

Planning the Campus with Place in Mind:  
A Phenomenological Exploration of the Lifeworlds of Community College Campuses  
in British Columbia

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 1992  
M.Pl., Queen's University, Kingston, 1998

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## Abstract

This phenomenological study contributes to scholarship on the geographies of higher education by examining the importance of “place” for the design and planning of college campuses. In particular, the study explores the lifeworlds of two community college campuses in British Columbia, Canada, comparing the “sense of place” at an urban campus in the lower mainland of British Columbia with a rural campus on Vancouver Island. In contrast to conventional treatments of the campus as absolute space, this dissertation considers how higher education campuses serve as places of meaning to those who use them. Using a combination of natural walk-along interviews and mental mapping methods with 23 participants, the findings from this study support Seamon’s (2013) contention that places – in this case, college campuses – are interanimations of people and their physical environments where meanings and a sense of place are created through the practices of daily routines. Participant responses also suggest that a sense of belonging to community, with its concomitant academic benefits, is advanced by encouraging a feeling of “at-homeness” on campus. These findings put into question the reliance of conventional campus design and planning approaches on the visual impact of the built environment to create a sense of place. Instead, building from Gehl (2011), they highlight how design and planning efforts that support the gathering of people and their routine use of campus spaces can foster the “place-ballets” that make vibrant and distinctive places. In generating spontaneous interpersonal encounters, place-ballet also sets the conditions understood to support the creation of new knowledge. To advance the notion of place-ballet, the study concludes by offering the neighbourhood as a model for campus design and planning that both connects home to community and encourages citizen engagement.

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## **Dedication**

To my son, William Domae-Garbutt who started kindergarten the year I began Ph.D. studies.

For seven years, he has been asking when I will finish my paper.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview of Study

The campus, conventionally defined as a “piece of land that is covered with the buildings of an American university” (Hegemann 1925, 87), is understood to play a pivotal role in advancing the mandate and mission of higher education institutions, yet it remains remarkably understudied and undertheorized (Boyer 1987, Boys 2011, Painter et al. 2013, Temple 2014). Described as the central organizing concept of the higher education institution, the campus has received curiously little scholarly attention outside of the built environment fields (Akin 2004, Guha 2013, Hajrasouliha 2017). Three decades ago, Turner (1987-88) observed that:

[i]t is puzzling that academics, who are usually eager to find new subjects of study – often to the point of seeking out the most obscure topics conceivable – have so completely neglected the environments in which they actually live and work. (They know more about the space planning of the ancient Minoans than about the space planning of the American university.) (1)

Although an extensive body of work has examined the campus as absolute, architectural space, human experiences and meanings of campus have not informed the campus design and planning literature in any significant way. This study makes an original contribution to geographical scholarship by deepening our understanding of the campus as a place – that is, space made meaningful through human experience (Tuan 1977). In this dissertation, I use geographic conceptualizations of place as part of a phenomenological inquiry into the meaning of two community college campuses with the aim of informing campus design and planning theory and practice.

Architecturally speaking and in the popular imagination, the sine qua non of the campus experience is a sense of place – a phenomenon where the built and landscaped environment

embodies the idealism of higher education wrapped in the distinct character of the school. It is generally considered to be a product of architectural and planning efforts such that ivy-clad buildings, verdant lawns, and leafy walkways are typical markers of a sense of place on higher education campuses (Ellen 1982, Edwards 2000, Stanton 2005, Coulson, Roberts, and Taylor 2015). Yet the presumption that the built and landscaped environment creates a sense of place is incomplete, failing to consider that people are an integral part of the making of place (Cresswell 2004).

Place is a frequently used, yet vastly under-theorized, concept in campus design and planning. The field's tendency to consider only the material aspects of place is surprising given the importance of community to the collegiate experience. This has been observed most notably by Perry Chapman (1999, 2006), who underscored the value of geographic conceptualizations of place to campus planning theory. Chapman (2006) contended that “[p]lace is not a physical abstraction. It has more to do with a chemistry that blends the character of the setting, its meaning to those who inhabit the setting, and the interactions that occur between the setting and its inhabitants” (xxiii). Following Chapman, this dissertation explores the human experiences and meanings that comprise as much a part of the campus as its physical characteristics.

Knowledge of the campus as a place of meaning begins to provide much-needed new insights for campus design and planning and is a direct response to the field's presumptive focus on the visual and physical impact of the built and landscaped environments. Given the limited theorization about the campus in general, it is not surprising that there is also a serious lack of theory underpinning its planning and design (Boys 2011, Temple 2014). As Temple and Barnett (2007) convincingly argued, “few conceptual frameworks exist for understanding the

connections between the physical form of the institutions and their academic effectiveness – and perhaps their sense of place” (6).

Place, arguably geography’s most important contribution to the social sciences, provides a useful theoretical approach to campus design and planning. In contrast with architectural and planning perspectives, geographic conceptualizations of place begin from the premise that it is people who give meaning to places (Cresswell 2009). In this context, a sense of place references the meaningful relationship between people and the material world, joining location and locale (setting) in defining the broader concept of place (Tuan 1974b, Agnew 1987, Relph 2008b). From a phenomenological perspective, Seamon (2013) coined the term person-or-people-experiencing-place to describe how people and material environments interanimate each other in an ongoing reciprocal relationship to create place. While individuals develop meaningful relationships with places through their experiences, usually over time, places also acquire shared meanings through communal experiences of them (Altman and Low 1992, Manzo 2003). Smaldone et al. (2005) posited that activities, traditions, social ties, and time are among the attributes that yield meaningful places.

This study of campuses as places of meaning contributes to a small but growing body of multi-disciplinary scholarship that considers human experiences in understanding campuses relationally (Hopkins 2011). In contrast with most of the established scholarship which studied the physical campuses of major universities using primarily quantitative methods, I take a phenomenological approach to understand the community college campus as a higher education learning place.

Simply defined, phenomenology is the interpretative study of human experience. More specifically, in this dissertation it refers to “the study [of] the meanings of human experiences in

situations, as they spontaneously occur in the course of daily life” (von Eckartsberg 1998, 3).

Phenomenological investigations examine “the ways things present themselves to us in and through such human experience” (Sokolowski 2000, 2). As such, it is a particularly useful way to consider the higher education campus as both a human and material phenomenon, providing an alternate perspective to the fields of architecture and urban design and planning which emphasize how built environments direct their users (Amdur and Epstein-Pliouchtch 2009, Degen and Rose 2012).

As often-unremarkable sites of everyday learning for millions of students across Canada and the United States, community college campuses provide rich opportunities to broaden our understanding of the meaning of higher education campuses and their sense of place beyond the built environment. Based on humanistic geography’s contention that the everyday practice of place creates meaning, the present study examines user experiences and meanings of two community college campuses, one urban and one rural, in the province of British Columbia, Canada. Twenty-three participants were selected for this study because they knew their campus in different ways as students, employees or community users, often in combination. I explored these diverse uses through natural walk-along interviews ranging in length from 18 to over 90 minutes. These interviews captured the meaning of place that is created through daily spatial practices such as movement, thoughts, and feeling (Kuntz, Petrovic, and Ginocchio 2012). At the end of the walk-along interview process, I invited each participant to draw a mental map of her or his campus. This provided an opportunity for participants to express their thoughts about the campus in visual form. Using phenomenological methods, I analysed interview transcripts as well as participants’ bodily gestures, movements, and mental maps. Using the lifeworld as a central concept, I then extracted significant statements from each, derived their meanings and

then clustered them into themes. This descriptive and hermeneutic thematic process yielded a rich description of the phenomena that represents each campus (Rieman 1986).

I chose two study sites for comparison purposes, examined each separately, and drew themes from both to arrive at my findings and recommendations. The Urban Campus is located in one of the many growing cities which comprise the Vancouver metropolitan area. The campus, which opened in the early 1980s, is a single, seven storey concrete structure in a modernist style set on 6.6 acres. It occupies a full city block on a major intersection in the city's downtown core (Figure 1.1).<sup>1</sup> Its original form was a variant of the academic quadrangle that was built upwards rather than outwards. Extensive addition has since modified the formation, yet the core of the quadrangle remains intact and centres the campus. Due to its location and close proximity to both high speed transit and an extensive bus network, students from across the greater Vancouver area commute to this non-residential campus. Originally built to house 2,500 full-time students, through expansion, the campus served approximately 14,000 primarily young adult students in 2016.



Source: image obtained from institution's website

Figure 1.1. The Urban Campus

In contrast, the Campus in the Woods is located in a small, rural community on Vancouver Island which is a three hour drive away from the province's capital city. In contrast with the Urban Campus, the Campus in the Woods almost exclusively serves the small community of 65,000 in which it is located. The presence of satellite centres in the surrounding communities contributes to this very local enrolment pattern. Set on 55 acres and open since the early 1990s, the campus was built as a mini-academical village. It is a loose collection of independent, low density buildings featuring traditional wooden, West Coast architecture sited amidst a forest of Douglas Fir trees (Figure 1.2). One of four campuses spread throughout the region, the Campus in the Woods served approximately 2,500 mostly mature adult students in 2016.



Source: photography by David Graham, used with permission

Figure 1.2. The Campus in the Woods.

The selection of these two strikingly different community colleges with architecturally diverse campuses allowed for the inclusion of a rich range of users' perspectives of their respective campuses and their senses of place.

## 1.2 Background: The Higher Education Campus

Campuses are special places in the North American landscape, ones with a distinctly American provenance. Meaning ‘field’ in Latin, German city planner Werner Hegemann first chose the word ‘campus’ in 1925 to describe the grounds and physical surroundings of the American university; the British term being ‘yard’ (Turner 1985, Stanton 2005). Seen as critical to the civilisation of the New World, particularly in the United States and Canada, higher education was one of the earliest priorities of the first colonists. By 1779, nine English language degree-granting higher education institutions had been established in the New World. Although primarily based on the physical forms of Oxford and Cambridge, the design of these first campuses drew from the local landscape (Turner 1985, Chapman 2006). And it is these adaptations – greenery, connection with nature, and openness to the surrounding community – that now characterize the higher education campus (Griffith 1994, Chapman 2006).

Thomas Jefferson featured them all in his plan for an ‘academical village’ at the University of Virginia which is widely considered to be North America’s quintessential campus (Turner 1985, Akin 2004, Chapman 2006, Garnaut 2012). In contrast with British and European campuses which typically featured a single large building centring the site, Jefferson’s campus plan also included smaller, family-sized buildings set around an “open square of grass and trees” (Turner 1985, 79). Jefferson’s vision subsequently became the standard and the term ‘campus’ was brought into popular use. Today, the Jeffersonian ideal remains largely intact and the American campus model has become the global standard (Way 2016).

Treasured campuses like Virginia’s offer more than just a model physical layout; they reflect the character of the school. This is commonly described in the campus design and planning literature as having a distinct sense of place. Achieving a sense of place through

material form is one of the primary objectives of campus design and planning practice (Dober 1996, Ossa-Richardson 2014, Temple 2014, O'Rourke and Baldwin 2016). As Temple (2009) observed, many schools are “almost defined, at least in the public mind, by their physical presence” (211). This is attributable to both the idealism associated with higher education and, more recently, the need for institutional branding (Neary et al. 2010, Temple 2011).

Campus design and planning emerged as a distinct practice in the post-World War II period when returning soldiers and the baby boom sparked an unprecedented expansion of higher education (Dober 1996). Today it is a niche subfield of architecture as well as urban planning whose overarching models and principles have shaped campus design and planning (Akin 2004, Garnaut 2012, Gilbert and Grant 2016). Amundsen (September/October 2013) described the field in the following way: “[c]ampus planning is understood to encompass a wide range of physical planning activities, from specific building placement and design that implements a capital plan to a framework of principles that guides future development” (2). A few key texts authored by a handful of experts guide current practice. The acknowledged classic is Richard Dober's *Campus Planning* which launched the genre with its publication in 1963. Planning a campus with a strong sense of place is a consistent theme throughout Dober's (1996, 2003) extensive body of work as a practitioner as well as an acclaimed author. Based on this principle, the interrelated activities of place-making and place-marking now characterize the field (Sinclair 2008, Painter et al. 2013). Place-making, “the structuring of the overall design, the broader skeleton, the articulated pattern, that is the campus plan,” is combined with place-marking, “the definition, conceptualization, and orchestration of certain physical attributes which give a campus a visual uniqueness appropriately its own” (Dober 2003, 4). It is understood that campuses achieve their distinct senses of place through these two practices.

There are two explicit assumptions guiding campus design and planning practice – first, that campuses are predominantly physical places and, second, that a campus’ sense of place is an outcome of its material, particularly visual, form (Edwards 2000, Stanton 2005, Temple 2009, Coulson, Roberts, and Taylor 2015). As such, it is commonly accepted that a sense of place arises from a well-planned and designed built and landscaped environment which gives a campus its unique “feel” (Watson 2014, xix). For example, Kenney et al. (2005) argued: “[a] sense of place [is] created by the plan and the buildings working together to define space and establish identity” (189). This presumption originates with the over-arching field of urban planning and design where a sense of place is understood to be a product of a specific urban design and a representation of time in the built form that together create a visually identifiable character (Malpas 2008). It is therefore not surprising that campuses notable for having a strong sense of place combine a discernible land-use framework with heritage buildings and/or newer construction designed in a historic architectural style such as Collegiate Gothic. As Meyer (2013) observed: “[w]e know what elite American colleges should look like. Tall Gothic towers, Georgian angles and radii, and the few massive, newer slopes of Cold War modernism: It’s a collage recognizable as ‘college.’”

While this image of the campus remains strong in the popular imagination, it does not represent the reality of most higher education campuses today. The democratization of higher education has led to the establishment of a vast number and range of higher education institutions that have been built since the Second World War. The physical campus has changed in response and now describes any place where higher education occurs. So while ivy-covered buildings and leafy walkways dominate our idea of campus, today they are found in almost every kind of built environment. As Chapman (2006) noted, campuses “are housed in former

department stores, factories, and schools, in large suburban mall-like complexes, and old fashioned ivy-covered campuses” (107). The field of campus design and planning has typically been blind to this new reality, concentrating its efforts on the grandeur of elite universities and the architectural creation of a sense of place.

### **1.3 Research Problem: College Campuses as Places of Meaning**

Campuses are more than just a school’s physical estate and their sense of place arises from more than just architecture and landscaping (Kuntz, Petrovic, and Ginocchio 2012). In his classic work, *Campus, An American Planning Tradition*, Turner (1985) defined campus as “the pervasive spirit of a school or its genius loci, as embodied in its architecture and grounds” (4). He expressed his point of view another way with the following: “[c]ampus sums up the distinctive physical qualities of the American college, but also its integrity as a self-contained community and its architectural expression of educational and social ideals” (5). A careful reading shows where Turner put his emphasis: campus is the “pervasive spirit of the school,” “its integrity as a self-contained community,” and the “expression of educational and social ideals” (4-5). With these words, Turner defined campus as a place of shared meaning as reflected in the material form.

The campus as an environment of diverse meanings and experiences has been left largely unexplored (O’Rourke and Baldwin 2016). There is a particular need to examine whether architectural representations of meanings in the built environment are so perceived by users (Amdur and Epstein-Pliouchtch 2009). As with any place, a campus is experienced and practiced in unintended ways. Despite this, the field of campus design and planning has focused its efforts on achieving a signature physical character to create a sense of place. Yet Turner’s use of the terms genius loci (and its companion term, spirit of place), and a sense of place, are as much

geographical as they are architectural. Campuses are not merely the physical characteristics of location; rather, their sense of place arises from the reciprocal relationship between people and the material world (Tuan 1974b, Relph 2008b).

In this geographical context, a sense of place has been defined as “the complex bundle of meaning, symbols, [and] qualities that a person or group associates (consciously and unconsciously) with a particular locality or region” (Datel and Dingemans 1984, 135). It is also “a synaesthetic faculty that combines sight, hearing, smell, movement, touch, imagination, purpose, and anticipation. It is both an individual and intersubjective attribute, closely connected to community as well as to personal memory and self. It is variable” (Relph 2008b, 314). A key component of a sense of place is place attachment; that is, interest, involvement, and/or belonging to place that forms an integral part of human identity (Montgomery 1998, Shamai and Ilatov 2005, Malpas 2008).

An individual’s recollections of their elementary school experiences offer a glimpse into the rich senses of place educational sites hold for their students. For children, poignant emotions can be attached to schools – places that are frequently filled with strangers, new spaces, and unfamiliar customs and rules. Artist and professor of pedagogy, Olivia Sagan (2008), remembered her own primary school classroom where happy childhood memories are linked with the “quaint blend of tall arched windows and parquet flooring lightly carpeted with chalk-dust near the blackboard” (174). Negative experiences are also tied to the physical environment of schools. Renowned American author and critic, Alfred Kazin (1951), wrote eloquently about the meaning of his own primary school:

When I passed the school, I went sick with all my old fear of it. With its standard New York public-school brown brick courtyard shut in on three sides of the square and the pretentious battlements overlooking that cockpit in which I can

still smell the fiery sheen of the rubber ball, it looks like a factory over which has been imposed the façade of a castle. It gave me the shivers to stand up in that courtyard again; I felt as if I had been mustered back into the service of those Friday morning “tests” that were the terror of my childhood. (17)

As the above passages demonstrate, people’s feelings about their learning experiences and their ‘place’ in the social system of the school can be connected to the physical environment. This is not unexpected given that schools, whether compulsory or higher education, reproduce the dominant social order through the production of space (Lefebvre 1991). Educators have long relied on the material environment of schools to shape student behaviour. In their studies of the ways that schools physically regulate children’s interactions in space, geographers of education have shown how physical spaces and processes of schooling attempt to establish behavior norms in children (Collins and Coleman 2008). Nonetheless, despite an imbalance in power, children find ways of creating spaces of safety and resistance often in the face of social stigma, creating meaning for themselves through the process (Catling 2005, Van Ingen and Halas 2006).

Not surprisingly, schools can be sites of significant meaning for children. These memories and associations have lingered in adulthood. While little research has considered college and university campuses in similar ways, the literature reflects a nascent, but growing, interest in considering the higher education campus as a geographical place. Sinclair (2008) contended that:

It is important to distinguish space from place. Our campuses are far more than collections of utilitarian spaces brought together to serve at times narrowly-defined purposes within higher education. Rather, and significantly, campus design and planning is about place-making. Places are spaces embedded with meaning and embodied with life. Places on campus are vibrant areas that are memorable, that inspire and excite us, that give purpose to our lives and identity to our institutions. (5)

Similarly, Neary et al. (2010) suggested that “estates professionals shift their focus from ‘spaces’ to ‘places.’ This requires a greater degree of holism in planning of estate interventions because the goals and considerations of place creation are primarily social and pedagogic, rather than material and financial” (36).

#### **1.4 Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to contribute to both our understanding of higher education campuses and the field of campus design and planning by using a phenomenological approach to examine two community college campuses as places of meaning to those who use them. This research poses two primary questions:

1. How are community college campuses experienced by those who use them? and;
2. How can geographic theories of place, and specifically the related concept of a sense of place, better inform place-making practices associated with the design and planning of higher education campuses?<sup>2</sup>

#### **1.5 Research Goals and Objectives**

In keeping with its purpose, the goals of this dissertation are to: 1) understand campuses as places of meaning to those who use them, 2) suggest how geographical conceptualizations of place can inform theories and practices of place-making associated with the field of campus design and planning, 3) further develop the geographic concept of a sense of place in the context of the campus, and 4) increase our understanding of the community college campus where there has been insufficient scholarship, particularly on its planning and design.

To meet these goals, this study has the following objectives: 1) to explore user experiences of campus (especially that of students, employees, and community members), 2) to compare and

contrast user experiences of a large urban and a small rural community college campus, 3) to use geographical theories of place and phenomenological methods to collect and interpret participant responses, 4) to derive meanings of each campus from them, and 5) to suggest how the field of campus design and planning might incorporate these findings into its theories and practices. In the next section, I discuss the significance of this study by placing it within the current context of higher education as indicated by a review of the literature.

## **1.6 Phenomenology of Campus Design and Planning: A Place-Based Approach**

In taking a phenomenological, place-based approach which asks how the campus is experienced by those who use it, this dissertation refers to the existing scholarship and makes an original contribution by responding directly to identified gaps in our knowledge. The study responds generally to the observation that the spatial dimensions of higher education remain under-explored and under-theorized (Taylor 2009, Thiem 2009, Boys 2011, Harrison and Hutton 2014, Temple 2014, Boys 2015). In particular, there is burgeoning interest in the relationship between space and place in the context of higher education, yet the subject remains sorely under-researched (Jessop, Gubby, and Smith 2012, O'Rourke and Baldwin 2016). Scholarly interest in the area crosses a number of disciplines including higher education theory, the geographies of education, environmental psychology as well as campus design and planning. The present study responds to observations made by each of these fields.

Foremost, this dissertation is a direct response to Temple (2009) who argued that a better understanding is needed of how space becomes place and how it affects the academic work of higher education institutions. While place has been widely theorized as meaningful space, the ways that this occurs in different locations and settings has not been sufficiently considered.

Shamsuddin and Ujang (2008) noted that “the role of meanings and attachment in making places with a strong sense of place have not been brought to adequate attention” (400). With specific reference to the higher education campus, Peltonen (2011) remarked that: “[t]he complete chains of translations from the architectural plans to the social uses and meanings of built spaces have not been explored so far” (808). Similarly, Neary et al. (2010) called for “greater emphasis on the social construction of meaning and shared narratives to augment the usual sources of data about the campus” (36).

In emphasizing individual experiences of the campus, this study also specifically responds to calls for phenomenologically-driven research into the relationship between individuals and place-based centres of learning (Hung and Stables 2011). It begins to respond to Holton and Riley’s (2013) recent plea that “there is a pressing need for more research that takes us into the everyday ‘lifeworlds’ of students” as a means of understanding how person-place relationships affect learning and other outcomes (169). In doing so, it also acts upon the observation that “space, which is social, is often planned without ‘social’ inputs: the views of the ‘common people’... are easily overlooked” (Temple 2014, xxix). This includes the voices of students which are often absent in studies of higher education spaces (Montgomery 2008, Jessop, Gubby, and Smith 2012, Beckers, van der Voordt, and Dewulf 2016).

This dissertation also makes an original contribution by considering the campus as a whole. As Amundsen (September/October 2013) argued, “[a]n image persists of the campus as individual buildings in the landscape, rather than the complex integration of built form, physical, environmental, and social infrastructure, and mix of activities and land uses that characterize both campuses and cities” (3). As a result, the campus is most frequently viewed as a collection of discrete, constituent parts and investigations of the campus typically follow this piece-meal

approach. To date, most studies examine only parts of the campus. For example, outdoor spaces, landscaping, sustainability initiatives, libraries/learning commons, student residences, and student union buildings have been fairly well covered in the literature as independent entities (Abu-Ghazzeah 1999, Dahlgren, Dougherty, and Goodno 2013, Cunningham and Walton 2016, Holton 2016). Learning spaces, an area of renewed attention, are also usually considered in isolation from other parts of the campus. The narrow body of literature has tended to focus on the design and utility of elements of learning spaces, such as classrooms, labs, and offices (Beckers, van der Voordt, and Dewulf 2016). The campus as a phenomenon in-and-of-itself has been left largely unexplored.

## **1.7 Significance of Study: Research Context**

As the previous discussion demonstrates, this research responds to specific, identified gaps in the literature on spatiality, higher education, and the campus. The need for this research, however, is also situated within the current context of higher education, a time when searching questions are being asked about the educational value of the campus. In the following subsections, I discuss three of the most pressing issues regarding the higher education campus to highlight the relevance of conducting this research at this time. These issues include the need for greater knowledge of: 1) how the campus supports higher education institutions in meeting their mandate, 2) the relationship between students' sense of belonging and a campus' sense of place, 3) community college campuses, and 4) campuses as public space.

### **1.7.1 The Role of the Campus in Meeting the Higher Education Mandate**

It is being observed with increasing frequency that the role that the physical campus plays in contributing to higher education's goals is insufficiently understood (Greene and Penn 1997,

Strange and Banning 2001, Painter et al. 2013, Marmot 2014, Temple 2014, Boys 2015). Perhaps the most obvious gap in the scholarship is the paucity of knowledge as to how the campus as a whole contributes to student success. The absence of robust information on how the campus fosters academic achievement has become particularly glaring with the technological transformation of learning (Sagan 2008).

Deemed the most significant force affecting the delivery of higher education today, technology has put the need for physical campuses into considerable question (Jamieson et al. 2000, Harrison and Hutton 2014, Boys 2015, Haggans 2015). Where face-to-face instruction has long been the dominant paradigm for instructional delivery, geographically blind, scalable online learning methods are threatening to replace it. Rapid advances in information and communication technologies have accompanied global efforts to increase higher education participation while reducing costs, resulting in a fundamental change in instructional delivery. Many higher education institutions now offer their programming substantively or entirely online and most campus-based schools are actively increasing their distance, blended, and online programming. With course registrations numbering in the tens of millions, MOOCs (massive online courses) have disrupted the traditional higher education model altogether by offering free, non-credit courses to the general public. Now that technology-enabled learning can occur almost anywhere, at any time, searching questions are being asked about the value of the physical campus and traditional higher education institutions.

It has been speculated that online education would slow, if not entirely stop, physical campus development (Temple and Barnett 2007). Cultural essayist Peter Drucker (1997) famously predicted the extinction of physical campuses by 2030:

Thirty years from now the big university campuses will be relics. Universities won't survive. It's as large a change as when we first got the printed book. Already we are beginning to deliver more lectures and classes off campus via satellite or two-way video at a fraction of the cost. The college won't survive as a residential institution. Today's buildings are hopelessly unsuited and totally unneeded.

While Drucker's prediction is unlikely to come true, his concerns about the growing obsolescence of the physical campus has resonated with Harden (2012) among others who continue to foresee its end. Along related lines, Akin (2004) contended that campuses are failing to meet the needs of today's consumer-oriented, part-time student who seeks instruction and support services 24/7. Like-minded critics have also pointed to outdated learning spaces as evidence of the campus' stagnation. Dugdale (2009) and Harrison and Hutton (2014) argued that learning spaces are not sufficiently equipped to support current pedagogical practices. Changes are needed to accommodate "new teaching and learning methods, research, technologies, and student expectations" (Temple and Barnett 2007, 14). Recent studies which have examined the learning activities that occur outside of the home and school in third places (e.g., coffee shops, restaurants, and other public spaces) reinforce the suggestion that in the twenty-first century, an integrated physical campus is no longer necessary (Watson 2007).

These criticisms speak to a lack of awareness of how the campus as a whole contributes to the teaching and learning mandate of the institution. This is attributable, in part, to how campus learning and learning spaces are normally conceived. As previously discussed, the campus has typically been viewed as a series of constituent and largely discrete parts. This perception mirrors conventional thinking which tends to separate curricular from extra-curricular activities. Curricular activities, or those concerned with an institution's core mandate of teaching and learning, are normally considered to occur only when an instructor is present in designated

spaces such as classrooms and labs. Extra-curricular activities, such as sports, recreation, and clubs are usually thought of as non-instructional activities and housed separately. Thus, the typical campus tends to be divided into instructional and non-instructional spaces and most studies of it follow this structure.

However, student learning is no longer confined to the classroom as instructor-centric pedagogies based on a one-way transmission of knowledge from teacher to student have broadened to include learner-centric approaches. Self- and peer-directed learning activities are now recognised as being at least as important as instructor-led ones (Cunningham and Walton 2016). Similarly, learning activities have expanded beyond texts to include “interaction, collaboration, physical movement, and social engagement” (Jamieson 2003, 121). These pedagogic changes have rendered the distinction between instructional and non-instructional spaces entirely artificial (Boys, Melhuish, and Wilson 2014, Harrison and Hutton 2014, Boys 2015). This supports investigating the campus holistically (Radloff 1998).

A holistic approach follows the way that people use and experience the campus. As Kuntz et al. (2012) argued, the parts of a campus – people, buildings, landscaping, roads, etc. – are in “dynamic interrelation: one can never be fully separated or isolated from the other” (434). By narrowing the study of on-campus learning and learning spaces to traditional settings such as classrooms and labs, existing research provides little justification for an integrated physical campus (Webb, Schaller, and Hunley 2008, Dahlgren, Dougherty, and Goodno 2013). Consideration of the campus as a whole is necessary to understand how it contributes to student learning. Estimates indicate that students spend 85% of their time on-campus outside of instructor-led, scheduled classes (Chapman 2006). As Chapman (2006) observed:

Much of the day-to-day learning in the collegiate setting is individual and social learning that takes place in labs, studios, dormitories, and other residential settings, at the union, in the library, on the playing fields and courts and fitness rooms, in organizations, at work, and all of the other venues on and off campus that students are known to inhabit. (132)

There is insufficient understanding of how this time contributes to the learning process.

The absence of knowledge as to how the campus contributes to the mandate and mission of the higher education institution is also apparent in other ways. For example, Chapman (2006) contended that the development of the physical campus forms an integral part of an institution's "selective positioning strategy" designed to attract the best faculty and student talent. Similarly, other scholars have noted that students' decisions about higher education are strongly related to their perception of the campus (Griffith 1994, Groen and White 2004, Speake, Edmondson, and Haq 2013). Boyer (1987) famously noted that:

It was the buildings, the trees, the walkways, the well-kept lawns – that overwhelmingly won out. The appearance of the campus is, by far, the most influential characteristic during campus visits, and we gained the distinct impression that when it comes to recruiting students, the director of buildings and grounds may be more important than the academic dean. (17)

However, beyond anecdote, there is surprisingly little evidence supporting these contentions (Price et al. 2003). While a handful of studies have focused on how specific parts of the campus, particularly outdoor space, attract potential students (Abu-Ghazze 1999, Salama 2009, Speake, Edmondson, and Haq 2013), little is known about how the campus as a whole comes together to influence students' enrolment decisions.

While our knowledge of how the campus contributes to the higher education mandate is lacking, data indicate that higher education institutions, including community colleges, are expanding and rejuvenating their campuses at unprecedented rates. Even in recessionary and funding reduction times, *College Planning and Management* reports that annual spending on

U.S. campus construction has averaged over \$10 billion for the past ten years with nearly 80% of dollars allocated to new construction (Abramson 2015). Expansion is widespread in an entrepreneurial higher education environment. New schools, often privately owned and for-profit and focused on serving non-traditional students, are being established at record rates, developing new campuses to support their business. Simultaneously, existing schools are renovating and building on their campuses to replace aging infrastructure, to accommodate growth, and to remain competitive in the higher education marketplace. In a global world, schools are also aggressively expanding beyond their current locations, setting up new sites across city, regional, and national boundaries to attract new students. The democratization of higher education has transformed the physical campus – campus now describes the myriad of places where formal higher education occurs.

Despite this flurry of construction, Bennett (2007) argued that “the higher education community has exempted its investments in physical space from the obligation it has otherwise accepted in evaluating outcomes and demonstrating value” (23). The presumption that new buildings and renovated spaces increase student usage and improve learning outcomes continues to remain untested (Brooks, Byford, and Sela 2016, O’Rourke and Baldwin 2016). In the absence of information about how the campus contributes to student success, it is not surprising that the value of the higher education campus is being questioned particularly at a time when concerns about student affordability approach record highs (Marmot 2014). Yet despite concerns about utility and costs, annual spending on higher education campuses continues to increase, suggesting that the physical campus remains a critical part of how institutions fulfill their goals. To justify continued investment, better knowledge is needed of how the campus contributes to the missions and mandates of the institutions of which they are a part.

In this context, this study of human experiences of campus can give important insights into the value of the campus. One promising area of research is students' sense of belonging to the places of higher education and how these dynamics affect access to education and academic achievement. In the next sub-section, I outline the need for this knowledge.

### **1.7.2 A Sense of Belonging – A Sense of Place on Campus**

The extent to which students' sense of belonging to their school's academic community is implicated with a campus' sense of place is an especially important question for higher education (Sagan 2008, O'Rourke and Baldwin 2016). Bickford and Wright (2006) are among those who contend that belonging to community – that is, a group with common purpose, values, and goals – is a necessary prerequisite to student academic and social success in higher education. Malpas (2008) usefully linked belonging to a sense of place in the following way: “‘Sense of place’ refers us, on the face of it, both to a sense of the character or identity that belongs to certain places or locales, as well as to a sense of our own identity as shaped in relation to those places – to a sense of ‘belonging to’ those places” (199-200).

The higher education literature defines sense of belonging as students' belief that they “fit in” at their school (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991). “Fitting in” arises from a number of factors, most prominently students' self-perceived ability to succeed academically and socially. Following Tinto (1987), a sense of belonging is aided by institutional efforts that foster academic and social integration such as support services (Deil-Amen 2011, Pichon 2015). Student participation in voluntary, informal, and unplanned activities outside of the classroom also promotes a sense of belonging (Waite, 2014). By fostering student persistence, a sense of belonging has been demonstrated to contribute to positive academic outcomes (Stebbleton et al. 2014).

There is growing evidence that students' sense of belonging to an academic community is connected to place. For example, Marmot (2014) and Thomas (2012) argued that students who "feel at home" on campus are more likely to persist with their studies and to be academically successful. Conversely, Strange and Banning (2001) postulated that campuses can send symbolic, non-verbal messages that negatively affect students' feelings of belonging and academic motivation. Yet most studies of belonging neglect students' relationships with the material environment of the campus in favour of factors such as student preparedness, interpersonal relationships, involvement, personal and cultural safety, financial ability, and campus climate (Strauss and Volkwein 2004, Evans et al. 2010, Thomas 2012).

However, extensive work in environmental psychology suggests that further consideration of the link between students' sense of belonging and a sense of place on campus is a worthy area of research. Building from human geography's conceptualizations of place, environmental psychologists have explored the connection between place and belonging in their well developed body of scholarship on place attachment (Tuan 1974b, 1975b, Relph 1976, Lewicka 2011). Defined as the emotional or affective bonds with place, the concept of place attachment began with Tuan's contention that people are more likely to form an attachment to well-defined places for which they have strong meaning (Tuan 1977, Livingston, Bailey, and Kearns 2008). Smaldone et al. (2005) contended that, "[a] person's connection to a place is thus based on the creation of meaning for that place" (398). Attachment to place can be positive and pull people to a location; place attachment can also be negative and push people away. While physical distinctiveness factors into place attachment, studies have demonstrated that how well a place meets individuals' personal, psychological, and identity needs outweighs its visual characteristics (Lalli 1992, Shamai and Ilatov 2005).

This provides a compelling reason to problematise the prevailing view that strong urban design and form are prerequisite to a sense of place on campus (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996, Lewicka 2011). This presumption seemingly, but erroneously, suggests that a sense of place can only be an outcome of robust campus design and planning. Moreover, it confers the advantage of having a distinct sense of place to schools with the time, land, and the financial resources to invest in the physical estate. Only a small minority fit in this category which excludes entire sectors of the higher education system such as community colleges, vocational, and specialized schools. It can be argued, however, that having a strong sense of place, and with it a sense of belonging, is especially important for these higher education institutions that are geared to under-represented, disadvantaged, and first generation learners.

For these reasons, community college campuses represent a vital, yet overlooked, area of study. Not only has the field of campus design and planning left the personal and social aspects of campuses largely unexplored, it has also not followed the mass democratization of higher education and its changing landscape. The exclusive focus on architecturally significant, often elite, universities fails to acknowledge the vast number and range of higher education institutions that have been built since the Second World War (Painter et al. 2013). Current campus planning literature and practice is virtually blind to the differing mandates, purposes, and student bodies of this diverse collection of schools. Amundsen (September/October 2013) observed that: “[t]he iconic and popular image of a higher-education institution – the quadrangle or quad surrounded by neo-Gothic or neoclassical architecture – is the form still largely aspired to, regardless of institutional type, when it was founded, or local context” (3).

### **1.7.3 Community Colleges: An Under-Researched Area**

Community colleges, also known as two-year, “commuter” and junior colleges, arose from a movement in the 1950s and 1960s to extend access to publicly-funded higher education to local communities. They are distinguished from most four-year universities by three defining characteristics: an ‘open door admissions policy’; a broad range of development, university, and employment oriented instruction; and most importantly, a mandate to enhance the socio-economic strength of the region through education. Often described as a middle layer between high school and university, the work of community colleges is squarely centred on teaching and learning rather than research (Beinder 1983). To meet local needs, community college programing is wide-ranging and often includes adult upgrading, first and second year university transfer courses, career programs, trade certifications, and non-credit continuing education courses. Typically, baccalaureate degrees are not offered in great number; however, this is gradually changing with the increasing educational requirements of employment.

Open access, labour market-oriented programing attracts a very diverse, primarily local student body to community colleges. Mature, adult students who have not graduated from high school or who need upgrading historically form a large part of the student population. And first generation learners, ethnic minority, rural, indigenous, and low-income students attend community colleges in greater numbers than any other kind of higher education institution. Not surprisingly, most community college students come from surrounding localities, commuting to campus while balancing multiple obligations including work and parenting.

To meet the educational needs of this growing population, the first wave of community colleges were quickly built in the 1950s. By then, a prototype for the higher education campus had already been established based on the elite university. For the next three decades, the rapid

growth of community colleges went well beyond that originally anticipated by policy makers, leading to the need for more campuses. By 1960, there were already over 700 community colleges in the United States, and it was anticipated that an additional twenty or more would be built each year for the “foreseeable future” to accommodate an estimated 50% of future high school graduates (Lacy 1962, 7). Between 1955-1974, a new community college opened in the U.S. every other week (Colleges, 1989). Today with over 1,600 community colleges in the U.S. and 130 in Canada, there is a community college within commuting distance of 90% of the population (Chapman 2006, 107).

This rapid growth presented planning as well as operational challenges. Interim space often had to be found while permanent campuses were secured. Financial constraints, both anticipated and not, resulted in many schools occupying these less traditional quarters permanently (Evans and Neagley, 1973). The hodge-podge nature of many community college facilities often reflects their first homes in rented spaces and in portable structures, many of which were retained for satellite operations once permanent campuses were built. As a result, community colleges have long histories of occupying abandoned government, school, factory, and retail facilities as well as rooming with other local organizations to offer programming (Chapman 2006). This is a tradition that community colleges carry on today, particularly in smaller localities.

Creating permanent campuses for this new educational entity tested the field of campus design and planning. Architects and planners struggled to develop new physical forms to meet the specific purposes of the community college and its student body. During the formative years, Evans and Neagley (1973) noted the following:

Planning probably is more crucial in respect to community colleges than it is for any other type of education facility because of their newness and uniqueness. Architectural firms are being asked to create something that many of them do not even understand. There can be no standard plans for community college [facilities]. Their diversity is one of their most significant characteristics. (182-183)

To guide practitioners, the Educational Facilities Laboratories (ELF), America's post-war think tank on educational spaces, published a report in 1962 which attempted to characterize the uniqueness of the community college. The challenge, they observed, was to encapsulate the special mandate, student body, and locations of the community college in the campus:

The community college is likely to be the center of cultural life for the community. In most cases it belongs to the community, reflects the community, and serves the community. Such facilities should not be a junior version of the American college nor a jazzed up high school. In short, this new kind of institution must have new kinds of facilities. (Lacy 1962, 6-7)

The report recommended some key characteristics of the community college campus, including:

- Appealing facilities whose doors are open to all comers and are designed to attract the half reluctant student;
  - Being the centre for cultural life for the community – the natural home for the theatre, library, art exhibitions, athletics (truly amateur), adult education, and recreation;
  - Facilities that represent the community and the “tripartite relationship” colleges should have with secondary schools, with universities, and with local business and industry;
  - Facilities that are unusually adaptable to fit the ever-changing curriculum and teaching methods of the community college;
  - Vehicular travel time and access;
  - Phased building to accommodate growth.
- (Lacy 1962, 6-11)

Despite these recommendations, today most community college campuses represent an uneasy blend of the high school and the traditional university campus, usually leaning more towards one than the other. While many community college campuses were planned as reduced scale versions of the traditional university campus – as small academical villages or academic quadrangles – others modeled large high school facilities by featuring long hallways with

adjacent classrooms (Turner 1985, 287). They are distinguished from the university campus in being primarily non-residential. As a result, parking facilities and roads feature prominently on many community college campuses to meet the needs of a commuting student body. In many cases, parking lots comprise much of these campuses' visual identity.

Today, most campus design and planning literature either entirely omits the community college or presents it as an afterthought where it is presented as a short sidebar to the main business of more prestigious university design (Chapman, 2006; Turner, 1985). The practice of campus design and planning has not acknowledged the unique role that community colleges play in increasing access to higher education and training. For example, while *Campus Planning* anticipated a doubling of American community college enrolment in 1963, Dober's now classic work focused exclusively on the university. The absence of scholarship on community college campuses and their role in meeting the mandate of these institutions is particularly glaring at this time in higher education. Community colleges represent a large component of both the U.S. and Canadian higher education systems. Their enrolment continues to grow as the educational requirements of employment increases and as neoliberal governments tie funding for higher education to labour market training. Each year in the U.S., over 12 million students attend one of over 1,600 community colleges and, at 1.5 million registrants annually, Canadian community college enrolment nearly equals university enrolment.<sup>3</sup> Still, the campus needs of this sector of education continue to be largely ignored.

Perhaps more problematic is the prevailing assumption that universities, and the most elite of these, should serve as aspirational, best practice models for all other kinds of higher education campuses. Not only do these schools serve only the smallest slice of the higher education population, their wealth far exceeds that of their more populous counterparts. Given

their purpose, scale, and funding, the applicability of even the more modest publicly-funded four year universities to other sectors is highly questionable. This a-critical, a-contextual assumption is of particular concern in the case of community colleges whose purpose and student population vary so significantly from the traditional universities upon which the literature is based. Despite having a student population that vastly outnumbers that of elite universities, the sector receives comparatively little scholarly attention. Shirkey (2012) made the following observation of higher education in the U.S.:

Outside the elite institutions, though, the other 75% of students – over 13 million of them – are enrolled in the four thousand institutions you haven't heard of: Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College. Bridgerland Applied Technology College. The Laboratory Institute of Merchandising. When we talk about college education in the U.S., these institutions are usually left out of the conversation, but Clayton State educates as many undergraduates as Harvard. Saint Leo educates twice as many. City College of San Francisco enrolls as many as the entire Ivy League combined. These are where most students are, and their experience is what college education is mostly like.

The community college experience of campus is the typical experience – the everyday experience of higher education for the majority of adult students in North America. Yet surprisingly, there is “virtually no research” about community college campuses (Painter et al. 2013, 21). Schuetz (2005) concluded that “more research is needed to describe how the community college environment, including the physical environment might better evolve to support retention and access” (75).

The absence of both architectural and academic grandeur is likely the reason for this disinterest. It is the rare community college that is celebrated for either its built environment or campus master plan. Most pass almost entirely unnoticed. Turner (1985) noted that with a few well-known exceptions, many incorrectly assume that college campuses have grown haphazardly, without intentional, professional planning (4). In fact, master planning of

community college campuses is a standard practice, born out of the need to accommodate enrolment growth and to secure government funding for building projects (Colyer and Seeger 2007, Hodge and Gordon 2014). With an expanding remit, community colleges face growing pressure to emulate the campuses of their university counterparts, engaging in master planning processes to secure financial and public support for their vision for the future (Chapman 2006).

One of the key challenges of community college planning is creating a campus with a shared “collegiate spirit” (Turner 1985, 287). This is a vexing problem for these institutions with a diverse student body largely comprised of part-time and commuting students. A deeper understanding of a sense of place is then especially relevant for community colleges given their common struggle to build a campus with one. Place also has special importance for community colleges that have a mandate to serve a particular geographic locality and the expectations of being embedded in the community that come with it. These expectations are linked to community college’s obligations as public spaces.

#### **1.7.4 Public Space**

By virtue of their taxpayer-funded mandate to serve the education and training needs of local residents, community colleges are public spaces. Once extensions of high schools and often funded through property tax levies, community colleges can be found in almost every corner of Canada and the United States. As open access institutions, they are tasked with engaging broad sectors of the local population, including learners from traditionally under-represented groups. But while community colleges have always been public places, they are increasingly being seen as part of the public realm (Mitchell and Staeheli 2009).

In recent years, the obligations that come with public funding have become attached to rising demands that community colleges grow their remit beyond teaching and learning.

Chapman (2006) argued that the civic role played by community colleges continues to expand as public expectations of them as community capacity builders grow. These responsibilities now go well beyond providing instruction to students and ensuring a local supply of job-ready graduates. With their strong roots in localities and funding from local taxpayers, following their university counterparts, more and more community colleges are being called upon to serve as anchor institutions. As Levinson (2004) observed: “[s]chools are no longer gated citadels, but instead catalysts for developments and city building. Many universities have become vital economic engines, sometimes the largest single employer in town” (90).

Contributing to the economic health and stability of their communities has become an unofficial mandate of community colleges. With globalization, localities are increasingly relying on students to grow their local consumer base as municipalities vie to become college towns in the wake of job losses in primary and secondary industries (Gumprecht 2008). International education has become a leading economic development strategy for colleges as well as their home communities. As a result, ‘student geographies’ has emerged as an area of study that considers the spatial impact of students on the surrounding environment (Smith 2009a, Holton and Riley 2013). Coined by Smith and Holt (2007), ‘studentification’ describes a form of gentrification caused by the influx of large numbers of students with stereotypical student behaviours into small communities (Gumprecht 2006, Hubbard 2008, Smith 2008, Turok, Munro, and Livingston 2009). This work augments traditional gentrification studies in considering the economic impact of campus extension into neighbouring communities (Sroufi 2005, Steinacker 2005, Adhya 2009). The displacement of low income, minority resident communities through the extension of campus boundaries has long been a consequence of these activities (Carriere 2011, Souther 2011, Winling 2011).

As campuses simultaneously stretch into their adjacent neighbourhoods and bring community on campus through market housing developments, higher education institutions have become significant players in town planning efforts (Way 2016). No longer scholarly enclaves, higher education campuses are often high profile parts of the communities where they reside. In turn, they have never been more welcoming to the general public (Halsband 2005). As Gumprecht's (2003, 2007) work on college towns and stadium culture attested, campuses have become significant public and tourist destinations in their own right, which often provides a significant revenue source for their home institutions. The field of campus design and planning has slowly come to accept these responsibilities to the public. As Neuman and Kliment (2003) argued: "it is critical to identify and to accept a certain level of such engagement as reciprocity for being a part of the regional community" (36).

Underpinning this is the idea that the 'public' is also formed on the spaces of campus. Colleges and universities have historically been active players in socialization and social reform initiatives and they continue to take a lead role in shaping public opinion (Turner 1985, Chapman 2006). The foundation of academic freedom is an open public realm that is encouraging of diversity of opinion and practice. Campuses are spaces of appearances in Arendt's (1959) terms, where "contending opinions struggle for power in public" (Jencks and Valentine 1987, 13). Open debate is essential to knowledge formation, the overarching goal of every higher education institution (Christ 2005). This depends upon the openness of the campus to all people. Open-door and merit-based admission, as well as public subsidization of higher education, are reflections of this principle. Campuses are therefore fundamentally public places in this regard as well.

Arguably, higher education campuses have never had a more public character than they do today. Yet despite the expansion of higher education globally and demonstrated scholarly

interest in public space, there is very little research on the community college campus as an everyday form of democratic public space. In particular, there is a need for greater understanding of how communities perceive campus environments towards improving on-campus spaces and informing town and gown planning initiatives.

The present study seeks to gain insight into these questions and concerns by using geographic concepts of place and phenomenological methods to investigate user-held meanings of two community college campuses in order to inform campus design and planning practice. The first half of this dissertation identifies issues and theories related to space, place, and phenomenology in the context of the higher education campus and campus design and planning. This is by way of introduction to the present study, which the first half of the dissertation also details. The second half of this dissertation discusses the findings from the investigation, presents recommendations for campus design and planning, and concludes with a preliminary agenda for further research. A detailed breakdown of the chapter structure of the dissertation is discussed below.

## **1.8 Outline of Dissertation**

This study is developed across nine chapters. The first four chapters outline the theoretical and methodological foundation for the findings of the two case studies which are presented in the two chapters that follow. A place-based approach to community college campus design and planning which makes specific suggestions for practice is advanced in Chapters 7 and 8. The final chapter, Chapter 9, concludes the dissertation by summarizing the findings as well as by pointing to areas of further research.

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 reviews the literature on geographical conceptualizations of space and place as theoretical tools to consider the higher education

campus from differing perspectives. Following a brief overview of the two concepts, I argue that a long history of campus design and planning practices has led to the campus being conceived as absolute space. I demonstrate the narrowness of that approach by reviewing some recent scholarship which illustrates the ways that campuses are socially produced spaces. To complement that work, I then introduce geographic conceptualizations of place and discuss their usefulness with regards to the higher education campus by examining some related studies. Next, I elaborate on a sense of place in this context, citing some of the diverse ways it has been treated in the literature on higher education. To close the chapter, I consider the pivotal challenge of place-making; that is, the creation of shared meaning in the built environment, and situate this research within that body of scholarship.

Place-making-phenomenology is introduced as the theoretical framework for my study in Chapter 3. Following a brief overview of phenomenology and the phenomenological worldview, I discuss their integration into geography, making specific reference to the influence of phenomenology on the discipline's conceptual development of the idea of 'place.' Architectural phenomenology is then reviewed as a prelude to David Seamon's body of work on environment-behaviour research. Following Seamon (2013), person-or-people-experiencing-place is introduced as the theoretical lens for this investigation of the meanings of two community college campuses. Phenomenology's philosophical roots are also outlined toward laying out the methodological parameters of phenomenological research. I then introduce lifeworld phenomenological methodologies as ways of elucidating meanings of place that are in accord with Seamon's concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place. Chapter 3 ends with an examination of phenomenology's fit with planning and design. Here, I argue that rather than

detering the use of phenomenology in planning and design, an understanding of its limitations and criticisms can help point to where it can be most useful.

In Chapter 4, I set out the specific methodology used in this dissertation. I begin by providing an overview of the two case studies under examination. A review of the criteria for participation in the study as well as a discussion of sampling strategies follows. Next, I introduce the natural walk-along and mental mapping as the primary methods for gathering participant responses. A summary of each campus' participants and their responses follows. In keeping with the parameters of phenomenological investigations, I then outline the process that I use to interpret participants' responses and to achieve trustworthiness. Disclosure of the limitations of the study completes the chapter.

Chapter 5 is the first of three chapters that presents my findings. Its purpose is to consider the relevance of Seamon's (2013) concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place to the responses of the 23 participants in the study. Using transcripts from the walk-alongs as well images from the mental mapping process, I demonstrate that participants' responses aligned with Seamon's contention that people create meaningful places through their regular and routine practices. Campus design and planning's view of the campus as absolute space belies participants' experiences of campus as an interanimation between people and the material environment. I then demonstrate the usefulness of the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld to understanding the experience of place. Next, the lifeworld as a quality of the human experience is illustrated through a discussion of the way participants created their own functional and transactional routines, turning space into place in the process. I argue that these functional and transactional routines have four defining characteristics: purposefulness, regularity, limits, and familiarity. I conclude the chapter by outlining some of the common time-space routines that

many participants, across the two campuses, performed as part of their lifeworlds. These, I argue, are also constitutive of surprisingly common characteristics of the lifeworlds of the two college campuses.

I explore the way that participants' shared time-space routines created a lifeworld of each campus in Chapter 6. I argue that despite the striking differences between the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods, surprisingly, the lifeworld of each campus shared notable similarities. These common patterns of use provide another way to approach the design and planning of campuses. Here I demonstrate the importance of routine to place-making-phenomenology and particularly to the constitution of the place-ballets that make vibrant and dynamic places. Next, I relate the practice of these common time-space routines to the meanings of campuses. I argue that just as the lifeworlds of the two campuses shared commonalities, the campuses also shared common meanings. These include campuses as: places of personal development, gathering places for all students, places where someone is always there, restorative places, and places of support services. I explore these meanings as well as each campus' individual ones, arguing that both were informed by the physical environment. In addition to having the five core meanings, the Urban Campus was also understood as: a place to pass through, a places of stairs and levels, and a place that was becoming more. In contrast, the Campus in the Woods had two additional meanings: a place to go for a walk and a West Coast landscape. These findings indicate the multiple, sometimes conflicting, meanings of place.

The relevance of this study's findings is discussed in Chapter 7, which situates the lifeworlds and meanings of the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods in the context of the literature. Using the findings as a reference, I argue that campuses represent opportunities to foster a sense of belonging with its concomitant academic benefits. While community continues

to prevail as the most dominant place-based theory of campus design and planning, the findings of this study suggest that it is incomplete. Rather, home in conjunction with community is offered as a way of fostering a sense of belonging that recognizes, but does not oversimplify, the role that the built and natural environments play in fostering place. I then circle back to the topic of a sense of place on campus, pointing to the importance of personal and social experiences in the development of an individual's sense of campus. A discussion of the opportunities to inform place-making based on the findings from the study as well as Gehl's (2011) recommendations for public space, ends the chapter.

The penultimate chapter in the dissertation, Chapter 8, examines neighbourhood as a model for community college campus design and planning. Based on Perry's (1929) design and advanced by Adams (1934), Mumford (1954), Gropius (1945), and Friedmann (2010), the neighbourhood provides a humanistic planning and design framework that encourages social interaction by connecting individuals to communities through the home. Using the neighbourhood concept as a framework, I advance five principles of community college campus design and planning that emerged from the study's findings. A neighbourhood framework also suggests that campus design and planning extend from a static, plan-based exercise to also include participatory, activity-based processes.

Chapter 9 concludes the study by summarizing the findings in the context of the campus design and planning literature as well as higher education scholarship by providing recommendations for campus design and planning based upon them. Additionally, as this study represents an initial foray into explicating the meanings of campus towards operationalizing them in the campus design and planning process, I suggest some areas of further research that arise from its findings.

## **2. The College Campus as Space and Place**

Space and place are integral to human geography's intellectual niche, providing it with a coherence that gives the discipline its identity and unifying focus (Agnew, Livingstone, and Rogers 1996, Elden 2009, Taylor 2009). From a philosophical standpoint, they are opposing terms. To Plato, space was a prerequisite to place; place is located in space. In contrast, Aristotle argued that 'being somewhere' is the starting point for existence; place is a prerequisite to space. While they remain contested ontologically, as descriptors of the experience of being-in-the-world, they are concepts which "pose the question of our living together" (Massey 2005, 157). While there are differences as well as overlaps between them, space and place are important epistemologically. That is, they each provide a "different lens with which to understand the world" (Cresswell 2004, 11). Over the past decade, geographers of education have pointed to the need to increase awareness of space and place in higher education (Thiem 2009, Holloway and Jons 2012). Their growing scholarship has demonstrated a strong relationship between spatial and social differentiation in higher education as it affects access and outcome (Brooks, Byford, and Sela 2016). Space and place provide useful conceptual tools to consider these differences and how they are expressed in the people-campus relationship.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of geographical conceptualizations of space and place to deepen our perspectives of the higher education campus. I begin by discussing the concept of absolute space and illustrate the dominance of this view in the field of campus design and planning. I then consider the history of the campus in North America and the development of the field of campus design and planning in the post-World War II period. Next, I provide an overview of the conventional literature on campus design and planning, which perpetuates the

long-standing and widely held view of campus as absolute space. Following that discussion, I introduce other scholarly analyses that consider space relationally in the context of the higher education campus. Since Lefebvre's (1991) important work, theorizations of space have centred on social, political, and economic relations of power (Soja 1989, Harvey 2005). Recently, Lefebvre's (1991) concept of social space has anchored several analyses of the college campus. I review some of this work as a prelude to understanding the higher education campus as a place. In the second half of the chapter, I consider how the geographic concept of place contrasts with space and discuss the usefulness of place and a sense of place in higher education theory and campus planning. To end the chapter and to introduce the theoretical framework and rationale for my dissertation, I review some of the literature that discusses campuses as places of meaning.

## **2.1 The Beginning: Campus as Absolute Space**

From its beginning, the campus has been viewed as absolute space where space is understood as natural, given, and essential with no inherent properties. That is, absolute space is infinite and independent; an entity in and of itself (Agnew 2005). Importantly, it is expressed mathematically – from Descartes we associate the three dimensions of length, depth, and breadth and from Euclid, a geometric framework. As Kitchin (2009) expressed it: “[s]pace in these terms becomes more understandable, and therefore controllable, through being understood in this way. This is space as fixed, as a container, as something in which all things happen” (262-264). Amenable to measurement, calculation, and control, absolute space is the space of the natural sciences where laws that describe and predict action, including human behaviour, are identifiable. Mathematical expressions of space are readily applied to land through the practices of surveying, cartography, architecture, and urban planning and design. The conceptualization

and design of the higher education campus has relied on the notion of absolute space; that is, space which is amenable to control.

Education has long been critical to nation-building, and the control of material and bodily space are key to the educational process. Schools are places where “the physical containment of children enables their integration into the dominant culture” (Valentine 2001, 143). Moreover, schooling teaches the body to observe social and cultural norms. As Valentine (2001) observed: “the body is a surface upon which cultural values, morality, and institutional regimes are inscribed” (33). Higher education continues these practices into adulthood and, as a result, colleges were among the first institutions established in the New World to hasten the development of the colonies.

Colleges were first attempted in the New World as a means of ‘civilising’ indigenous Americans (Turner 1985). Although none of these early collegiate initiatives were realized, the efforts speak loudly about colonists’ views of the spaces they settled. The historical record shows that the first colonists saw vast tracts of undeveloped land when they arrived in the New World, failing to equate indigenous territories and ways of knowing and being with civilized societies. The classical, religious-based college came to fruition first as a way to train clergy and shortly after, to train teachers and other professions critical to building a new nation. Colonial colleges borrowed equally from the Oxbridge model of English education and the monastery in their design (Turner 1985). Architectural influences from both continue today in campus design and planning practice. Early colonial strategies to control both physical space and the student body set the stage for modern campus design and planning.

Three inter-related tools – siting strategies, campus form, and architectural style – originate from colonial times and together demonstrate attempts to control the North American

landscape. Each also symbolically communicates who belongs on campus and who does not (Gieryn 2002). Siting strategies for the campus were key to creating a blank space upon which to mold students. Separating the student body from the general population was considered to be necessary to literally capture students' attention, to enforce discipline, and to create an appropriate moral order untainted by outside influences. For this reason, outlying sites were preferred, particularly those where bodies of water, hills or mountains, provided natural boundaries. Campus forms, such as gated walls, high fences, and ring or quadrant roads, heightened this separation and symbolically expressed separation and containment. These forms sharply defined campus edges, keeping students inside and antagonists outside (Turner 1985). Courtyard central towers also facilitated the easy identification of outsiders and allowed for the monitoring of student behavior and the enforcement of discipline. Since the Second World War, clock towers have mostly replaced observatories as campus centre-pieces. Time rather than people now supervises and monitors students. Today, these forms are now strongly connotated with campus design.

Alongside these material structures, distinctive architecture was equally important to separate the college from the surrounding towns. Signature architecture continues to be considered essential to creating a unique sense of place for the campus. By symbolically communicating 'non-verbal messages' about expected student behaviour, architecture is a key tool for engendering psychological and physical belonging in the student population (Rapoport 1982, Neuman and Kliment 2003, Schuetz 2005, Kuntz, Petrovic, and Ginocchio 2012, Waite 2014). The most prominent example is Collegiate Gothic, a higher education variation of Gothic revival architecture that first appeared at Bryn Mawr in architectural homage to Oxford and

Cambridge (Figure 2.1).



Source: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/6a/8a/66/6a8a66d2f16f9796ff259531219d470d.jpg> and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic\\_Revival\\_architecture\\_in\\_Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_Revival_architecture_in_Canada)

Figure 2.1. Collegiate Gothic Architecture: Harkness Tower, Princeton University & Hart House, University of Toronto

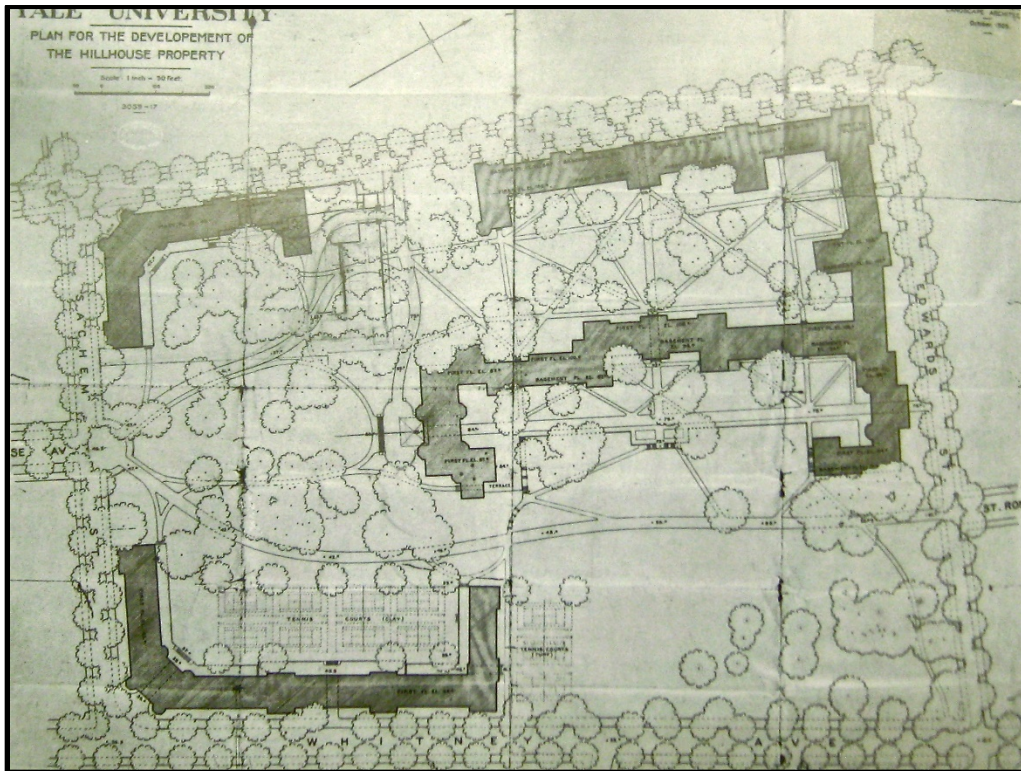
Its spread across North America, however, is attributed to Ralph Adams Cram, an early lead architect at Princeton who was evangelical in his campaign for Collegiate Gothic. Cram frequently and publicly cited the unique ability of Collegiate Gothic to promote “personal honour, clean living, good fellowship, obedience to the law, reverence, and the fear of god” (as quoted in Turner 1985, 217). Owing to his efforts, it was the dominant architectural style of university campuses established between 1850 and World War I. Its stern appearance gave new institutions a historic feel, one strongly associated with the prized English heritage of the ancient universities. While siting strategies and characteristic campus forms helped shape the popular

view of the higher education campus, owing to the pervasive influence of Collegiate Gothic, a campus' sense of place is most frequently associated with distinctive architecture.

By the time that the first of the Morrill Land Grant Acts was passed in 1862, an American practice of campus design and planning had been established. The Acts facilitated the rapid expansion of higher education to a broader population. Through them, each state received 300 acres of land per member of Congress for the purpose of establishing new higher education institutions. The sale of these lands financed the establishment of over 75 new colleges by 1890. In addition to rapidly increasing the number of higher education institutions in the United States, Land Grant universities considerably expanded the range of available instruction, setting the stage for the mass democratization and diversification of higher education that exists today. Previously, only elite members of society and the clergy could access higher education (Turner 1985). In addition to law, theology, and teaching, Land Grant universities included agriculture, science, engineering, and military studies in their curriculum.

The establishment of the Land Grant universities marks the formal consolidation of the ideas first envisioned by Jefferson that now form the American campus ideal. This is largely owing to Frederick Law Olmsted, a principal architect of the land grant campuses. Highly regarded by then as a landscape architect, campus design married Olmsted's personal philosophies with his professional ambitions. Olmsted deemed the education of the common man to be necessary to national social development (Turner 1985). His park-like campuses were intended to "refine the tastes, raise the level of thinking, and civilize people to behave in a harmonious, tolerant manner" (Schuyler 1997, 2). Olmsted, through his prodigious campus design activities, successfully entrenched Jefferson's desire to feature the natural environment in

campus design practices (Hockaday 2007). His plan for Yale's New Haven campus demonstrates his design philosophy (Figure 2.2).



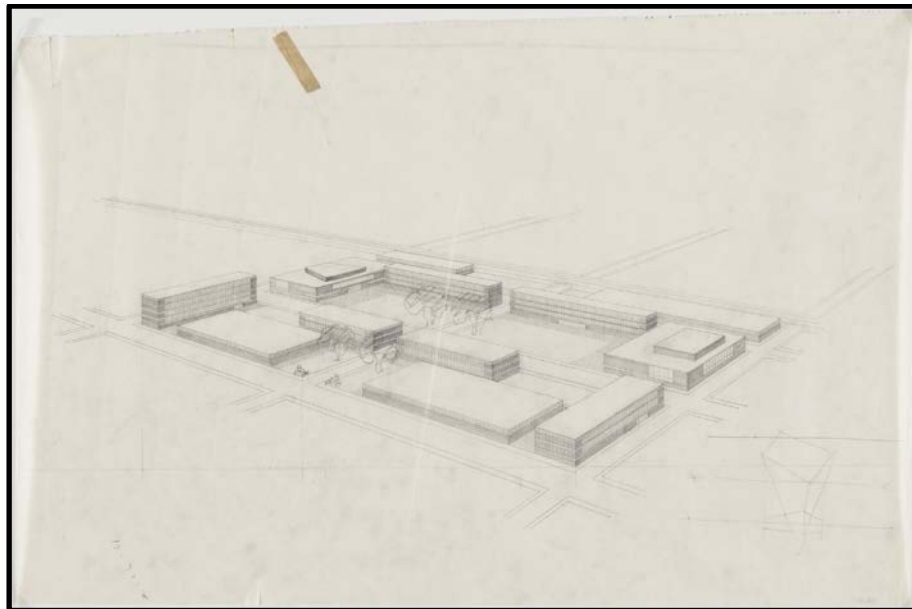
Source: <http://www.yalescientific.org/2010/12/science-goes-up-prospect-street>

Figure 2.2. Frederick Law Olmsted's Master Plan for Yale University

By the time of the post-World War II expansion of the higher education system, the basic form of the U.S. higher education campus had been established. Land was viewed as a blank slate upon which to develop institutional forms that represented the academic and moral tenor of the school. Siting choices, signature campus forms, and distinctive architecture were used to control not only the physical estate but the student body. These three strategies remained in place even as scientific rationality assumed prominence in the post-war years.

Modernism based on the premise that reality is ordered in absolute space yielded a new style of architecture that embodied the emergence of spatial science and rampant urbanization

(Massey 2005). While the modern design of campuses established in the post-World War II period is architecturally very distinct from the pre-war period, the desire to affirm an educational philosophy through the control of space continued to underpin the planning and design process. Scientific rationality replaced faith as the principal ideology of higher education and campus planning. Nonetheless, as Muthesius (2000) argued, modern collegiate architecture shares with its predecessors an essentially utopic vision, symbolically attempting to “demand strong coercive or voluntary reshaping of the users’ behavior” (6). In the immediate post-war period, schools frequently commissioned signature modern architects to design iconic campus buildings. Keen to have an imprint on future society, Le Corbusier, van der Rohe, Gropius, and Saarinen all designed centrepiece buildings for new campuses that in one way or another represented humankind’s ability to control the world. These towers psychologically and physically dominate the spaces of the campus, symbolizing the superiority of modern scientific rationalism during a time of rapid economic growth.



Source: <https://thechamelhouse.org/2016/12/18/mies-van-der-rohe/>

Figure 2.3. Mies van der Rohe's Master Plan for the Illinois Institute of Technology

Still, despite the strikingly different appearance and form of modern buildings, the master plans of the first modern campuses did not stray far from earlier colonial plans (Muthesius 2000). For example, Turner (1985) noted that Mies van der Rohe's much heralded modern design for the Illinois Institute of Technology relied on the classical quadrangles of the traditional Beaux Arts campus (Figure 2.3). Thus, while the 1950s and 1960s trend toward modern design led to campus buildings with an unquestionably different sensibility, the desire to control the spaces of the campus and the attitudes and behaviors of its users through design did not fade. Modern campus designers developed new patterns to control space. Muthesius (2000) identified six campus plan types – zoning, molecular, central, linear, grid, and cross type – to describe subtle variations in the 'scientific' approach to campus planning. These plans utilized lines connected at fixed points of intersection to control the flow of students throughout the campus.

Examples from colonial times to present day demonstrate the extent to which higher education institutions have controlled physical space and the material environment as a means of representing and instilling institutional values. The blend of architecture, landscape, and planning that is believed to come together to create the sense of place characteristic of many higher education campuses continues to attract a growing number of architectural and planning historians. Building on existing scholarship, the recently published literature reflects a renewed interest in case studies of higher education campuses. These are focused almost exclusively on elite universities (Ojeda, O'Connor, and Kohn 1997, Muthesius 2000, Neuman and Kliment 2003, Coulson, Roberts, and Taylor 2011). New construction in North America and abroad has also sparked much of this interest (Pearce 2001, Dixon 2010, Kramer 2010, Lee 2011).

These works favor the ability of strong architecture and urban design to produce a sense of place that establishes an appropriate social and moral order for the campus. Typically, these case studies detail the important role that architecture and campus design play in communicating meaning and in regulating behaviour. For example, Kenney et al. (2005) argued that: “[a]rchitecture establishes an impression of the character of an institution and reflects its values and mission. The identity of the institution is written into its buildings” (194). Similarly, Edwards (2000) argued that university buildings are “silent teachers” (vii), a phenomenon that Locke (2015) more recently referred to as the “built pedagogy” of a campus (598). In stressing the role that the built environment plays in affecting student behaviour, the human experience of the campus is conspicuously absent in these works.

Campus design and planning manuals gather together the best and worst of architectural case studies with the aim of providing advice to future practitioners. Usually adopting an economic or spatial science approach to campus planning, these works typically draw from trends in urban planning and offer mathematical models for planning the size and position of campus spaces (Stanton 2005). Under the guise of scientific rationality, campus design and planning is presented as a neutral science, one that calculates the space necessary for the institution’s functions and determines the built and landscaped environment based on a mathematically-driven analysis of each site in relation to others. In the following section, I review the practices of conventional campus design and planning to demonstrate this prevailing view of the campus as absolute space.

## **2.2 Conventional Campus Design and Planning: Perpetuating Absolute Space**

As its history demonstrates, campuses have typically been viewed from the perspective of real estate. Most often, the campus is perceived as a vacant landscape or cleared site to be filled with built and landscape design elements that yield a strong visual identity for the institution as well as physical and symbolic control of the student body. While guided by positivism and the scientific principles of cause and effect, post-war campus designers shared with their predecessors a view of the campus as a container of space to be controlled through design. For example, Neuman and Kliment (2003) argued that as settings which support the mission of the institutions, campuses should “demonstrate an enduring planning framework, a compelling landscape character, strong contextual architecture, controlled perimeter treatments, and carefully managed encounters” (1-2).

The idea of the campus as the product of controlled space remains the dominant paradigm in planning and design practice. The visual campus master plan, which has become the primary representation of the campus itself, is the most striking evidence of this. Its purpose is to guide forward-looking development by promoting prudent land-use and the efficient allocation of space (Dober 1996). Since the post-World War II boom in higher education campus construction, formula-driven approaches continue to underpin campus design and planning practice (Martin 1968, Greene and Penn 1997, Alexander 2012). Template designs and plans which reduce costs have been used almost without interruption, duplicating limitations and problems along the way (Clinchy 1969, Alexander 2012). This approach has led to only a handful of multi-building, large-scale campus plans in both Canada and the U.S. (Jamieson et al. 2000, Gilbert and Grant 2016). It then follows that much of campus design and planning is

concerned with normative measures of space, such as space standards and facility utilization rates, as well as capital maintenance costs (Greene and Penn 1997, Rullman and van den Kieboom 2012). Likewise, evaluations of campus spaces are typically quantitative in nature. User satisfaction surveys of particular learning spaces (e.g., classrooms and post-occupancy evaluations of new buildings) are the norm (Karna, Julin, and Nenonen 2013).

Dugdale's (2009) analysis of conventional campus planning illustrates its absolute view of space. She observed that conventional campus planning:

- is land focused
- is backwards looking, relying on planning standards and benchmarks
- uses a linear process, from analysis to conception to implementation
- produces a "plan" to be implemented
- is based on needs assessment by schools and departments
- prioritizes conceived spaces over the activities within them
- is focused on classroom experience
- favours single-use space types with a single owner model
- leads to specialized space types assigned by semester

In keeping with Dugdale's observations, the limited literature on higher education campus design and planning overwhelmingly reflects the campus as absolute space. Such scholarship is most often focused on the built and landscaped environment with scope largely confined to the world's best universities (Temple and Barnett 2007). These are usually best practice publications gathering together the best and worst architectural case studies with minimal evidence to support their claims. Primarily taking an economic or spatial science approach to campus planning, they offer mathematical models for calculating the size and position of campus spaces (Stanton 2005). Augmenting these works is a plethora of well-illustrated pictorial analyses of campus master plans and architectural styles as representations of the values and brand of historic, typically elite, universities (Ojeda, O'Connor, and Kohn 1997, Muthesius 2000, Neuman and Kliment 2003, Coulson, Roberts, and Taylor 2011). These case

studies focused on the role that architecture and campus design play in communicating meaning and regulating behaviour (Shah and Kesan 2007).

Recently, there have been some attempts to re-direct campus design and planning efforts toward the student learning experience. The Learning Landscape project in the U.K. is perhaps the leading example of this (Dugdale 2009, Neary et al. 2010). This collective responds to the changing higher education environment (e.g., technology, informal learning, etc.) by re-configuring and re-conceptualizing space. In arguing that learning strategies should guide campus development, Harrison and Hutton (2014) supported a similar approach. While the focus of these efforts is explicitly on encouraging campus-wide learning activities and interpersonal interactions, they perpetuate conventional campus design and planning's tendency to conflate space with place. These approaches typically suggest that places can be created by simply rearranging space. For example, both Dugdale (2009) and Harrison and Hutton (2014) pointed campus designers and planners to innovations in corporate office space for guidance on how to create collaborative, hybridized, and multi-use space. Such recommendations, while laudable for their focus on the student experience, are based on the presumption that new physical forms will bring people together and result in leading-edge learning. Theories of place – that is, theories of human interaction as part of the physical environment – continue to be absent from these discussions.

Perpetuated by campus design and planning conventions, the idea of the campus as a series of empty containers of space has been persuasive. It has not only informed how campuses are designed and planned, but also how they are studied. The application of Hillier and Hanson's (1984) space syntax theory to analyse pedestrian flows on higher education campuses is a leading example of this. For example, Greene and Penn (1997) modelled each of the four

campuses of the Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile using space syntax algorithms. Their analysis was based on the premise that increasing the number of people who simultaneously travel on the same campus routes leads to increased interpersonal contact and integration. However, as the authors acknowledged, mathematically-based modelling of pedestrian flows can neither cause interpersonal connections nor speak to the quality of any encounters. Both are necessary conditions of establishing communities of belonging. This is one of the most significant limitations of only treating space absolutely.

Until recently, higher education has also uncritically accepted the campus as absolute space. Space is the one variable in the education environment that is “taken as fixed”: a neutral backdrop or setting for learning (Jamieson et al. 2000). As Boys (2011) observed: “[w]hat is odd in learning spaces debates is that whilst contemporary ideas about teaching and learning have been profoundly influenced by wider shifts in cultural theory, attitudes to how space works have remained resolutely stuck in a commonsense, modernist, and functional mode. Space is still seen as the setting for behaviours” (32).

### **2.3 Campus as Relational Space**

More recently, concern for individual student success in an increasingly diverse student body has generated fledgling scholarly interest in the campus as relational space (Jamieson 2003, Kuntz, Petrovic, and Ginocchio 2012, Palfreyman, Tapper, and Thomas 2014). In contrast with absolute views, relational space considers that people and things exist in relationship to other people and things (Elden 2009, 263). Here, space is not an empty container but the outcome of “simultaneously occurring interrelations among heterogeneous actors, both human and non-human within the geometries of power” (Massey 2005, 12). Relational space is a process that is always in the making (Massey 2005).

Relational ways of thinking about the campus first emerged in higher education scholarship which examined how the physical design of campuses supports culturally-embedded ideologies of teaching (Jamieson et al. 2000). This work began by analysing the power relations and social hierarchies that are built into the material environment of the typical campus. For example, Muetzelfeldt (2006) illustrated how the standard lecture theatre physically forces students to face their instructor. In doing so, the built environment reinforces pedagogical approaches that give sole authority over knowledge to the instructor. Similarly, Hurdley (2010) determined that corridors reinforce social status among university participants by closing off access to space.

About the same time, geographers began demonstrating some of the ways that social practices reinforce ideologies that are built into the material environment of campus. For example, Giesecking (2007) examined how the campus of an elite women's college facilitated both the creation and challenge of gender and socio-economic norms across space and time. Others have commented on the higher education campus as a space of built exclusion. In their study of the University of Toledo, Nemeth et al. (1992) convincingly argued that "college campuses are architectures of ideology and that campus communities are oblivious to the deliberate ways in which these architectures work" (81-82). The authors demonstrated a lack of alignment between the university's Collegiate Gothic architecture and its stated goal of becoming multicultural. Similarly, Hopkins' (2011) study of the experiences of Muslim students at a British university provided a unique analysis of the way that institutional actions and the physical design of campus worked in tandem to exclude and discriminate. Here, the university's increased surveillance of Muslim students post-9/11 compounded the effects of other discriminatory practices expressed in space to negatively affect students' everyday, embodied

experiences. The notion of the campus as embedded with ideologies of power has garnered the interest of scholars who have analysed its spaces using Lefebvre's (1991) unitary theory of social space. In the next section, I review some of these explorations.

## **2.4 The Social Production of Campus**

Perhaps the most influential theory of space to date, Henri Lefebvre's (1991) work has formed the foundation for studies of space as a product of power relations (Soja 1996). His unitary theory of space contends that space is socially produced to meet the needs of the dominant mode of production. Lefebvre argued that while space is a phenomena that is produced by society, it is experienced by the body. It is from the point of view of the body that he posited three kinds of interrelated space: conceived space (representations of space), perceived space (spatial practice) and lived space (representational spaces) (Buser 2012). Conceived space refers to the ways that planners, engineers, and others represent space mentally through codes, languages, maps, etc. Perceived space refers to how we practice space through our everyday routines including our almost habitual movement through routes and networks. Lived space reflects the human experience of space such as the feelings, memories, values, and social norms that arise in space. It also represents the way individuals contest conceived and perceived space. Social space emerges at the confluence of conceived, perceived, and lived space (Carp 2008, 132).

In Lefebvian terms, campus design and planning is a process of conceiving space towards materializing power relations in the built form (Beyes and Michels 2011). Building from work originating in organizational studies, a handful of recent studies of the higher education campus have used a Lefebvian framework to consider the higher education campus as socially produced space; that is, at the nexus of conceived, perceived, and lived space. Two studies are

particularly useful in demonstrating how users socially produce space within the context of specific campus architectures. Peltonen (2011) documented the creation of lived space through the campus community's re-conceptualization of the modern campus design of the University of Oulu, Finland. Here, users created their own meanings of campus through actions such as creating new names for campus spaces in defiance of the institutionally-given ones. Similarly, Zhang (2014) examined the intersection of conceived, perceived, and lived space at the new corporate-style campus of a major Chinese University. Students defined their identities by reinterpreting, reclaiming, and redefining the rational, consumeristic, and rapidly changing identity of their modernistic physical campus. In their work, both authors pointed to the lived experiences of campus as ways of contesting and creating meaning in the face of power embedded in the built environment.

As related terms, the concepts of space and place productively come together in their overlapping, yet distinct, considerations of how people produce meaning through experiencing the campus environment. In the next section, I highlight some of these differences by reviewing the geographic concept of place and by considering its treatment by the field of campus design and planning. I argue that the field has favoured the locational and material aspects of place at the expense of the human dimension that also comprises a sense of place. Geographic conceptualizations of place and a sense of place are less explored in campus design and planning, but they remain important ways of conceiving the higher education campus. An overview of several studies which consider a sense of place on campus completes the chapter.

## **2.5 Campus as Place**

Where space is often considered in absolute and relational terms, place has been more simply defined as meaningful space. Relph (1976) defined place as being comprised of three

interrelated parts, physical features or appearance, observable activities and functions, and meanings or symbols (Relph 1976, 61). Canter (1977) offered a similar triad of concepts to define space. In his model, place is “a combination of the actions, physical form, and conceptualizations that come together for any person in any location” (Canter 2008, 666). More recently, place is understood to be comprised of three main characteristics: location, locale (setting for everyday life), and a sense of place (Agnew 1987). As indicated by these definitions, conceptualizations of place emphasize human experiences of location. Neary et al. (2010) observed that: “[i]f space is a box where things happen, place on the other hand is a site shaped by the relationships between the subjects and the objects that connect in a given situation. Each place or site is the product of the social context out of which it has emerged and therefore, each situation will be context specific” (42). Similarly, Agnew (2003) noted: “if space is the ‘top-down’ impact of institutional schemes of spatial organization and representation, then place is the ‘bottom-up’ representation of the actions of ordinary people” (613).

Tuan (1977) originally referred to this as the experiential perspective: human beings and their lived experiences create place. Human agency continues to centre conceptualizations of place and the idea that individuals make places in specific locations largely differentiates the concept from absolute views of space (Agnew 2003, 613). Moreover, where other conceptualizations of space often reference the global flow of people, ideas, capital, and power, human experience with, and connection to, location is a critical dimension of place (M’Gonigle and Starke 2006). As Massey and Thrift (2003) described it, place is “a slow and steady conversation between human and environment, each imprinting the other” (278).

With its focus on human attachment to location, the concept of place has been seen as decidedly backwards and perhaps dangerously provincial. Proponents of place have been

criticised for preferring, and thus arguing for the preservation of, existing places rather than contributing to the creation of new ones (Sime 1986). For precisely these reasons, humanistic concepts of place have fallen somewhat out of favour. Yet local places still matter, perhaps more so in a rapidly changing, technologically-enabled world (Castells 1989). It is the absence of locally distinctive settings that inform both Kunstler's (1994) concern about "placelessness" and Augé's (1995) identification of "non-places."

This is the central argument behind the concept of place-making in urban planning and design. Defined as the architectural and design practices that preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of specific locations, place-making has become a central focus of urban design (Buchanan 1988, Madureira 2015). As I previously discussed, place-making ("the structuring of the overall design, the broader skeleton") and place-marking ("the definition, conceptualization, and orchestration of certain physical attributes which give a campus a visual uniqueness appropriately its own") also define campus design and planning (Dober 2003, 4). Together, the two practices are understood to create a campus' unique sense of place. While standard campus design and planning practices are considered to be essential to creating a built ensemble that is recognizable as a campus, a unique sense of place is understood to result from a sympathetic built connection to the local and regional setting that is developed over time. Thus, campus design and planning's conceptualizations of place lean to the importance of unique physical locations and settings on the assumption that they directly foster collegiate community.

Tuan (1974b), Relph (2008a) and Seamon (2012) are among those who have preferred to call this "spirit of place" rather than the more commonly used term "sense of place." Seamon (2012) described spirit of place as the "unique ambience, atmosphere, and character of the place – for example, the 'London-ness' of London or the 'Santa Fe-ness' of Santa Fe" (11). "Spirit of

place” typically suggests physical evidence of a long history of human settlement in one location as indicated by its townscape (Conzen and Whitehand 1981). A townscape exists “when form after form is added to the surface of the Earth, the cultural landscape is an objectification of the spirit of a society/genius loci. [The] urban landscape is a palimpsest – a layering where subsequent layers do not erase all traces of their predecessors” (Jive’n and Larkham 2003, 72). Here it is often argued that the built environment becomes vested with commonly held meanings of place, over time developing a sui generis power “all apart from powerful people or organizations who occupy them” (Gieryn 2000, 475). A leading example in campus design is the sandstone and red tile roofs that visually define the campus of the University of Colorado at Boulder (Figure 2.4). These features, present in the campus’ Collegiate Gothic and Tuscan Vernacular Revival architecture, tie it to the surrounding landscape.

In contrast with conventional campus design and planning perspectives, geographical considerations of place emphasize the contribution of human experience to the making of place while also including characteristics of location and material form (Hung and Stables 2011). Studies have supported geography’s contention that a sense of place results from human interactions with the material characteristics of a particular location and with each other. For example, Shamai and Ilatov (2005) concluded that “the influence of the personal and social perception and interaction overrides the physical dimension of [a] sense of place” (474). Similarly, Shamshuddin and Ujang (2008) found that activity is more important than visual appearance and architectural style in fostering a sense of place.

While the campus design and planning literature has overwhelmingly favoured the architectural approach to developing a sense of place (i.e., visual and material), there is growing interest in exploring the higher education campus using geographical approaches. Here,

geography's consideration of a sense of place, which includes belonging as well as the connected notions of meaning, attachment, and identity, has the potential to contribute to the planning and design of campuses that foster student success. As I have previously noted, higher education scholars have demonstrated the relationship between students' sense of belonging to their school, their persistence with their studies, and their academic success (Thomas 2012, Marmot 2014, Stebleton et al. 2014). However, the relationship between belonging and place remains under-considered in the higher education environment.



Source: <http://www.cu.edu/cu-careers>

Figure 2.4. University of Colorado at Boulder

In their work on the compulsory education system, Hung and Stables (2011) identified the importance of schools' having a geographical sense of place; that is, having a discernable and distinct meaning associated with a sense of belonging. They maintained that, "students need to know and understand the meaning of a school to be able to locate themselves in it" (200), arguing that students' ability to self-identify with a school is a necessary condition of participation and belonging. This observation aligns with environmental psychology's work on

place attachment, which has found that the ability to locate oneself in a place affects behaviour toward it (Manzo and Perkins 2006).

As places where students develop their identity, a clear sense of place may then be especially important in educational environments. Students' ability to identify with a school as a place relies on their ability to understand the meaning of different places (Relph 1976, 5). This is facilitated when the meaning of a school is easily perceived, a characteristic Lynch (1960) called legibility. Two studies are notable for using a sense of place and place attachment as central concepts to explore higher education campuses as places of meaning.

In studying the effect of a building relocation for the faculty of education at a major U.S. university, Kuntz et al. (2012) observed that a changed physical environment led to a profoundly different sense of place. Prior to moving, faculty and students shared a strong sense of academic community where spontaneous, informal gatherings were fostered by the many connected hallways and large, flexible rooms of their building. Upon re-location, this sense of academic community gave way to a culture of administrative obligation where residents visited the building much less frequently, using it primarily for administrative tasks, which paralleled the corporate style of the new location.

White and Green's (2011) study of place attachment in higher education also provided insights into how notions of identity and belonging are implicated in a sense of place. Their exploration of the ways that attachment to place affects student higher education decision-making is of special interest in this regard. Their findings are congruent with place attachment scholars who situate belonging in place, arguing that attachment to a particular place affects participation and motivation to be there (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996, Manzo and Devine-Wright 2014).

In their study of three low-income urban neighbourhoods in northern England, White and Green (2011) found that the attachment of disadvantaged youths to their hometowns inhibited them from attending higher education and labour market opportunities that were located away. It was strong ties to place, particularly location-based social networks, that these youth valued above potential prospects outside their hometown. The authors discovered that places were meaningful because of people's prior experience of them. Place, they contended, "operates as a constraint or opportunity not just spatially (i.e., with regard to distance) but also conceptually" (White and Green 2011, 45). White and Green's study is important not only because it demonstrates place attachment behaviour in the higher education context, but because their findings suggest that location is implicated with a sense of belonging. The authors concluded that "[t]he influence of social networks should not be examined outside of their spatial context" (White and Green 2011, 48). While these two studies of a sense of place demonstrate the influence of meaningful places on student participation in the higher education environment, one of the most vexing questions is whether places, in the geographical sense of having meaning, can be made.

## **2.6 Making-Places?**

While the field of urban planning and design, and the subfield of campus design and planning, have put place-making (along with sustainability) at the centre of its practice, the question of whether a sense of place can be made remains contentious. Campus design and planning practices have demonstrated a reliance on strong architecture and urban design to create a sense of place. However, Sime (1986), Jive'n and Larkham (2003), and Relph (2008a) argued that place-making practices can enhance user experiences but cannot unilaterally create a sense of place, in the geographical sense of having meaning.

An example from campus design and planning is telling of the quandry. The University of the Sunshine Coast in Australia was the site of O'Rourke and Baldwin's (2016) consideration of some of the material aspects that can engender a positive sense of place on campus. In their study, students were given an opportunity to provide feedback about what would increase their use of a barren area of campus. In addition to landscaping and design features, participants suggested social activities and events as ways to gather students to consequently create a sense of place. The authors concluded that by encouraging use, material qualities of campus can promote a sense of community as a prerequisite to a sense of place.

O'Rourke and Baldwin's study highlights one of the challenges of creating a sense of place – people have to experience them through visitation and use, in order for meaning, belonging, attachment, and identity to develop. While favoured by campus planners and designers, a strong visual identity and form can foster a distinctive physical character or spirit of place. However, users also create their own meanings. This is acknowledged by a strand of scholarship in urban planning and design which has embraced geographic conceptualizations of place in its definition of place-making. It contends that the making of meaningful places depends on developing the relationship between the built environment and the people who use it (Schneekloth and Shibley 1995, Childs 2010). For example, Castells (1983) called urban design, “the symbolic attempt to express an accepted urban meaning in a certain urban form” (304). From this perspective, a distinctive meaning not only creates a unique sense of place, it is necessary to distinguish one place from another (Hung and Stables 2011).

The difficulty of integrating the physical and human dimensions has meant that geographic conceptualizations of place have not been easily integrated into urban planning and design theory and practice (Cuthbert 2003, Arefi and Triantafillou 2005, Lapintie 2007, Davoudi

and Strange 2009). As Bligh (2014) contended: “place is a particularly troublesome object for design activity. The experience of place, while influenced by social factors, is understood as being unique to the individual. Place cannot be designed, but only designed for” (42).

Because of this, the field of urban planning and design continues to grapple with how to create meaningful places. The crux of the challenge is creating a sense of place; that is, a shared meaning that is conceived in the built environment and that is perceived and practiced by users. Although the meaning of places has been widely studied, particularly by environmental psychologists examining the home (Cooper Marcus 1995, Manzo 2005), place meanings have rarely been used as a basis for place-making (Lim and Albrecht 1987, Manzo and Perkins 2006). While Appleyard (1978, 1981) is acknowledged for his explorations of how place meanings might inform planning and design, a framework for operationalizing them in practice has not been established (Friedmann 2010). One of the barriers to this development is a lack of research into shared meanings of particular places and their sense(s) of place (Manzo and Perkins 2006). This information about the human-environment relationship has significant, yet mostly untapped, potential to inform environmental analyses and participatory planning and design processes.

The value of this perspective is highlighted when it has been absent. The most striking examples in planning history involve the re-settlement of low-income, ethnic minority communities through the U.S. federal urban public housing projects that peaked in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of these cases serve as examples where planners and policy-makers systemically ignored the importance of place meanings and attachments to residents’ well-being (Lim and Albrecht 1987, Manzo, Kleit, and Couch 2008, Simms 2008). There are fewer documented cases where place meanings have been used formatively as part of the planning process, although several authors anticipated the value of doing so (Lim and Albrecht 1987, Manzo and Perkins

2006, Whittlemore 2014). The present study is a tentative step in that direction and focuses on the study of user-held place meanings of the campus toward informing campus design and planning theory and practice.

While the existing campus design and planning literature is dominated by architectural conceptualizations of absolute space, a handful of studies focusing on campuses as relational spaces and places suggests the importance of the meaning of, and attachment to, campus for its users. These works correspond with findings in environmental psychology that show the effect of attachment to place on individual behaviour. In particular, some scholars highlighted the meaning that is created through student interactions with the physical campus and with each other (Hopkins 2011, Kuntz, Petrovic, and Ginocchio 2012, Zhang 2014). Missing from the literature is work that demonstrates the place-meanings of community colleges and how these might be incorporated into campus design and planning processes. Simply put, while geographic conceptualizations of place are increasingly being called upon to inform campus design and planning, few studies have investigated the place meanings of specific campuses. Even fewer scholars provide useful ways to bridge the theory-practice gap that is required to place-make on campus (Rullman and van den Kieboom 2012). This is reflective of a broader conversation in urban planning and design on integrating place-meanings into practice.

As a philosophical, as well as a methodological, way to investigate the meanings that arise from the human experience of place, urban planning and design theorists have pointed to the potential of phenomenological perspectives to inform practice. However, unlike the home, for example, the meanings of campus have not been studied using phenomenological approaches. By investigating what two community college campuses mean to their users, this study seeks to add a new perspective of the campus to the established literature. These findings have the

potential to increase our understanding of the role that the campus plays in the mission and mandate of the institution and to enrich participatory campus design and planning practices.

In the next chapter, I discuss place-making-phenomenology as the theoretical framework for this study. I begin by reviewing the origins of phenomenological thought, which leads to a brief overview of the phenomenological worldview. Following that, I discuss some of the developments within the movement which have led to the creation of research methods grounded in phenomenological approaches.

### **3. Theoretical Framework: Place-Making-Phenomenology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The theoretical framework for this study of the meanings of campus is place-making-phenomenology, a term coined by Aravot (2002) to describe a basis for urban planning and design practices which seeks to create a geographic as well as an architectural sense of place. It consists of a broad set of ideas in urban planning and design that are grounded in humanistic geography, most notably the work of Yi-Fu Tuan (1974b, 1975b), Edward Relph (1976), Anne Buttner (1976), and David Seamon (1979) as well as philosopher Edward Casey (1993). In keeping with its humanistic orientation, Aravot (2002) described place-making-phenomenology as “more a guiding principle of endless realizations than a model” (209).

This dissertation draws primarily from the approach of David Seamon (1979, 1982, 1985, 1993b, 2000a, b, 2012, 2013, 2014a, b), whose body of scholarship on the geographic lifeworld is particularly relevant to phenomenological-based enquiries of place. Phenomenology, literally defined as the study of phenomena (i.e., things as they appear), has informed geography in various ways and to various extents since the late-1960s. It is formally considered to be both a field of philosophical inquiry (like ontology, epistemology, logic, and ethics) and a tradition which contends that it is the foundation of all philosophy.

Phenomenology begins from the philosophical standpoint that we cannot conceive of a world without having lived experiences in it (Dovey 1999). People are inextricably intertwined with the physical world in which we are a part. As Moore (2010) described it: “we react and respond holistically, to the environment that is human as well as physical, that includes materials, traditions, and institutions as well as local surroundings. This locates us, not as cool

observers of a world ‘out there,’ but as an indispensable part of that world” (65).

Phenomenological approaches have been integrated into theory, and perhaps most prominently into research methodology, across the social sciences. The latter has been appropriately described as the development of a modern phenomenological movement which draws from continental philosophy but deviates from it, often substantially (Wylie 2007). There are a plethora of schools of phenomenological thought today. As Spiegelberg and Schuhmann (1982) suggested, there appear to be as many styles of phenomenology as there are phenomenologists. Not surprisingly, there is no dominant approach in geography; its application very much depends on the interests of the particular geographer (Norlyk and Harder 2010).

The pairing of human geography with phenomenology has rested on their common interest in studying human experiences of being in the world (Rodaway 2006, Backhaus 2009). Devotion to the lived experiences of place has a long tradition in geography which can be readily seen in the regional approaches of Vidal de La Blache, Carl Sauer, J.B. Jackson, and Patrick Geddes, amongst others. Direct references to phenomenology began appearing in the late-1960s by a group of geographers at odds with the influence of Cartesian dualism and positivism on their discipline (Backhaus 2009). Phenomenology’s impact has been greatest on the conceptual development of place as the centrepiece of the discipline. Geography’s principle contribution back to phenomenology has been its explications of the ways that spatiality forms an integral part of lived experiences. Human relations with the material world create meaning, turning space into place (Relph 1976, Tuan 1977). Place is the spatial expression of lived experiences (Seamon 2013).

Place-making-phenomenology, the theoretical lens through which I will consider the meanings of the campus, comprises a set of ideas originating from classic continental

philosophical phenomenology which have been extended by humanistic geographers. In recent years, the phenomenological origins of the concept of place have been hidden as phenomenology has faced numerous criticisms that led to its decline along with humanistic geography in the early-1980s (Backhaus 2009). However, through iteration, phenomenology, defined as the study of the meanings of phenomena, has endured as both a philosophy and as a research methodology. Although overshadowed in geography, phenomenology gained ground in other areas where its conceptual and methodological development have been ongoing. And, phenomenology, considered more broadly as the study of lived experiences beyond the question of meaning has also returned to geography in post-phenomenological and non-representational forms (Thrift 2007, Anderson 2009, Thrift 2011).

The purpose of this chapter is to explicate place-making-phenomenology by situating geographic conceptualizations of place within the classic phenomenological tradition and the related modern movement. I begin by providing a brief overview of phenomenological philosophy, outlining some of the broadly accepted, major tenets that have had a significant influence on humanistic geography. Next, I demonstrate how these concepts have influenced geography's development of the concept of place. Drawing from a number of scholars, I provide a detailed discussion of how phenomenological thought has influenced the advancement of that concept, particularly the notion of a sense of place. I give special attention to David Seamon's (2013) deliberations on person-or-people-experiencing place, a concept that describes his argument that place-meaning is created by the regular and routine actions of people who are indivisible from their surroundings. A review of phenomenological forms of inquiry follows as background to a discussion of the lifeworld phenomenological approach and the specific methodologies that I use in this dissertation. Although it has found success as a way of bridging

theory and practice elsewhere, phenomenology has not made many inroads in urban planning and design. As the present study seeks to begin to remedy this absence, I then review the literature on phenomenology and urban planning and design. I complete the chapter with an overview of the limitations and criticisms of phenomenology and phenomenological investigations. This provides a context for the present study and the methodologies that are presented in Chapter 4.

### **3.2 What is Phenomenology?**

A discussion of place-making-phenomenology is aided by an overview of the philosophical tradition from which the modern phenomenological movement continues to evolve. As the study of lived experiences through the examination of the meaning of phenomena or things that normally reside in pre-conscious thought, phenomenology begins with the notion that meaning is constituted through consciousness (Holloway and Hubbard 2001).

Phenomenology contends that objects do not exist in and of themselves; they are the creations of human consciousness (von Eckartsberg 1998). This idea originates with phenomenology's founder, Edmond Husserl, who had an ontological interest in studying the structures of consciousness as the structures of meaning creation. As phenomenological scholar Rolf von Eckartsberg (1998) wrote, phenomenology posits that "experiences are constituted by consciousness and thus could be rigorously and systematically studied on the basis of their appearance to consciousness" (5). The study of the conscious experience reveals the meaning of things or phenomena.

Husserl's famous clarion call, "back to the things themselves," describes this exercise of bringing things not normally considered to conscious experience. Here, the key idea is to attempt to shed all pre-conceived notions in the consideration of phenomena to find "what makes a thing

what it is” (Lien et al. 2014, 190). While there are two basic forms of phenomenology, descriptive and interpretive, how phenomenologists choose to determine the meaning(s) of phenomena varies widely and is an area of considerable controversy. In particular, and as I will discuss later in this chapter, Husserlian phenomenology’s association with the search for essences or the invariant structures of meaning that define lived experiences, has been soundly rejected by many phenomenologists and non-phenomenologists alike. In response, phenomenological approaches are now used as ways to understand the multiple meanings of things that vary between, and within, individuals. Yet Husserl’s belief that humans constitute the meanings of things remains one of phenomenology’s foundational principles. As von Eckartsberg (1998) stated: “we do not describe something in terms of what we already know or presume to know about it, but rather that we describe that which presents itself to our awareness exactly as it presents itself” (6). Buttmer (1976) described the daunting and seemingly impossible task in a similar way: “[o]ne endeavors to peel off successive layers of a priori judgement and to transcend all preconceptions” (279).

Although Husserl’s aim was to close the subject-object divide underpinning Cartesian thought, Heidegger contended that his reliance on the study of consciousness as the way of doing so was incomplete. Existential forms of phenomenology began with Heidegger who claimed that the exploration of human consciousness in-and-of-itself was not sufficient to describe the experience of the world. Rather, he argued that human existence exceeds consciousness. Heidegger believed that meaning arises contextually through our participation in the world. His term *dasein*, or “being-in-the-world,” denotes the individual human experience of being inseparable from the world: “[p]ersons are not selves separated from a world that is presumed to exist completely independently of them” (von Eckartsberg 1998, 11). Phenomena or

things exist in relation to the human experience. Thus, for Heidegger, the analysis of consciousness must be the consciousness of direct experience (Hung and Stables 2011, 195).

Building from Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty subsequently argued that direct experience of the lived world is through the body – consciousness is embodied. His work was intended to resolve not only the subject-object, but the mind-body, divide. As Grosz (1994) characterised it: “the body is not an object. It is the condition and context through which I am able to have a relation to objects” (86). Similarly, Wylie (2007) posited: “I am my body, which is always already both in and of the world” (149). For Merleau-Ponty, the body-in-the-world, not outside of it, creates meaning (von Eckartsberg 1998).

While the origins of phenomenology are much more complex and traverse considerably more ground, it is the work of these three philosophers, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, that much of modern phenomenology, particularly in geography, extends (Rodaway 2006). Four ideas originating from their work form the core of the phenomenological worldview; that is, how humans experience the world in meaningful ways. Phenomenon, intentionality, body-subject, and lifeworld are these basic tenets. And although the phenomenological movement now includes a much wider group of proponents and features a more expansive lexicon, these four concepts are usually at the centre of all phenomenological inquiry. Together they have also had a profound influence on human geography’s conceptualizations of place. It is for this reason that I review them in the next sub-section.

### **3.3 The Phenomenological Worldview**

The purview of phenomenology is phenomena: any thing or experience perceptible to humans. This includes “any object, event, situation or experience that a person can see, hear, smell, taste, feel, intuit, know, understand, or live through” (Seamon 2000b, 158-159). von

Eckartsberg (1998) helps us understand the concept of phenomena by explaining it in this way: “[f]or example, when I eat an apple, I effectively destroy it as a physical object, and yet it remains as a phenomenon. Its various perspectival views – that is, its redness, its juiciness, its roundness, and its other properties – can remain as a matter of contemplation for me” (6).

Phenomenology contends that phenomena have meaning because humans perceive them in intentional ways. We direct ourselves to them and thus have human experiences that define them. This is known as intentionality. Seamon (1987) described intentionality this way: “intentionality holds that all human impulses, actions, and experiences are directed in some meaningful way toward a world which supports and reflects that meaning” (373). Holloway and Hubbard (2001) offered the following example: “the flat blade of metal attached to a wooden pole only becomes a spade when you approach it with the intention of digging a hole” (70).

As humans, we enact intentionality through our bodies which is one of the ways of our being-in-the-world. We comprehend reality through our bodies – “we create meaning through the experience of moving through space and across time” (Starks and Brown Trinidad, 1374). An intelligent body-subject subconsciously encounters the world and experiences that environment as part of the world not separate from it. “The body is a figurative ‘bridge’ between ‘being’ and ‘world’” (Dovey 1999, 39). As a result, “our experience is itself an essential part of reality” (Holloway and Hubbard 2001, 70).

Phenomenology asserts that intentionality and individual experiences of phenomena, in their many forms, are normally concealed in our day-to-day living in the world. Our immersion in routine distracts us from considering the meaning(s) of the infinite number of phenomena that we encounter in our lives. Husserl called this way of living in the world “the lifeworld.” It is a world that humans have interpreted and given meaning but that appears to us as if that wasn’t so

(Smith 2009b). Lifeworlds are often predictable. People's days usually routinely unfold in familiar environments (Seamon and Sowers 2009). As Buttimer (1976) described it, the lifeworld is "essentially the prereflective, taken for granted dimensions of experience, the unquestioned meanings, and routinized determinants of behaviour" (281). In phenomenology, the lifeworld is a worldview as well as a focus of study. That is, phenomenologists see the world from the perspective of the lifeworld as well as having interest in people's own (von Eckartsberg 1998).

### **3.4 Place and Phenomenological Geography**

A phenomenological worldview centring on the lifeworld is seen most prominently in geography's interest in the study of everyday, lived experiences. Key works from geography's humanistic period from the 1970s to the early-1980s mark phenomenology's peak influence on the discipline. Relph's (1976) work on lived experiences of place, Tuan's (1974a, 1975a, b) extensive discussions on the perspectives of experience, and Ley's (1983) work on social structures are classic examples of varying phenomenological interests within the discipline. Geographers such as Anne Buttimer (1976) and David Seamon (1979) more explicitly embraced phenomenological tenets, positioning themselves as researchers relationally within the lifeworlds of their inquiry. Today, the lifeworld and the accompanying ideas of phenomena, intentionality, and the body-subject are a less frequently used framework for explaining spatiality and the human experience within geography. Nonetheless, in its various forms, phenomenology has had a lasting effect on geography which is most readily seen in its ongoing interest in the concept of place.

### 3.4.1 The Phenomenology of Place

Phenomenologically, place is an ontological position. It begins from the premise that ‘being somewhere’ is the starting point for existence. The philosopher Edward Casey (1997) took an Aristotelian position in arguing that: “to be is to be in place,” an irreducible and unencompassable condition (ix). Importantly, in phenomenology, place is also an epistemology arising from Heidegger’s notion of being-in-the-world. It contends that humans cannot be understood separately from the world in which they are a part. As a result, in geography, places are both material, locationally-based things, and processes as well as theories about how these become meaningful. Place is a “way of seeing, knowing, a way of experiencing, and understanding the world” (Cresswell 2004, 11). It is “the direct ground of human experience” (Gruenewald 2003, 623).

Phenomenologically-informed theories of place use the concepts of phenomena, intentionality, body-subject, and lifeworld as ways of understanding lived experiences of space. Seamon (2013) described the relationship between place and phenomenology in the following way: “[a]s a phenomenological concept, place is powerful both theoretically and practically because it offers a way to articulate more precisely the experienced wholeness of people-in-world, which phenomenologists call the lifeworld – the everyday world of taken-for-grantedness normally unnoticed and thus concealed as a phenomenon” (11).

The lifeworld has been central to human geographic conceptualizations of place and the extensive interest in studying everyday life. Eyles (1989) defined everyday life as “a taken-for-granted reality which provides the unquestioned background of meaning for the individual. It is a social construction which becomes a ‘structure’ itself. Thus through our actions in everyday life

we build, maintain, and reconstruct the very definitions, roles, and motivations that shape our actions” (103). Similarly, Holloway and Hubbard (2001) wrote:

In most of the urban West, therefore, we could suggest that the everyday refers to customary and routine behaviours that occur in the workplace, the home and garden, the streets, shops, parks, cinemas, places of worship, football stadia, community centres, and so on. To a lesser or greater extent, these are places where people adopt everyday modes of behaviour and thought, conforming to taken for granted assumptions about the way that people should act towards members of their family and their neighbourhood, apparently without ever questioning this. (36)

These definitions illustrate the phenomenological themes of a meaningful, yet taken-for-granted, world that is both created and experienced by the body intentionally moving in space.

The term “sense of place” is widely used to capture the meanings that arise from the human experience of lived space. While place is both created and understood through its three interconnected markers – location, locale and a sense of place – it is the latter that weaves together the phenomenological concepts of intentionality, body-subject, and lifeworld (Agnew 2003). From this perspective, humans ‘sense’ or experience a particular place. Scholars have observed a number of different dimensions of a sense of place that stem from the human experience of lived space. Amongst others, these include: one’s position or place in society (Tuan 1975b, Cresswell 1996), the faculties we use to differentiate one place from another (Relph 2008a), the clarity with which one place can be visually perceived in contrast with others (Lynch 1960), the feelings and emotions that places evoke (Cresswell 2010, Depriest-Hricko and Prytherch 2013), one’s personal identification with and attachment to place (Manzo 2005), as well as one’s perceived ability to participate in a place (Cresswell 1996).

These various connotations of a sense of place are all suggestive of human belonging to place that is developed over time. As Holloway and Hubbard (2001) argued: “[a] meaningful

place is a place that belongs to us in some way. Simultaneously, meaningful places become part of who we are, the way we understand ourselves and literally, our place in the world” (71). Places become meaningful usually through prolonged experience with them (Tuan 1975a). The idea of at-homeness captures the complex relationship that arises from people’s sense of particular places, their positive attachment to them as well as the importance of place to personal identity (Seamon 1979, Manzo 2003). The connections between time, belonging, meaning, and place also underpin the notions of rootedness, authenticity, and fields of care, all of which describe the connections that people can have with the material aspects of particular locations (Tuan 1974b, Relph 1976).

### **3.4.2 Architectural Phenomenology**

These characteristics are also the ones that underpin architectural phenomenology, which seeks to foster linkages between humans and the material aspects of particular locations by paying particular attention to people’s sensory perceptions (Holl, Pallasmaa, and Perez-Gomez 2006). Here the focus is on how the built and landscaped environments can be designed to reinforce people’s connections with the earth. Dwelling, the idea that everything in the world exists in a connected and continuous relationship, has had a strong influence on architectural phenomenology. Stemming from Heidegger, the concept represents a later thinking of *dasein*. Dwelling highlights the ongoing, relational nature of being-in-the-world where things play a role as “connectors and assemblers” (Jones 2009, 267). While the idea of dwelling is a foundational concept, architectural phenomenology has shied away from the connotations that it has had with authenticity and purity, particularly racial purity (Dovey 1999). Rather, architectural phenomenology has used the concept of dwelling to emphasize a need to foster organic, location-based relationships between the built environment and people. These are not static, but

continuously in development through the practice of everyday living. Christopher Alexander's (2012) idea of wholeness captures the intent: "[w]holeness speaks of the oneness of all things. It suggests a vast understanding of things in their entirety. Wholeness can only be understood in the act of grasping it and moving into it, creating it, and experiencing it" (87).

Heidegger's conceptualizations of dwelling have provided an opening for architectural and other theorists to consider the role that location and locale (material setting) play in how people make a sense of place. To phenomenological architectural theorist, Norberg-Schulz, a sense of place is meaning that arises *of a* place. It is the sum of the physical as well as symbolic values in nature and the human environment, wrapping together topography, light, the built environment, and symbolic and existential meaning (Norberg-Schulz 1980). For Tuan (1975a), successful architecture fosters a strong sense of place by creating shelter for human experiences and by representing communal values. The interconnected role that location, locale, and a sense of place play in making meaningful place has been given considerable attention by David Seamon (2013) who developed the concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place with urban planning and design in mind.

### **3.4.3 Person-or-People-Experiencing-Place**

The inseparable relationship between people and the material world has been the focus of phenomenological geographer David Seamon's (1987) lifelong work. Since the publication of his landmark study, *A Geography of the Lifeworld*, he has directed his attention to how phenomenological approaches might be applied to the vexing question of place-making (Seamon 1979, Seamon and Sowers 2009). Since the 1990s, much of his work has centred on how environmental design can facilitate the creation of a sense of place as it is defined in both geography and architecture where it is also referred to as *genius loci* or spirit of place (Seamon

2000a, 2012, 2014a). His principal contribution continues to be a resolutely phenomenological approach to the understanding of place as a concept and in its many manifestations. As he explained:

Phenomenologically, place can be defined as any environmental locus in and through which individual or group actions, experiences, intentions, and meanings are drawn together spatially. Phenomenologically, place is not a physical environment separate from people associated with it but, rather, the indivisible, normally unnoticed phenomenon of person-or-people-experiencing-place. This phenomenon is typically multivalent, complex, and dynamic. (Seamon 2013, 11)

Person-or-people-experiencing-place extends Heidegger's thinking on the indivisibility of people and the material world that being-in-the-world describes. Seamon's particular concern is with the co-constitution of people and material things that make places unique and distinctive. His theory contends that people and place interanimate each other in a "mutually reinforcing and reciprocal relationship" (Cummins et al. 2007, 1825). While others such as Gieryn (2002) and Harvey (2005) referenced the dynamism and power that people and the material world create together, Seamon (1991) asked "how physical, design-manipulable qualities contribute to various modes of environmental experience" (182). In keeping with Relph (2008a), places are defined not by their size but by their particular environmental qualities and meanings; they exist at any scale. In this way, Seamon's approach is useful for campus design and planning. Ordinary design efforts that encourage human use, like sidewalks and pathways, can be instrumental in encouraging the creation of place, particularly at small scales (Seamon and Sowers 2009).

This is because body-subjects, acting unconsciously but intentionally, create places through their regular routines. He identified three kinds of routine – body routines, time-space routines, and place-ballets. Body routines consist of "a set of integrated gestures, behaviors, and actions that sustain a particular task or aim, for example, preparing a meal, driving a car, doing

home repair, and so forth” (Seamon 1979, 55). A sequence of body routines comprises a time space routine; that is, “a set of more or less habitual bodily actions that extends through a considerable portion of time, for example, a getting-up routine or a weekday going-to-lunch routine” (Seamon 2013, 149).

Place-ballet occurs when many people practice their time-space routines in the same supportive physical environment. It is “an interaction of individual bodily routines rooted in a particular environment, which often becomes an important place of interpersonal and communal exchange, meaning, and attachment” (Seamon 2013, 151). With place-ballet, Seamon extends Jane Jacob’s (1961) idea of the sidewalk ballet “in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole” (50). Both contended that it is the unique mixture of people, their everyday routine activities, and the material environment that “can transform that space into a lived place with a unique character and ambience” (Seamon 2013, 151).

A distinctive sense of place emerges from a diversity of people, uses, and material environments which foster them. As Seamon (2013) described it: “[b]ecause each [place] ballet is a different mix of users and material environment, it radiates a unique ambience and character that, in turn, evoke a sense of place identity” (153). There are four, intertwined ideas underpinning his notion of place-ballet that explain its value to place-making practice. The first is that places are constantly in creation through their regular use. There is a rhythmic and routine nature to the engagement of people and the material world. Person-or-people-experiencing-place reflects a generative process which is always underway. Synergy is the second characteristic of place-ballet. Together, people and the material environment produce something greater than the sum of their parts. As he contended: “[p]lace-ballet, in other words is an environmental synergy

in which humans and material parts unintentionally foster a larger whole with its own special rhythm and character” (Seamon 1980, 163).

The synergy of place-ballet is created by the habitual nature of person-or-people-experiencing-place. That habituality yields spontaneity is the third characteristic of place-ballet. Vibrant and dynamic places are generated from the regular and routine actions of people using them. As Seamon (1980) argued:

A habitual base, however, does not mean a precisely predictable dynamic composed of robot-like humans continuously repeating the same sets of behaviours. Rather, the precognitive regularity of place-ballet provides a foundation from which can arise surprise, novelty, and unexpectedness: the spontaneity of childplay, neighbours “bumping into” one another, a community group quickly organizing to oppose a street widening. (163)

Thus the fourth characteristic of place-ballet is multiplicity. Each person is part of a lifeworld inclusive of the individual ways that they sense place. Places have at least as many meanings as there are individuals and individuals often have many meanings of place. Seamon (2013) also maintained that “there is also a lifeworld of the place or situation that houses those individual lifeworlds” (145).

Together, body routines, time-space routines, and place-ballet describe three different patterns of human immersion with the physical environment. As ways that body-subjects practice place, or in phenomenological terms, present the experience of place, they are constitutive of its meanings. Put simply, phenomenology contends that what people experience things to be is what they are. These meanings are amendable to discovery using phenomenological methods. Phenomenologists are not the only theorists who contend that the material environment, daily practices, and individual perceptions make places meaningful

(Lefebvre 1991, Massey 2005). Nor are they alone in their interest in the role that the material environment plays in the process (de Certeau 1984, Gieryn 2002).

As an approach, phenomenology's distinctiveness lies in its commitment to the lifeworld, which is understood to be the indivisibility of people and the material environment, and in the nature of the methods used to understand the meanings of places. The latter attempts, with varying degrees of success, to bridge individual and group meanings of place. Urban designers have widely acknowledged this as a necessary, but difficult and often missed, step in the place-making process (Jacobs and Appleyard 1987, Sternberg 2000, Loukaitou-Sideris 2012, Southworth et al. 2012). Toward this end, in the next section I provide a brief overview of phenomenological forms of inquiry, situating Seamon's Lifeworld Approach within the modern phenomenological movement.

### **3.5 Phenomenological Forms of Inquiry**

Phenomenology was originally conceived as a philosophical exercise that uses description to uncover the phenomena that comprise part of the human experience of living in the world. It has since evolved into a set of research methodologies that seek to "capture some flavour of the layered meanings, ambiguity, ambivalence, and richness of our experience of our lived world" (Finlay 2011, 180). Phenomenological methodologies have been touted, particularly in psychology and more recently the health professions, as ways to obtain knowledge that bridges the theory-practice divide (Finlay 2011). Here, its special contribution to praxis is methodologies that facilitate, where possible, the generalization of individual experiences. In simple terms, phenomenological methodologies have been used to understand phenomena that can assist in the creation of that phenomena.

Bevan (2014) noted an important distinction between phenomenological philosophy and phenomenologically-based research methodologies. Whereas in philosophy, the philosopher considers the phenomena only from her or his point of view, in phenomenological research, the researcher works primarily with the considerations of others. Creswell (2014) described the latter as an inductive process where the researcher categorizes participant responses to arrive at an understanding of the phenomena which can be compared to other definitions of it (65).

While the original philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger are the source material for modern phenomenological research methodologies, over time, considerable deviation has occurred as new phenomenologists individualize these now classic works. Still, there are two main approaches to these investigations – descriptive and interpretative forms of phenomenological inquiry. Descriptive phenomenology, based on the work of Husserl, ambitiously seeks to “recover the moment of intentionality in order to strip away the accumulated layers of conscious meaning and conceptualization (including academic theorization) that hide the ‘true essences’ of the initial moments of encounter with phenomena” (Holloway and Hubbard 2001, 70). Descriptive phenomenologists contend that processes of reduction can strip away these layers of conscious meaning. The result is the “essence or core commonality and structure of the experience” (Starks and Brown Trinidad 2007, 1373). The search for essences is the hallmark of descriptive phenomenology.

Phenomenology has faced significant criticism for the idea that phenomena have only one true meaning or invariant structure. While many descriptive phenomenologists maintain a commitment to the search for essences, others acknowledge the multiplicity of experiences and perspectives that can yield a diversity of meanings. This is the approach of interpretative phenomenology which I use in the present study. Following Heidegger, interpretative or

hermeneutic phenomenological research methodologies involve the researcher as a co-constitutor of knowledge where the researcher and study participant engage in a joint encounter and exploration of the phenomena (Spiegelberg 1975). From the premise that we are all beings-in-the-world, interpretative phenomenology begins with the idea that to understand anything we must have to first interpret it (Finlay 2011). The goal is to evoke lived experiences by analysing human expressions and representations of them. Interpretative phenomenologists may choose to examine texts and other artefacts as well as visual and performed art as part of the process. These are interpreted within the context in which they were created and are currently found. The purpose of interpretation is to look beyond the superficial to find hidden levels of meaning (von Eckartsberg 1998, 30). The “articulation of a theme, that is a meaning unit” is the desired outcome (von Eckartsberg 1998, 40). Nonetheless, awareness of the unfinished nature of all interpretation underpins hermeneutic phenomenological investigation (Seamon 2000b).

Description and interpretation represent ends of a continuum of approaches that investigate lived experiences. Finlay (2011) described the differences between them as “ambiguous rather than clear” (120). Both have the objective of determining generalizable patterns from the lived experiences of body-subjects. Where ethnography studies the activities of particular people at a particular time, phenomenology’s interests include finding generalizable themes of meaning. In examining all forms of human expression, not just consciously produced ones, phenomenology differs from symbolic interactionism (Seamon 2000b). And unlike most forms of grounded theory, whether descriptive or interpretative in orientation, modern phenomenological methodologies acknowledge the role of the researcher in the construction of findings (Starks and Brown Trinidad). Finlay (2011) identified six facets that underpin all forms of phenomenological research: 1) a focus on lived experiences and meanings, 2) the use of

rigorous, rich, and resonant description, 3) a concern with existential issues, 4) the belief that the body and world are intertwined, 5) researcher reflexivity, and 6) the transformative power of the process.

### **3.6 Lifeworld Phenomenologies**

Lifeworld phenomenologies consist of a set of phenomenological approaches that incorporate both descriptive and interpretative methods. While acceptance of the lifeworld is implicit in all phenomenological approaches, lifeworld-centred approaches focus on it as the primary way to understand people's lived experiences (Finlay 2011). In keeping with the concept upon which it is based, lifeworld approaches seek to illuminate the taken for granted meanings of our everyday experience of being-in-the-world. The focus is existential in its interest in the "specific experiences of specific groups involved in actual situations or places" (Seamon 2000b, 166). One of the defining traits of lifeworld approaches is a predilection for problematising common assumptions about the meaning of phenomena. The general idea is to learn "how the implicit and tacit becomes explicit and can be heard" (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nyström 2008, 37). This requires the researcher to demonstrate flexibility in considering the phenomenon at hand (Finlay 2011).

#### **3.6.1 Place-Making-Phenomenology as a Theoretical Lens**

David Seamon is among those phenomenologists for whom the lifeworld is the preferred intellectual vehicle to understand lived experiences. What differentiates Seamon's *Geography of the Lifeworld* approach from other forms of lifeworld phenomenology is his use of person-or-people-experiencing-place as a theoretical lens through which the lifeworld can be viewed. His approach is tailored to environmental and architectural design and has the explicit goal of

informing place-making activities (Seamon 2000b, Finlay 2011). Finlay (2011) characterised Seamon's approach in the following way:

The central aim of his approach is to explore and interpret the mutual relationship between human beings and their material/social world through examining behaviour, experience, and meaning in a descriptive, interpretive manner as they happen in their everydayness. (129)

For Seamon, place – that is, person-or-people-experiencing-place – is an essential characteristic of the lifeworld. Place “holds people and worlds always together” (Seamon 2000b, 161). In his lifeworld phenomenology, person-or-people-experiencing-place is not a predictive theory, but rather a framework for understanding the lived experiences of space. In Seamon's words, the phenomenon is “uncharted territory.” “The phenomenologist has no clear sense of what she will find or how discoveries will proceed” (Seamon 2000b, 164). Person-or-people-experiencing-place is not intended to be a constraint on how information will be analysed but rather a research method that makes its parameters clear (Creswell 2014).

As an existentialist phenomenologist whose work regularly references Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty, Seamon continues to use the core phenomenological concepts of phenomena, intentionality, and body-subject in the context of the lifeworld to draw out the ways that people and the material environment mutually engage each other. In accordance with Heidegger's thoughts on understanding as a condition of being-in-the-world, Seamon's lifeworld phenomenology is interpretative. He wrote: “[o]verall, much of phenomenological work relating to environment-behavior research has been hermeneutic because the aim is often understanding [of] people in relation to *material* environments” (Seamon 2000b, 167). His work has demonstrated a keen interest in illustrating a phenomenological worldview where the author may not have declared one. To press this point, Seamon has continued to use a wide variety of

source material in his interpretative work; he has made phenomenological investigations of text-based work, including photographs, and popular fiction as well as academically-oriented, non-fiction publications (Seamon 1993a, 2000b, 2006, 2013).

### **3.6.2 Methods**

Like most forms of interpretative phenomenology, lifeworld phenomenologies do not predicate a fixed set of methods. Seamon (2000b) advises researchers to follow von Eckartsberg's (1998) four basic steps in phenomenological investigations: 1) identifying a phenomena of interest, 2) gathering accounts from respondents regarding their experience, 3) carefully studying these accounts toward identifying underlying commonalities and patterns, and 4) presenting the results to respondents and others.

Seamon (2000b) encourages the use of those qualitative techniques that best suit the phenomena under investigation, offering some general guidelines (Finlay 2011). Choice of methods should be driven by how deeply they allow the researcher to engage with a person's lifeworld (Seamon 2000b). He advises that multiple information sources, as well as multiple modes of investigation, provide researchers with access to the most insight about the phenomena. Research study participants should be selected based on having had experience with the phenomena being investigated and be willing to express themselves (Seamon 2000b). Given the reliance on described experience, a shared linguistic understanding is a requirement of the process since "[l]anguage is access to the world of the describer" (Giorgi 1975, 74).

More important than methods is the researcher's orientation to the phenomena (Seamon 2000b). A phenomenological attitude of openness to any possibility as well as a desire to engage others reflexively are key to lifeworld phenomenological investigations. Reflexivity has largely replaced the belief that researchers can bracket their own knowledge in their study. Seamon, like

most hermeneutically inclined phenomenologists, embraces the inevitable effects of his own being on his work (Finlay 2011, 23). As von Eckartsberg (1998) stated, “the study and interpretation of others’ experience occurs with the at least implicit context of the researcher’s own precomprehension and understanding” (34). Instead of bracketing, lifeworld phenomenological approaches encourage bridling or researcher awareness of her or his own knowledge, beliefs, and theories in the interpretative process, particularly as it relates to keeping an open attitude to the phenomena (Finlay 2011, 127). I take this approach to reflexivity in this study which is detailed in Chapter 4.

The interpretative process emphasizes the individual lifeworld with the researcher seeking to understand not only a person’s point of view but the context in which it emerges (Seamon 1979). In support of this perspective, Melhuish (2010) argued that phenomenology promotes “an understanding of space as subjectively perceived, through the senses and the imagination, by the individual – such that the same space may be experienced and described by different individuals in quite different ways” (Melhuish 2010, 9). Lifeworld phenomenologists focus on the exploration of individual lifeworlds in and of themselves, leaving open the possibility of seeing generalities later (Finlay 2011).

Two levels of analysis allow general insight to be gleaned from the explorations of individual lifeworlds (von Eckartsberg 1998, Finlay 2011, Lien et al. 2014). The first considers the personal experience of the phenomena which is often called the personal/existential level. The second level attempts to identify common structures or generalizable patterns of that experience. The result produces the “what” that is being researched (von Eckartsberg 1998, 30). The latter comprises the general level of analysis. Although there are two levels of analysis, von Eckartsberg (1998) reminds researchers that they are not mutually exclusive: “[t]he personal-

existential and the general-phenomenological components are inextricably intertwined and collaborative in the creation of human experience in a particular situation” (59). Both levels of analysis require the researcher to look for both explicit and implicit meanings by iteratively reviewing participant responses (Finlay 2011, 228).

In acknowledging the multiplicity of the world, lifeworld phenomenology, unlike some classic forms of descriptive phenomenology, does not have the search for essences as its goal. The idea that there are essential, invariant meanings of phenomena contradicts lifeworld phenomenology’s commitment to the validity of each individual’s experience. Instead, lifeworld phenomenology, like most interpretative forms, acknowledges that “there are multiple perspectives to any phenomenon, each with their own vocabularies, theories, interpretations, and frames” (Lien et al. 2014, 191).

### **3.7 Place-Making-Phenomenology, Campus Design and Planning**

With this strategy that affirms individual lived experiences in its search for generalizable patterns of meaning, phenomenology seems like it should naturally form part of urban planning and design with its obligation to public consultation (Schön 1983, Friedmann 1987, Forester 1999, Healey 2006). So far, however, this does not appear to be the case. Although Seamon is only one of many phenomenologists who have oriented their scholarship towards environmental design, Whittemore (2014) recently concluded that, “[i]n the history of planning theory only a handful of scholars have discussed existing or possible contributions of a phenomenological approach to practice” (301).

Those that have considered such an approach have tended to focus on the potential of phenomenology to inform the environmental analyses that foreground most planning activities (Bolan 1980, Lim and Albrecht 1987). For example, Lim and Albrecht (1987) suggested that the

value of phenomenological analysis is in its explication of the human experience of particular places. Phenomenology, they contended, can help discern how place-meanings are “constituted by the man-environment interaction” and “the kind of qualities that imbue space with a sense of place” (27). Whittemore (2014) and Bolan (1980) further suggested that this type of phenomenological analysis could aid planners in obtaining a more nuanced understanding of differing points of view. They maintained that this would help close the distance in understanding that often exists between citizens and planners.

Still, the admittedly small body of literature on the subject has clearly expressed a limited use for phenomenology in planning practice and theory (Krieger 1974). The dominance of rationalism is strongly implied as the reason for the lack of phenomenological perspectives in planning, although it is not clearly stated. Nonetheless, this scholarship has demonstrated a decidedly cautious approach to phenomenology which is likely why there are very few phenomenologically-inclined case studies in the planning and design literature. One notable exception is Abu-Ghazze's (1999) examination of user perceptions of campus outdoor space at the University of Jordan. The purpose of his study was to learn how individuals' perceived and used the campus' outdoor spaces.

Abu-Ghazze used a phenomenological approach to determine the meaning and significance of outdoor spaces and evaluated these against the intended design or use of them. By explaining how characteristics such as gender affected how users perceived the structure and characteristics of each space, he found remarkable differences in meaning and use between people (Abu-Ghazze 1999). Individuals' perceptions of the suitability of spaces for their particular needs was a better predictor of their use of that space than the designed or intended use. For example, University of Jordan students often chose to study rather than socialize in

spaces designated for recreation. For Abu-Ghazze, these results highlighted the importance of user participation in campus design processes. While he concluded with the need for additional research, his finding of variable meanings of campus spaces and their effect on use suggests that phenomenological methods can be useful in the ways that planning theorists have suggested.

However, while acknowledging their importance, urban designers and planners have long grappled with how to determine place-meanings as well as how to integrate them into place-making practices (Appleyard 1979, Sternberg 2000). It appears that the significant body of environment-behaviour scholarship on place and place-meanings has not found easy application in the planning and design fields. This study provides an opportunity to test planning theorists' speculations about the value of modern phenomenological forms of inquiry as ways of elucidating the meanings of place, providing a renewed foray in the development of a systematic way of incorporating place-meanings into planning and design practice (Manzo and Perkins 2006).

The field of urban planning and design continues to speak to the importance of “analysing, organising, and shaping the urban form so as to elaborate as richly and coherently as possible the lived experiences of the inhabitants” (Buchanan 1988, 32). Depriest-Hricko and Prytherch (2013) expressed the need for “more specific language for sense of place, which might be useful not only for talking meaningfully about community values and aspirations but also for expressing these in context-sensitive redevelopment plans” (146). With the lifeworld as its singular focus, phenomenological investigations of places provide a seemingly tailor-made way to inform these practices.

As much as it ever has, campus design and planning continues to follow the trends of the umbrella fields of urban planning and design. For example, in their analysis of the master plans

of 31 Canadian universities, Gilbert and Grant (2016) observed the dominating influence of New Urbanism. They concluded that:

We might consider, however, that if we have come to the point where every place and every type of institution occupying space is being planned the same way, then perhaps our ability to consider how to develop locally-appropriate, place-based, and community-based solutions has been lost. (27)

Phenomenological conceptualizations of place and lifeworld methods of inquiry potentially offer ways to support the creation of campuses, following Chapman (2006), that are in keeping with the local geography in which they are situated and that align with the particular mandate and mission of the institution. The small scale of the typical community college campus may facilitate this development. Violich (1983) argued that the future of the urban design profession lies in the planning of small places where “the human being can develop a dialogue with his environment” (41). A better understanding of the meanings of campus, inclusive of crucial indicators of educational success such as belonging, is a step toward informing the development of campuses that are grounded in their local circumstances.

### **3.8 Limitations and Criticisms of Phenomenology**

The hesitancy with which urban planning and design has received phenomenology and the lack of interest in pursuing its potential for place-making practice may be partly due to its perceived limitations. As I previously discussed in this chapter, many of these well-founded criticisms were given prominent attention during the 1980s, leading to phenomenology falling out of favour in geography. Aravot (2002) also cited the most prominent of these in her discussion of the decline of geographic conceptualizations of place in place-making practice. Here, she highlighted phenomenology’s seeming commitment to the search for universal

essences, its apolitical, humanistic orientation, and association with the racist connotations of Heidegger's conceptualizations of dwelling.

However, Aravot also emphasized the difficulty of applying place in urban planning and design practice. She argued that the existence of a "profound disillusion with and discreditation" of place-making practices was based on the field's failure to instill phenomenological understandings of place in practice rather than a refutation of the human need for meaningful places (204). Certainly, the many human dimensions that comprise a sense of place continue to fortify the concept of place at a time when conceptualizations of space are considered to push more theoretical boundaries. Phenomenology's commitment to understanding human, lived experiences accounts for its endurance.

This is at least in part attributable to the body of scholars that have responded to many of the criticisms of the phenomenological worldview and methodologies associated with it. For example, reflexivity, inter-subjectivity, and multiplicity have largely supplanted phenomenology's previous fixation on bracketing researcher knowledge in the quest to reveal the invariant, universal essence of a phenomenon (Finlay 2011). Similarly, phenomenological investigations are now used to demonstrate lived experiences of marginalization as a way to illustrate how larger ideologies play out at individual and group levels. Certainly, by acknowledging that place is always in construction, modern phenomenology has become more progressivist and outward in orientation, distancing itself from earlier thinking that connoted place with a purer, parochial, and often mythical past (Relph 2008a).

In Aravot's (2002) estimation, "the phenomenological path [to place-making] has not been exhausted" (204). However, if place-making phenomenology and modern phenomenological methods of inquiry are to have a place in urban planning and design, and by

extension, campus design and planning, it will be because they can provide perspectives and solutions to difficult problems. Admission that “phenomenology is a necessary but limited approach to the understanding of place” is a necessary first step in avoiding, so to speak, throwing out the phenomenological baby with the bathwater (Dovey 1999, 44). Human lived experiences constitute only part of the world, but nonetheless, they are “something that cannot be denied” (Wylie 2007, 148). In this way, phenomenological conceptualizations might complement relational theories of space, such as the space of flows, power, politics, and globalization, which can inform more ideological considerations (Massey 2005).

Phenomenology’s strength is in providing a human-centred approach to the study of places which recognizes that the material environment is part of the experience. When used to explicate the local context, it has significant potential to increase our understanding of how space becomes place through many senses. This is the possibility that phenomenology offers to urban planning and design and, by association, to campus design and planning. David Seamon’s (2013) theory of person-or-people-experiencing place and lifeworld methodology provide ways to increase our understanding of campuses beyond conventional definitions. These meanings of campus might then be applied to campus design and planning practices and other place-making activities. Using Seamon’s work as a framework, in the next chapter, I outline the specific methodology that I use in this study of two community college campuses in British Columbia, Canada.

## **4. Research Methodology**

Building from my review of the literature, particularly the theoretical framework of David Seamon's person-or-people-experiencing-place and his lifeworld phenomenological approach, the purpose of this chapter is to outline the specific methodology that I use in this dissertation. Following Ciolfi and Bannon's (2006) recommendations, qualitative methods were used as most suitable to the discovery of the lived experiences of campus. In this chapter, I document the sites of the two case studies, the participants in the research study, participant response collection methods, and methods of interpretation as well as the limitations of my study. Permission to conduct research on human subjects was received from the Research Ethics bodies of the three higher education institutions involved in this study. This includes the University of Victoria under whose auspices this study is being done, as well as the two colleges that comprise the sites of my case studies. My findings, which are presented starting in Chapter 5, draw from the results of 23 natural walk-alongs and mental mapping exercises conducted at these two sites over the course of fourteen months.

### **4.1 Case Study Overviews**

British Columbia is home to one of the most integrated higher education systems in the world. The community college sector, of which the two colleges being studied are a part, began as a movement to increase regional access to higher education. Concerned about growing enrolment pressure on the province's sole university, in 1963 then University of British Columbia (UBC) President, Dr. John B. Macdonald, recommended that the province develop a decentralized community college sector paralleling that found in California. Based on his advice, the provincial government legislated a community college system to extend access to lower level

university transfer courses, technical training, and adult upgrading throughout the province. “Truly a citizen movement,” the enactment of British Columbia’s first colleges required the approval of local school boards as well as community plebiscites authorizing taxation for the purposes of establishing a college (Beinder 1983, 8). These actions tightly cemented the relationship between local communities and their college, particularly in the province’s smaller, hinterland communities.

In the ten year period between 1965 and 1975, all 14 of the province’s community colleges were established with each serving a regional catchment area. Since then, no new publicly funded colleges have been created and only ten remain; the others have since become universities. Colleges #1 and #2 in this study were created within five years of each other; one in the lower mainland in the early-1970s and the other on northern Vancouver Island in the middle of the decade. While they were born out of the same legislation, as a result of being responsive to their communities, each has developed a strikingly different institutional and campus profile.

#### **4.1.1 College #1: The Urban Campus**

College #1 is the largest college in the province of British Columbia and one of the largest in Canada. Its two campuses are located in the growing area that comprises Metropolitan Vancouver. In the nearly half century of its history, the college has established a well-regarded forte in applied academic study. It has the distinction of being one of only two colleges in the province that does not offer trades training. The college operates two campuses – the one under study and another facility in an adjacent community. Overall, the college served 23,000 students in 2016.

Its largest program area is university equivalent programing and while the vast majority of its students still transfer to nearby universities, the college is credentialing more and more of

its own applied degrees. Like many colleges, its ambition is to find a niche in the marketplace by delivering programs that straddle both academic preparation and employment-oriented skills. Situated in the middle of one of the fastest growing areas of the province, and very well serviced by high speed transit, the college has experienced one of the biggest and most rapid enrolment expansions in the last seven years.

While the vast majority of its enrolment growth has come from local students, College #1 has a relatively large international student body, welcoming approximately 2,500 international students each year. The student body is of traditional higher education age: 57% percent of its students are under the age of 25 with 41% under the age of 21. In total, 65% of its students are female. Over 1,200 people are employed at the institution including approximately 550 regular faculty, 500 support staff and 90 administrators. An additional 385 contract faculty taught at the institution in 2016.

Like almost every community college in the province, College #1 began operations in rented facilities while its first campus was being erected. The Urban Campus, the largest of the college's two sites, opened in the early-1980s on a 6.6 acre former brownfield site. It occupies a full city block on a major intersection in the city's downtown core. It is rightfully described by its college as an "urban facility." The single, seven storey, glassed-in concrete structure with brick facing has an imposing presence on the streetscape where it sits near the top of a hill adjacent to the riverfront (Figure 4.1). Two levels of underground parking sit beneath the structure. Save a short uncovered passage that connects an independently run Student Union building to the main building, the campus is entirely indoors.

The original form of the campus was a modernist interpretation of the academic quadrangle that was built upwards rather than outwards. Figure 4.2 illustrates the layout of the

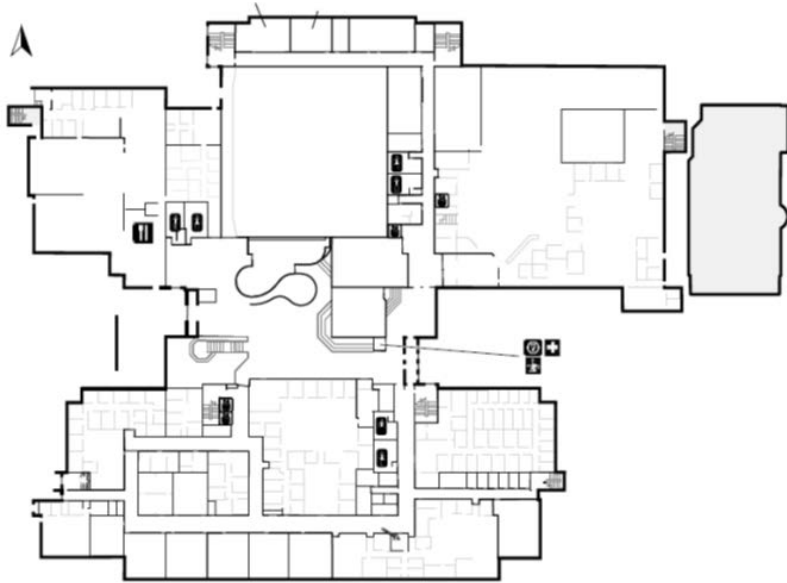
main floor of the campus. An extensive addition has since added levels and wings; however, careful viewers can see that the core of the quadrangle, flanked by two wings, remains intact and centres the campus (Figure 4.3). Originally built to house 2,500 full-time students, through expansion, the campus served approximately 14,000 primarily young adult students in 2016.

A spatial science approach is evident in the original facility program for the campus. Its location on a square block in the city's downtown core as well as financial limitations naturally led planners to design a single, multi-storey building. While phases of expansion were conceived at the outset and have since been executed, they never materialized in the form of a campus master plan that outlays a vision for the site. Rather, given the realization of an expected boom in student enrolments, concerns about functionality and efficiency have led to a facilities-oriented approach to campus planning. However, as enrolment at the Urban Campus continues to climb, the college has embarked on the development of its first campus master plan, which is scheduled to be completed in the next year. The college has acquired a block of industrial land across the street and the new master plan is expected to recommend a significant campus expansion.



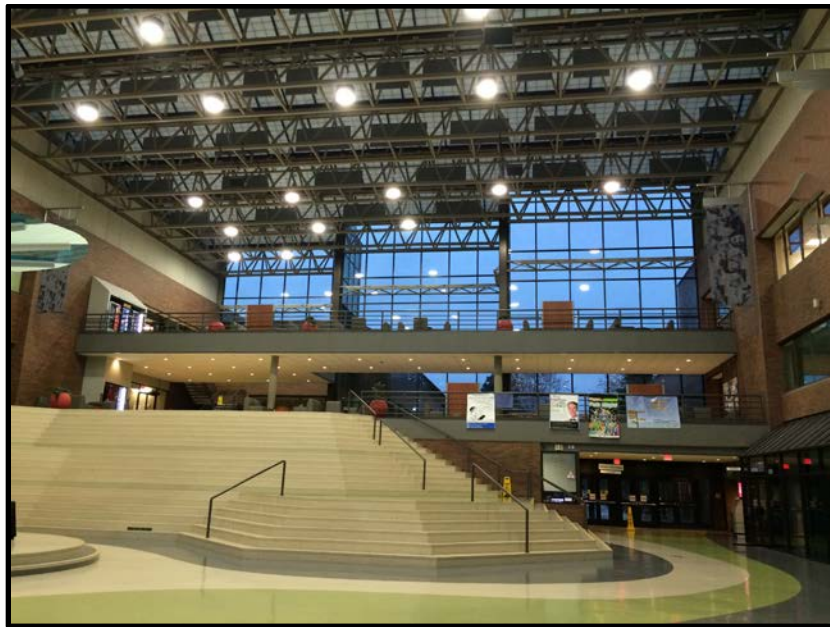
Source: image obtained from institution's website

Figure 4.1. The Urban Campus: Modernist Architecture



Source: image obtained from institution's website

Figure 4.2. The Urban Campus: Main Floor Plan



Source: image obtained from institution's website

Figure 4.3. The Urban Campus: Concourse Centring the Quadrangle

#### **4.1.2 College #2: The Campus in the Woods**

With the need to serve a sparse population scattered over 80,000 km<sup>2</sup>, College #2 began as a primarily distance education institution serving the coastal communities on northern Vancouver Island and the north-central mainland coast. It has since developed into a traditional, primarily location-based, comprehensive community college that offers a broad array of programming on a small scale. Roughly speaking, five program areas – lower level university equivalent, trades training, adult upgrading, and health and career programs – each form about a fifth of the college's enrolment.

College #2 is one of the smallest colleges in the province, serving 4,300 students in credit programming in 2016. Another 4,200 students participated in non-credit, short duration community education programming which forms a large portion of the college's educational outreach to its many surrounding small communities. Its regional service area covers the traditional territories of 35 First Nations of the Nuu-chah-nulth, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Coast Salish peoples, many of whom reside in remote and isolated communities. College #2 employs nearly 450 people of which half are faculty, a third support staff, and a tenth administrators.

During its formative years, the college occupied regional learning centres in over 20 local communities. It quickly gained a strong reputation for its innovative forms of distance education delivery, developing many of its own broadcast teaching technologies well before cable, satellite, and the internet. For example, a mobile training trailer once traversed the province teaching on-site trades training. And for a short period of time, the college reached isolated coastal and island communities via a former whaling ship. These initiatives and all but one of the learning centres

were closed over time as these isolated, rural communities suffered declining populations and economic hardship.

As student demand for classroom-based learning grew, the college began building permanent campuses in the 1990s. It now operates 4 small campuses as well as the last of its learning centres. The largest of the campuses, the Campus in the Woods, opened in the early-1990s, amalgamating seven sites in the area as part of the process. The campus was built as a mini-academical village on a greenfield site. It is a loose collection of eight independent, low density buildings mostly featuring traditional wooden, West Coast architecture sited amidst a forest of Douglas Fir trees (Figures 4.4 and 4.5). The college describes itself as a “campus in the woods.”

Housing 2,500 students in 2016, the Campus in the Woods almost exclusively serves the small community of 65,000 in which it is located. Overall, 90% of students come from within the surrounding area although the college is seeking to become a destination for students outside of the local communities. In contrast, the average age of a Campus in the Woods student is 34-years-of-age which reflects its role as an upgrading and re-training institution. At the Campus in the Woods, 60% of students are female and 40% are male. While some students travel across the region for specific programing, the presence of other campuses in the college region contributes to this very local enrolment pattern.

In 2013, College #2 conducted the first major review of its campus master plan since 2001. A new strategic plan, as well as a much smaller site, were the major impetus for this assessment. Originally developed on 66 acres, the current site is now 50.6 acres as the college has leased 4.4 acres to a local government and more significantly, recently sold 11 acres. With a

large temporary facility on site and a number of pressing construction priorities, College #2 also plans to revise its campus plan.



Source: image obtained from institution

Figure 4.4. The Campus in the Woods: An Aerial View



Source: photography by David Graham, used with permission

Figure 4.5. The Campus in the Woods: West Coast Architecture

## 4.2 Participants

On the premise that it is people who make place, the 23 participants in this study (12 from the Urban Campus and 11 from the Campus in the Woods) were drawn from the two college populations at-large. This approach follows Waite (2014) who observed that, “[d]ifferent user groups ‘read’ the campus landscape differently and thus interpret and decode embedded messages differently” (76). Participants came from the two main groups of campus users: students (and former students) and employees (and former employees). In addition, there were two community users of the Campus in the Woods.

I sought participation from these three groups (i.e., students, employees and community users) in recognition of the major attendees on higher education campuses. Students, who comprise the vast majority of the campus populations, are included for previously discussed reasons. However, while the importance of the campus to students and potential students has long been remarked upon by Boyer (1987) and Kenney et al. (2005), among others, the value of a functional and pleasing campus to employees, particularly faculty, has become of increasing interest since a survey of U.S. college employees found that employees valued their working space and the campus above all other aspects of their job (Biemiller 2008). A deliberate effort was made to include non-academic employees (support staff and administrators), who, despite having a regular on-site presence, are often not included in studies of campus (Temple 2009).

In keeping with the increasingly community-oriented and public nature of higher education campuses, my research design included a community-user category comprised of otherwise unaffiliated visitors to the campus. Open to the public, higher education campuses are more frequently being planned within the context of the communities where they reside. And now that on-campus, market-based housing and other commercial developments are

commonplace, so too are connected planning initiatives between local governments and higher education institutions. More and more higher education campuses are being deliberate in their efforts to welcome their neighbouring communities, and many are attractive tourist destinations in their own right (Gumprecht 2003, 2007, 2008). However, despite my attempts to recruit more community users, only two were included in the study. Visitors to the campus turned out to be mostly former students and former employees. Given that all but two of these participants self-identified as students and employees, I have categorized those individuals that way.

The criteria for participating in the study was simple and straightforward. All adult participants (19 years-of-age or older in British Columbia) who had visited their respective campus at least once and who were willing to talk about their experiences, were invited to participate in the study. Having had the experience of the phenomena is, of course, necessary to any investigation of its meaning. Equally important, however, is ensuring that the participants are willing to and comfortable with, communicating their experiences whether positive or negative (von Eckartsberg 1998, Roulston 2010).

Potential participants were invited to join the research study in several ways. Notices were posted on the bulletin boards of both campuses and distributed as flyers to student union offices, international education offices, offices of new students, and other locations where students congregate. Additionally, several departments at both colleges offered to post the invitation on their social media sites and to email it to their distribution lists. Those efforts, as well as word of mouth referrals by early participants, significantly increased involvement. I sought only participants who both volunteered for the study and came forward of their own volition. Although this made recruitment more challenging and required a much longer time horizon for collecting participant responses, this strategy fosters the gathering of high quality

information. This is especially important in phenomenological research where a small number of investigations are characteristic. Shertlock (1998) advised accordingly: “[i]deally, the respondents will also feel a spontaneous interest in the research topic, since personal concern can motivate the respondent to provide the most thorough and accurate lived descriptions” (162). No incentives of any kind were provided to participants of the study.

#### **4.2.1 Sampling**

I employed a criterion-based, stratified sampling strategy to ensure the participation of new and more familiar users of the campuses as well as to try to ensure representation from students, visitors, and employees of each college (Creswell 1998). Phenomenological investigations prize variation in experiences of the phenomenon over the demographic diversity of participants (i.e., gender, age, etc.) (Norlyk and Harder 2010). However, in recognition that the latter informs the former, and in keeping with the purposes of the case study, I strove to maximize variation between groups of campus users (i.e., student, employee, and community) and diversity within these types of experiences (e.g., part-time as well as full-time use, a range of student programs, and employee work area types, etc.). No one who met the criteria for participation was excluded from the study. The targets for stratification were achieved naturally through the volunteer process. This was aided by the use of snowball sampling. Several participants agreed to circulate invitations to participate in the research study on my behalf. This greatly increased uptake and helped meet targets.

#### **4.3 Eliciting Participant Responses**

To understand the lived experiences of the campuses, two complementary, qualitative research instruments were used. Pioneered by Kevin Lynch (1960) in the *The Image of the City*,

the natural walk-along and accompanying mental mapping process have recently been garnering interest as means of investigating the relationships between people and places (Riley 2010, Evans and Jones 2011, Gieseeking 2013). By involving participants' bodies in information collection processes, both methods seek to augment the verbal interview and its reliance on language to express meaning. There is increasing recognition that the interview, the gold-standard method in qualitative research, privileges language as the dominant form of human expression. As a result, research methods that use non-verbal forms of inquiry are becoming more commonly employed. This is especially important in environment-behaviour research such as this study where it is contended that people make place through practice. Walk-alongs and mental maps provide ways of demonstrating how people create and experience place with their bodies.

#### **4.3.1 Natural Walk-Alongs**

The natural walk-along is one technique that seeks to augment the limitations of the verbal interview, the standard research instrument in phenomenological research. As the purpose of phenomenological investigations is to understand the phenomenon by probing the lifeworld, querying individuals about their experience through an interview is the norm (Creswell 1998). The natural walk-along is a variant of the standard verbal interview that incorporates aspects of participant observation (Kusenbach 2003, Riley 2010). During natural walk-alongs, the researcher literally walks along with the self-directed participant in the place of interest, asking questions, recording answers, and making other observations along the way (Kusenbach 2003). Based on the premise that "the body is the obvious point of departure for any knowing," natural walk-alongs have been included in phenomenological methods as a way of investigating how people interact with the material world of which they are a part (Sandelowski 2002, 104).

Walk-alongs are very much in keeping with Seamon's concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place as they consider people's experiences in their worlds rather than separate from them. In doing so, they provide opportunities to "examine how physical, social, and mental dimensions of place and space interact within and across time for individuals" (Carpiano 2009, 264). Wunderlich (2008) contended that: "[w]alking practices and 'senses of [or for] place' are fundamentally related" (125). Walking is inherently phenomenological. It features prominently in our lifeworlds as an intentional, yet routine, behaviour that normally requires little thought.

For these reasons, Kusenbach (2003) argued that 'walk-along' methods are particularly suitable when researching "pre-reflective and visually elusive" themes such as perception, spatial practices, biographies, and social relationships (466). Walk-alongs "make visible and intelligible how everyday experience transcends the here and now, as people weave previous knowledge and biography into immediate situated action" (478). As Arefi and Triantafillou (2005) commented: "[p]lace is at times unpredictable and can be understood through engagement, not through detached observation" (Arefi and Triantafillou 2005, 76).

Natural walk-alongs allow participants to determine where they and the researcher will go. This allows the researcher to follow the participants' bodily experience *in situ* as they move through the place of study. In this way, walk-alongs led to Lynch's (1960) work on wayfinding that demonstrated how individuals organize and use sensory cues from the external environment. Walk-alongs also influenced the development of his concept of imageability or the "generalized mental picture of the exterior physical environment that is held by the individual – a product of immediate sensation and memory of past experience" (4). Walk-alongs allow the researcher to observe participants' practice of place, revealing how "places are created by the routes people take" (Evans and Jones 2011, 850). Pedestrians create meaning while walking, including

meanings that challenge or resist those intended for the planned environment. As de Certeau (1984) wrote: “the pedestrian unfolds the stories accumulated in a place” (110).

While the pedestrian requirement can limit participation in walk-along studies, it was not anticipated to have a major impact on this study. This is primarily because some mobility is necessary to use both campuses, which are equipped to accommodate persons with disabilities. Further, the invitation to participate in the research study described the process as a ‘move-along’ thus permitting people in wheelchairs to take part. Still, I acknowledge that the mobility requirement may have dissuaded potential participants for whom movement is not easy. This is the most cited criticism of walking-interviews as restricted mobility is more common among older people whose participation may be reduced as a result (Evans and Jones 2011). Other potentially constraining factors include safety considerations during the darkness of evening as well as inclement weather.

Natural walk-alongs have been shown to more effectively elucidate aspects of place than the standard, researcher-led, seated interview. Evans and Jones (2011) concluded that “walking interviews are profoundly informed by the landscape in which they take place, emphasizing the importance of environmental features in shaping discussions” (849). Allowing participants to guide the process empowers them with control of both space and time. This has been proven to make the experience more comfortable for those involved, leading to greater openness, more spontaneous responses, and longer interview times (Carpiano 2009, Evans and Jones 2011).

To encourage these outcomes and because participants had a wide range of campus experiences, a semi-structured interview protocol was used as part of the walk-alongs. Eighteen, broadly phrased, open-ended questions formed the foundation of a conversational style, phenomenological interview (Giorgi 1975, Roulston 2010). Both descriptive and structural

(about specific situations and actions) questions about the campuses formed part of the protocol and ensured consistency among interviews (Appendix). This allowed the participants to set the direction of the conversation, giving them the opportunity to discuss matters of greatest interest to them (O'Rourke and Baldwin 2016). The semi-structured format also permitted me to ask additional questions on-the-fly to obtain more detail as well as to seek clarification. Having this flexibility was critical to my exploration of individual lifeworlds as questions were tailored to each participant (Bevan 2014). This fostered my reflexivity as researcher and the co-investigation of phenomena that is prized in lifeworld phenomenological investigations (Finlay 2011).

#### **4.3.2 Mental Mapping**

Each interview concluded with a request that the participant draw a map of their campus. Since Lynch's (1960) pathbreaking work, mental mapping has gained ground as a way of interpreting the "roles and meanings of space and place" (Giesecking 2013, 713). Beyes and Michels (2014) described this benefit of mental mapping in the following way:

The technique of mental mapping is an experimental method of cartography, through which memory, orientation, and major architectural features, as well as images of spatial appropriations, are combined. Imprecise and distorted as they often appear, such maps present aesthetical, imagined, and ideological expressions, and often symbolic interpretations of perceptions and experiences of spaces. (30)

While they can stand alone as a research method, mental maps are more often combined with a verbal interview, as is the case here (Giesecking 2013). Not only do they provide another mechanism for participant expression, their use has been shown to encourage the articulation of feelings, themes, and ideas that participants cannot, or would rather not, communicate through language. Mental mapping can take a variety of forms ranging from labelling an existing map, to

free-form hand drawing, to computer generated mapping. There is no standard technique for this form of research (Giesecking 2013). Similarly, methods of analysis are left to the researcher to determine. Researchers are advised that mappers tend to use the borders and centre of their map to communicate important ideas. The only drawback to mental mapping found in the literature is participant reluctance to draw or concern about drawing ability. Both are encountered only occasionally (Giesecking 2013).

#### **4.4 Participant Responses**

In keeping with sample sizes used in phenomenological investigations, my study draws upon the 23 interviews that I conducted over a 14 month period (November 2014 – January 2016) at the two campus sites. Following the protocols approved by the Research Ethics Committees of the three institutions involved, all of the interviews were recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and anonymised. I also obtained each of the participant's written permission to publish their mental maps. Procedures to secure ongoing consent were used. To date, none of the participants have since exercised their right to withdraw.

Prior to meeting with me, participants were asked to complete a short, optional questionnaire indicating their affiliation with their college, frequency of use of the campus, and basic demographic information. All 23 participants volunteered this information and most submitted it to me with their consent forms in advance of our meeting. Having this information was extremely valuable as it provided an easy entrée into questions about each participants' lifeworld.

I met each participant at a place of their choosing which ranged from their home, their parking spot, their transit stop, places on campus as well as off campus spots. After making introductions, receiving information about the research study, and verbally agreeing to be

recorded, each participant led me on a walking tour of their campus. I used the semi-structured interview protocol during all of the interviews. While inclement weather and darkness/safety concerns have been cited as potential impediments to walk-along response collection (Giesecking 2013), this did not prove to be the case here. As previously discussed, the Urban Campus is entirely indoors and the mild weather of the West Coast cooperated to allow walk-alongs at the Campus in the Woods. Rescheduling only occurred once due to snow.

All of the participants agreed to draw a mental map at the end of the walk-along. Remaining on campus, together the participant and I found a comfortable, quiet spot to sit. With the recorder still on, I offered each participant a sheet of white 11x14 paper and a pencil or pen. A few participants chose to use their own writing instrument. Following Lynch (1960), I requested that participants free-form draw and label a map, continuing the interview as they were doing so. Participants frequently expressed concern about their ability to draw but after reassurances from me, ultimately this did not inhibit them from doing so. Approximately half chose to narrate while drawing, the other half provided an explanation upon its completion. Everyone was open to questions from me during the process.

While intended to last from 20-40 minutes, in actuality the interviews lasted much longer than that. The shortest interview was 18 minutes. It was an anomaly. Nearly three-quarters of the interviews lasted over 38 minutes. On the whole, participants were eager to show me their campus and to talk about their experience. Often they offered more information after their interview concluded. In those cases, I turned the recorder back on and continued taping. It was during these times that I collected some of the most rich information.

Overall, the 23 participants were almost evenly divided between the two sites with one more male student involved at the Urban Campus than at the Campus in the Woods. The

distribution between genders was also evenly split between males and females at each campus. More youth, those between 19-24 years-of-age, participated at the Urban Campus. This is indicative of the demographic characteristics of the student population attending there. Tables 4.1 to 4.3 list the study's participants by user group, gender, and age. All names are pseudonyms. Of interest is the fact that while participants were asked to self-identify as a student, employee or community user of the campus, eight of the 23 total participants indicated they were both students and employees. As a result, I have categorized them accordingly. Participants had a great spectrum of experience at the two campuses, ranging from less than a year to over 25 years. Table 4.3 summarizes participants' length of experience at their respective campuses.

Table 4.1. Campus Participants by User Group

Campus	Total	User Group			
		Student & Employee	Student	Employee	Community Member
Urban Campus	12	4	4	4	
Campus in the Woods	11	4	2	3	2
<i>Summary</i>	23	8	6	7	2

Table 4.2. Campus Participants by Gender and Age

Campus	Total	Gender		Age		
		M	F	Youth (19-24)	Adult (25-64)	Senior (65+)
Urban Campus	12	6	6	4	8	
Campus in the Woods	11	6	5	1	9	1
<i>Summary</i>	23	12	11	5	17	1

Table 4.3. Participants' Length of Experiences on Campus (in years)

Campus	Total	Experience on Campus (in years)						
		< 1	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25 +
Urban Campus	12	2	4	2			1	3
Campus in the Woods	11		3	1	2	3	1	1
<i>Summary</i>	23	2	7	3	2	3	2	4

#### 4.4.1 Participant Overview: The Urban Campus

Of the 12 individuals who participated in the study at the Urban Campus, four were students, four were employees, and four were both students and employees. Three of the students were female and one was male. They ranged from 20 to 52 years-of-age with two of the students being under 23. The oldest student had been using the campus on and off for 31 years. This was atypical as the other three had frequented the campus for a much smaller amount of time, ranging from two to four years. All but one of the students was enrolled in university equivalent programming in arts and sciences. The exception was a student enrolled in a professional music program. Conversely, of the five employees who participated in the study, three were male and two were female. The employee participants were much older than the students, ranging from 27 to 61 years-of-age. They held a wide range of roles at the college as support staff and administration. The four participants in the student and employee category includes one student who became a faculty member, two students working part-time at the college, and a senior executive assistant who took courses throughout her career. Two of the four participants who experienced the campus as both a student and an employee were young, under the age of 23. Strikingly, three of the participants at the Urban Campus had each spent over 25 years there – one had recently retired with over 40 years of service. Of those in the student and employee

group, two were male and two were female. The participants used a variety of modes to travel to the campus including car, transit, walking, and cycling. Many used multiple modes of transportation to reach the campus. For some, this journey consumed several hours a day. Table 4.4 below provides detailed information about each participant at the Urban Campus.

Table 4.4. The Urban Campus: Detailed Participant Information

*Name	User Group	Area/Program	Age	Gender	Years on campus	Mode of Travel to campus
Travis	Employee	Lab Assistant	27	M	6 mos	Car
Courtney	Student	Arts	21	F	2	Skytrain
Greg	Student	Psychology	31	M	4	Car
Ethan	Student & Employee	Faculty	50	M	33	Walk
Paula	Employee	Manager	52	F	7	Car
Donna	Student & Employee	Sciences	20	F	2	Bus/Skytrain
Edward	Employee	New Students	41	M	8	Bus/Car/Bike/Motorcycle
Brayden	Student & Employee	Anthropology	23	M	6 mos	Bus/Skytrain
Natalie	Student	Arts - Teaching	20	F	3	Walk
Bruce	Employee	Director	61	M	25	Car/Skytrain
Yolanda	Student & Employee	Secretary	61	F	40	Car
Judith	Student	Music	52	F	31	Skytrain

\*All names are pseudonyms

#### 4.4.2 Participant Overview: The Campus in the Woods

In contrast, with the exception of a 21-year-old, the 11 participants at the Campus in the Woods were all over the age of 31. Reflecting the demographic characteristics of the student and employee population of the community, half of the participants were over 50. Six participants were male and five were female. Their range of experience at the Campus in the Woods varied from a minimum of two years to a maximum of 26 years. Four of these participants saw themselves as both students and employees of the college and each had over ten years of

experience at the campus. Student participants were all part-time course takers in professional programming as well as in university equivalent courses. Similar to the Urban Campus, employee participants held a wide variety of roles as support staff, faculty, and administration. As was previously mentioned, there were two strictly community users of the Campus in the Woods. While participants used a variety of modes to travel to campus, there were more who walked to campus and fewer who took transit. Table 4.5 provides information about each participant at the Campus in the Woods.

Table 4.5. The Campus in the Woods: Detailed Participant Information

Name	User Group	Area/Program	Age	Gender	Years on campus	Mode of Travel to campus
Linda	Student & Employee	Recruiter	47	F	23	Walk/Car
William	Community	Community User	21	M	3	Walk/Car
Brian	Community	Community User	54	M	20	Car
Tamika	Student & Employee	Sociology	51	F	16	Walk
Mikayla	Student	Human Services	31	F	2	Car
Gerry	Student & Employee	Comp. Science	64	M	26	Bus/Bike
Sharon	Employee	Secretary	56	F	8	Car
Todd	Employee	I.T.	41	M	12	Car/Walk/Motorcycle
Maggie	Employee	Librarian	66	F	19.5	Car
David	Student & Employee	University programs	50	M	12	Car
Paul	Student	Business	35	M	3	Bus

\*All names are pseudonyms

## 4.5 Analysing Participant Responses

As with all forms of phenomenology, in lifeworld phenomenology the researcher is advised to “let the phenomenon guide the study of it” (Finlay 2011, 188). Nonetheless, the researcher is required to clarify how phenomenological principles are used not only in gathering

participant responses but also in analysing them (Norlyk and Harder 2010). On that advice, my analysis of participant responses continually focused on the four key phenomenological principles that I outlined in Chapter 3. Phenomena, intentionality, body-subject, and lifeworld were at the forefront of my mind when I queried participants, observed their behaviour, and analysed the accumulated information.

Interpretative phenomenology references the hermeneutic circle which describes the “open-ended and continuously spiraling nature of the hermeneutic inquiry and sense-making process” (von Eckartsberg 1998, 51). Here the researcher shuttles between analysis and synthesis, relating the parts to the whole in the interpretation process (von Eckartsberg 1998, 50). In keeping with this idea, I hybridized Finlay’s (2011) and Creswell’s (2014) processes to create a three stage process to iteratively analyse participant responses. This involved going back and forth between: 1) dwelling with individual responses 2) theming them, and 3) theming the themes (see Figure 4.6 for a pictorial summary of the process).

Dwelling with participant responses at the personal/existential level – the personal experience of the phenomena – required that I begin analysis during the walk-along and mental mapping process. The semi-structured nature of the interview facilitated this as did my efforts to be open, empathic, and attentive with each participant. The ability to pause, think, and to further probe individuals during walk-alongs helped me focus on what I saw and heard. Often times I had to ‘reset’ my head to truly recognize what the participants were sharing with me. Many times it was outside of my own ideas of a campus. Immediately after the conclusion of each interview, I usually made a series of notes to record my observations and thoughts. This was critical because the recording only captured the verbal aspects of the natural walk-along. While I tried to reflect my observations back to participants during the interview so that they could respond and

be recorded, note-taking was the second part of the iterative interpretation process. The next step involved listening to, and verbatim transcription of, the recordings. Once I had transcribed each interview, I listened to the interviews while reading the written transcript, annotating each along the way. This way I could capture nuances such as tone and inflection. On occasion, I followed up with participants to ask clarifying questions. I also asked earlier participants follow-up questions that I thought of later. To augment this level of analysis, I have included participants' descriptive narratives and mental maps as part of my findings. Figure 4.6 below represents the process of dwelling with participant responses.

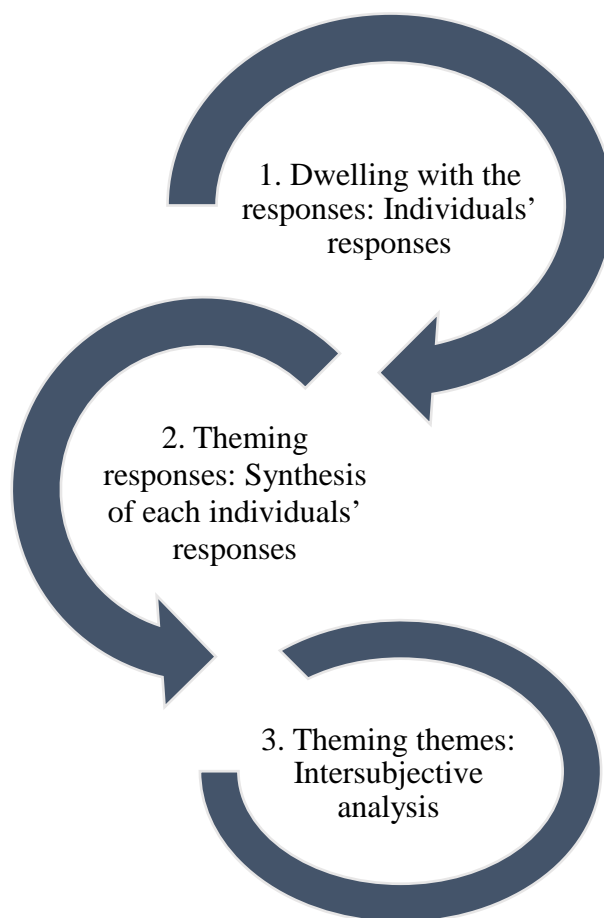


Figure 4.6. Three Stage Process of Phenomenological Analysis

At this point, having spent much time with the material, I began the process of synthesizing participant responses in search of common themes. Here, the researcher identifies the common structures or generalizable patterns of experience (von Eckartsberg 1998, 30). This involved interpreting units of meaning from each individual's responses and noting them down. The process revealed the most pertinent themes emerging from each participant's experience. I then reviewed these, refined them, and finally named them. I relied on Seamon's (2013) concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place and the previously discussed phenomenological ideas of phenomena, intentionality, body-subject, and lifeworld to capture the rhythmic and routine nature of most participants' experience of campus.

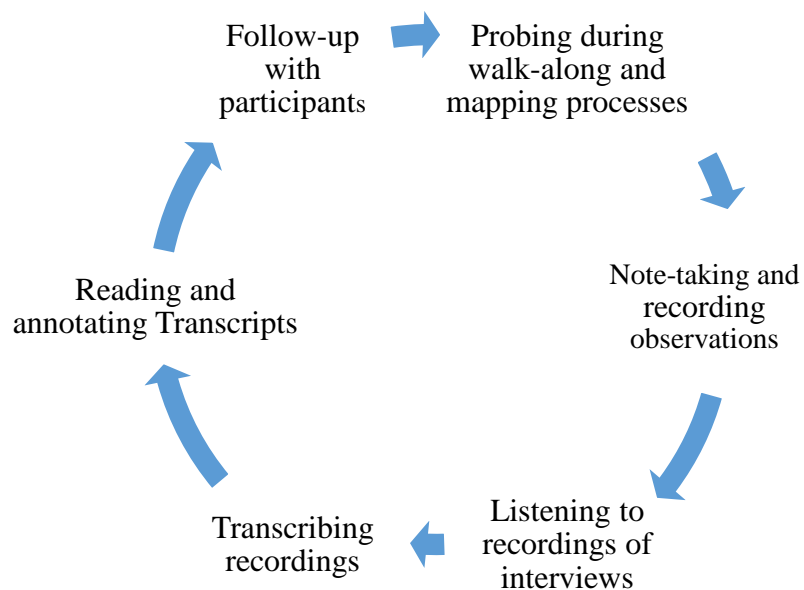


Figure 4.7. Dwelling with Participant Responses

Thematic analysis constitutes my interpretation of the meanings of campus. Rather than a reductive process, where the researcher suspends or brackets all previous assumptions about the phenomenon in search of invariant essences, researcher and participant reflexivity underpin the

process of thematic analysis. It also indicates where I contribute most to the development of the findings. As von Eckartsberg (1998) characterised it, thematic analysis:

represents a transformation of the narrative first person experiential report into a declarative third person summary statement in the researcher's language formulation, which becomes the basis for further reflections aiming at higher levels of universalisation and more abstract meaning-comprehension. (41)

Excerpts of individual narratives are also presented in my findings to illustrate themes.

In accordance with Creswell's (2014) recommendations, the final interpretative process involved another level of thematic analysis. I themed each participants' responses and then themed those individual themes. This yielded some of the meanings of that particular campus, which I present in Chapter 6. von Eckartsberg (1998) noted the special value of this level of thematic analysis to professional practice – it allows the researcher to translate the “everyday naïve language of the subject” into professional jargon, in this case, the language of design and planning (48). My process of dwelling with participant responses and then categorizing them into themes indicates where and how I influenced the findings the most. Seaming together the advice of Finlay (2011), Seamon (2000b), von Eckhartsberg (1998), and Creswell (2014) ensured a robust qualitative process.

As I previously discussed, one of the most compelling criticisms about phenomenology is the idea that it searches for an essential, invariant structure, or ‘essence,’ of a phenomenon. While this goal remains paramount in certain forms of descriptive phenomenology, it has been replaced with the notions of partiality and multiplicity in interpretative phenomenology. Partiality refers to the belief that, “[h]owever powerful, comprehensive and nuanced, our findings must remain tentative, partial, and emergent. It is always powerful to see more in data at a different point in time, and another researcher will usually unfold a different story” (Finlay

2011, 244). Similarly, acceptance of multiplicity acknowledges that there is a plurality of experiences and meanings of a phenomenon.

The question of whether multiplicity of individual experience/meaning can exist alongside generalized themes of experience/meaning has found resolution in the work of Nogué i Font (1993). His study of the Catalanian landscape found that phenomenologies of “landscape in its own right and as particular individuals experience that landscape” exist simultaneously (159).

He concluded that:

The experience of the Garrotxa landscape is in some ways different for farmers and painters. There are, however, certain environmental qualities and experiences that are shared, and these similarities indicate that a phenomenology of landscape in its own right exists. These similarities are environmental qualities and interactions that are normally hidden and taken-for-granted, but that can be identified through a phenomenological approach. (178)

Nogué i Font’s finding paves the way for this study of community college campuses that uses a phenomenological approach to determine their meanings.

## **4.6 Trustworthiness**

To achieve trustworthiness in this inherently interpretative process, I used Creswell’s (2014) validity strategies to mitigate against my own limitations in understanding participant responses. Validity strategies ensure the credibility, fittingness, and verifiability of the findings (Lien et al. 2014). Creswell’s strategies include the use of multiple information sources, participant validation at the phenomenal level of analysis, time in the field, use of rich, thick description, presentation of discrepant information, and declaration of researcher bias. Earlier in the chapter, I discussed how I used multiple sources of information, participant validation at the phenomenal level of analysis and time in the field to achieve validity. In Chapters 5-7, I present my findings where readers can see the use of descriptive language, the inclusion of verbatim

narratives and maps to ensure accuracy and participant validation, as well as my presentation of discrepant information or information that is not supported by my thematic analysis. In the following sub-section, I will discuss the limitations of my study, including my bias as the researcher.

#### **4.7 Limitations of Study**

This study is limited by several factors. The first is reflective of its guiding theory, place-making phenomenology and particularly David Seamon's concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place. This understanding of place has been rightly criticized for its focus on the individual or group experience outside of the larger forces that affect the creation of place. For example, issues such as globalization are omitted from analysis in favour of locally situated human agency. A related limitation is that while this study seeks to understand the meanings of campus toward informing campus design and planning practices, it only tangentially addresses the bureaucratic, financial, and political processes that can steer site selection, campus design, and master plan development. However, it does provide another valuable source of information beyond what is normally included in the public participation exercises that typically form part of planning, design, and development activities.

The second limitation of the study concerns phenomenology's position on researcher reflexivity. Interpretative phenomenology contends that findings are only partial and incomplete. As Finlay (2011) argued, "[phenomenological] researchers appreciate that the researcher actively constructs the collection, selection, and interpretation of data and that any results are co-constituted – a joint product of the participants, research, and the social context" (80). Therefore, my findings are limited to and by the participants in the study as well as myself as the researcher. While a sample size of 23 participants is in keeping with the norm for phenomenological

investigations (Creswell 1998), it is understood that the results are not necessarily representative. As Finlay (2011) noted, “[f]or qualitative researchers in general, and phenomenologists in particular, more is not necessarily better when it comes to sample size as we are not aiming to get a representative range” (191).

Reflexivity acknowledges that researchers are “an inevitable part of what is being researched” which both “blinkers and enables insight” (Finlay 2011, 23). My pre-understandings stem from my education and training as a professional planner (MCIP, RPP) who has spent her entire adult life on higher education campuses as both a student and as an employee. This made maintaining an open attitude to various meanings of campus more challenging. This was especially true in this study as I am a long-service administrator at one college and a sessional faculty member at the other. I have never had any responsibility for either campus and none of the individuals’ with whom I could have had a power-over relationship (including direct supervisory employees and current students of mine) participated in the study.<sup>4</sup> While this made it more difficult to recruit participants, these experiences privileged me in terms of having insight into each physical campus, institution, and how campuses are planned and designed on the ground. The strength of those pre-understanding sometimes caused me confusion when participants spoke of their own, different understandings of campus. Once I became aware of and acknowledged this, my pre-understandings also privileged me as I was then able to recognize when participants’ held different views.

In addition, while I sought variation in experience of the two campuses as phenomena, while remarkably consistent, the experiences of the participants cannot necessarily be generalized to the populations-at-large of both campuses. Given my strong belief that colleges are public institutions in every sense of the word, it was my hope to have more community users,

or otherwise unaffiliated visitors, participate in the research study. As previously discussed, only two from the Campus in the Woods were included. The other non-student, non-employee visitors to the campus were former students and/or employees. However, while limited, the impressions and meanings of community users of the campus suggest the importance of including these perspectives in campus design and planning activities.

A final limitation of the study is the extent to which the findings of my study are applicable to other campuses, including other community college campuses. The outcomes suggest that the two campuses, while sharing some common core characteristics, are also very much creations of local circumstance. This includes not only the specific architectures and designs of the physical campus but the mix of users who comprise the campus as well. So while there may be generalizability beyond the present study, that is not the primary point. Rather, the main purpose of the study is to consider whether phenomenological investigations of the meanings of campus can usefully inform campus design and planning.

With these limitations in mind and having set out the specific research methodology, in the following three chapters I present the findings of the present study. Chapter 5 opens this discussion by considering participants' responses in light of place-making-phenomenology, the theoretical framework of this study. In this chapter, I consider participants' experiences of the two community colleges against the framework of David Seamon's (2013) concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place, the phenomenological idea of the lifeworld, and his extensive work on the routine nature of human spatial behaviour. Despite being significantly different organizations, participants at the two college campuses had lifeworlds with remarkably similar characteristics. This was based on the common way that they experienced their campus and used it in their day-to-day practices. I discuss this finding at length in Chapter 5. I conclude the

chapter with an outline of these shared time-space routines which I argue form the foundation of the lifeworlds of the two campuses.

## **5. Persons-or-People-Experiencing-Campus**

Place, commonly understood to be comprised of location, locale, and a sense of place (Agnew 1987), has been a subject of intense theorization in geography as well as elsewhere. Perhaps because of this, the concept has not easily translated to the field of urban planning and design and its subfield that focuses on campuses. This study of two community college campuses as places of meaning intends to advance the theory and practice of campus design and planning. It joins a small, but growing, number of studies in higher education that consider how people's everyday experiences constitute place. As Chapter 3 elaborates, place-making-phenomenology, the theoretical basis for the present study, is founded on a set of humanistic, geographic ideas that stress the role of people in making place. Many of these ideas are captured in the related term, sense of place, which attempts to characterize the distinctive perceptions and meanings of specific places that arise from people's differing experiences of them. Seamon (2013) coined the concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place as a way of describing this human, lived engagement with the material world. In theorizing that people experience places as indivisible wholes, the concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place offers a different way of thinking about how lively, vibrant places might be fostered than that usually found in campus design and planning.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the relevance of Seamon's theories of place-making phenomenology to participants' experiences of the two college campuses being studied. In the following sections, I consider the responses of the 23 participants in light of the concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place and the phenomenological ideas that underpin and accompany it. I begin by featuring some of the different ways that the participants in the study

presented their conception of the campus as an interanimation of people and the physical environment. As indicated by their descriptions and mental maps, this was frequently described by them as an experience. To introduce these concepts, I take a thematic, rather than campus-based approach to presenting participants' responses. This highlights the similarities between participants' use of the two campuses and forms part of my phenomenological approach to campus design and planning.

In phenomenology, one of the defining characteristics of people's lived experiences is the lifeworld or the "typical, taken-for-granted context of everyday experience of which, most of the time, we are unaware" (Seamon 2013, 143). Participants in this study described their experiences of campus akin to the lifeworld, using language in their walk-along that almost exactly mirrored Seamon's definition of it. While unique to each person, participants' lifeworlds shared a common structure which, following Seamon, I call a functional and transactional routine. Participants familiarized themselves with the campus through the lens of past experience and the creation and practice of their functional and transactional routine. By outlining the four main characteristics of this routine, I demonstrate how participants made a campus that they initially perceived as being "big and overwhelming" feel "small and comfortable." While each person's functional and transactional routine was unique to them, the 23 participants shared a number of the same time-space routines or common patterns of activity. To conclude the chapter, I present the common time-space routines that were practiced by almost all of the participants at both campuses. As a whole, Chapter 5 lays the theoretical groundwork for a more fulsome discussion of the meanings of campuses that I present in Chapter 6.

## 5.1 Person-or-People-Experiencing-Place

At its core, the concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place denotes the phenomenological position that humans do not exist apart from the rest of the world and that their routine, bodily experiences of place reflect this wholeness. In coining this term, Seamon's (2013) emphasis was on the indivisibility of people and the material environment as well as their interanimation. He further argued that the meanings of places are created by the regular and routine actions of person-or-people-experiencing-place. This point of view is at odds with conventional thinking about the campus which defines it primarily as absolute space. From this perspective, the campus is primarily thought of as buildings, landscaping, and land, rather than as human experiences of being-in-the-world. As such, conventional campus design and planning tends toward architectural determinism to create a sense of place.

In his review of the literature at the time, Sime (1986) observed an uneven consideration of the physical and non-physical environments in the study of places. He argued that “[t]he concept of place offers an opportunity to redress the imbalance in emphasis on the physical environment in some domains (e.g., architecture and geography); in other areas (e.g., psychology) the concept demands that greater attention be paid to the physical environment” (49). Seamon's (2013) phenomenological concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place offers a correction to this problem within geography.

The findings from the present study suggest that person-or-people-experiencing-place aptly describes participants' experiences of the two campuses. The responses from all 23 participants across the two research sites solidly support his contention that place “is not the physical environment separate from people associated with it, but rather, the indivisible, normally unnoticed phenomenon of person-or-people-experiencing-place” (Seamon 2014b, 11).

As Seamon (2014b) outlined it, person-or-people-experiencing-place is “typically multivalent, complex, and dynamic. It incorporates generative processes through which a place and its experiences and meanings, including place attachment, shift or remain more or less the same” (11). Using Seamon’s concepts as a framework, some of the ways that participants described their campuses as dynamic, interanimated wholes are outlined below.

### **5.1.1 An Interanimation of Human Relations and the Physical Environment**

One of Seamon’s central positions is that the “co-constitutivity” of people and material things is fundamental to the process of creating places. In formulating this argument, he drew from Schutz (1962) who observed that “lived bodies belong to places and help constitute them just as simultaneously places belong to lived bodies and depend on them” (327). Seamon (2013) elaborated on this idea with the concept of interanimation which he described in the following way:

Through bodily encounters and actions, the person or group contributes to the particular constitution of a place as, at the same time, those encounters and actions contribute to the person’s or group’s sense of lived involvement and identification with that place. In short, lived bodies and places interanimate each other. (151)

In this study, participants’ responses pointed to campuses being experienced in very similar ways. The 23 responses reflected their perceptions of the campus as the product of people interacting with the physical environment. This was evident in the way participants verbally described their campus, depicted it in their mental maps as well as in how they practiced it. Despite attending two different colleges with vastly differing physical profiles as well as significantly different student bodies, participants at both campuses presented a common pattern of noting both the physical and the relational aspects of their campus while also demonstrating how one supports the other. The unstructured format of the walk-alongs combined with the free-

form mental mapping processes gave participants carte blanche to express this in their own way. In the next section, I demonstrate some of the many individual ways that participants conceived the campus as an interanimated place. Short excerpts of the transcripts of their walk-alongs and, in some cases, their mental maps are used to illustrate particular ideas. Although not all participants' mental maps are featured in this chapter, with their permission, each participant's mental map appears somewhere in the dissertation. To ensure anonymity, I have changed identifying information about each person. Starting with David, I begin to introduce you to the 23 participants in the study.

#### **5.1.1.1 David**

David, a 12-year veteran of the Campus in the Woods, paused during our walk-along to inquire what I meant when I used the word campus, asking:

So when you say campus – you mean the actual building and layout, or combination building, layout, and people?

In response to my request for his opinion on that, he shortly and succinctly defined the campus as a product of both its physical and relational elements, stating:

Location, layout, buildings, staff who are connected to the students for sure. Staff who are not as connected to the students, not so much.

David's description highlights his idea of campus as a place created, in part, by staff who enliven the physical environment through their dedication to helping students. For him, staff that don't actively help students aren't as much a part of the campus as those who do. His viewpoint was informed not just as an employee of the college, but as one of its students. David began taking courses as a young adult in the 1980s well before the current campus was built. He later returned as a mature adult intent on completing his degree. Having just celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, he spoke passionately about the college's role in serving students. He explained further:

I think because they don't see the students on a daily basis like we do, they don't get that same connection of why we're here. And so a lot of times we ask for something done, it's like 'we don't do that because we don't do that for students.' But it's sort of, you could do a little bit more.

In following-up, David reinforced his view that the presence of students was important to his idea of campus. As he made a point of emphasizing, a key theme in all of the participants' responses was the notion that campuses are as much about people being in and practicing place, as the physical environment. The mental mapping exercise allowed participants to creatively express their insight as to the ways people and the physical environment worked in tandem to create campuses. For example, some participants drew the campus as a physical environment and then verbally described the social interactions which enlivened it. Others drew the campus as relational space and then described the ways they felt the physical environment contributed or did not contribute, to those interactions. Sharon's mental mapping process was a telling example of the former.

#### **5.1.1.1 Sharon**

Sharon was one of three participants who lived nearby in the residential communities adjacent to the Campus in the Woods. In her mid 50s, she was in an administrative support role at the college. During our time together, she spoke enthusiastically and intimately about the place where she had spent the last eight years. Her narrated mental mapping exercise yielded a campus composed of people actively constructing place through practice (Figure 5.1).

While her drawing depicted an aerial view of the campus' buildings connected by pathways, she supplemented that image with vivid details about the activities that the buildings helped to generate. Each of the lettered circles in squares on her map denoted a building on

campus. While drawing, she explained the significance of each to the practices that occurred there:

I guess I'm just kind of showing where all the buildings are. And then I just thought that I could explain it perhaps maybe not in the drawing, but maybe like that my building is obviously is my second home. And then, I'm just sort of thinking about as I walk to Building R, and I think about all of the artists and um, the Building S just being behind it [where they are]. I think about some of the crazy talent that we have had at the College with respect to some of the faculty and students in the Arts Programs. Building D – yeah, well I think about all the student activity and sort of like this being the hub, and when it comes to September. Like right now, I'm looking forward to actually seeing the students again in September. I mean I love that activity and that the campus becomes alive again. And then also too, I think about some great colleagues in that building that I have. And then walking along, so I'm thinking about Building P and again just how proud I am of all our Nursing and our Health programming. Um, I think we have some great programs and these students do exceptionally well. Um, you know, I feel very proud. I also think about our international students and how that has changed the feel of the campus too, and when I say that, it's just really neat seeing all these multicultural students and I think that's really good for everybody. It's good for the college and it's good for our community. I think about Building T and of course I do like the food that our new food services offer and how you want a great meal and she does a great job. And then also too, again a lot of student activity around that area, so this is always really busy. And then, of course, from that building I always walk back behind Building D and of course we have our beautiful TTB Building, and I like how there's an area there where if you want to play frisbee .... I know I've seen a net up there, and it provides some sort of outdoor activity for our students.

Sharon's narration is interesting in the way she placed herself dynamically within the campus, moving through it as she described walking through her regular routine and reporting on what she saw. Her comments followed the typical route that she took to reach each building and outlined the ways that her walk connected her to the people in each of the spaces. Each building represented the different students, colleagues, and activities that were situated there. Yet just as her narrated map indicated, for Sharon, the campus was all of these things put together.

Seamon's (2013) concept of the interanimation of people and the physical environment comes

alive in her statement. As I outline in the next section, Tamika used a different tactic to express the same idea.

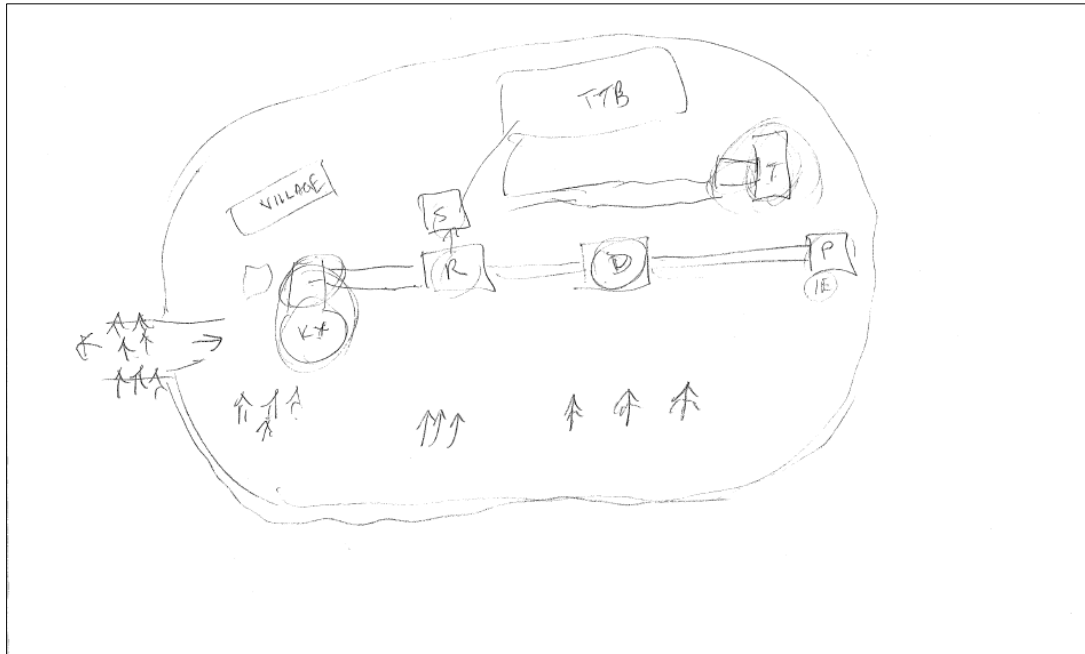


Figure 5.1. Sharon's Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods: Buildings and Pathways

### 5.1.1.2 Tamika

While also focusing on the physical campus, Tamika, a 51-year-old student and part-time employee at the same college, took a symbolic approach in drawing her mental maps of the Campus in the Woods. When she first arrived on campus 16 years ago, the college was her first experience with higher education and she chose to take coursework locally while parenting her young child. She was the only participant who drew two separate maps to demonstrate the two different ways that she felt that the campus was created by people practicing place (Figures 5.2 and 5-3). In her first map, Tamika depicted the ring walk that surrounds the campus (Figure 5.2). The ring walk is a paved pathway that horseshoes around the perimeter of the Campus in the

Woods. It is a popular walking and biking trail for nearby residents as well as the college community.

For Tamika, the ring walk with its connecting pathways radiating from it, represented the community of people and ideas that defined the campus. She described her first map of the campus in this way:

I feel like it's this big circle. There's our ring walk that we just did but it is also kind of a way to... I guess it's the community of it. Like that whole metaphorical circle of things but it is also open, so there's ins and outs, right?

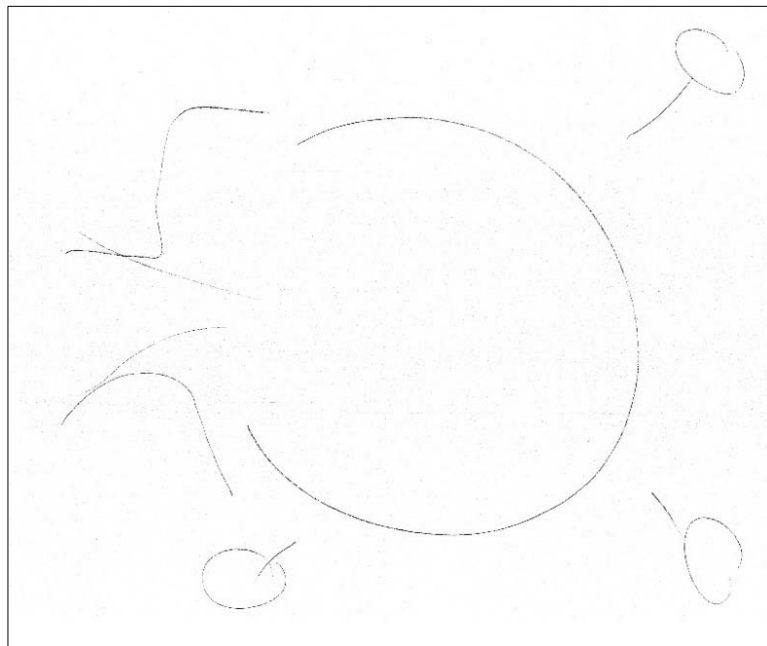


Figure 5.2. Tamika's Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods: A Metaphorical Open Circle

During her walk-along, Tamika took me on her regular jaunt around the campus' ring walk. Like Sharon, Tamika is a nearby resident of the campus and walking around the campus was something she did several times a day, including prior to work and after dinner as well fitting in a few rounds during the day when she could. For Tamika, walking around the campus was

one of her ways of joining the circle of community that she envisioned on the map. She elaborated:

There are lots of times as I see [colleagues] go for walks some days when it is break time, we'll go and get a walk in. Because I like it. Plus, I'm trying to get a little more exercise. Plus, just having that little path is nice... sometimes I see a lot of staff on it and I just enjoy the walk, actually.

Tamika drew a second map to elaborate on her idea of the campus as a socially and culturally safe community where people are free to be themselves (Figure 5.3). On the left-hand side of the map, she depicted herself as an outlier in her town, drawing herself as a triangle amidst a group of circles. The house in the middle illustrated her idea of the campus as a diversity of learners who engaged in open discussions. The series of interconnected doors on the right-hand side of the map signified her view of the campus as a place that 'opens doors' to both conversation and future opportunity. She narrated her drawing with these words:

[I'm drawing] the culture of the college just because it was a literal life changer for me, walking in and finding that I could fit somewhere, you know. I would be in situations in [my town] where I had no one that I could really talk to, or I'd use a word like apathetic, twice in two months people called me on that, like what does that mean or who do you think you are? It's not that big a word, right, or a hard word... but I found that I didn't really have anybody, so I just kept trying to fit with these social groups where I never really felt like... there's nothing wrong with them so what's wrong with me. Then I got into classes where I could say things and other people... you know, you could have actual discussions with people about stuff and no one looked at you like you were weird or something, so I finally felt like, whew, this is where I need to be, and it was at the college, so taking courses. So that's what I meant by fitting. There is a place where you can have a voice and even if people don't agree with you, it's okay.

Like David, Tamika's understanding of the campus was as much about people as it was about the physical environment. In referencing the way each interanimate the other, Tamika drew the physical environment as symbolic of the practices it sustained. Her drawing of the ringwalk

represented a community of learners who practiced a culture of openness and tolerance through the free expression of their ideas and opinions. They also physically practiced this community by walking the ringwalk together. This theme of practicing community also emerged in my walk-along with Courtney, a 21-year-old university transfer student at the Urban Campus.

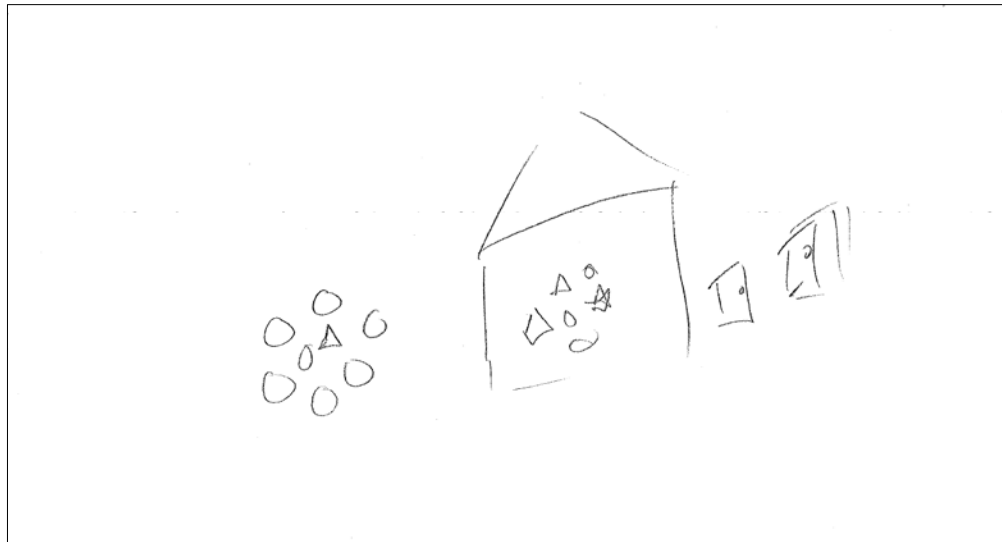


Figure 5.3. Tamika's Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods: Diversity in Place

### 5.1.1.3 Courtney

Courtney first visited the Urban Campus as a child attending language school, a time of which she has only vague recollections. Having just left the campus to complete her degree at a local university, after a semester away, Courtney's first visit back to campus was her memory-filled visit with me. Like Tamika, Courtney also represented the campus as a community, identifying the campus' central concourse as its heart. Her mental map of the campus featured the physical places that she frequented the most which were the concourse, staircases, and classrooms (Figure 5.4).

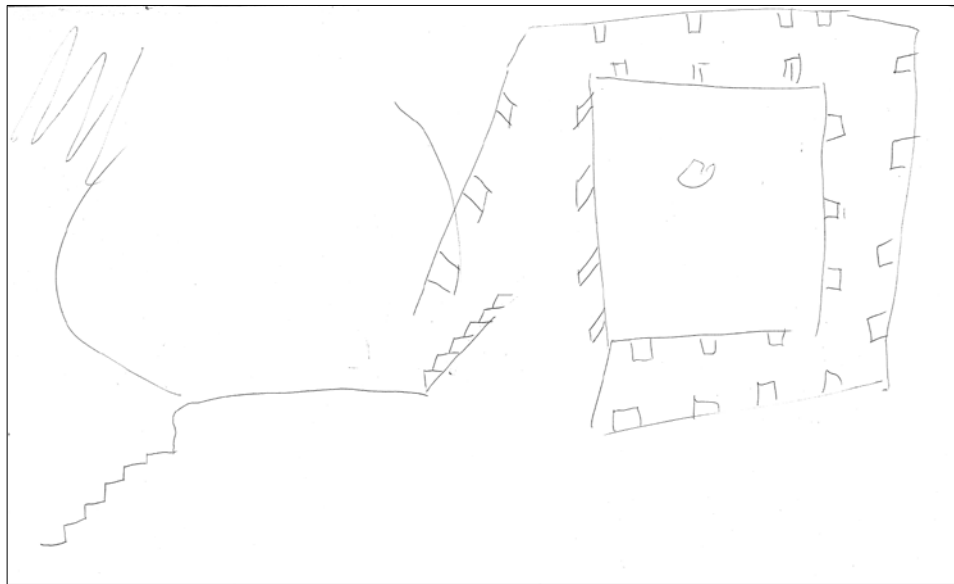


Figure 5.4. Courtney's Mental Map of the Urban Campus: Concourse, Stairs and Classrooms

She drew a circle on the left-hand side of her map to represent the main concourse/gathering space at the campus, noting:

This is like the courtyard and I guess this is where I spent the most time so this is how I think of the campus. Cause I usually just went like through here to my classes or to the Geo lab or whatever.

She also described symbolism of the space in the following way:

So I remember when there was like a gold medal hockey game. We all like skipped class like... Like everyone left their class, and we all like sat here. That was a good experience. Like everyone was out here, it was really nice.

As a space where students could gather and do the same activity in large groups, the concourse represented her idea of the campus as community of learners coming together to do the same activity.

As the examples above indicate, while Sharon, Tamika, and Courtney each depicted physical space in their mental maps, they did so as a way of illustrating the activities that

occurred there. Each told a different story about how the physical environment brought them together with others, creating the campus through activity. In contrast, other participants in the study used their mental maps to describe their campus as relational space supported or not, by the physical environment. Greg, Rob, and Maggie were among those participants who drew images to express them as relational spaces. However, like Sharon, Tamika, and Courtney, each offered a similar observation about the way people and the material environment interanimated each other.

#### **5.1.1.4 Greg**

After a dozen years away, Greg returned to the Urban Campus as a mature student intent on completing a degree after many years in the workforce and some false starts at other schools. At 35 and back at college for the last four years, the campus was the physical embodiment of learning for him. His mental map illustrated the tension between social expectations and critical thinking that defined his learning experience on campus. Figure 5.5 shows his depiction of the Urban Campus as a relational space.

Greg described his drawing in the following way:

The way I view it is the straight lines would be society. This is how you want to.... this is how we all have to react in society or we're trained to be in society. And the circles indicate, the squiggles indicate your freedom to choose your own path.

You have a mix of everything here. They are training you in class to think this way (points to straight lines). At the same time, they're training you to think like that, critical (points to squiggles). Everything is about the learning.

He was the only participant who noted the importance of on-campus informal social interactions to his learning. To capitalize on this, he made walking through the campus part of his daily practice and often stopped to observe others. While drawing his map, he remarked:

You can learn from the littlest thing on, you know. You can learn from the littlest incident on campus. You can learn from different people, everything. The whole thing is about learning.

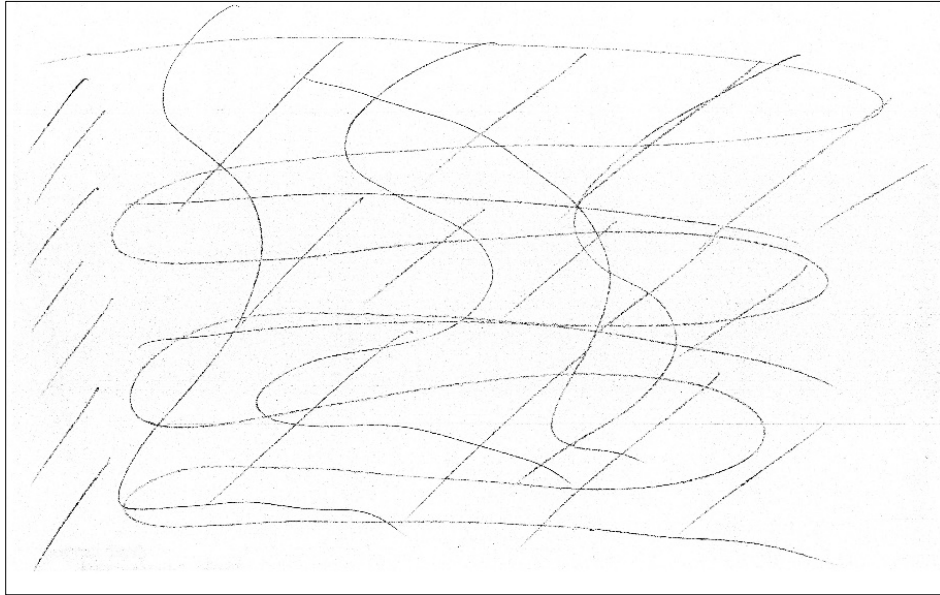


Figure 5.5. Greg's Mental map of the Urban Campus: Society and Freedom

He went on to stress the importance of the physical setting in supporting this learning environment, going on to say:

But, the physical environment does mean something. If the campus was ugly, it wouldn't be as enjoyable. [University S] is an ugly campus, it's not enjoyable. It's so big and it's so disjointed. This is a compact area so it's enjoyable.

In Greg's view, by bringing people together in enjoyable and compact spaces, the Urban Campus contributed to the college's purpose of promoting learning. Learning was a theme that also emerged in Maggie's walk-along. Her perspective was informed by her role as a faculty member at the Campus in the Woods.

### 5.1.1.5 Maggie

While Greg’s mental map of the Urban Campus centred on his learning process, Maggie’s map focused on the people who in her mind made the Campus in the Woods a learning place (Figure 5.6). A senior librarian with decades of experience and a deep commitment to her work, Maggie’s mental map of the campus shone a light on its people, their demeanour and the quality of the educational experience at the college.

As she described it, the happy face spoke to the friendliness of the people on campus, the stars represented the quality of the educational experience, and the pluses were there because, “I think we do our work really, really well.” She elaborated by describing the campus as “inviting and welcoming,” noting features of the physical environment that supported a “happy” learning environment for students:

The staff are friendly and helpful; the environment is pleasant. Students gather to learn, to visit, to collaborate, and connect. The natural light and windows, views to the outdoors, neutral colors, modern glass doors on study rooms, ease of getting around, signage, artwork [make the environment pleasant]. Student spaces – furniture, chairs on casters, tables – all movable, study rooms with multi-media projectors and white boards, and Skype technology in a convenient, central location contributes to student satisfaction. Café counter and stools add a casual feel.



Figure 5.6. Maggie’s Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods: A Happy Place

For Maggie, the campus was created by helpful, friendly people working in a happy, pleasant environment that was at least, in part, fostered by the architecture and interior design. However, where Maggie saw the physical campus supporting her work at the Campus in the Woods, Bruce had a more critical view of the Urban Campus.

#### **5.1.1.6 Bruce**

Like David, Bruce was another participant in the study whose time at his college preceded the current campus. A long-service administrator at the Urban Campus, his views of it were informed by the myriad of locations where he had had office space. Yet after 25 years on campus, he remarked, “I associate [the campus] more with the people and the social environment rather than the physical space.” Still during our walk-along, he was very observant of the physical space and his mental map depicted himself in interanimation with the material environment (Figure 5.7). To illustrate this, he drew five separate images of himself on campus. Starting clockwise from the top left, these included: being present in the concourse, sitting with colleagues around a meeting room table, reading in the library, working out at the gym, and his feeling of being in one of the college’s spaces. His depiction of these five different images was, in part, intended to signal his perception of a disjointed campus. He noted:

Yeah, so even though they’re physically very, very close the image that comes with it is dramatically different. And focused on activities. Even though there is a unity and cohesion to the architecture that very few post-secondary institutions have, because they have a whole bunch of buildings of different eras and different purposes, I don’t experience it as a single cohesive unit.

He went on to describe some of the other ways that he felt the physical environment affected his perceptions of the campus. On the bottom left of his map, he drew a submarine to describe the experience of being in one of the campus’ hallways. He related:

That's a submarine, and that's almost the sense I get walking down to the print shop and down in the depths and this strange feeling.

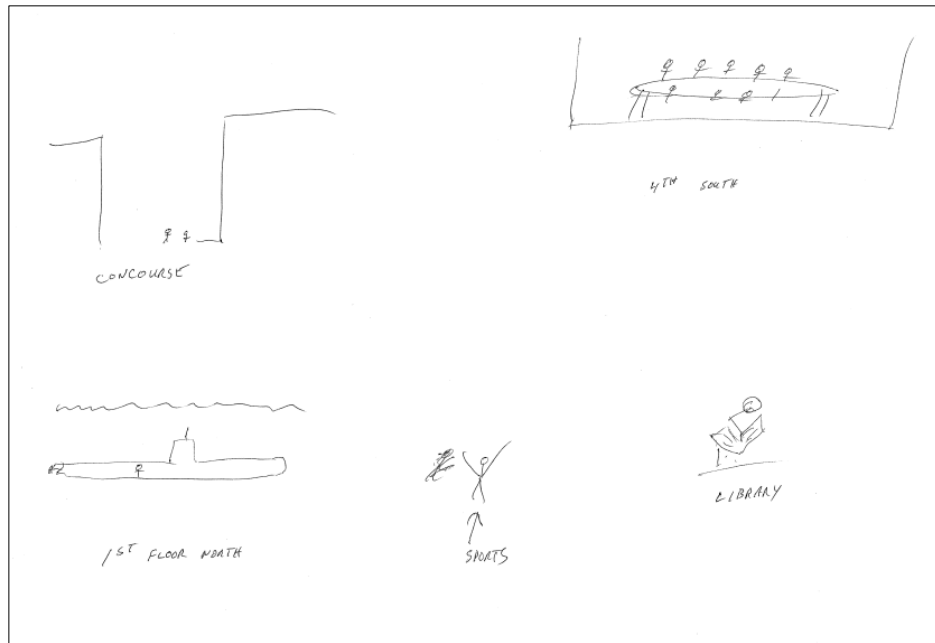


Figure 5.7. Bruce's Mental Map of the Urban Campus: People and Place

In contrast, his image on the top right of his map represented the camaraderie of the college community that he felt was encouraged by spaces which brought people together. He remarked:

I guess where we just were, where the boardroom was, that's actually where I associate a lot of the social interaction around the boardroom table or in meeting or...that kind of thing.

His images of being present in the concourse, of jumping in the gym, and of reading in the library, rounded out his idea of the campus as a set of activities and relationships supported and, in some cases, not supported, by the physical environment. Taken together, this reflects his idea of the campus as an experience where people and the material environment are in interanimation. Campus as an experience was a theme that other participants in the study expressed more explicitly. In the following section, I introduce three of them.

### 5.1.2 Campus as a Personal Experience

One of the ideas underpinning Seamon's (2013) concept of person-or-people-experiencing place is that place is constantly being created by people whose behaviours are enmeshed with the physical environment. Place can thus be thought of as an experience. Some participants in the study were explicit in defining the campus in terms of their own personal experience. For example, Natalie, a 20-year-old second year Arts student in her last semester at the Urban Campus, summed up her feelings about it in this way:

It's a good campus, like could be worse. My friend at [another local college] said that he had a really bad experience there which was kind of bad. Yeah. But I think I've had a good experience here.

Brayden, another Arts student at the same campus in his early 20s, elaborated on the experience theme. When we talked, Brayden was contemplating a change in major and was uncertain where his studies would take him next. While his remarks referenced characteristics of the physical elements that comprise campus, he placed greater emphasis on his experience in that environment:

I think of campuses as being an academic space that is focused around specific buildings. I see it more as like a collection of what's happened here in relation to me. I think more of it as more of my experiences here over periods of time so like, for example, I might think of it how was it when I was in this one semester compared to like the second semester here. So, for example, like my first semester here was less stressful than the second semester, or I might think of it as this month was... let's continue with the stress thing; like this month was less stressful than that month or this month felt brighter in the campus than that one just by like how much light comes in there or something, and more along those lines of periods of time rather than any one specific point in time.

Paul, a mature student who returned to studies at the Campus in the Woods having previously earned two degrees elsewhere, also saw the campus in terms of his experience over

time. His mental map (Figure 5.8) clearly illustrated this idea. As he drew, Paul made the following comments:

I'm probably going to do two years. 2013 and 2016 right now. I hate doing that, but probably emptiness. So a sun in 2013, getting new hope and everything. So kind of an artistic sun right there, saying new beginning and everything like that. 2016 probably a circle just because of things. 2016 it's just winding down, I'm not feeling it any more.

He elaborated by saying:

If you would have asked me this two years ago, it would have been a close knit community. Right now I'm going to pick empty, because it feels empty. A few years ago there was a whole bunch of people that wanted to do stuff on campus. A whole bunch of people that were running events or doing stuff. Now it's almost to the point where nothing happens here.

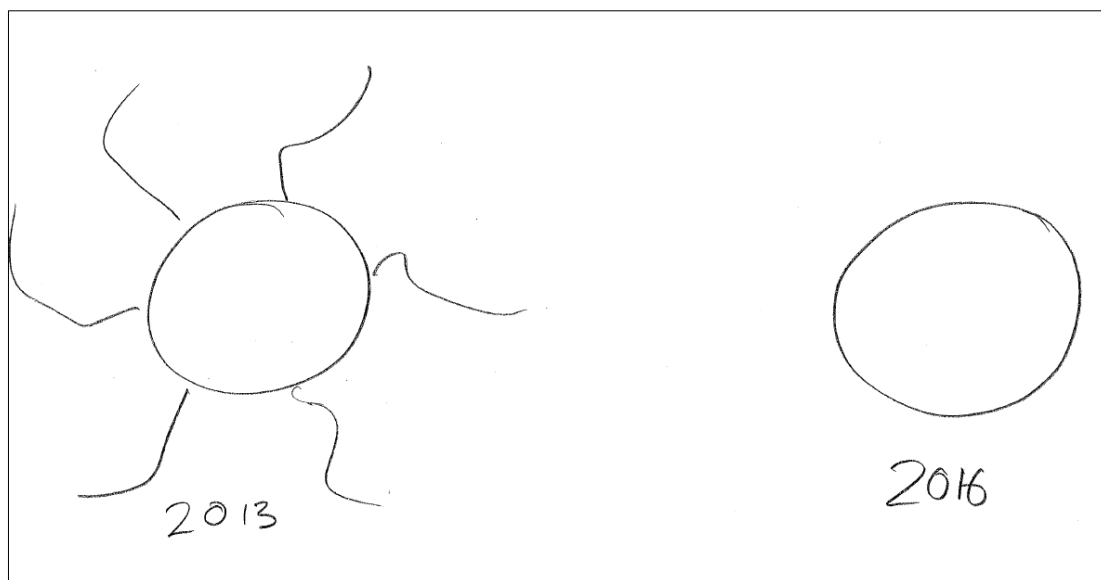


Figure 5.8. Paul's Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods: Hope to Emptiness

As Seamon (2013) posited, person-or-people-experiencing-place nicely conceptualizes participants' perceptions of the campus as an interanimated combination of material things and human relations that they often described as a set of experiences. An integral part of his

concept is the presence of the lifeworld or “the typical taken-for-granted context of everyday experience of which, most of the time, we are unaware” (Seamon 2013, 143). In the remainder of the chapter, I consider the ways that participants’ uses of the campuses were indicative of the concept of the lifeworld.

## **5.2 The Lifeworld of Campus Users**

As Chapter 3 discusses, the concept of the lifeworld is core to the phenomenological worldview and, as such, it is integral to Seamon’s (2013) concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place. He described the lifeworld in the following way:

Though its particular constitution and significance shift from situation to situation, the lifeworld is the latent, normally unexamined givenness of experiences, situations, events, and places. The lifeworld typically goes forward without self-conscious intervention or purposive design; it incorporates an unnoticed, unprompted expectedness. (145)

He went on to outline people’s experience of it:

Much, but not all, of the lifeworld is such repetitive, pedestrian routines unfolding predictably with no or minimal regulatory guidance. Most of the time, lifeworlds just happen, and this automatic unfolding is mostly the case even for the more conscious behaviours and willed actions that are a taken-for-granted portion of more deliberate lifeworld goings-on. (145)

Conceptually, the lifeworld describes an aspect of the human experience of living, i.e., one that is unnoticed, regular, and routine. While forming part of the phenomenological worldview, the lifeworld is also an object of study (von Eckartsberg 1998). As Seamon (2013) observed: “[t]here is a lifeworld for each experiencing person and there is also a lifeworld of the place or situation that houses those lifeworlds” (145). Individual lifeworlds are, in part, made up of their specific behaviours and routines which Seamon (1979) called body-routines and time-space routines. Places too have a lifeworld based on his notion of the place-ballet, which refers to individual lifeworlds collectively coming together in one physical environment. Place, Seamon

(2014b) argued, “holds lifeworlds together spatially and environmentally, marking out centers of human meaning, intention, and comportment” (12).

In the following sections, I will demonstrate the presence of the lifeworld beginning with participants’ observations of the unconscious, unnoticed, and routine ways that they used their campus.

### **5.2.1 Observing the Lifeworld: In the Participants’ Own Words**

As the findings demonstrate, Seamon’s concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place is a fitting way to understand the multiple, individual ways that people perceived and practiced their campus as an indivisible whole. As Chapter 3 discusses, person-or-people-experiencing-place supposes the existence of a lifeworld where people develop normally unnoticed, regular, and repetitive routines as a way of interpreting the world of which they are part (Smith 2009b). Phenomenologists contend that body-subjects unconsciously, but intentionally, give meaning to the world through these routine behaviours. Body-subject, as defined by Seamon and Nordin (1980), refers to:

the inherent capacity of the body to direct behaviours of the person intelligently, and thus function as a special kind of subject that expresses itself in a pre-conscious way usually described by words such as, mechanical, automatic, habitual, and involuntary. (36)

Seamon (2013) further elaborated in arguing that:

Through a repertoire of unself-conscious but intentional gestures and movements seemingly interconnected, the body-subject automatically offers up the behaviours and activities presupposed by and sustaining the person’s typical lifeworld. (149)

Just as person-or-people-experiencing place described the ways participants conceived the campus, the concept of the lifeworld aptly characterised their use of it. Our walk-alongs prompted 14 of the 23 participants (eight at the Urban Campus and six at the Campus in the

Woods) to note this directly. Each took time during the walk-along to highlight both the presence and the intensity of what phenomenologists call the lifeworld in their day-to-day experiences of the campuses. Participants used their own words to describe the way that their day “automatically unfolded” in a “normally unnoticed” manner which characterizes the lifeworld (Seamon 2013, 145).

This was the case whether the user had spent under a year, or 25 years, on a campus. For example, 27-year-old Travis, who had just reached his six month anniversary as a new employee of the Urban Campus, observed his lifeworld in this way:

While I mean, it's..., it's kind of..., I do this sort of, the same sort of thing everyday. So I guess I'm not really thinking about the space so much. It's kind of..., kind of ..., just go on autopilot towards the lab. You kind of don't really think about what you're doing, it's just sort of something that you've been doing for long enough that you don't really need to think about what you're doing. You just sort of head down the hall open up the lab and start, start going at it. [laughs] I'm not really thinking about anything per se, just heading into the lab.

Long time users of the same campus, like Ethan, who at 50 had spent almost all of his adult life on campus as a faculty member and as former student, also remarked:

And for me, I've just been here so long that I enjoy the familiarity. I know the corridors almost intuitively now. And I can pretty much walk to any place I need to with my eyes closed. [It's] automatic habit now. To me, it's the combination of safety, familiarity, and predictability that I find enmeshed in my daily routine here and within the building.

Similarly, Gerry, who at 64 years-of-age, had walked the Campus in the Woods for over 25 years, as a student, an employee, and for recreation, described his route around the campus in the following way:

I don't think I do decide, I just go. I don't believe it is a conscious decision, although I usually do come back this way. I don't think it is a conscious thought for how I get back. Walk through the path. Or sometimes I'll come the other way depending on which way I... Again, there is no conscious decision on which way I do the circle.

These three examples from three different participants reflect body-subjects creating and re-creating place in intentional, if not conscious, ways. While no two individuals had exactly the same routine, they all had a routine. As the previous examples indicate, they performed this routine without much conscious thought. Each participants' routine was uniquely their own and based on a number of factors specific to the individual. For example, routines differed in terms of where participants arrived on campus, the specific classrooms or offices that they needed to visit, the places they chose to eat at as well as the routes they took to go from one place or another. However, despite this variation, there was a typical way that all of the participants came to establish their routine. There were also shared characteristics of the routines themselves. This was the case irrespective of whether the participant was a student or employee or the campus that they used. In the next section, I outline some of the ways that the campus is created through these routine practices. Together, these comprise some common characteristics of participants' lifeworlds.

### **5.2.2 Making Space into Place: A Lifeworld of Campus**

The campus does not form part of people's lifeworlds as soon as they first step foot on it. Rather, the initial unfamiliarity of a new space disrupts the person's previous lifeworld. In their phenomenological study of recreation places, Fishwick and Vining (1992) observed that "places are sensed as a combination of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, people, personal experiences, and in the context of other places" (61). This proved to also be the case in the present study. With time and experience, the campus became part of each participants' new lifeworld. Taken together, the responses of all 23 of them suggest that there is a common trajectory to this experience.

The campus, initially perceived as overwhelming, was interpreted in terms of past experience and practiced based on need. With time, this practice became routine. As participants demonstrated a remarkable tendency to only go where they needed to go and to use the same routes to get there, I call this a functional and transactional routine. Participants' routines were functional in that the composite activities were practical, needs-based, and focused on participants' main reason for being on campus. This usually meant attending class or work. Unless they had a school or work related reason to be on campus, participants almost never visited the campus for social or cultural reasons. Similarly, participants' routines were transactional in that they approached the performance of their routine in a business-like manner and rarely stayed on campus longer than was needed to get the day's tasks done. Once established, the presence of familiar faces reinforced participants' practice of their routine. Thus once their routine was set, participants did not often vary from it. In short, what was at first perceived as big and overwhelming became small as users gained familiarity with the faces and spaces of campus. I describe this process of establishing and practicing the lifeworld of the campus next.

#### **5.2.2.1 A 'Big and Overwhelming' Campus**

Although participants frequently used the words small and compact to describe the two college campuses being studied, the same people also described their first experiences of them as being big and overwhelming. An unknown physical environment and the presence of unfamiliar faces contributed to this sentiment as did the absence of knowledge about the culture of the campus and one's place within it. For example, Travis who had just earned a Master's degree at a nearby university of 35,000 students, characterised the Urban Campus as "small" yet "still a little bit overwhelming and different than what I was used to."

Participants often chose the word big to describe their first experience of the campus. This reflected not only their initial perceptions of it but the enormity of being at college as a new student, employee or visitor. Natalie described her first impression of the Urban Campus in this way:

It was very big, I was a little nervous because I was just out of high school, I was just like okay, this college is kind of a big thing.

William, a 21-year-old community user who first visited the Campus in the Woods as a high school student, also used the word big in recalling his first experience of it. He said:

Well, actually it was a little bit scary just because everything is bigger. It seems kind of funny now because I'm at [University V] now and everything, but it's got like the big open hallways and the walkways going from building to building and although we're grown-up kids and everything, there are just so many classrooms and all that stuff.

Later in our conversation he remarked:

It definitely seems a lot smaller [now].

Thus the same campus was often described as both big and small by users. This seeming incongruity has a ready explanation. Although participants described both campuses as being physically small, because their experiences of them are personally big, the campuses also first appeared to them as big places. Paul captured his initial perception of the Campus in the Woods apropos to this sentiment:

It was big. Not as big as [University I], and not as big as [University F] where I had been before, but big and scary. You know, the thought of being a 30-year-old coming back to school and looking around and saying, "what am I doing here, why don't I have a career or anything like that?"

Over time and through experience, the campus became smaller to its users. Having spent 23 years on campus as both a student and employee, Linda, at 47-years-of-age, observed the Campus in the Woods from the perspective of time:

It looks a lot smaller to me now than it used to look. It used to be so massive looking.

Ethan made similar remarks of the Urban Campus:

And fundamentally [it is] the same building with some alterations over 30 plus years. But I remember originally looking at the concourse thinking it was big steps. The concourse area seemed quite large at that time. Now, of course, it sort of seems a bit smaller to me but that's probably a reflection of how many years I have been here. It's fairly routine to me.

### **5.2.2.2 Achieving Familiarity through the Lens of Past Experience**

As Ethan described it, familiarity with the campus – that is, its people, physical environment, and practices – accounted for this change in perspective. The process by which participants achieved this comfort level with the campus also followed a common path. Almost without exception, participants noted that they gained ease with their campus by using their own past experiences of educational institutions. For recent high school graduates, the campus was compared to their secondary school. For the rest, the campus was frequently compared to those of other higher education institutions of which they had knowledge. It is often assumed that community college students, many of whom are first-generation learners, have little to no experience being on a higher education campus. This was not the case in this study where everybody had some prior knowledge of at least one other campus. More and more students are arriving at community college having already taken some previous higher education. And those without often have some experience of a campus, perhaps having visited for recreation or as part of a previous high school-arranged visit.

As a result, participants discussed the campus in comparison to others to which they had been. These experiences informed their expectations of where specific places such as classrooms and services ought to be located on campus. This finding corresponds with Ossa-Richardson

(2014) who observed: “[t]hose who look cannot help seeing the old in the new; experience, then, inevitably enriches a built place with meaning beyond or even counter to intention” (153). A clash between assumption and reality frequently led to students gaining the impression that the campus was confusing. For example, Brayden arrived at the Urban Campus having previously taken courses at the college’s other site. He observed the difference in this way:

This campus immediately appeared to me as like, this is not immediately apparent where anything is.

In making these comparisons, participants revealed their expectations of a higher education campus. Here they made specific reference to the characteristics that did and did not contribute to their becoming familiar with their current one. For example, 31-year-old Mikayla who had decided to return to school after a life-changing car accident, spoke to the way staff helped to ease her transition to the Campus in the Woods:

So I remember coming to the campus and seeing where we’re sitting right now, seeing this beautiful campus and I previously went to, it was [University I] so I was used to a very large spread out campus that I felt didn’t really have a lot of personality so I remember coming to this big building with the beautiful facade and going in and talking to the academic advisors and just having a really good experience compared to [the university]. I just like the size of it. It is comfortable. It is welcoming. That is one of the things that I really like about this campus to me, it is personal.

Contrasting campuses also allowed participants to highlight the characteristics that they felt signalled institutional intentions for how to use their current one. For example, Brayden described his impressions of the Urban Campus in this way:

At like [another of the college’s campuses] I would be much more conducive to saying like, “Oh yeah, it’s a place you can stay and study too.”

Brayden cited both the presence of concrete and the absence of relaxing spaces as contributing to this perception:

I don't dislike concrete as a major thing inherently. Like, a lot of concrete buildings I quite like, but that one is just, it felt encapsulated but...I mean sometimes encapsulation is good, it lets you like put your field of privacy up, but that one it just felt...not smothering but just not conducive to comfort and to rest. Like I kind of want to be able to rest a tiny bit when I'm learning, like that's not restful but you kind of make a proxy for it and that area just didn't strike me as a place that you could do that, especially between a lot of classrooms they are just concrete, concrete, like four walls of concrete really and so it's...or just four walls, no windows, and like, I like this. I like having some plant life and some sunlight and being able to look out and see something outside.

At both campuses, participants compared their present campus to ones they've previously visited, both favourably and unfavourably, using previous experience as a guide to how current spaces should be used.

Sometimes, the purpose of a space was not clear to participants. A frequently cited example was the glassed-in area on the main floor of the Urban Campus (Figure 5.9). The "Fishbowl", as it is known colloquially, is a very prominent and defining feature of the Urban Campus. Eleven of the 13 participants there mentioned it during our walk-alongs. Built in 2011, it is a relatively new addition to the campus. A glass-walled, curvi-linear structure that is peppered with bright colour and architectural flourishes, the Fishbowl has a striking presence on the otherwise brown and grey modernist campus. Consisting of tables, chairs, and a few soft seating areas, it otherwise gives no clues as to its intended use.

College publications described it both as a student lounge and as a multi-purpose building. Still there was no obvious signage in the space to this effect and participants referred to it by several names. The Fishbowl was the most common of these but participants also called it the Glassed-in Space, the Greenhouse, Safe Study Area, Bubble, and the Lion's Den. Figure 5.10 shows some student renderings of the space in their mental maps. Shortly after it was constructed, the college held a contest to find a suitable name for the space (Figure 5.11). As you

can see from the poster, the college simply described it as a “new building.” Despite it now being officially called the Lion’s Den, this was not well known amongst the participants.

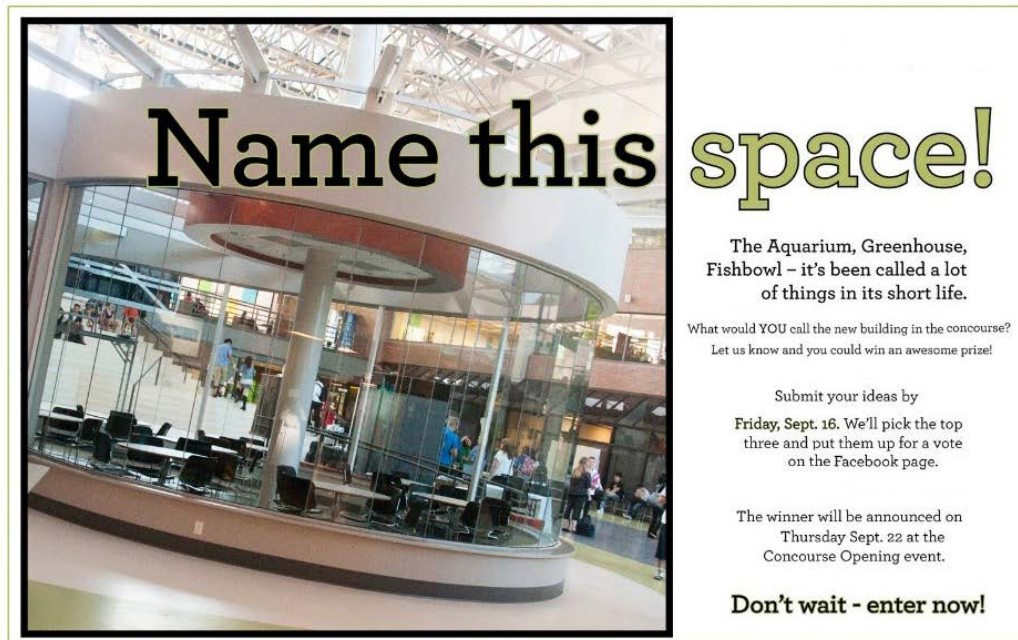


Source: image obtained from institution’s website

Figure 5.9. The Urban Campus: The Fishbowl



Figure 5.10. Three Student Renderings of the Fishbowl: Brayden, Travis, and Donna



Source: image obtained from institution's website

Figure 5.11. Naming Contest for the Urban Campus' Fishbowl

The most interesting aspect of the space was its apparent ambiguity. The Fishbowl presented to users in a physically vague way. That it looked unlike any other space on campus seemed to puzzle participants. A lack of noticeable signage on the structure contributed to this as did the absence of a clear front door (there were two entry points to the room). As a result, participants had very different perceptions of the purpose of the space. Here is a selection of their responses to it:

There's a safe study hall off to the corner there. (Travis)

I rarely use that area [indicates glassed in area]. I don't know [why]. Maybe, noise? (Greg)

I've been in this room before for a study session with some people we were working on a project. It's not really a good place to do group work because you feel bad talking even though you are allowed to talk. (Courtney)

In the summer it can get quite a bit warmer which is why they created the relatively new enclosed space inside the concourse to try and give a space for students and others that is a little more temperature regulated. (Ethan)

Well, there's the Fish bowl. Sometimes [I go there] when there are not that many people there to study, but usually there is. (Donna)

The Fish bowl or the Lion's den, the big glass enclosed communal space within the space, helps to give it a sense of activity. (Edward)

Yeah, they call it the Fishbowl. I don't go there often because usually like all the tables are full and it's just easier to do work elsewhere. (Natalie)

That little pod over there, there's the funny study pod... (Bruce)

Brayden most aptly characterised people's unclear understanding of the space in saying:

I'm just going to call that a bubble because I have not a clue what it's actually called and I don't think any student actually does.

Bruce elaborated on the same thought:

Yeah, so that just came, I don't know five or six years ago, and it was a conscious attempt by the college to humanize the space, but I'd look at it, and as we discovered today, it's not quite clear who's allowed to use it and what it's purpose is, and so we got into it and that was the first time that I'd actually sat down inside it. I walked by it hundreds of times probably, but that's the first time I've ever gone into it and realized quickly, oh, it's a study quiet space, it's not a social space. And so it took about ten seconds and I started feeling uncomfortable there.

Despite being one of the most prominent features on campus, there was a great deal of uncertainty about what the space was for and, therefore, who was permitted to use it. As the above selection of remarks indicate, it was characterised as a silent study space, a place for group projects, a student social place as well as a communal gathering place. As a result, while everyone referred to it, none of the participants in the study used it regularly. This example demonstrates not only the role that past experience plays in people's understanding of place, but the importance of familiarity to their use of them. The desire to be in recognizable spaces populated with friendly faces was one of the major drivers behind how participants used both the

Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods. This common pattern of using the two campuses can be thought of as a functional and transactional routine, which I explore further below.

### **5.2.3 Spatial Practice: Developing a Functional and Transactional Routine**

In the *Geography of the Lifeworld*, David Seamon (1979) spoke to the habitual ways that people practice space. As Chapter 3 discusses, he noted two particular types of routinized, individual behaviour: body-routine and time-space routine. Body-routines consist of “a set of integrated gestures, behaviors, and actions that sustain a particular task or aim, for example, preparing a meal, driving a car, doing home repair, and so forth” (55). He also identified time-space routines: “sets of more or less habitual bodily actions that extend through a considerable portion of time, for example, a getting-up routine or a weekday going-to-lunch routine” (55). Participants at both campuses demonstrated both of these routines in their daily practice of the campus. Examples were plentiful and included the way Judith opened her locker and stacked her belongings in exactly the same way everyday at the Urban Campus (a body-routine) to Travis’s morning drive to the parkade of the same campus where he parked his car in the same spot and climbed the same flights of stairs everyday to reach his office, reversing the pattern to go home (a time-space routine).

This study suggests that participants’ use of the two campuses can be thought of in terms of an even larger and longer pattern of activities which, after Seamon, I call a functional and transactional routine. The habitual, routine use of campuses has been observed elsewhere by Voela (2014) and Cooper Marcus and Wischemann (1990). However, while these studies linked the practice of routine to the creation of meaning, they did not elaborate on the process. As previously discussed, in this study, functional and transactional routine is intended to denote the way participants more or less went to the same places in the same, efficient order, day in, day

out, while on campus. Each person's routine was unique, occurring at different times of the day and comprised of: the activities that constituted his or her purpose for being on campus, the activities that directly supported that main purpose as well as the routes they took from one place to another. But each person consistently performed his or her routine almost exactly the same way, every day, with rare exceptions. This held true even for students whose daily schedule varied according to when their classes fell on the colleges' timetable matrix. Once students established a pattern of activity for each day of the week, they tended to repeat that pattern when that day fell on subsequent weeks, week in, week out. For example, students had a Monday routine, a Tuesday routine, and so on.

Several characteristics defined this functional and transactional routine. The first is that virtually all of the participants used their campus solely for their main reason for being there, i.e., school or work. This usually included engaging in one or two secondary activities that directly supported their primary reason for being on campus. Secondary activities included: getting a coffee, parking their car, studying and doing group projects in the library, and going to the Registrar's office. So students came to campus to take classes and employees came to work and not much more.<sup>5</sup> As Gerry, a student and employee at the Campus in the Woods, described it:

If I am taking a class at night of which there are sometimes, I will get here and no earlier than I have to, so it's not as if I'm showing up just to be on campus. I am here to take the course, not to enjoy the campus life.

Yolanda, who had recently retired from the Urban Campus after 40 years of working there, succinctly described what she and other employees do there:

Park your car. Take the elevator or the stairs. Go to your office. Turn around, go home.

Another telling example of this came from Paul at the Campus in the Woods. The following excerpt of my walk-along with him typified many of the interviews I had with participants at both campuses:

Me: So you normally come in at the bus loop here?

Paul: I do.

Me: And where do you normally go from there? Do you mind showing me?

Paul: Sure. I usually go either to the coffee shop right there or straight to Building T. where all the business courses are.

Me: Okay, alright. Can you show me what you would first do? Either you would go get coffee or you'd go into your building and go to classes?

Paul: Yeah, pretty much.

Me: Where else would you go?

Paul: That's pretty much where I go on campus. I don't really go anywhere else unless I have a meeting or anything like that.

Me: Okay. So by that do you mean you just go get a coffee, go to classes, and then turn around and then go home?

Paul: Exactly.

Me: Do you ever go around the campus?

Paul: No.

Me: No? You just come in and then you go?

Paul: I just come in and go.

Not only did participants limit their time on campus to activities that directly related to being at work or school, they travelled to the same places at roughly the same time every day, using the same routes to get to and from each location. The regularity of this is the second characteristic of the functional and transactional routine. In this way, participants' routines on

campus can be described as a set of connected time-space routines, or transactions, that began as soon as they left for campus and that ended when they went home or to their next destination.

Mikayla's mental map outlined her functional and transactional routine (Figure 5.12). She drew arrows on her drawing to outline her route.

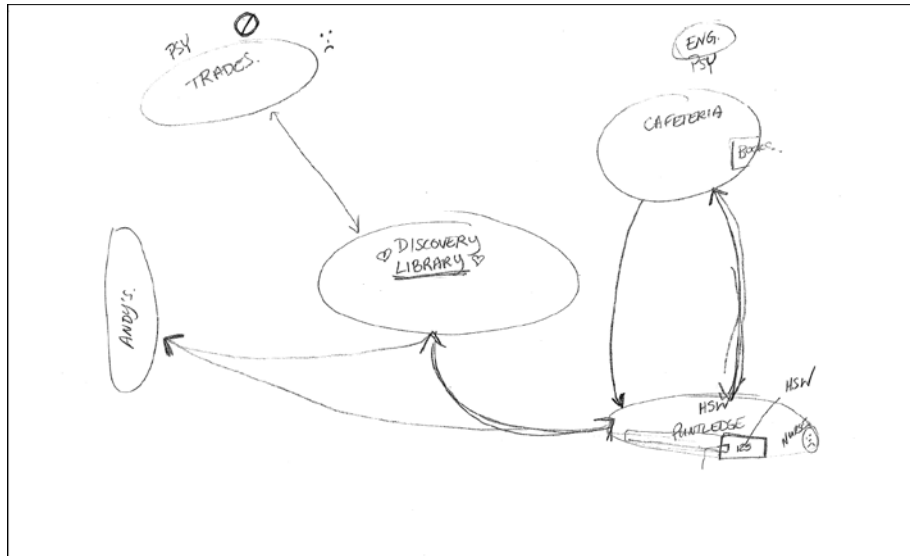


Figure 5.12. Mikayla's Mental Map of The Campus in the Woods: Her Daily Routine

Mikayla narrated as she drew her map:

I'm going to draw a map. So this is Puntledge. I'm not very good... When I think of the names of buildings, this is my building, this is the library building, this is the cafeteria, Trades, this is my husband's building, so... And then when I think of where I would travel it would often be like this, there's a back entrance to my building that I would use to the cafeteria, and then kind of go like that, and then go like this, so interesting how habitual we are. Very seldom I would go like this to the Trades building. Then I would either go like this ....., like this...

She went on to describe some of the individual time-space routines that made up her larger, functional and transactional routine. Here is an example of her visiting-the-library time-space routine:

I would go to the library. Yup. This door...I almost always fill my water bottle at the water station, which I love. There are water stations everywhere and I would rather – and I don't know if it is a psychological thing or what but I would rather fill my water bottle at one of those stations than at a tap in the bathroom. I don't know why but it just feels better. And then to the library. For some reason I was always drawn in to the left of the library, I didn't usually ever use the computers that were to the right or in the round area. I would go down here. Sometimes I would use the silent study room.

As was the case with Mikayla, participants overwhelmingly tended to carve out a limited group of places on campus which defined their use of it. This is the third characteristic of the functional and transactional routine of campus. Most participants had at least one other place that they went to in addition to their classrooms or workspace but for the most part these were few. Common places were the libraries, study spots, cafeterias, and coffee shops. Courtney, a student at the Urban Campus described it in this way:

I just came to class and then basically went home. I went to the library sometimes but that's it. Or the Geo lab actually, I went there a lot.

Employees at both campuses tended to frequent a few more places as part of their functional and transactional routine than students. Travis illustrated this in his rendering of the Urban Campus which depicted the parts of the campus that he visited during his day (Figure 5.13).

In addition to his office and adjacent spaces, Travis included the cafeteria, the Registrar's office, and Human Resources, Finance and Payroll in his map. As can be readily seen, his idea of the campus was limited to parts of the Urban Campus' second, third and fourth floors. He depicted these in isolation from the other things that were located there. In addition, his map entirely omitted the first, fifth, sixth, and seventh floors as well as the Student Union Building.

Participants' use of only a limited section of their campus was prevalent at both campuses. Ethan at the Urban Campus described it like this:

I never just wander up there on a whim. There's just certain spaces that I just never go to.

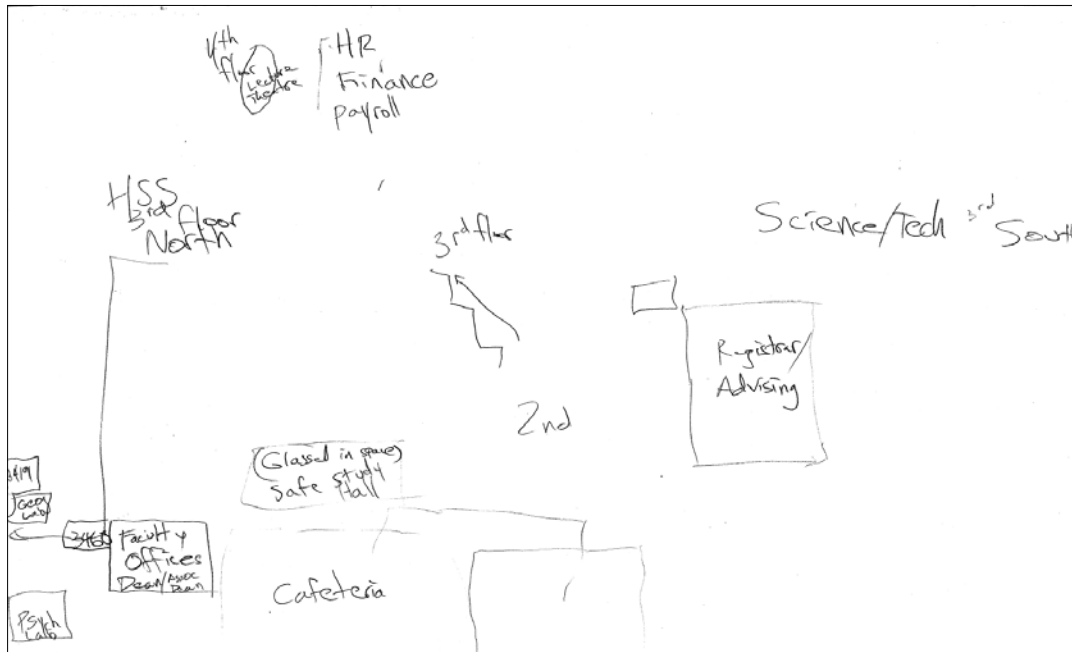


Figure 5.13. Travis's Mental Map of the Urban Campus: His Routine

Most participants in the study did not visit the vast majority of their campus. Because they only used their campus for the functional activities directly related to their primary reason for being there, i.e., attending classes or work, and once their daily routine was established, participants did not veer off it to visit other parts of the campus. This was true even for those who walked their campus for exercise and relaxation. This activity formed part of their routine. As Maggie at the Campus in the Woods phrased it:

On a typical day, I don't go much beyond my little world.

The consequence of having this pre-set routine was that unless they were already part of it, users tended not to explore the other places that the campus had to offer such as: the theatre,

gymnasium, fitness centre, art galleries, eateries, outdoor spaces, and study areas – amenities that typically characterise campus life. Participants also didn't return to campus at other times to attend social functions, events, lectures or athletic events. Tamika, from the Campus in the Woods and Ethan from the Urban Campus, were the two exceptions. Once their routine day was over, they spoke of coming back to campus to attend public lectures, to see student art shows, and to view films. However, all of the other participants described their time on campus as 'come and go.'

While there is a certain functionality to these routines, there is a certain territoriality to this behaviour as well. It is logical that busy people only travel to the places that they need to be, thus taking a functional approach to their use of the campus. This was a key theme in Edward's description of his time on the Urban Campus:

So most of my days are spent in one of those four offices or in whatever random office I happen to be meeting with a service partner or a colleague or a committee or we are having a conversation about a particular topic.

In contrast, Donna presented the territorial nature of her use of the campus:

For students in the Associate of Science program, we just stay in our little place and we don't know anything about the other areas of the school. So, this is the science department and here's kind of where I usually hang out with friends, when we're studying this is like our best place to study.

#### **5.2.3.1 A 'Small and Familiar' Place**

In her comments, Donna pointed to the fourth characteristic of participants' functional and transactional routines. This is that the presence and recognition of familiar faces reinforced the practice of each individual's routine within a limited area. Having established a functional and transactional routine that they regularly repeated, participants encountered others who were performing their own routine at exactly the same time. The scheduled regularity of each

institution's timetable matrix and workday facilitated this. By establishing the pattern of when classes are offered, the timetable matrix structured when and where students and faculty would go to and from class. Similarly, the standard workday at both colleges meant that many staff arrived at and left the campus at the same times. This created a campus place-ballet where the same individuals saw each other at the same times, in the same locations, almost every day.

The presence of familiar faces proved to be very attractive for participants who maintained their routine on the expectation of seeing people they recognized or knew. For example, although Edward brought his lunch to work each day, visiting the cafeteria formed part of his routine. As he described it:

I bring a lunch with me so I don't actually often buy food from the cafeteria but I will come in to grab some water or quickly grab something if I haven't got enough food with me, so I'll walk through and look around for people that I know or students that I know and I'll connect with them really briefly.

Similarly, Linda's daily walk to the Campus in the Woods from her nearby home incorporated places where she knew she would see familiar faces. She noted:

And since the Trades Building has been built, most people walk to the left of the Trades Building. I walk through it so I can say hi to the faculty when I come through in the mornings.

Familiarity with the faces sharing their space was a critical component of what made participants feel comfortable on campus. As Paula, an 52-year-old employee who had worked for 7 years at the Urban Campus noted:

It does feel like a place where you feel comfortable. You know people and they know you.

Courtney also spoke to the importance of familiar faces to feeling at ease at the Urban Campus. She described the Geography Lab in the following way:

I liked it here, it was like nice to be. I did my work that wasn't Geography here too. It was nice, it felt comfy. Like I said, you knew people here all the time.

Later in our walk-along, she commented in similar terms about the entire campus:

You have classes with all the same people when you go here. So you feel pretty comfortable, even if you are not like necessarily close with anyone. Like, you just feel comfortable around people here.

Recognizing and knowing the faces around them was also an integral part of participants' feeling that they belonged on campus. In part, the search for recognizable faces kept people from straying too far outside of their regular places. Feeling that they 'fit in' was described by many participants as important to being comfortable on campus. Tamika, who described the Campus in the Woods as a place where she finally felt she fit in when she first arrived 16 years ago, commented:

So, yeah, there's always someone that you can say hi to and I feel there is a lot of... what I used to say about my [other] job, it's not that people are interesting, it's that they were interested, they are interested in things. Same here. There are a lot of people who are doing a lot of community things and you run into them in different places and so I do feel a kind of a fit.

The idea of "fitting in" with a community of people was observed by other participants. For example, Greg made the search for familiar faces part of his daily practice of the Urban Campus.

His narration of our walk-along is as follows:

I come here, I'll park. I'll call the elevator, come get coffee if I don't have one or even come grab like a Coke from the cafeteria. Throw it in my bag, chat with the staff cause I've been here for so long that I kind of know them. Um, and then I might wander up to the Psychology offices and see if there's any professors around just to strike up a conversation with them. And then I might walk down to the library and find a spot to study or find a lounge chair up there and just fool around on Facebook or Twitter. And then, I usually don't take the stairs, check out the flights of stairs... [takes elevator]. Sometimes I would grab a seat out there or something [indicates seating area with couches on third floor overlooking concourse]. And then again, I would walk by this board, check this out [indicates bulletin board across from third floor elevators]. And then go down here... [goes down hallway]. So I would check that out. And then the Psychology lab is just

down there. And then I would walk down there [indicates hallway with offices]. And you know, walk down here. Then, this way. I do this for two purposes. I see whose here on campus. And just for my knowledge. Cause sometimes they have pictures like that, subtle things, right.

One example particularly demonstrates the importance of familiar faces to people's level of comfort and use of space. As it is at many schools, the hallways of the Urban Campus appear identical, sharing the same cream-coloured walls, carpeting, and banks of putty-coloured lockers. But to Courtney, each hallway had a different feeling, based, at least in part, on who occupied it. Here is an excerpt of our walk-along – she made the following observations while showing me the location of one of her classrooms:

Courtney: I guess I never really had classes here and then when I had one at my last semester, I just didn't really like it. It didn't feel familiar, it was just kind of, you know. It guess it is kind of the same cause there's still like the carpet in the hallway but it's just different.

Me: You can't really identify what was different about it because the carpets and the hallway were the same?

Courtney: Yeah.

Me: But there was a different feeling about it?

Courtney: Yeah. And now that like I'm saying it, it sounds dumb. But I just never liked it here. I think it was because it was the first one. I just don't like the... I just like being higher, I don't know.

In stating her preference for "higher," Courtney referred to the hallways on the third floor of campus where most of her classes were located and where there were many well-known faces.

As this passage illustrates, the presence of familiar faces in familiar spaces gave participants a positive feeling about the places that they visited as part of their functional and transactional routine. While it was not generally the cause of their routine – in most cases that was utility – it was motivation to continue to practice it. By repeatedly going where they needed

to be, i.e., to their classrooms or workspaces, on a fairly regular schedule, they encountered the same people in the same place.

Campus designers and planners should not underestimate the pull of familiarity and routine. Participants in this study demonstrated a strong tendency to interpret spaces through the lens of past experience and showed a marked preference for places for which they had previous understanding and comfort. Ambiguous spaces, like the Fishbowl at the Urban Campus, led to participants feeling uncertain about their purpose and choosing to observe, rather than use them. This narrowed the number of places that participants visited and therefore, included in their functional and transactional routine.

Wunderlich (2008) contended that: “[a] sense of belonging and familiarity grows out of our habitual awareness and interaction with social time-space routines of everyday urban places” (130). In this study, participants’ practices of their campuses supported his argument. Each constituted his or her own lifeworld through the development of a functional and transactional routine that, while unique to them, was based on a number of similar patterns that Seamon (1980) called time-space routines. An examination of these shared time-space routines reveals much about how participants constituted the two campuses through practice.

### **5.3 The Time-Space Routines of Campus**

While walking-along with them, it became immediately apparent that not only did participants approach their use of campus in the same way – that is, as a functional and transactional routine – but that their routine was structured by a common set of activities or as Seamon (1979) called them, “time-space routines.” Participants’ days were composed of a series of linked time-space routines that they usually performed one after the other beginning as soon as they stepped on campus and ending when they stepped off. While participants’ functional and

transactional routines differed based on where and when they went, and in what order, these individual routines included many of the same constituent parts or time-space routines. An obvious example of one of these parts is the time-space routine of going to and from class. Attending class was the primary reason why students attended both campuses and much of their time outside of scheduled instruction was spent travelling to and from class.

Having observed these repeated behaviour patterns, I identified the common time-space routines by breaking each participants' functional and transactional routine into its component parts. Using Seamon's (1979) definition, I analysed each person's daily functional and transactional routine for its discrete, but linked, activities. Table 5.1 lists some of the time-space routines that were most frequently practiced by participants at both campuses.

Of course, participants did other things while on campus such as going to the gym, etc., but this abbreviated and partial list based on 23 participants is suggestive of some of the major components of each person's functional and transactional routine. Below, I have annotated a portion of my walk-along with Ethan to highlight the presence and interconnected nature of these common time-space routines. During this segment of our time together, he took me along with him as he went about his day, beginning with walking to campus from his nearby home:

Yeah, I come down off of [the street], enter right by the, one of the theatre entrances, the back one actually. (Time-space routine: Walking to and from campus)

And then come down the fourth floor and then come down the staircase just past us here and then just straight to this office. I drop off my jacket and backpack full of notes and other notes. (Time-space routine: Walking to office)

And then usually before my morning classes, my next stop would actually be the classroom because everything would be shut down so I have to turn on the computer, turn on the lights, and frequently pull down the screen, everything else that needs to be set up before the start of the class. So I like to do that before

students get into the room. (Time-space routines: Walking to classroom and setting up for class)

From there I would come back to my office. (Time-space routine: Walking to office)

And if I had time I would then go down to the cafeteria and grab a coffee but sometimes very much time dependent. Or I'll simply see if I can wait, usually I have a gap between my classes and I get a coffee downstairs, say between the end of the class at 10:30 and the next one at 12:30. (Time-space routine: Walking to and from cafeteria to 'get a coffee')

Table 5.1. The Time-Space Routines of the Two College Campuses

Arriving and leaving campus – walking from parking lot, transit station or home
Getting a coffee/tea – going to the coffee shop or cafeteria
Travelling between classrooms and offices
Attending class or work – sitting in classroom or office space
Waiting (for class, friends, meeting or activity) – standing or sitting
Going to the restroom
Visiting the cafeteria to eat and/or socialize
Reading or studying
Visiting professors', colleagues' or student services offices to interact with another
Resting and relaxing – sitting or walking
Encountering and/or meeting with others (friends, classmates and colleagues)
Using smart phone for social media, making phone calls, accessing the internet, texting, etc. (often while walking)
People watching

While the activities on the list are mundane, as my time with Ethan indicated, they are reflective of what participants did while on campus. That is, while some people did a myriad of other things, almost all of the participants performed these time-space routines as part of their functional and transactional routine. Much of their time on campus was spent in this way. As Ethan described it:

More or less, I come into the campus, go to my office, go to my classrooms where I am teaching, I may go to the cafeteria and then I'd head back to my office and then reverse the trip home. There's also side trips down to the library.

As ways of practicing place, these time-space routines can be seen as contributing to the formation of the lifeworld of the two campuses.

Given the pedestrian nature of both campuses and the role that walking plays in creating understanding of, and familiarity with, place, it follows that most of the commonly performed time-space routines incorporated walking. While participants journeyed to campus using multiple modes of transit, once they arrived on campus, their functional-transactional routines were performed on foot. While participants could have used skateboards or wheelchairs to traverse through campus, walking remains the dominant form of on-campus travel. As previously discussed, all of the participants in the present study walked.

Compared to the other modes of travel, walking most directly engages body-subjects with their surrounding environments. As such, walking as a form of practicing place has been addressed by a number of scholars (Ingold 2004, Wylie 2005, Middleton 2010, Degen and Rose 2012). As Gehl (2011) argued, walking is not only a way to get around, but a way of being present in public. He further contended that people's sensory abilities are attuned to perceiving and processing environmental information at walking paces. Wunderlich (2008) similarly argued:

As a lifeworld practice, walking is an unconscious way of moving through urban space, enabling us to sense our bodies and the features of the environment. It is while walking that we sensorially and reflectively interact with the urban environment, firming up our relationship with urban places. Walking practices and ‘senses of (or for place)’ are fundamentally related, the former affecting the latter and vice versa. (125)

In the next chapter, I suggest that there are lifeworlds of the two campuses that are formed, in part, by people practicing these common time-space routines. These lifeworlds are, in part, constitutive of the meanings of campus. In making this argument, I draw on Seamon’s (1980) concept of the place-ballet as a framework for understanding how vibrant and dynamic places emerge from the practice of these seemingly mundane time-space routines. Using lifeworld phenomenological methods of interpretation, I complete the chapter by explicating some of these meanings of campus.

## 6. The Meanings of Campus

Place, Seamon (2014b) argued, “holds lifeworlds together spatially and environmentally, marking out centers of human meaning, intention, and comportment” (12). In this chapter, I argue that the time-space routines that structured many participants’ individual functional and transactional routines formed a surprisingly common core to the lifeworlds of the two campuses. Just as there were lifeworlds of the individual participants in the study, so to were there lifeworlds of the two campuses. As Seamon (2013) observed: “[t]here is a lifeworld for each experiencing person or group, but there is also a lifeworld of the situation or place that provides the setting for those individual and group lifeworlds” (145). As ways of practicing place, these common time-space routines can be thought of as generative processes of person-or-people-experiencing-place where meaning is created through the interanimation of people and the physical environment. Participants walking these common time-space routines contributed to an atmosphere that, in part, evoked the experience of the campus.

One of phenomenology’s guiding principles is that things are as they present themselves, not simply what we assume them to be (von Eckartsberg 1998, 6). Things are what people experience them to be. As experiences of place, these time-space routines can be thought of, in phenomenological terms, as ways that the campuses presented themselves to me as the researcher. They are, as Nogué i Font (1993) argued, a means of defining the campuses from the “inside” (178). In Chapter 5, I demonstrate some of the ways that individual participants presented the two campuses to me during our walk-alongs and through the mental mapping exercises. In this chapter, I consider how these individual experiences came together to create both generalizable and separate meanings of the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods.

Although urban design has been defined as an “attempt to express an accepted urban meaning in a certain urban form” (Castells 1983, 304), the problem of doing so in practice has proven vexing for the field. Within the field, the variability of human meanings of place has been identified as the source of this problem. Promoting a single meaning or even a small number of user meanings through design efforts seems inherently inimical to the multiplicity that is person-or-people-experience-place. As Fishwick and Vining noted (1992), “the same attributes of an environment produce very different reactions from individuals” (61).

Place-making-phenomenology seeks to circumvent this conundrum not by denying multiplicity, but, as previously argued, by embracing it. As Chapter 4 delineates, lifeworld methods attend to two interconnected levels of phenomenological analysis, the phenomenal or individual level of meaning and the phenomenological or generalizable level of meaning (von Eckartsberg 1998). In its search for a generalizable level of meaning, phenomenology seeks to consolidate the shared aspects of human experience while also acknowledging a diversity of individual meanings. In this chapter, I argue that participants’ common experiences – that is, their common time-space routines as well as their shared observations – suggest a generalizable level of experience of both campuses which is constitutive of their meanings. As Chapter 5 discusses, these common time-space routines – shared patterns of seemingly mundane, walking, standing and sitting based activities – captured how most participants spent their time on-campus and, therefore, what they experienced. In making this argument, I am not suggesting that both campuses are exactly the same, but that they are constituted by the practice of similar core activities.

I begin the chapter by discussing how participants' practice of place created a surprisingly similar core to the lifeworlds of both college campuses. Here, I use Seamon's concept of the place-ballet to illustrate how the same time-space routines practiced by different people at different times and in different physical environments can form the foundation of vibrant and unique places. The identification of these shared time-space routines can assist the field of campus design and planning in fostering the place-ballets that can make meaningful campuses as well as ones that are distinct. Following this discussion, I explicate the meanings of campus that emerged from this study. Just as the two campuses had lifeworlds with common characteristics, they also shared common as well as unique meanings.

In the second half of the chapter, I suggest that both campuses shared the meanings of: being places of personal development, gathering places for all students, places where someone is always there, restorative places, and places of support services. In keeping with the concept of person-or-people-experiencing-place, these meanings were formed through participants' interanimation with the differing physical environments of both campuses. These characteristics influenced the unique meanings that were also held about each of the campuses. In addition to the meanings that the Urban Campus shared with the Campus in the Woods, the former was also understood as a place to pass through, a place of stairs and levels, and a place that was becoming more. In contrast, the Campus in the Woods was perceived by participants as a place to go for a walk and a West Coast landscape.

## **6.1 The Lifeworld of the College Campus**

As a core phenomenological idea, the concept of the lifeworld is valuable because it speaks to "how our body and relationships are lived in time and space" (Finlay 2011, 125). Both a 'thing' or focus of attention and a perspective, the notion of the lifeworld speaks to the taken-

for-granted nature of the everyday world where “meaning-making body-subjects approach the world intentionally” (Finlay 2011, 125). Places provide settings for those everyday experiences, holding “people and worlds always together” (Seamon 2000b, 161). Thus, lifeworld is a way to think about places as holistic composites of people and physical environments in which both are immersed (Seamon 2014a). It is also a way to think about places as worlds that we have interpreted and given meaning but that appear to us unwittingly (Smith 2009b).

As individuals have lifeworlds so to do places. While these are, in part, formed by the collectivity of people practicing their lifeworlds, the lifeworld of places is also inclusive of “spatial, environmental, and temporal” factors (Seamon 2015, 3). Referring specifically to architecture, Seamon (2017) wrote: “[o]ne realizes that there are the individual lifeworlds of all users associated with a building as, at the same time, there is the more complex lifeworld of the building itself generated by those individual lifeworlds. The lived dynamic and character of the building’s lifeworld may support or interfere with the individual lifeworlds housed within that building” (3).

To more fully understand the lifeworld of places, in all of their complexity, we can turn to Seamon’s (1979) concept of the place-ballet. Place-ballet captures the interanimation of people and the physical environment that is also at the heart of the idea of person-or-people-experiencing-place. Places, he argued, are in part composed by people practicing the same time-space routines in the same spaces. Place-ballet describes the patterns that emerge when many people practice their routines simultaneously. Moreover, the simultaneous performance of these individual routines in supportive material spaces can foster vibrant, meaningful, and unique places (Seamon 2013, 151). Seamon and Nordin (1980) described the process as follows:

Place-ballet describes the regularity of place founded in habit, routine, and supportive physical environment. Conducting their own daily activities, people come together in space, which takes on a sense of place. Individual participants using the same space unintentionally create a larger place with its own tempo of activity and rest, bustle, and calm. (35)

It is the regularity of place, founded upon people's habitual routines in a complementary physical environment, that facilitates the unplanned encounters and activities that characterise lively places (Seamon 1980). Identifying the time-space routines that form the backbone of place-ballet not only tells us about the meanings of place, it is a necessary precursor to informing professional efforts in support of these activities (Seamon 1980, 2013, 2014a, b). For example, time-space routines can be thought of as opportunities to strengthen campuses by using them to promote social interaction or the creation of new knowledge. I discuss this further in Chapter 7, which sketches out a preliminary approach to community college campus design and planning based on these findings.

The presence of these common time-space routines suggests that the lifeworlds of the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods share some of the same qualities. These normally unnoticed, regular, and repetitive routines are integral to the practice and meanings of both college campuses and, to a certain extent, may be suggestive of some of the characteristics that define college campuses generally. That is, the identification of this core set of time-space routines is also a way of theming of each participant's time-space routine thus moving from the individual or phenomenal level of meaning to a generalizable level of meaning. This is not to suggest that each campus was the same but rather that there was a similar structure and pattern to many of the activities that occurred at both campuses.

The Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods each had their own place-ballet that was composed of a unique blend of people, settings, time-space routines, and other activities.

The different physical environments of the two campuses were integral components in these place-ballets. For example, the Urban Campus swirled with a flurry of hundreds of young students bustling through its staircases and corridors during class-change on any given day while the grounds of the Campus in the Woods more often than not resembled people quietly strolling through a park. Each campus definitely had a “unique character and ambience” as a result (Seamon 2013, 151). However, campus design and planning has tended to overplay the role that the built environment plays in creating meaning. While in this study it definitely contributed to the formation of meaning, as Sime (1986) argued: “[a]rchitecture, in concentrating on the physical dimensions of space and form, is in danger of neglecting the patterns of behaviour and experience which imbue buildings with meaning” (60).

A closer examination, however, indicates that these different place-ballets appear to be composed of many people doing many of the same things, albeit at different times and in different settings. Although each campus had its own place-ballet, there was a common structure to both ballets which, as Chapter 5 outlines, is composed of the time-space routines that were commonly performed at both campuses. Who people were, the buildings and classrooms that they went to, when they traveled, the routes that they took and the settings they did it in, all differed. This, however, does not obscure the fact that participants were doing many of the same things. The argument that I am making here is that despite having strikingly different student populations, employee compositions, locations, site plans, architectural styles, and designs, the findings from the present study suggest that the two campuses shared remarkably similar types of time-space routines that are outlined in Chapter 5. These core time-space routines are also a useful way to articulate an important part of the “character” of the two college campuses (Nogué i Font 1993).

Identifying and examining these time-space routines also helped determine the differences between college and campus. The example of the time-space routine of going to and from class is illustrative of this distinction. While taking courses is part of going to college, going to and from class is something that only happens on campus as students can take courses in other ways, for example, online. Going to and from class forms part of the meaning of campus.

As the outcome of a generalizable level of analysis, these common time-space routines also provided a framework that underpinned the meanings of the two campuses. In the same way that they shared a set of common time-space routines, the campuses also shared similar, as well as different, meanings. In the next section, I discuss the phenomena of campus by explicating the meanings that participants associated with the two campuses. These arose from participants' practice of their time-space routines in particular settings.

## **6.2 The Shared Meanings of the Two Campuses**

Just as their lifeworlds shared common characteristics, the two campuses also shared similar meanings. This did not preclude them from also having meanings that were unique to each campus. As the concept of place-ballet suggests, the unique mix of people performing their time-space routines in their own ways, in different settings, created unique places with their own atmospheres and ambiances. However, the number of participants who practiced common time-space routines points to a shared character of the two campuses. These can be inferred from an examination of some of the reasons behind participants' dedication to their time-space routines. An analysis of the intentions that underpinned this core set of time-space routines is telling of the meanings of the two campuses to those who use them. In phenomenological terms, "intentionality holds that all human impulses, actions, and experiences are directed in some

meaningful way toward a world which supports and reflects that meaning” (Seamon 1987, 373). For these reasons, as part of my discussion, I examine the role that the physical settings of campus played in contributing to these meanings.

As my identification of the common time-space routines suggests, the two campuses shared some core meanings based on participants’ common ways of practicing them. These emerged from my analysis of participants’ functional and transactional routines, our walk-alongs, and the mental mapping exercises. While each participant lived the campus in his or her own way, there were five interconnected themes of meaning that existed, to varying extents, with all of them. This was the case whether participants were students, employees or community users of the campuses. These meanings include the campuses as: places of self development, gathering places for all students, places where someone is always there, restorative places, and places of support service. Taken together, these point to a partial, but central, character of the two college campuses. As will be seen, each meaning consists of a broad theme that is inclusive of a diversity of ways that meaning was expressed by individual participants. A thematic approach allowed me to capture individuality as well as generalizability. Table 6.1 summarizes these core meanings.

### **6.2.1 Personal Development**

For all of the participants in the study, their campus was a place of personal development, for themselves as well as for others. While this was grounded in the idea of the campuses as places of higher education, participants viewed learning as much more than just taking courses for credit. Learning involved the freedom to develop as a person by pursuing one’s own interests and pathways. This was the case whether participants were students, employees or both.

Table 6.1. Core Meanings of the Two College Campuses

<p>A Place of Self Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Personal growth</li> <li>• Pursuing one’s goals and dreams</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• A means to an end</li> </ul>
<p>A Gathering Place for All Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal gathering such as classes</li> <li>• Informal, student driven forms of gathering, e.g., talking in small groups</li> <li>• Social activities and events</li> <li>• Watching others and being seen</li> <li>• Being self in a non-judgemental environment (acceptance, like others around)</li> <li>• Celebration of diversity</li> </ul>
<p>A Place Where Somebody’s Always There</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar faces</li> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Supportive staff</li> <li>• Personal and academic advice</li> </ul>
<p>Restorative Places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering oneself</li> <li>• Nourishment</li> <li>• Refreshment and invigoration</li> <li>• Relaxation</li> <li>• Contemplation</li> </ul>
<p>Support Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business transactions</li> <li>• Administrative tasks</li> <li>• Wayfinding</li> </ul>

The idea of the campuses as places where people can create their own pathway in life was most strongly expressed by students like Greg who observed:

It’s where I started to understand how important education was in life. It’s where I began my career, I guess. And not working, it’s a place where I began my career doing things I want to do and not being in a job where I’m bitter and miserable

and I didn't want to be there. I think with the skills I've learned here, I can go do what I want to do. So that's how I look at it.

As a recent high school graduate, for Donna, attending the Urban Campus signified her freedom to choose her own way in life. She explained:

I chose [College #1] because, well partly because my sister went to university and I saw how she didn't do well there and also a lot of my instructors or uh teachers at my high school they told me that it would be a good option to go to college first, and my parents weren't really open to it at all, they were like okay this is totally new. College is not a thing in our culture; it's more university first, so I had to really do all of the research to prove to them that going to college first and then transferring to university would be a good option, so I just kind of looked into it.

Commensurately, the campus became a place where she could break free of others' perceptions and expectations of her and build interpersonal skills that allowed her to develop as a person. She described it in this way:

In high school I was more like, I don't know...I wasn't able to mingle with people all the time. I don't know just...I wanted to but I wasn't very good at speaking to everybody and including everybody, and I know I was seen in like a specific way, like, 'Oh, she's the smart person that'll do all the work.' But here it's nice because like everyone just accepts you as who you are and, I don't know, I don't know, it's just made me grow so much in so many ways and I really, I can really be myself and I can, now I'm able to include people, talk to everyone in ways I was never able to do before.

Judith, a music student, expressed the same thought as a 52-year-old mother returning to the Urban Campus after a long period away parenting and working. Having previously trained to be a legal assistant and taken courses toward a university degree, she returned to the Urban Campus after 25 years with the aim of furthering her ambitions to be a professional musician. Now the parent of five adult children, she described her return as "time for myself, where I can be myself. I just feel very comfortable and very pleased to be here."

Employees of both colleges also spoke of the campus as a place of personal development for students and well as themselves. Edward and David saw their respective campuses as cultures of learning of which they were a part. Edward shared his viewpoint in this way:

I really do not see a campus as a collection of classrooms and service offices where students come in and do a series of transactions on route to a credential, it is more about this is a community of people that are here to provide a combination of opportunities and experiences that students can engage in to learn and to grow and to become who they want to be in the next two to four years.

David used his mental map to articulate the relationship between himself and his idea of campus as a place of personal development, making specific reference to how he practiced this by walking the Campus in the Woods' circular ring walk almost every day (Figure 6.1). In this way, his practice of the campus was similar to Tamika's, whose story appears in Chapter 5. As students and employees, both saw the ringwalk as physically reinforcing their ideas about what the college was all about. Walking the ring walk was one of the ways that they practiced these ideas.

The following is a segment of David's conversation with me as he was drawing his mental map:

David: I'm sort of doing more like a centralized energy in the center. Energy or fun in the center and then how that comes into goals or say careers. The staff and students. And I'm going to say .... This is my walk. And that's my focus.

Me: So this represents what it is to you, and then this is actually representing, the round thing is representing the physical path?

David: Yes. And that's where I use a lot of time to focus and kind of enjoy it.

Me: And so these are the goals of the college?

David: Yes. So it's kind of like to say the reason we are here, it's kind of like our goals. And then careers, and then staff and students, and then for me all of this gives me a feeling of personal fulfillment, and kind of fulfills some of the needs that I have for me.

Me: And this is the center?

David: This is the center. So this is the energy. The fun, the action, this is where it all comes down to.

Me: So this represents an actual physical path, and this represents the people who are here?

David: Yes.

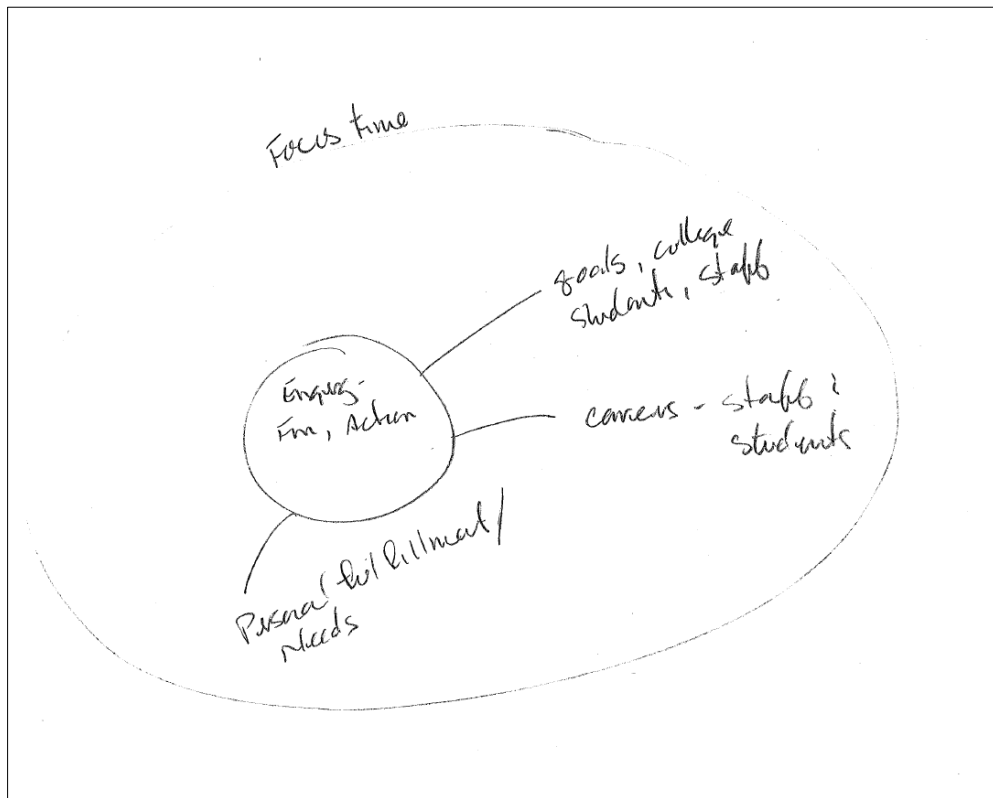


Figure 6.1. David's Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods: A Place of Personal Development

Not all students and employees were as effusively positive about the campus, their work or their learning, but as a means to an end, it still represented a place of personal development.

Gerry succinctly summarized the meaning of the Campus in the Woods to him:

Yeah, it has... I guess it has two different meanings. One, if I was on campus to take a course it would mean that I would be learning, which I enjoy. The other meaning would be if I'm on campus it means I'm working, which means I'm making money, and I'm enjoying that. So it has two different meanings depending on what I am doing.

Brayden more pessimistically saw the Urban Campus as a necessary pitstop on his way to completing a degree elsewhere:

Like I wouldn't invest anything particularly into it, partially because like I know it's a temporary place and it's not a place I'm going to be, hopefully, too much longer, so I don't want to invest too much into it and I don't... there's nothing that's pushing me to invest a lot into it.

As places that foster personal development, the idea of campus was closely associated with notions of individuality and the freedom to be oneself. In a related manner, the meaning of campus was also tied to the notion of many individuals being able to come together in the same space.

### **6.2.2 Gathering Places for All Students**

Being places where everyone can come together on equal terms was one of the defining characteristics of the two campuses. Campuses were understood to have a pivotal role in providing and fostering a safe, gathering space for students to be both alone amongst others and together in small groups. The sheer presence of many students in one place was a core element of the participants' idea of the campuses. But this notion was much more than just students coming together to attend class. Being settings where students could gather informally was as important, if not more so, than the idea of them as formal learning places. As Yolanda at the Urban Campus put it:

I picture campus with students sitting around, mingling, communicating.

Several themes underpin the idea of the campuses as gathering spaces for all kinds of students. Foremost is the idea of students being able to be themselves in an accepting, non-judgemental environment. Participants cited the importance of students having a space just ‘to be.’ This was a characteristic of the Campus in the Woods that Bill, a community user, observed as being critical:

There are places to sit down and relax and if you were waiting for somebody or doing something or just read or do what you wanted to do, which is quite nice. That is the really important thing for something like this... to have open spaces where people can just sit and gather themselves.

The presence of a diversity of people in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, and personal style was seen as evidence that the campuses were settings where people can safely be themselves. Maggie described the Campus in the Woods as “such a neat blend of people.” Gerry elaborated on the same idea from his personal point of view:

We’ve gone from very few people here to lots of people, as in students. I believe that the makeup of students is getting better, like the demographics, which is kind of neat to see. We got a lot... When we first started here I... I don’t know but it seemed to me that there was a lot of older people coming back to school but now it seems that we’ve got older, younger, we’ve got different races, we’ve got a far different mix of people attending and I think that’s a good thing.

Sharing space with all kinds of people was seen as a precursor to students doing things together. These activities ranged from students talking together one on one or in small groups, to collaborating on group projects, to studying as well as to more formal and planned events such as sports or dances. Many participants related these kinds of student activities to the energy of the campuses. Paula articulated it this way:

I mean you get a, I don’t know how to explain it, but you do get a different sense of the energy of a place. I don’t know if a building can do that. The energy is, well when this place is full of students it’s alive. It’s really alive.

Watching others and being seen were some of the simplest ways that participants felt connected to the idea of campus as a gathering place for students. David related his connection to this idea of the campus in the following way:

Sometimes I'll just go out to a picnic table and just sit and enjoy myself and watch the students and the activity going on. I just like to see the activity and the action and keep in touch with the students.

At both campuses, more overt practices of diversity were also felt to be constitutive of the idea of campus. Paula elaborated on this at the Urban Campus:

I remember there were some students doing some dancing here some months ago, and it was just wonderful. It was an ethnic dancing thing they were doing and it was just beautiful to watch. It was really, really inspiring. They've had First Nations as well, out here doing dancing and chanting, and it's just wonderful. It just creates a kind of sense of community and bonding and acceptance of everything that this college is about. It's about diversity in the student population and I think that's wonderful.

In turn, participants expected that the campuses had physical environments that supported the many way students choose to freely gather. Yolanda spoke to this idea of the campus:

I picture campus with lovely design so that the design makes sense to whatever you're doing, or having to either work at or for the students to go to class. You know, the departments flow – to me that's a campus. All coming together but in different aspects based on what you're looking for.

Participants pointed out many features of each campus which they felt spoke to the way the physical environment supported students gathering. The most prominent of these was each campus' central concourse. Chapter 5 introduced the concourse at the Urban Campus through the presentation of Courtney's responses to it. Two views of it are pictured below (Figure 6.2).

Courtney's belief that the concourse represented the heart of the college community was a commonly held one. For example, Judith remarked of it:

I think that the way it's designed, the stairs, and the big concourse open area is really nice, because it always feels like there is something going on. Because

there's always people out there, and I like the design of that in terms of social interaction. And just running into classmates and talking to them, and walking through to the cafeteria, you know, or to the library.



Source: images obtained from institution's website

Figure 6.2. The Concourse at the Urban Campus: Two Views

Donna also spoke to the importance of the concourse to her idea of campus:

I remember thinking, wow, this is such a nice open space and it's like right in the center of the college, which is great; like everyone walked through there at some point during the day. I can't see how you wouldn't unless you're on the first floor all of the time, so I liked how it's just so perfect, like everyone's going to be in there at some point and eventually I'd done a bunch of events in the concourse involving students and trying to get them engaged in doing fun activities with total strangers so I'd come to like the concourse quite a bit.

In contrast with the Urban Campus, the concourse at the Campus in the Woods is an outdoor plaza set between three buildings. Save a few benches, it is an empty, cobblestone space (Figure 6.3).

Todd spoke to the importance of the concourse to his idea of the Campus in the Woods, featuring it prominently in his mental map (Figure 6.4). He remarked:

When you're there you actually feel that you are at a learning institute at a college. Because we're in the Administration Building, so I can go weeks without seeing a student, so you kind of lose touch on who you're supporting and why

you're there. And then when you go to the concourse, if that's the right word for it, if you go into that area, it's filled with students and you know why you're here, your raison-d'etre so to say, your reason for being [on campus].



Source: photography by David Graham, used with permission

Figure 6.3. Central Concourse: Campus in the Woods

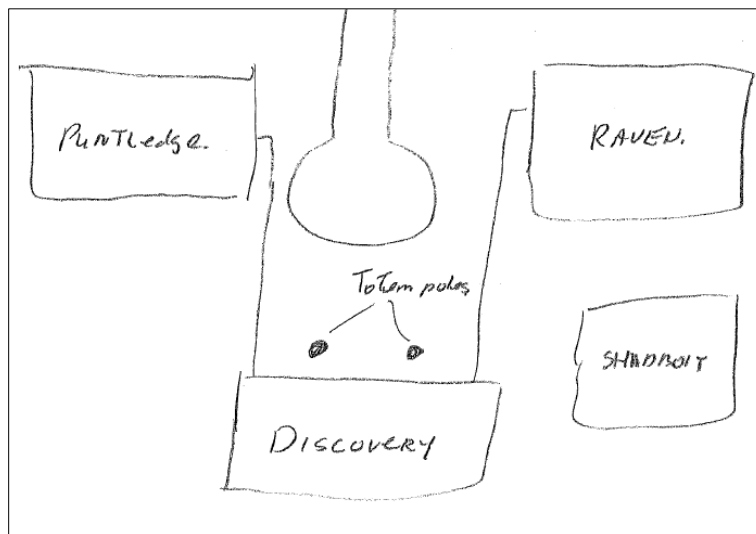


Figure 6.4. Todd's Mental Map: Concourse at the Campus in the Woods

However, while participants pointed to their campus' large, central courtyards as important gathering spaces, they also referenced other places where students collected. For example, the library at the Urban Campus was frequently cited as supporting students coming together.

Edward described his feelings about the space in this way:

The reason I've walked us into the library is that this is another space that I associate with activity and energy and creativity, collaboration, especially for students. There are far more students who use this space than staff, but I think it's an example of a space where students feel very welcome and it's been set up in such a way it's designed to be collaborative. The people who have created the space have big open areas where everybody is sitting together and they've got rooms where they can meet as groups and the only isolated areas are on the second floor, so if you do want to work by yourself you can have that experience but the main floor of the library is actually designed to be more collaborative which I kind of like actually. The library is the primary social hub of the campus.

In contrast, participants at the Campus in the Woods spoke mostly about the role that the campus' outdoor seating areas played in supporting student gathering. They frequently referenced benches, picnic tables, and coffee tables as important components of student life.

William, a community user of the campus spoke fondly of one particular picnic table:

I like the benches just outside of this building, just outside the window there between the walkway and the parking lot. I've sat there a couple of times either just waiting to pick up my mom or with the dog and you can see the entire front part of the campus and, like I said, when the sun is shining it just reflects off everything nicely. It is a good place to sit and have a coffee and think about things or do your homework.

As gathering places for all kinds of students, campuses were thought of as places that support students. This was seen most profoundly in the idea of them as places where somebody was always there.

### 6.2.3 Places Where Someone is Always There

As Chapter 5 discusses, one of the characteristics that defined participants' functional and transactional routine was the search for familiar faces in familiar spaces. In their regular travels, participants incorporated places where they knew people and where people knew them. Being around people who recognized and supported them was seen as integral to the idea of both campuses. This meaning is a companion to the ideas of the campuses as places of personal development and of gathering. The extent of this ranged from simply seeing recognizable faces, to collegial relationships, to friendships as well as to familial type relationships. Yolanda at the Urban campus described the importance of people knowing who she was to her sense of the campus:

I mean, just like you saw, everyone knows me. I feel love when I see people.

Donna said it best:

Most of the time there's somebody here.

Being a place to develop lasting friendships was also seen as integral to the idea of campus. For example, Paul responded to my question about the importance of the campus to him by quickly answering:

Friends are here.

Donna also noted:

Especially [at the Urban campus] that was the biggest thing I think, I just made friends first semester and I had the same friends like throughout, and I gained even more friends along the way, like you meet all these people.

Similarly, in her mental map of the Campus in the Woods, Linda drew the campus as a window to a bright future that included graduation, more money, friendships, and opportunity (Figure 6.5).

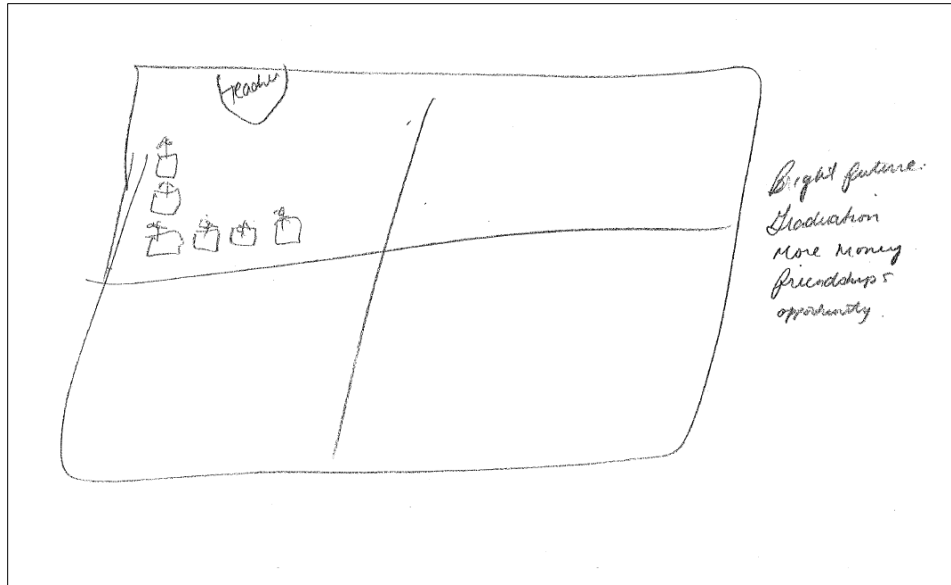


Figure 6.5. Linda's Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods: A Window into a Bright Future

David was one of several participants at the Campus in the Woods who talked about walking as a way to develop new friendships, noting:

Sometimes I'll go with other people if they want to go for a walk and just get a chance to get to know each other outside of the actual work environment, the office as it were.

One of the least researched areas of campus is the role that support staff play in its constitution (Temple 2009). In this study, participants spoke passionately about the importance of employees who could be counted on to always be there. Participants at both campuses particularly mentioned the role of food service personnel to their idea of the campus. For example, Paula related her sense of the Urban Campus to the staff in the cafeteria:

I mean I've worked at other institutions and you get a sort of a pulse or a sense of a place from the people that work in the cafeteria. I know that kind of sounds silly, but the people here, in particular there is [a woman] who works in the cafeteria. She was the first person when I first arrived here – she specifically asked me my name. She asked me my name. I thought 'oh,' so I told her. And she has remembered my name ever since. Ever since. And it's just one of those things that sort of gets at you, that they care that much to do something like that. And the

people that work over at the grill there, I know all of their names, and they know my name, but it's not just me. They do this with everybody. Virtually everybody I see that works here, they know their name.

Students frequently cited their relationships with cafeteria and coffee shop staff as important to their idea of campus. Good cheer often accompanied the provision of physical nourishment at both campuses. As a result, at both places, cafeterias and coffee shops were almost universally cited as bright spots that enlivened the campus. As Chapter 5 relates, Greg made chatting with the cafeteria staff at the Urban Campus part of his daily routine. Paul at the Campus in the Woods did the same, observing:

[The campus has] got a good coffee shop, just talking to [the barista] and getting to know other people around there. I know a lot of people hit the coffee shop because that's her reputation.

Supportive staff elsewhere also proved to be important to students' idea of their campus. For example, Mikayla made visits to the campus bookstore part of her regular routine, commenting:

I would go in the bookstore, the cute little bookstore. I actually got all my textbooks there and would go there if I needed any like last minute school supplies. The staff are really nice.

Similarly, Donna and her friends often found solace in a staff member who provided a sympathetic ear during times of both joy and stress. As she described it:

There's like this huge office that we were right next to, it used to be Rowen's office and she was a secretary of the science department... oh, not secretary, I'm not sure what her title was called but she's in charge of a lot of things and we became really close to her; we as in like a bunch of the science students and we really, really like her and I know she's made us feel really welcome and we could talk to her about school and classes and stuff. Ah, she's no longer there; she's actually working in the registration office now. Yeah. We still know her really well. But yeah, she was like the go-to person. I don't know, she just made you feel a lot better about just being in science, sometimes you just have these hard times with all of the crazy courses and the labs and everything.

As a result, Rowen's office occupied a central position on Donna's mental map (Figure 6.6):

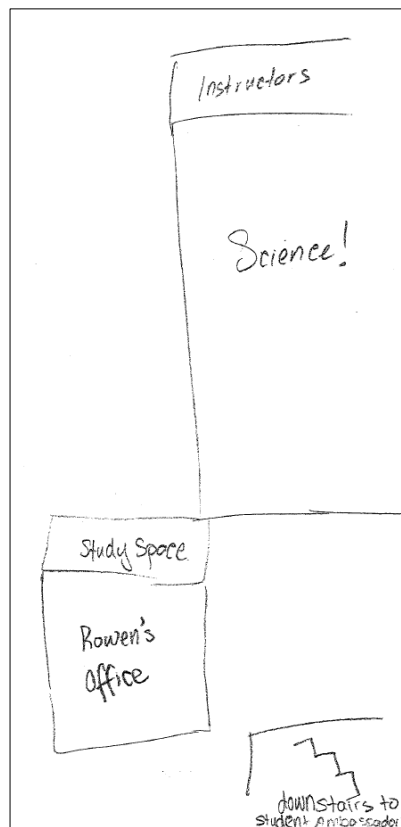


Figure 6.6. Donna's Mental Map of the Urban Campus: Rowen's Office

For participants in the study, the campus was very much defined by the places where they encountered others for friendship, support or simply familiarity. Where cafeterias and coffee shops were frequently cited by participants as important to their idea of campus for these reasons, other similarly referenced spaces included the library at the Urban Campus and the walking trails at the Campus in the Woods. The concept of the campus as places of personal support was also echoed in the idea of them as restorative places.

### 6.2.1 Restorative Places

In the same way that the two campuses were thought of as places of supportive interpersonal connections, they were also thought of as places of personal, emotional, and physical sustenance and nourishment. For Greg, the Urban Campus was a place of refuge, a sanctuary for personal development:

Looking back, looking at it now, it's a place where I can come and relax. It's weird to say, but it's a de-stresser. When I am at home I have to deal with home things. And when I am here I can get away from everything that's going on at home. So I can cut it off and be concentrating on my issues here and what I am doing here.

Personal well-being was seen as essential to learning and working. As such, the campuses were thought of in that way. Brayden made a 30-45 minute visit to an outdoor courtyard at the Urban Campus one of his regular stops, citing his need for fresh air and time alone. Mikayla made a similar observation about the Campus in the Woods being conducive to learning because it promotes well-being:

I found that [the campus] was, not consciously but subconsciously, really important, especially with the kind of work we were doing and, you know, talking about serious life issues in our lives and in the lives of the people we were going to be working with, having a restorative place to be going to school was, for me, really beneficial.

Some participants commented on their campus as a nourishing place, noting that a long and arduous commute often taxed them before they even stepped foot on campus. So while cafeterias and coffee shops were noteworthy because of the people who worked there, the fuel provided by food and drink was also important to participants' idea of the campus. These were seen as some of the necessary ingredients of personal well-being. For this reason, Ethan's view of the campus was strongly associated with the cafeteria at the Urban Campus. He carefully marked it on his mental map (Figure 6.7), commenting:

Of course there's the cafeteria. Most important to me for the coffee supply.

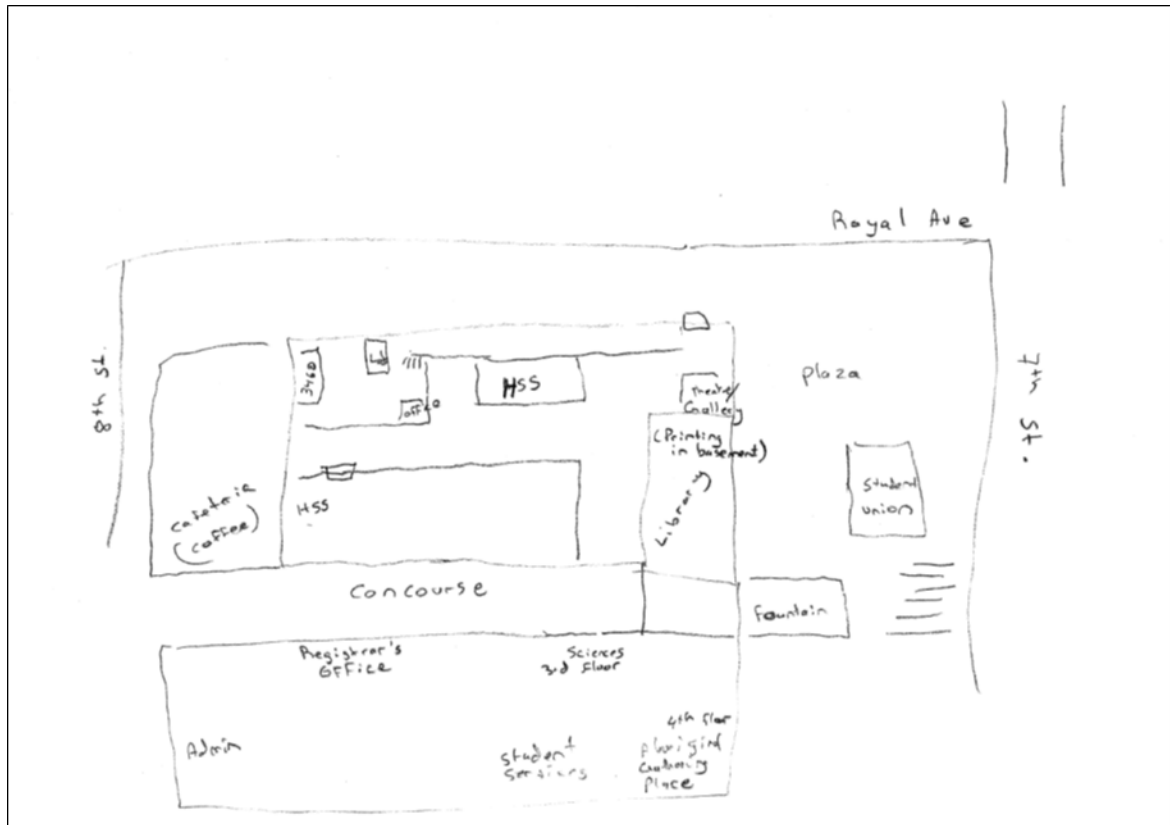


Figure 6.7. Ethan's Mental Map of the Urban Campus: An Array of Support Services

The campus as a restorative place was also indicated by participants who specifically referenced spaces where they could invigorate themselves. For some, this involved exercise such as going to the gym at the Urban Campus or walking the trails at the Campus in the Woods. Maggie was one of several participants who made an effort to walk the ring walk around the Campus in the Woods a couple of times a day for well being. She noted:

I was just saying about this lovely perimeter walk. It's safe. It's there. It's available. The fact that the college has installed it, this trail, I think it's really important for people to take advantage of and people are discovering it. And all part of wellness, and maybe not so much fitness, but the wellness, just getting out and having that lovely – it's a nature walk really. The fact that we have that here is lovely. It's beautiful. You're outside, you are seeing members of your own

community as well people that live in the neighbourhood. It's lovely. It's very welcoming and it's cheerful. It's just a beautiful way to escape for 15 or 20 minutes.

For others, restoration involved the idea of the campuses as places of rest and relaxation.

The library served this role for many student participants at the Urban Campus. Courtney noted:

Basically I just went to the second floor and sat. I didn't even get much work done. I just waited for next class, trying to do homework.

This sentiment was also noted by Donna who made the following observations about her job in the library:

Well it was like my relaxation place, so like even in the middle of exams I'd still come and work here even though it was sometimes, like I mean usually during exams you want to shut out everything but I would not do that because, well first of all I knew they needed the help, and secondly it was really relaxing for me because our employer she was really nice in terms of allowing us to listen to music, because if you think about, I mean, it's a pretty like boring job, you're just shelving books for the whole like 4-hour shift right, so she would just let us listen to music so it was nice for me, I'd just zone out, like stop thinking about studying for a little while and then come back to it after I'm done my shift.

As much as participants in the study needed to relax and rejuvenate on campus, they also had tasks and business to do and the campus was also very much conceived as place of support services.

### **6.2.2 Places of Support Services**

Although few participants did more than casually mention them during our walk-alongs, tracing participants' functional and transactional routines demonstrated the importance of support services to their idea of the campuses. As might be expected at commuter campuses, many of my walk-alongs with participants included parking lots. For example, Bill's mental map (Figure 6.8) of the Campus in the Woods consisted primarily of the roads and parking lots he used when picking his wife up from work. As a community user of the campus, he only

occasionally frequented the library, cafeteria, swimming pool, and other public amenities on campus. Not surprisingly, his map showed less detail about those buildings and areas.

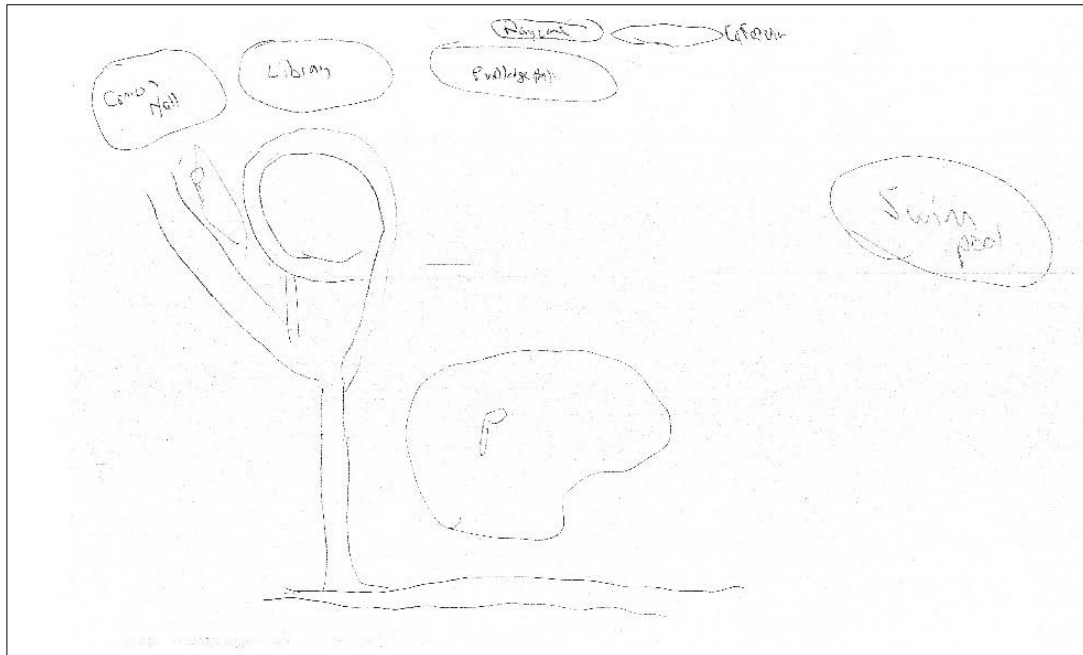


Figure 6.8. Bill's Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods: Roads and Parking Lots

Signage was another support service that participants at both campuses saw as constitutive of the campus. In this case, the lack of clear signage at the Urban Campus was referenced by over half of the participants whereas at the Campus in the Woods, the signage was praised by a third. Other prominent support services included: computer labs, bookstores, Registrar's offices, human resources and payroll offices, student unions, and print shops. Participants like Ethan marked ones of importance on their mental maps of the Urban Campus (Figure 6.7). It was in these places that participants performed the administrative tasks that supported their primary reason for being on-campus which was going to school or working.

Where the prominence of these support services on participants' mental maps was evidence of their meaningfulness to the idea of the Urban Campus, participants pointed to a lack of these services as illustrative of how the Campus in the Woods didn't meet expectations. In these instances, the absence of support services was indicative of its inadequacy. Paul made the following critical observations:

The lack of study space. The lack of initiatives to get students to do stuff. The lack of a good wireless connection in the school. The lack of a secured wireless connection in the school. Those are probably my top ones that I would say.

As the above sections indicate, the two campuses shared some core meanings based on the common ways participants practiced the campus. This was also likely due to the fact they also shared a common purpose as community colleges. At the same time, each also had its own unique meanings based on local circumstances and physical settings. In the next section, I will discuss some of the meanings that were exclusive to each campus. This exercise in comparing and contrasting campuses helps define what each campus was, as well as what it was not.

### **6.3 Unique Meanings of the Urban Campus**

As well as being a place of self development, a gathering space for students, a place where someone is always there, a restorative place, and a place of support services, the Urban Campus had three additional meanings that reflected some of the ways that the physical environment contributed to its atmosphere. Built in a modernist tradition, the Urban Campus had some defining architectural characteristics that participants pointed out during our walk-alongs and that they featured on their mental maps. As Chapter 5 outlines, these included the Fishbowl as well as the central concourse. However, the campus also had some other remarkable features

that contributed to the campus as: a place to pass through, a place of stairs and levels, and a place that was becoming something more.

### **6.3.1 A Place to Pass Through**

During the nearly 40 years of its existence, the Urban Campus has expanded exponentially beyond its planned size. Originally designed to house a student population of 2,500, the campus now sees 14,000 students annually. Extensive addition and renovation completed incrementally over decades has made this possible. Open areas have been re-engineered into walled classrooms and offices. Perhaps most significantly, additional floors have been added to the original design. The result has created a campus with a very asynchronous feeling. As Greg put it:

The campus is a little disorganized, the layout here. Not well laid out.

As might be expected from a layout that developed incrementally, the campus featured many sets of stairs and long, carpeted hallways that connected two floors of underground parking with seven levels of classrooms and other useable space. This has had the effect of creating a campus with a disjointed feeling characterised by unconnected stairways, elevators that only travel a few floors and a non-sequential room numbering system. Brayden described it in this way:

If you want to get to like floor five or six you have to come from floor one, you have to take a minimum of two elevators and cross over along that way, so that's just kind of a...immediately that's, you're putting a lot of effort into getting around this school.

As a result, even long-time users of the campus continued to find unfamiliar areas, making them feel like travellers who are perpetually in search of their way. After seven years on campus, Paula described the feeling this way:

I mean one of the things though that is still a bit of a challenge sometimes is finding offices because the signage is a little bit tough. Because you think you're

going one way and you think the offices are a certain way and then all of a sudden you are in a different set of numbered offices than you expect to be at. It's not straightforward.

Similarly, after a decade on campus, Bruce noted:

There's a few corridors like that where the numbering system just doesn't make sense to me for the room numbers, and so I would walk down the corridor like this thinking, am I in the right area? I've been here for ten years I should know where these rooms are but I'm still not confident.

For participants, the stairs, hallways, and concourse strongly influenced their idea of the campus as a place to pass through. The juxtaposition of seven floors of uniform, concrete classrooms against carpeted hallways seemed to emphasize the heaviness and boxiness of the former, giving the campus a never-ending feel. As Paula commented:

I mean, it does feel very classroom-ish, it has a cement feeling.

Similarly, Courtney noted:

I guess it seems like it's a lot more classrooms and not much that stuff that's not classrooms if that makes sense.

Natalie summed up her perception of this in drawing her functional and transactional routine in her mental map (Figure 6.9). As the arrows in her map suggested, the combination of concrete, classrooms, long hallways, and stairs as well as the effort required to traverse them, seemed to coalesce in participants feeling like they were in perpetual transit.

For some, the classroom heavy, boxy, and concrete modernist design combined with the add-on nature of the extensive renovations, created an unwelcoming feeling that did not encourage them to stay and explore the campus. Bruce described it this way:

So I had to walk up the hill, and consistently ever since I started working here anytime I'd come in that western entrance where there's these long bank of stairs I've always found it very daunting and very uninviting. You get to one level and if you're not fit your heart's beating by that time and you can see that you can get in the floor below us, below the concourse, but it's not clear that it would actually

lead you anywhere, so there's another daunting flight of stairs to go up, go up the stairs and finally arrive to dark black doors that are not inviting but there's a few benches around and people coming and going so one assumes at that point that's where you come in and find the entrance, so it's not a welcoming presence.

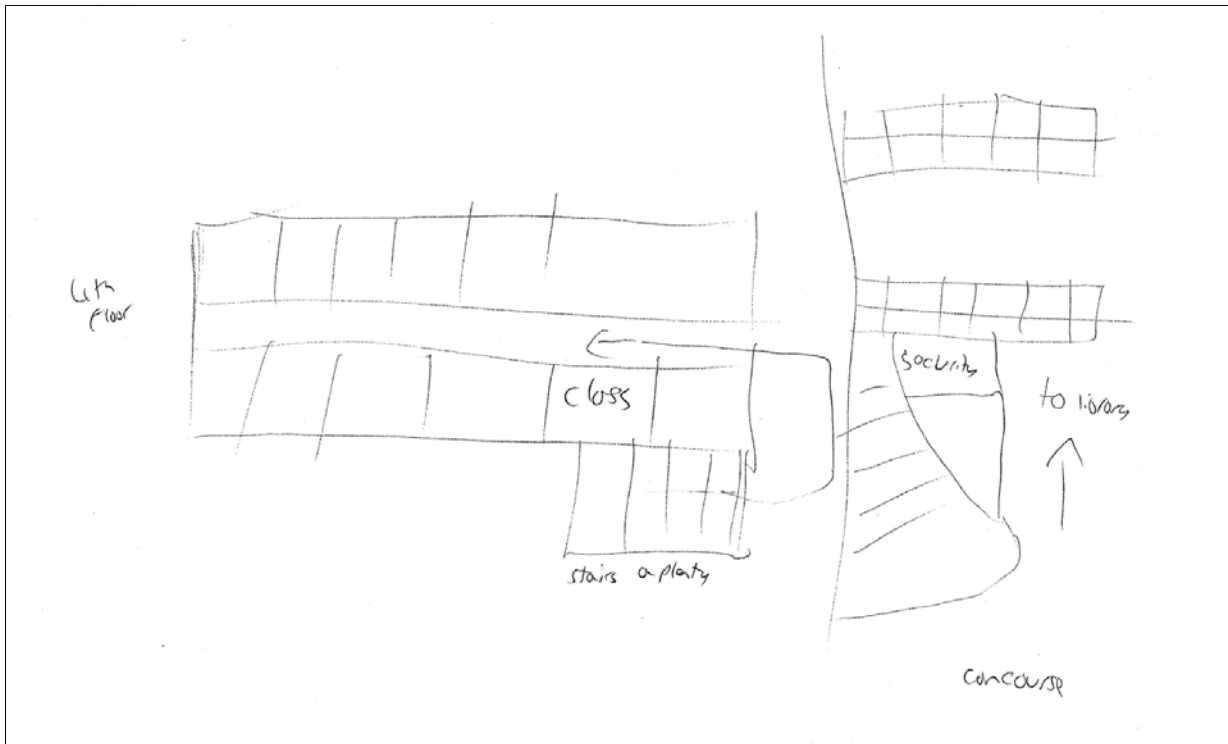


Figure 6.9. Natalie's Mental Map of the Urban Campus

The result was that, for Bruce, the campus was a place for people to simply pass through as they performed their daily functions. He observed:

[The campus] is a box. It doesn't do a whole lot to encourage [students] to stay before and after class, I mean there's been some efforts and that's partly what the concourse was trying to do and the area where we sitting was to try and make it a place that you could do before and after class, but for the most part it's come and do your stuff and flee.

Students made the same observation. For example, Brayden commented:

It's a place to go through rather than to stay, I would say. It definitely feels like a route rather than a point of, not rest, but a point to stay at.

Not everyone held this feeling as deeply as Bruce and Brayden, but they still held it. For example, Natalie found the campus' layout easier to master, noting:

It was kind of confusing. I got lost a bit, but I still was excited that I was going to come here, so like once I got like the hang of where I was I could just learn where other stuff was easily.

Yet she still saw no reason to stay any longer on campus than necessary. This had as much to do with the fact that her educational endpoint was not the Campus in the Woods. Her goal was to transfer to a nearby university. Like Brayden, Natalie's sense of the campus was very much influenced by her intention to be there only temporarily.

As the examples demonstrate, the disjointed passageways of the campus combined with its utilitarian design seemed to reinforce a feeling of transience that, for many, defined the Urban Campus as a place to pass through on their way somewhere else. The campus' modernist physical design was also strongly implicated in another of its meanings. Here, the campus' multiple floors were significant in it being perceived as a place of levels.

### **6.3.2 A Place of Stairs and Levels**

As a campus built on a hill with nine floors (two floors of underground parking and seven floors of classroom and office space) connected by many different types and sets of staircases, it was widely perceived as a place of levels. Judith described it as an "accessible pyramid," depicting it on her mental map as a series of stacked levels (Figure 6.10).

As Judith's mental map illustrates, the campus' many staircases figured largely in participants' idea of the campus. Natalie also noted, "stairs a plenty" on her mental map (Figure 6.9). And Courtney remarked:

I just remember walking up the hill and all the stairs. It's a lot of stairs.

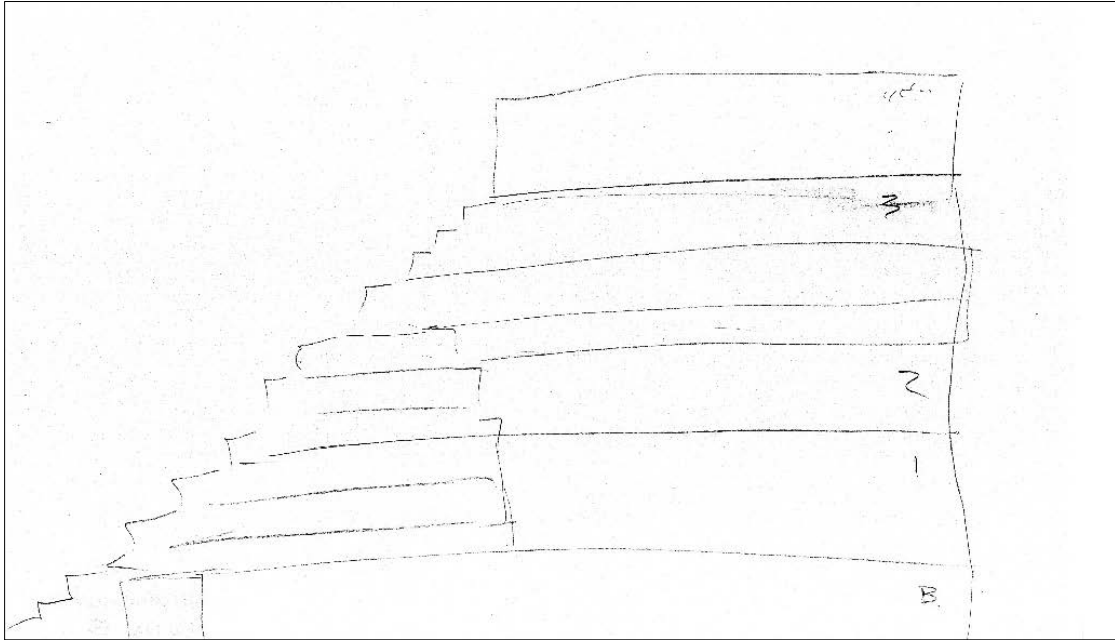


Figure 6.10. Judith's Mental Map of the Urban Campus

Even if they only took the elevators, every participant at the Urban Campus mentioned its stairways during our walk-alongs. Stairways also appeared, in one form or another, on eight out of the 12 mental maps. While some viewed the staircases in a fairly neutral manner, referring to them simultaneously as a necessary evil and an opportunity for exercise, others saw them as heights to be scaled in a pyramid of power.

Yolanda was one of the participants who reflected on the hierarchical nature of the Urban Campus. In her mental map, the executive offices at the Urban Campus sit on top of the south and north wings of the college, overlooking the concourse area that joins them. She marked them as SMT (Senior Management Team) on her map (Figure 6.11).

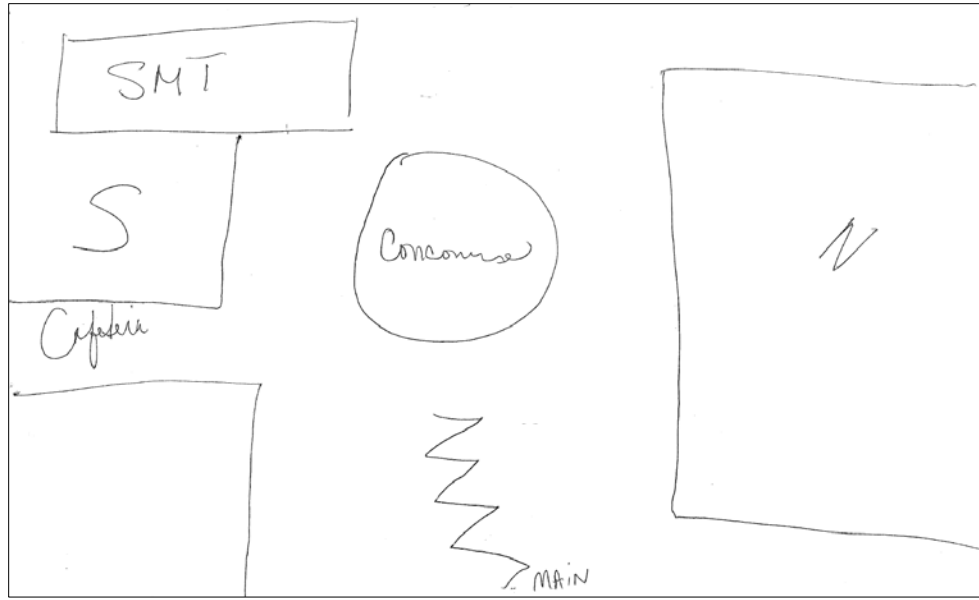


Figure 6.11. Yolanda's Mental Map of the Urban Campus: Senior Management Team (SMT)

She commented while drawing:

Then, SMT is sort of this hub. Senior Management Team and the hierarchy. So it's still here and I don't know if it will ever go away. This is the hub of the concourse. And then there's lower floors, obviously. So this is all north, with four levels, and all the floors being either classrooms, faculties, services, or theatre. It all makes sense if you were giving a tour, and I still think it does, but my first vision of when I come here is this hierarchy that I couldn't take anymore. It's just there in different ways, but I was too close to it.

Greg was one of several students who also pointed out the location of the executive offices overlooking the central concourse at the Urban Campus. He tied that location to the power structure of the college:

But it's also I just..., I feel there's a hierarchy of power here. And when you are in the same building as the president and the vice-president, you act differently. You have to, it's a natural..., it's natural. Their offices are here. They're fourth floor. Sometimes, I've walked by and just curiosity. When you walk over to that area, if we take the elevator to the fourth floor. You can tell it's an executive wing. And, because you walk down the hallway and there's no classrooms, there's just offices, and it's updated, it's modern. So that tells me they're putting money into

those offices, and you know. But they're not putting money necessarily into the students' area.

He related how the presence of executives at the Urban Campus created a more formal atmosphere than that found at the college's other campus:

I think when you have less executives around and less authority figures, like you have all the department heads here, I think. When you have staff that are... they have to be on guard for how they act and they just let their guard down less. They let their guard down at the [other] campus more whereas here it's like they have to be more vigilant and so they have to be more professional right and they can't skew the line. I can be more..., I'm informal, but I can be more informal there, I guess.

Students' as well as employees' awareness of the things that changed the atmosphere of the campus was not limited to the location of the college's executive floors. Participants were very conscious of the many changes and renovations that were ongoing at the Urban Campus, seeing them as particularly important to what the campus was all about.

### **6.3.3 Becoming More**

If the extensive additions to the campus had the unintended consequence of a disjointed effect, this was not their only meaning. When considered along with some of the other changes that have been made to improve the general ambience of the campus, the outcome was seen as transformative. Participants communicated a sense of a campus that was actively becoming something more. That is, there was a widely held view that as the college was becoming more sophisticated in its program offerings so too was the campus.

In the modernist tradition of the late-1970s, the original design of the Urban Campus heavily favoured brown brick and concrete which lent the campus an austere feeling. Over the past decade, the college has worked extensively to soften the campus in the hopes of increasing student use. The installation of lineoleum, carpeting, colourful accent pieces as well as modern

soft seating areas has brightened the campus and given it a warmer feel. Then and now images of the concourse highlight the effect of this transformation (Figure 6.12).



Source: images obtained from institution's website

Figure 6.12. The Concourse at the Urban Campus: 2003 and 2016

Employee participants received these changes very favourably. Pride in the school was closely linked to pride in campus. Paula saw the changes to the campus as necessary to the evolution of the college, noting the difference between when she first arrived as a new employee seven years ago and now:

I don't want this to sound too harsh, but I mean it felt like it was an institution still in the 70s basically. It felt very dated. It didn't feel modern. It didn't feel with the times, and I don't know if that worked against the institution or not, in terms of a stigmatism that may have been held by people. I know that when I certainly came here I had optimistic viewpoints of the place, but I found different viewpoints held by people when I got here. But I always thought that [the college] was a place and an institution with great potential and great people. I think the transformation and the renovations that they have, have sort of helped those feeling along. The people that may have had negative viewpoints before are much more positive about the place now. I think all these things have culminated to make a really vibrant and energetic place now. Much different, radically different than the place when I first came here.

Greg shared similar thoughts from his perspective as a student:

They've tried doing some things to spruce it up with the colour out there in the lobby. The fluorescent green and blues, those are just recent within the past year. Um, they've put in that rotunda area. That's brand new. They've tried to make it a more warmer place, because it was very cold before. And they put more couches out there and seating areas so they are trying to make it a place to be.

In keeping with the normally unnoticed quality of the lifeworld, Greg indicated that these changes caused him to consciously think about the campus. He remarked:

[The campus is] just so natural. It's just a part of, you know, part of my life. So I don't put a lot of time into that, but I do notice things, right. I do notice the artwork. You know. I notice the colours on the wall over there. Which is... it, it shows that they're giving, they're trying. And I understand that with budgets the way they are, there's not much you can do. You have to do things a little, a little at a time, little pieces.

For participants at the Urban Campus, these changes, especially in the context of the college's ongoing efforts to improve and renovate, signified a campus that was becoming more like an advanced place of higher learning. While the specific changes and renovations received mixed reviews, participants saw them as signs of the college's intentions to lift the quality of the campus and as evidence of the college's commitment to improving the student experience. In the same way that the built environment contributed to unique meanings of the Urban Campus, it also contributed to the formation of distinct ideas of the Campus in the Woods. I will present three of these in the next section.

#### **6.4 Unique Meanings of the Campus in the Woods**

Just as some of the physical characteristics of the Urban Campus contributed to the unique meanings of it, the material environment of the Campus in the Woods was implicated in its distinct meanings. While also being places of personal development, gathering places for students, places where someone is always there, restorative places as well as places of support services, the Campus in the Woods had two other meanings. Here, the low density, chalet style

of architecture, stands of Douglas Fir trees, and park-like landscaping contributed to the campus being perceived as a place to go for a walk and as a West Coast landscape.

#### **6.4.1 Place to Go for a Walk**

The many trails, groomed and ungroomed, that both surrounded and bisected the Campus in the Woods defined it as a place to go for a walk. As Chapter 5 discusses, the ring walk circling the campus was perceived to both literally and symbolically represent the college community. Even so, the number and variety of walking paths was noted by all of the participants except one. Here, participants commented upon the elevated walkways connecting three of the buildings, the paved pathways criss-crossing the campus, and the gravel trails leading to and from it. As Linda commented:

We have beautiful walking trails on the campus and if I go either way from my home I can end up on [campus]. At the bottom of my hill, I can go into a forest, walk up through a forest trail for 15 minutes and come onto the campus, walk around, and head back to my house a different way, so it's a complete loop.

The campus' many walkways and pathways were an integral part of the experience of it, adding important elements of delight. As Mikayla explained:

So this is where I would normally enter the campus so I park in this parking area and come up one of these paths which is really neat, right, to come up through a kind of forested path/trail area. It is a really neat way to come to school, I find.

For the two community members who participated in the study, the walking trails defined the campus as a community space. William regularly brought his dog through the campus' forested trails, walking 45 minutes from his home to reach them. And Bruce referenced community awareness of the trails, noting:

I know that there are some nice walking trails, I just don't know where they are. I think I'd probably explore and find out where they are. But I've heard from other people that there are some areas.

Having community members on its paths and trails was important for the college's employees. It was seen as a means by which the college connected with its constituency. As Maggie expressed it:

I'm so pleased to see so many people in the neighbourhood walking through here. You see people in the community walking like we are here now with their dogs, or just out for a walk. A lot of people walk this loop, and we see the same people daily or weekly. So I think it's a sense of community that we get to see people in our community as well as the college community.

Other ways that the campus connected with the local community contributed to its meanings. In particular, the style of the built and natural environment of the campus factored heavily into the idea of it as a West Coast landscape.

#### **6.4.2 West Coast Landscape**

With its assembly of two-story buildings separated by grassy areas and sited within a forest of Douglas Fir trees, participants saw the Campus in the Woods as being grounded in the regional landscape. Here the combination of chalet style architecture, stands of trees, grassy areas, and the presence of nature was perceived as rooting the campus in the vernacular. Mikayla described her feeling of being on the campus as being part of the community:

It's a feeling of kind of like calm, of belonging, sort of... of... there is a lot of really great First Nations stuff that we've done at this campus and we have the Totem pole and there is this sense of the West Coast that really kind of, to me, lends this feeling of community, really.

As a community user of the campus, William described the sentiment:

[The campus] is very much part of the valley. Well, it's got the setting with both the nature and the buildings. [The town] has this great kind of relationship with nature as well where we kind of have buildings and everything but in between are all these great green areas and we have all these trees on campus and the grass and everything makes it feel a lot similar.

His mental map simply captured this relationship (Figure 6.13).

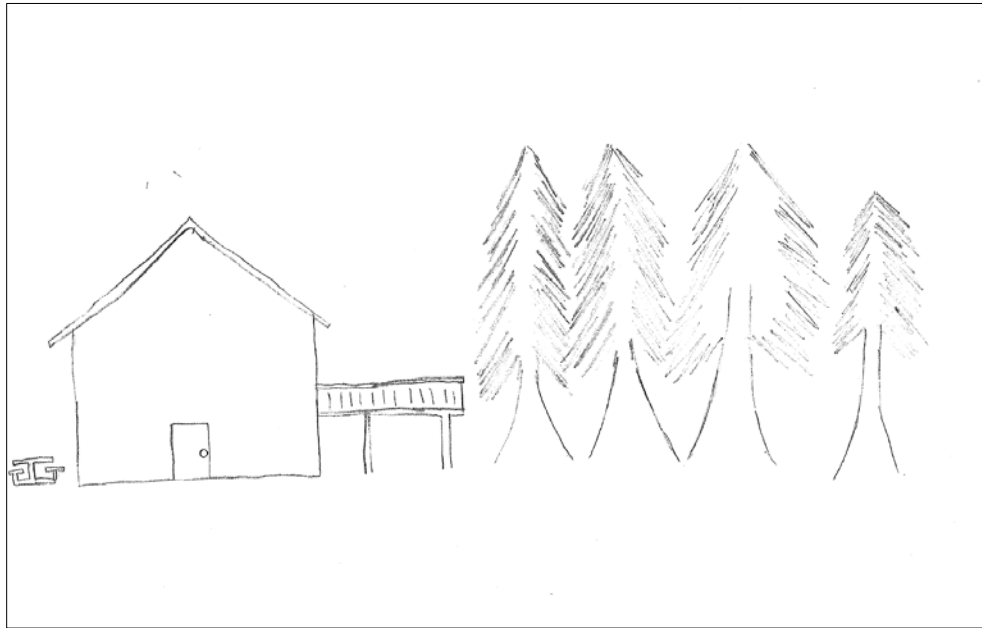


Figure 6.13. William's Mental Map of the Campus in the Woods

As William depicted in his mental map, wood, and trees loomed large in participants' idea of the Campus in the Woods. Todd recalled his first impression of the campus:

It was a very woodsy type of feel. Very woods-like. It was nice. It was not industrial looking. It suited the Island very well and the community, the way it looked. I liked all the wood. The buildings connected by the bridges. That's what I remember. And lots of trees. It's kind of a West Coast type of feel to the college, with the wood, the beams, the wood beams. It's got all the wood panelling and the wood beams and the nice pointed roofs on everything. It's got a real nice feel to the campus. Then you've got the totem poles out front. Lots of grass. Lots of trees.

The architectural style of the four main buildings centring the site contributed to this widely held perception (Figure 6.14). With their exposed wood beams, exterior wood finishing, and sloped roofs, participants commented on their resemblance to alpine chalets. As Linda observed:

It speaks Vancouver Island. All the beams and the trees left up on the campus. You drove in and it felt like a little fairy tale, a little lodge in behind the trees.



Source: photography by David Graham, used with permission

Figure 6.14. The Campus in the Woods: Chalets

As Bill described it:

[The campus] is very serene with all the trees and the buildings themselves fit into the landscape quite nicely.

The close presence of nature also contributed to the idea of the campus as a West Coast landscape. Maggie observed:

We are walking through kind of a natural environment where you see growth, you see evidence like this. I think it's beautiful. You see different things throughout the season. You see berries, you see buds, you see....I mean where else would you find this? I mean you don't have the water but you've got this beautiful unforested area that's left natural. It's not groomed. It's just beautiful. And the smells and the sounds.

While participants like Maggie spoke to the characteristics of the campus that defined it as a West Coast landscape, they also spoke equally to those aspects that were seen to diminish the integrity of it. For example, Maggie noted the effect of nearby construction on the ambience of the campus:

I guess I'd have to say that with the development, across the way we've got big box and we've got.... I think it has affected the look and feel, the ambience of a

natural environment that we've prided ourselves on for so long. I think it's changed the dynamics of the look and feel of, not so much rustic, but that West Coast sense of environment.

More troubling for participants was the area of modular trailers known on-campus as the Village (Figure 6.15).



Source: photography by David Graham, used with permission

Figure 6.15. The Village at the Campus in the Woods: Aerial and Interior Views

Composed of two rows of seven modular trailers joined by a roof, the Village was constructed to meet the campus' burgeoning need for classroom space. For seven of the 11 participants, the Village was an eyesore which detracted from the campus. David expressed this sentiment in the following way:

The village. It just doesn't fit with the rest of the feeling. It feels more like if they have nothing else to do they just stick stuff over there. It doesn't have that same vibe. Well there's not a lot of groups sitting around and talking. People. Like that vibe that way. There's not that energy vibe, it doesn't seem to be there. It's tucked off in the back and it's kind of almost like umm throw us back there. And it's go there, do your thing, and get out.

David's last sentence echoed the observations that Bruce and Brayden made about the Urban Campus. Bruce indicated that the campus gave a 'come and flee' impression while Brayden made an analogy between the campus and a route of travel. Here we see evidence of the

relationship between the perceived meanings of campus and behaviour. The extent to which these meanings of campus are implicated in its purpose is the subject of Chapter 7.

## **6.5 Place-Meanings, Spatial Practice and the Built Form**

The findings from the present study demonstrate that the two community college campuses were amalgams of person-or-people-experiencing-place or individual lifeworlds that came together in ways that were suggestive of both general and unique meanings for each campus. While both campuses were understood to be: places of personal development, gathering places for all students, places where someone is always there, restorative places, and places of support service, each also had unique meanings. Shaped by its built and natural environments, the Urban Campus was also understood as: a place to pass through, a place of stairs and levels, and becoming more of a place. Conversely, the Campus in the Woods was seen as a place to go for a walk and a West Coast landscape. As was the case with the shared meanings, these unique meanings were informed by the physical environments of each campus but created through practice. As Cresswell (2004) argued, “place is made and remade on a daily basis” (39).

Perhaps one of the most important findings of this study is the multi-layered nature of place-meanings. While generalizable, the place-meanings of the two campuses reflect themes of meaning that users expressed in a multitude of ways. In a related manner, these findings also illustrate that places exist at many scales such that campuses can have multiple and sometimes conflicted meanings for their users (Cresswell 2004, Friedmann 2010). This confirms other studies that demonstrated that place-meanings are as complex as the people who hold them (Manzo 2003, 2005). In keeping with the tenets of interpretative phenomenology, these meanings are subjective and limited to my analysis of them (Finlay 2011). Still, they are

informative to the extent that they can be considered with respect to the intended purpose of the higher education campus, as indicated in the literature.

The relevance of the meanings of campuses has been considered by a diverse range of scholars who have not only suggested that they are reflective of users' experience, but that a better understanding of them is necessary to understand how the campus contributes to the mission and mandate of higher education, particularly as community colleges are concerned. To date, both the import of the meanings of campus and their usefulness to campus design and planning have been mostly speculated. In the next chapter, I situate the findings of the present study in the context of the literature by returning to the issues that the first two chapters outline. I do this with the aim of developing a place-based approach to campus design and planning.

## **7. Toward Belonging: The Community College Campus as Home**

The present study was conducted at a time in higher education when the absence of a theoretical framework for the physical campus has led to questions about both its utility and its purpose. In Chapter 1, I reviewed the specific context of my research by pointing to a lack of understanding of how the campus contributes to institutions' missions and mandates for higher education. New pedagogies and modes of educational delivery, particularly online learning, have presented a forceful challenge to the widely held presumption that the campus contributes to student learning. At the same time, escalating investment in bricks and mortar has accompanied an astronomical rise in tuition costs, causing great concern about growing financial barriers to higher education. As I discussed in the introduction, one of the underlying arguments for sustaining the physical campus has been its perceived importance as a place; that is, as an environment whose meaning contributes to the purposes of the institution (Turner 1985, Chapman 2006, Harrison and Hutton 2014).

Where the literature to-date has focused solely on the intended architectural and design meanings of campus, this study examines the meanings of campus that are held by its users. By taking a phenomenological approach to the investigation of these meanings, the present study finds that participants understood campuses to be, in Seamon's (2013) terms, persons-or-people-experiencing-place where people and the physical environment interanimated each other. While the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods each had unique meanings, they also had shared meanings based on the common way participants practiced them as part of the functional and transactional routines that made up their lifeworlds. As Chapter 5 outlines, the identification

of these common and constituent time-space routines was integral to an understanding of how space becomes place on campus. They were also telling of some of its meanings.

Having discerned some of the meanings of the two community college campuses in Chapter 5, in this chapter, I turn to the second and third objectives of the study. Here I consider how geographical conceptualizations of place can inform theories and practices of place-making associated with the field of campus design and planning. Friedmann (2010) referred to this as “operationalizing place.” To that end, I situate my findings within the literature by circling back to the topics that I raised in the first two chapters and consider their implications for campus design and planning. I begin by examining the role that campuses might play in contributing to the mission and mandate of their institutions, focusing on community as both a promising and problematic theory of campus development. In doing so, I pay specific attention to the idea of belonging that underpins community, arguing that higher education theory has overlooked the role that place plays in the development of belonging.

Using findings from the study and following the literature, I argue for greater consideration of the relationship between the geographic concepts of home and community. Feelings of at-homeness (Seamon 1979) have been implicated with a sense of belonging to community. Here I suggest that campus design and planning efforts should focus on developing at-homeness as prerequisite to developing a sense of belonging to community. Building from the concept of person-or-people-experiencing place, I discuss some of the factors that influenced these feelings of belonging. I then return to the concept of place-making and consider the findings in the context of whether places can be fostered through design and planning activities. Drawing from Seamon (1979, 1980, 2013), Cooper Marcus and Wischemann (1983, 1990) and Gehl (2011), I conclude the chapter by advancing belonging grounded in person-or-people-

experiencing-place as a place-based approach to community college campus design and planning.

## **7.1 Community: An Incomplete Theory of Campus Design and Planning**

While scholars across the disciplines of geography, higher education, and urban planning and design have pointed to the need to elucidate its meanings in order to understand and advance the campus, the challenge of putting these to use is hampered by a lack of a theoretical framework in which to consider them. For the spaces of campus to be more than discrete containers for learning and other knowledge-generating activities, a larger, integrated purpose for their existence must not only be laid out, but planned and designed for. As the findings on the Urban Campus suggest, a single-building campus with a harmonious visual identity and structural uniformity does not necessarily result in users experiencing it as an integrated whole. This is where the mandate and mission of higher education institutions and their greater administrative control over land-use planning decisions potentially gives them an advantage over towns and cities where it has proven difficult to not only determine commonly accepted place meanings but to implement them in a participatory and democratic way.

The tenets of the movement that led to the creation of community colleges in the 1950s and 1960s provide some guidance in this regard. As Beinder (1983) documented, British Columbia's "colleges were founded on a widely supported philosophy directed towards the provision of a wider range of opportunities for a greater number and variety of people" (10). For the most part, this mandate continues to drive community colleges which are both centred around locally-based, open access education and focused on adult student success. Counter-intuitively, however, due to the broad range of short programming that they offer, the wide sectors of the commuting population to which they are directed, and the often part-time nature of student

attendance, community colleges have grappled with establishing a sense of community on campus (Turner 1985).

As Chapter 1 discusses, while it was the explicit goal of the Educational Facilities Laboratories (ELF) to ground the design of colleges in their communities, the resulting campuses point to the difficulty of using community as a theory of campus design and planning (Lacy 1962). Several factors likely contributed to the challenge, including both the focus on economic efficiency that underpins this sector of higher education and the speed in which many community college campuses were erected. Timing was equally important; community college growth rapidly accelerated during the height of post-war rationalism, modernism and blue-print planning. Planners, including campus planners, relied on the power of architectural determinism to create communities by using the built environment to collect people (Muthesius 2000). However, the absence of landmark buildings such as cathedrals and libraries meant that community college designers could not visually signal a sense of community through the impact of signature architecture, akin to universities' use of Collegiate Gothic. Marked in the U.S. by the demolition of Pruitt-Igoe in the mid-1970s, the global history of social upheaval caused by housing relocation projects has proven that communities cannot be built through architecture alone (Friedmann 2010). Modernism not only downplays, but also underestimates, the interanimation of people and the physical environment that constitutes place. As Appleyard (1979) argued, instrumentalism as the ideology of modern architecture and land-use planning insufficiently considers the user in its intended communication of intention and meaning.

Still, community as the grounding idea behind both college and campus continues to prevail. As Bickford and Wright (2006) argued:

Community catalyzes deep learning and should be a critical consideration when planning physical and virtual learning spaces. The importance of community to learning is implied but rarely stated as a significant context in higher education. Were community not important for learning, colleges and universities would have little reason to exist – people could learn efficiently by reading and interacting with tutors. Research on learning theory, how the brain works, collaborative learning, and student engagement has taught us that people learn best in community. (4.1)

Advances in student development theory and adult education have led to a renaissance of community as the backbone of higher education theory, a conversation that has subsequently spilled over to discussions about campuses. The notion of community “engenders notions of spatial contiguity as well as a sense of nested belonging,” making it an easy point of reference for those seeking to validate the campus (Aitken 2009, 221). As Temple (2009) argued, “the creation of community and its culture turns, I suggest, university space into a place” (218). Community, simply defined as a group of individuals who share beliefs, understandings, and experiences and who feel interconnected as a result, is perhaps the prevailing theory of campus in the post-war period (Ojeda, O’Connor, and Kohn 1997, Coulson, Roberts, and Taylor 2011).

For community colleges, a theory of campus that is based on the development of community continues to have obvious attractions. While the concept is ambiguous and complex, its connotations are mostly positive (Aitken 2009). Community wraps together ideas of belonging, the public, and locality that naturally align with the mandate and missions of this sector of higher education. As Peter Powell, a past president of the B.C. Schools Trustees Association noted, “[t]he college, to fulfill its function must be able to hold the interest and support of the population which it serves and this can be done only if its programmes relate to the specific needs of the community and satisfy the grass roots demands of the people in the college attendance area.” Community colleges hold a special responsibility to their localities. If

the public, in all of its diversity and fullness, is not represented on-campus, then community colleges are not meeting their obligation as public spaces.

As Chapters 5 and 6 elaborate, participants at both campuses spoke favourably about the campus as a community of people, frequently citing the ways that the physical environment supported these social interactions. Recently, Rullman and van den Kieboom (2012) elaborated on community as a theory of campus design and planning. Campuses, they argued, must create an environment of active citizenry where new ideas emerge from the confluence of dissimilar people:

In an increasingly diverse society, college students must have frequent opportunities to practice productive interaction and constructive disagreement, experience high-quality socialization, and learn to live productively in community with one another. Especially important to ensure are opportunities and places for students to experience different perspectives, life experiences, and world views while developing in themselves a sense of self as part of a community with concomitant responsibilities to others. (179)

The arguments favoring community as a theory of higher education and campus design and planning rest on evidence that belonging to a community contributes to student success. As Chapter 1 discusses, the field of higher education continues to point to the importance of a sense of belonging to academic achievement (Thomas 2012, Marmot 2014, Stebleton et al. 2014). Building from Peck (1993), Bickford and Wright (2006) argued that a sense of belonging to a community creates the conditions for the deep and authentic interpersonal communication and engagement that are essential conditions for learning and other forms of knowledge generation. Cicognani et al. (2008) further found that a sense of community amongst higher education students sparks social participation, including: “political participation, voluntary activities, engagement in social, cultural, sports, recreational events, as well as extracurricular activities” (98).

Despite this renewed attention to developing communities in both higher education theory and campus design and planning, the literature tends toward making the same, but opposite, mistake that it makes with campus. If discussions and studies of campus in higher education typically focus on the physical environment at the expense of human relations, higher education's discussions about community tend to neglect spatiality by treating space as a container for human interaction. As the two passages above suggest, discussions about community in higher education typically assume that bringing people together in space organically leads to community. However, as Marin (2001) found elsewhere, propinquity alone does not create community. A sense of belonging needs to be actively fostered.

In its considerations of community development, higher education has overlooked the ways that place is implicated in belonging. That is, there is a greater need to consider the processes by which individuals develop a sense of belonging through person-or-people-experiencing-place or the interanimation of people and the physical environment. This returns us to the concept of a sense of place which can also be described as a sense of belonging to place. Malpas (2008) usefully linked belonging to a sense of place this way: “[s]ense of place refers us, on the face of it, both to a sense of the character or identity that belongs to certain places or locales, as well as to a sense of our own identity as shaped in relation to those places – to a sense of ‘belonging to’ those places” (199-200). As Holloway and Hubbard (2001) argued, places do not have meaning ‘within’ themselves which can be imparted to any observer, “a sense of place relies far more on the individual, with places becoming significant for them alone” (74).

Here, the many dimensions that comprise an individual's sense of place are helpful in describing the forms of belonging that can involve the physical environment of campus. Subsumed within the concept of a sense of place are: the faculties or senses we use to

differentiate one part of the campus from another (Relph 2008a), the ease with which one part of campus can be perceived in contrast with others (Lynch 1960), the feelings and emotions that the campus evokes (Cresswell 2010, Depriest-Hricko and Prytherch 2013), one's personal identification with, and attachment to, campus (Manzo 2005), one's position or place at the school (Tuan 1975b, Cresswell 1996), and one's perceived ability to participate there (Cresswell 1996). As Chapters 5 and 6 delineate, each of these characteristics was commented upon by participants in the study who referenced them while describing their attachment to their campus. Together, they point to the importance of considering how belonging is implicated in individuals' relationships with campus.

From a phenomenological perspective, one of the most enduring theories of the nature of individuals' belonging to place is Relph's (1976) continuum of insideness and outsideness. While retaining currency in its own right, Relph's framework has been both reworked and extended in environmental psychology's body of work on place attachment. As he described it, "to be inside a place is to belong to it and identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with a place" (49). Conversely, outsideness refers to "a self-conscious and reflective uninvolvedness, an alienation from people and places, homeless, a sense of unreality of the world and of not belonging" (51). With his seven modes of insideness and outsideness, Relph provided a construct with which to consider the nature of the relationship between people and place as well as a means of understanding why the same places can elicit widely differing individual responses (Seamon and Sowers 2008). In developing his insideness and outsideness framework, Relph was one of several phenomenologically-oriented scholars in the late-1970s who brought attention to the idea of home.

## 7.2 Home and Community: A Continuum of Belonging

Across the environment-behaviour fields, home remains the concept most deeply associated with belonging. Like community, the meanings of home are diverse and contested. Where home and sanctuary were once considered to be synonymous, more recent literatures have explored the concept as a “spatial imaginary” where homes are sites of a diverse array of feelings and meanings, including “fear, violence, an alienation” (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 2). Still, the concept of home retains mostly positive connotations to a sense of belonging which is typically attached to a physical environment (Cooper Marcus 1995, Manzo 2003, Aitken 2009, Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey 2009). Seamon’s (1979) work on home and his concept of at-homeness spoke directly to this: “[a]ttachment to home is associated with the experience of at-homeness – the taken for granted situation of being comfortable and familiar with the world in which one lives his or her day-to-day life” (78).

Using Relph’s (1976) modes of insideness as a foundation, Seamon outlined five qualities of at-homeness: rootedness, appropriation, regeneration, at-easeness, and warmth. Intersecting these characteristics is the idea that home becomes a part of oneself through everyday practice (Appleyard 1979). Rootedness refers to the way homes both situate and centre bodies in space: “[l]iterally, the home roots the person spatially, providing a physical centre for departure and return” (79). The daily practice of household-based, time-space routines allows this rootedness to be experienced in an automatic way which in turn creates a sense of comfort and safety. Appropriation refers to the ability and authority to control space through the practice of routines in a physical environment. It also describes the ability to regulate who else may be present in space. Control, safety, and comfort also facilitate regeneration, both physical and psychological. As Seamon (1979) described it, regeneration refers to the ways that home restores

the body (81). In a related manner, at-easeness speaks to one's ability to be one's self at home. Underpinning this ease is the freedom that security, control, and comfort engender. Warmth refers to the "atmosphere of friendliness, concern, and support that a successful home generates" (Seamon 1979, 84).

The findings from the present study suggest that the literature pertaining to community as a theory of campus development would be enriched by a more fulsome understanding of the relationship between belonging to home and belonging to community. At both campuses, participants who expressed the deepest sense of belonging described it as a home or second home. They were also the ones who spoke to a feeling of membership in their college community, suggesting as Appleyard (1979) argued, "that the sense of a self in a place is more important than simply a sense of place" (152).

Greg at the Urban Campus described the relationship between feeling at home on campus and his sense of belonging to the campus community by referencing his social circle:

So over the past three years or whatever it's become a part of my life. There's some days when you just want to get out of here but there's some days when you find it relaxing right. So it's like... Other than home, it's the second most, you know, important place where I spend most of my time. I belong here more than I belonged up at University S. Because I tried to do the same things up there, create the same friendliness that I try to, like talking to people. It, it wasn't happening. So. I get more here. I can joke with a lot more people. I like to joke around with people, have fun with them and I can do that more here.

As someone who had worked at her college before the establishment of its Urban Campus, Yolanda made a similar observation about the permanent facility and her feeling of being at home:

Because I started here after being in portables and the different reorganizations and splits and that kind of thing. When I come here, there is always somebody, like people know me and I know and like them, and I just love people. I love

people and this makes me feel at home when I come here because so many of them go back so many years.

As an employee of the same campus, Edward saw his role as fostering a culture of home and community where students can grow. He connected the two in the following way:

My job is not just to provide a certain service but to provide a space and an opportunity, and a community where students can feel at home and comfortable, sometimes taking those risks or doing things that are out of their comfort zone or things they have not tried before, in order to really learn who they are and what they want to do and be with for the rest of their life, and so that is part of the community that I am trying to build here; one that is focused on discovery and learning and supporting each other through this learning process.

The continuum of belonging that home and community represent has been well considered by geographers in the literature. Relph (1976) wrote: “home is the foundation of our identity as individuals and as members of a community” (39). Similarly, Seamon (1979) argued that “at-homeness is the experiential foundation of community” (95). More recently, Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey (2009) posited that the concepts of home and community are intertwined and mutually reinforcing, differing only in scale and intensity. Both represent belonging or comfortableness and familiarity in place. Home typically suggests strong and intimate bonding developed within the private sphere of the family, typically thought of in Canada and the U.S. in terms of the size of the nuclear family. Community widens that group to the public sphere with social connections extending over a larger geographic area. Implied in both concepts is the idea that individual comfort in place or feelings of at-homeness allow people to connect more broadly with community. In turn, associations with community reinforce attachment and belonging to home.

Of particular relevance to this study is Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey’s (2009) finding that, “the boundary between home and community blurs into one larger, symbolic entity experienced

as ‘home’” (247). Holloway and Hubbard (2001) similarly argued that: “[a] sense of physically being and feeling ‘in place’ or ‘at home’ can then be regarded as a sign that the individual has established an emotional tie to place. This emotional bond is necessary for cultivating a sense of place, along with the requirement that an individual needs to be physically intimate with the place at the same time” (75). Here it is argued that establishing a bond to place, such as at-homeness, is a pre-requisite to cultivating belonging to other places.

In keeping with their attention to the lifeworld, phenomenological research on ‘home’ in humanistic geography converges on the idea that at-homeness involves establishing one’s self-identity through the everyday practice of routine that is person-or-people-experiencing place. As Tuan (1977) portrayed it: “the home place is full of ordinary objects. We know them through use; we do not attend to them as we do to works of art. They are almost a part of ourselves, too close to be seen” (144). In defining home, he referred to Stark (1948) who wrote: “[t]his surely is the meaning of home – a place where every day is multiplied by all the days before it” (55). As befits his interest in the lifeworld, Seamon (1979) connected his concept of at-homeness with routine. He argued that in the practice of their daily routines, people appropriate space, becoming rooted in it over time. This familiarity leads to feelings of being at-ease in space which facilitates regeneration and, when there is a supportive physical environment, even warmth.

### **7.3 Campus as Home**

Home as an outcome of familiarity achieved through the practice of walking one’s routine was found by Cooper Marcus and Wischemann (1983) in their study of the University of California’s Berkeley campus. Four hundred students were asked whether they could mark a home turf on a map of the campus; 90% were able to do so. Remarkably later on the study, they concluded: “[a]pparently, the need to feel that one belongs to one spot is so compelling that most

students, even those with no formal tie to any one building (i.e., those who had not yet chosen a major) still appropriated a place to which they returned daily” (Cooper Marcus and Wischemann 1990, 144-145). Undergraduate students indicated a larger home turf area than graduate students who often marked a single building. Cooper Marcus and Wischemann (1990) found the practice of routine that is person-or-people-experiencing-place to be integral to the creation of a home turf. They observed:

Clearly the pedestrian orientation of a campus has a lot to do with the perception of home turf. Where most campus-users walk between buildings, and where the climate is conducive to outdoor lunching/studying/relaxing much of the year, a gradual daily familiarity with places evolves into a sense of home territory. Like people in a residential neighbourhood, students and faculty on the Berkeley campus felt comfortable in their home turf because they saw people there whom they knew. But we sensed that, even more importantly than in a residential area, people become attached to an area of campus because they use the outdoors as a resting place as well as a passing-through space, that is, they become familiar with its sights, sounds, sensations, and visual images while sitting, relaxing, eating or conversing. (148)

Paula described how familiarity and routine led to her feeling of at-homeness at the Urban Campus. She noted the relationship between home and family:

I’ve come to realize, probably in the last little while, that it feels like a home. I mean in the course of my daily activities, I’m not consciously thinking about the space or the people per se, but I have had an opportunity to reflect on it and for me it’s, and maybe not everybody would ever have these feelings unless they have that opportunity to have some space away from the space as it were, and realize that it’s a great group of people that work here and I think that like any institution, and I’ve often said this, every institution is like a family. Every family has its ups and downs, its quirks, that sort of thing, but it’s what makes the place. Either you like it and you stay, or you don’t and you go. I think a lot of people stay here because they feel that affinity. They feel that sense of belonging.

In addition to Greg and Paula, Travis, Ethan, Donna, and Yolanda also chose the word home to describe the Urban Campus. As did Mikayla, Sharon, Maggie, and Todd at the Campus in the Woods. While the campus was clearly not home for every participant (e.g., Paul very

explicitly noted his lack of attachment to the Campus in the Woods in Chapter 5), ten of the 23 participants described their campus as akin to a home.

Aspects of belonging that characterise at-homeness were present even when participants did not specifically use the word home to describe their campus. Taken together, the shared meanings of the two campuses reflect both at-homeness and belonging to community (Table 6.1). Each of the core meanings of campus – that is, places of self development, a gathering place for all students, places where someone is always there, restorative places and places of support services – is multi-layered. Each of these layers illustrates how feelings of at-homeness, as outlined by Seamon (1979), intersected with feelings of belonging to community. For example, as a place of self development, participants' spoke to their ability to break free of past experiences and others' expectations of them to define themselves on campus. In turn, this at-easiness with being oneself in an accepting environment allowed participants to be present either alone amongst others, or together with others in the campus' gathering places. Similarly, participants needed and sought out restorative places and places of support service in order to regenerate sometimes alone, but more often in the presence of others. And participants were warmed by campuses as places where someone always was.

One of the distinguishing contributions of phenomenological and other literatures on the home is their recognition of the role that the physical environment plays in making a place a home. In her landmark book, *House as a Mirror of Self*, Cooper Marcus (1995) theorized that individuals turn houses into homes through the placement of artefacts. As she suggested:

In our own lives, we select the sets and props of different 'acts' (or periods of life) in order – often unconsciously – to display images of ourselves and to learn by reflection of the environment around us. The key seems to be the personalization of space: More and more I found in the stories I heard, that it is the moveable

objects in the home, rather than the physical fabric itself, that are the symbols of self.

From a socio-psychological perspective, Després (1991) similarly argued:

The home plays a crucial role in people's definition of their self-identity, acting as a dialogue between them and the larger community. As a container for the material possessions that are meaningful to each household member, the home provides the information necessary to the development of their self-identity, these objects being concrete embodiments of different aspects of their personality (101).

The findings from the present study suggest, however, that the campus as a home was more than just a container of personal objects, it involved the interanimation of people and the physical environment. Achieved through the practice of routine, personal identification with the physical environment was an integral aspect of feeling at-home on campus. This occurred in a number of ways. Some participants perceived the overall campus in terms of a home. For example, Todd described the Campus in the Woods this way, noting that:

[The campus has] got this homey feel to it. It just feels like you're allowed to touch things and you're not out of place. It's not like being in a very modern place where you're kind of worried about everything that you might have to touch or do, or you'd just feel like you're in the wrong place, and here you just kind of feel like you're at home. You are not out of place here.

He went on to say:

[Home] means not being uncomfortable and being able to walk around, and feeling comfortable not to say hi to people, and not having your head down. So that's home to me.

In these two passages, Todd equated being at-ease on campus to feeling at home. In a comparable way, the Campus in the Woods was home for Sharon because she saw herself in the landscape. She described it as follows:

The large grassy areas, the forest, the buildings, the space between the buildings, it feels like home. When I say it feels like home, it feels like a second home. It's not like home, home. But it does give you that comfort.

Mikayla expressed a very similar sentiment about the Campus in the Woods, describing the ways that the landscape worked in harmony with her body and identity:

It's a feeling of kind of like calm, of belonging, sort of... of... Yeah, yeah. I just love this space. Just the trees, the way the campus looks, the way it feels to move around it. That was a lot about... of what I enjoyed and what made me feel comfortable here. Being from a rural area myself...

Participants who felt the deepest sense of at-homeness were those who, akin to Cooper Marcus and Wischemann's (1983) findings, had at least one home territory. While employees tended to have a built-in homebase such as their workspace or office, students who felt at-homeness on campus found homes on campus or created ones for themselves, usually a combination of both. Mikayla was one of these students. She described one of her classrooms as home, pointing to a community of like-minded students whose formal and informal learning was encouraged by a supportive physical environment:

It was nice having almost all my classes in the same room because there was this sense of "this is my room." I think just from being in the same space all the time there was a sense of comfort, you know, "this is my room and this is where I always sit" and that there wasn't this extra stress of changing from room to room for every class, just a sense of settling in, "this is where I belong."

For her, home was an interanimation of people in place:

This is a sense of home and that's the neat thing about my program is you're mostly with all the same students. I call it a canned program because you just move around in a group as opposed to university studies where you're taking different classes with different people. But that was a really neat opportunity and important for that program, I think, that you developed relationships with the group that you were with because we were talking about a lot pretty sensitive topics, so that was really neat. So I came to really enjoy this room. It has great windows, and it has a kind of instructional space in the front and there is a little bit of a partial wall in the back and there's couches and a little table so there was a lot of really good break out space because we did a lot of workshops and group work where we would break into groups. So the room actually was really good for that kind of work because that's the kind of program it is. It wasn't a strictly instructional thing. Instead we would break out into groups and do group work.

Outside of class-time, Mikayla frequented places on campus that, for her, had a homey feel, created, in part, by the physical environment. She often returned to a particular spot in the library because of the physical properties of the space:

I love this space [in the library] again because there is lots of light, it is very open. I'm not even sure what this is out there but it just has a bit more of a homey feeling to it, and I would often try to grab one of the tables at the windows. But no, I just, I just love this space again with the windows and the light and everything.

Her favourite place on campus was the student lounge, a de facto home away from home for students:

I'll show you the area that I would like to spend time in is the student lounge. I would come and study and read in this area in the student lounge. It is cool, it has these nice couches and just has a different feel depending on the holidays or whatever. Christmas they had it all decorated and it was just a really, really nice place to be. People take their shoes off and a kind of all cosy on the couch kind of thing.

Students who couldn't find a homey spot on campus made their own by personalizing the space around them. For example, Brayden occasionally sought refuge from the concrete megastructure that was the Urban Campus by personalizing a small, unused outdoor courtyard. He described his ritual in the following way:

There's a little, what's it called, a courtyard over on the third level that's closest to where my classroom is that has some plants growing in it and it's open air, so it's actually a nicer place to sit down if you have some time, and if it's not wet and cold. There's fresh air. And there's almost never anyone in it. So if I ever wanted to listen to music I don't need to plug into my headphones. I can usually just play it. So normally I sit at that chair there. Just because of angles and sunlight, and so I do like having the trees there and some of these are quite interesting how the branches formed especially the one on the extreme right and left. Sometimes it's actually quite interesting hearing the birds because they're usually like along the rooftops here, there's one or two usually and it can be quite calming. Sometimes I bring a pot of tea. I usually bring, like if I'm going to have a pot I usually bring my own tea and I bring my pot and I bring a teacup up and that just really helps you get through a long day.

Donna was one of several students who felt rooted in space that they appropriated for themselves. Despite having transferred to a nearby university to complete her pharmacy degree, she returned to the Urban Campus once or twice a week to hang out, to study, and to keep cherished relationships with faculty going. She described the office where she volunteered as her second home, noting:

This is the place that I come to all the time when I come now.

She began her mental map of the campus by drawing her on-campus home on the bottom right corner, setting it out in contrast with a work area depicted in the top centre (Figure 7.1). For Donna, home and family were intimately related. She explained the relationship between the two in this way:

I think of it as my second home because I really do, I really like the teachers; I still know most of the teachers, I've visited most of them quite a few times and they were really happy to see me. I know they're always ready to give me advice because they have so much experience, so I love listening to that because I'm making a huge bunch of life choices at this point so it's really nice to hear people who have experience and, unfortunately, I can't really ask my parents for that because they had their education in India, so that's kind of like my advice system as well, so I just ask people here because they have a lot of experience. They have a lot of connections too.

Individualizing space through familiarity born of routine and through the placement of personal objects led to the deepest feelings of at-homeness. In these instances, the campus became an important part of participants' self-identity. On this form of appropriation, Appleyard (1979) wrote the following: "[t]he home environment, as it evolves with the modifications and adaptations that we make on it, becomes in some sense a part of ourselves" (151). This sentiment was reflected by Paula who described it as follows:

Well, I think after a while if you spend enough time in any one place, after a time, I think that there is a kind of bonding that happens on a very base level. You don't

really become aware of it when it happens. It just sort of becomes part of who you are after a while.

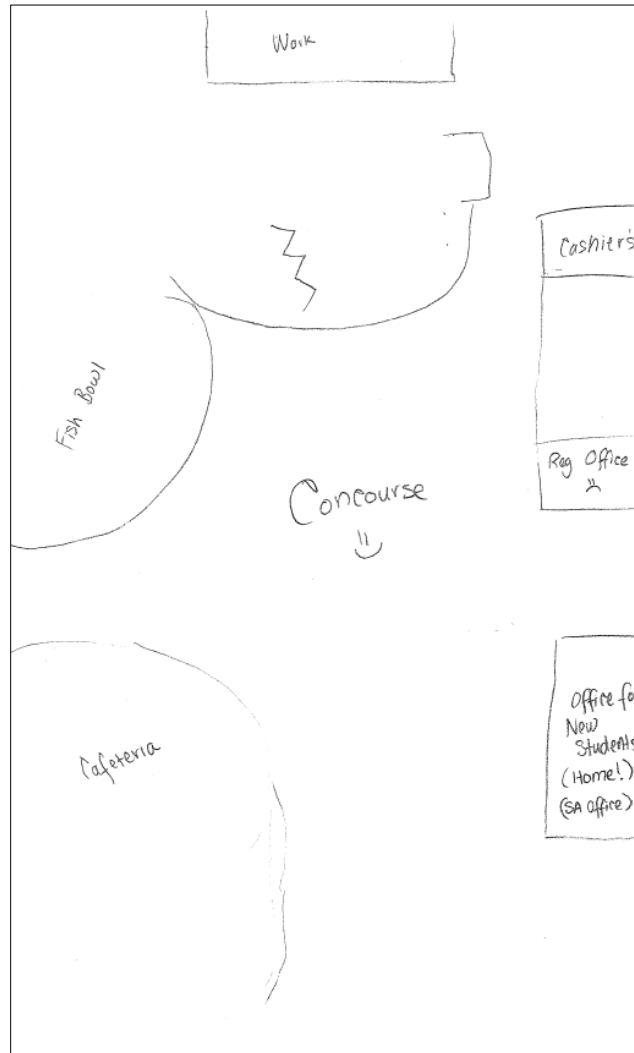


Figure 7.1. Donna's Second Home at the Urban Campus

Paula drew parallels between the changes she engineered to her work space and the Urban Campus becoming part of her self-identity, noting:

Now this office space is radically different than when I first joined the college. When I first came here, you couldn't swing a cat in here. This book shelf was actually over here. There was an old metal desk here. There was a computer table like this, but an older one there. There was a filing cabinet over here, and a bookcase as well, all cramped in here, so you really only had this much room to walk in here. Then I basically talked with the fellow I worked with, and talked

about making changes in the office, so we got rid of some things like the big large filing cabinet that was no longer used. It was virtually empty, so we got rid of that. So it was basically about, over the years, getting rid of things that didn't belong in here and it became a better place. So we got newer furniture obviously, because the furniture that had been here was much older. It was like stuff that was in inventory. But this is much nicer obviously.

In contrast, Ethan spoke to how the stability of the Urban Campus led to it becoming a part of him over time:

[The campus is] part of me for want of a better phrase. I did my associate of arts here, basically this is where my work life has been effectively and so my identity is actually tied up in the building. To me, it's the combination of safety, familiarity, and predictability that I find enmeshed in my daily routine here and within the building. All of which are aspects that I really like in my personal life and certainly changes do occur but they happen slowly here which is much more to my liking.

While the previously referenced literature understands home and community as points on a continuum of belonging, the ways that the comfort and familiarity of home lead individuals to seek connections with community haven't been as fully elaborated. In the present study, this was found to be a reflection of at-easeness, Seamon's (1979) characteristic of at-homeness that describes the quality of being free to be most comfortably who one is. Participants most frequently equated at-easeness with not having to watch one's words. Familiarity with the people around as well as the physical environment were necessary to this comfort. Ethan described it this way:

The main campus is simply put for me, home. Home means safety, security, uh, for me, warmth, under the heading of predictability. I am comfortable here. I can metaphorically be myself. I don't feel quite, as a ...visiting a place and thus having to be more careful about what I say or do such as at [the college's other] campus.

At the Campus in the Woods, Maggie made a comparable observation, citing conversations as an element of being at home:

I still comment that the campus has been my home, now for 20 years. It's where I expected to work hard, make a contribution and leave feeling fulfilled. I think it is a reflection of myself and what I saw upon arrival was a place that I could put my heart and energy into. Home to me is comfort, shelter, warmth, family and friends, conversations, respect, generosity.

For these participants, feeling at home meant being able to be oneself on campus and to express that. The ability to connect with others through the practice of their functional and transactional routines and through the freedom to have open conversations created an atmosphere where interpersonal connections could be made. Moving-easy and speaking-easy allowed community, however that was defined by participants, to form.

Paula depicted the interconnected nature of community in her mental map of the Urban Campus (Figure 7.2). For her, the campus was a group of people united in the pursuit of learning who share space. While drawing her map she remarked:

We all know that we're here to instruct or impart knowledge to the next generation, and the next, and the next, sort of thing.

In her view, the campus embodied this sense of belonging when it was full of students. For Paula, the college's sense of purpose was supported by a campus which brought people together in a home-like environment as a way of encouraging their meeting. Watching television is an activity associated with the home and by replicating this environment, the Urban Campus turned its concourse into a giant living room where conversation could easily be had (Figure 6.2). As she described it:

One of the things I think has been a wonderful addition is this big screen down here. Like when there have been events like the World Cup or if there's something going on that everybody in the world would be interested in watching, all the students just sit here on the steps and they watch it. And it's just a really cool thing. It's like a real community building kind of thing.

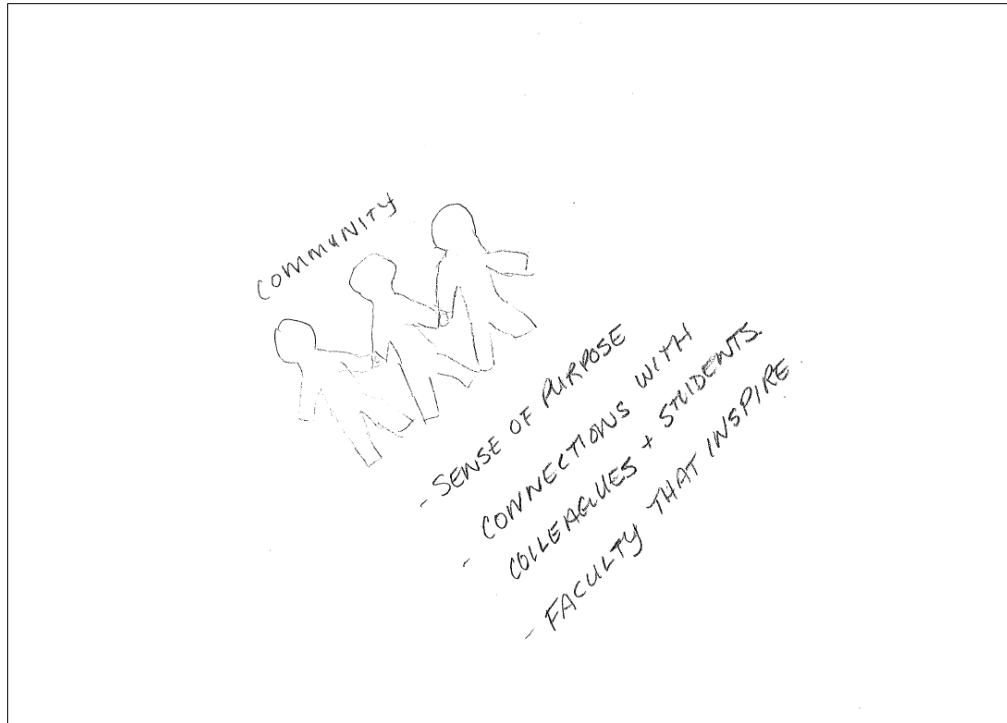


Figure 7.2. Paula's Mental Map of the Urban Campus: Community

Edward had an almost identical response to the addition of the screen. He remarked:

The big LCD screen, well I guess sort of the big Omnimax they call it, that has information and at times live sporting events, the sound system that is in there, all of those things together, I think, have transformed it from a physical pass-through space to more of a center, the community, where there are actually things to do and spaces that invite you to stick around for a while as opposed to just moving on somewhere else.

Like Paula and Edward, Travis also spoke to the way the Urban Campus supported feelings of at-homeness and the subsequent development of community. Despite having been on campus for less than six months, Travis had begun to feel very comfortable on campus. He observed:

[The campus] is quickly becoming my new sort of home. It is familiar, safe, something that you, you know, you can come back to, not feel overwhelmed. You know it's a..., as I said, a familiar, you know where you are coming back to.

Having a safe place in which to depart and return is one of the characteristics of home. It is, in Seamon's (1979) terms, a form of rootedness which organizes the body spatially. Travis' office space served as an important home base for him, centring him within the campus and incorporating both rootedness and appropriation. Having a place of his own to care about was an important part of his feeling of at-homeness. As he described it:

While I spend so much time in the lab I kind of think of it as my zone, kind of the place that I... It's my domain to run, it's kind of where I kind of tend to spend maybe two-thirds to three-quarters of my time on campus.

It was from his home base that Travis connected with the rest of the campus community through the daily practice of his functional and transactional routine. In his view, the layout of the campus supported the interpersonal connections that lead to community. He compared his previous experience at another university to his current one at the Urban Campus:

While I mean I spent the most of my time at University S, I spent over six years there and got to know everybody through that, you know, those many years so I think I've got my closest ties to it just because I did both my undergrad and my graduate degrees there. But this is quickly becoming my new sort of home. This is, feels more like a regular institution but I think the small, compact nature of the campus facilitates more cross-fertilization between the faculty members and a closer community relationship with the other faculty and staff in the area. The smaller, compact nature facilitates an easier relationship with the other staff and faculty and gives me a greater sense of belonging and home-like feeling.

## **7.4 Invisible Barriers**

Just as person-or-people-experiencing-place set the context for participants feeling at home on campus, it also detracted from it. Together, the physical environment and the behaviour of people contributed to this message. At both campuses, participants spoke about places where they sensed that they were not welcome. For example, Donna annotated her mental map of the Urban Campus with smiley and frowny faces to point out places where she felt comfortable and places where she did not. She marked the concourse with a smiley face and the Registrar's office

with a frowny face. A section of her map illustrating this is below (Figure 7.3). In addition, Figures 5.11 and 6.6 contain other parts of her map.

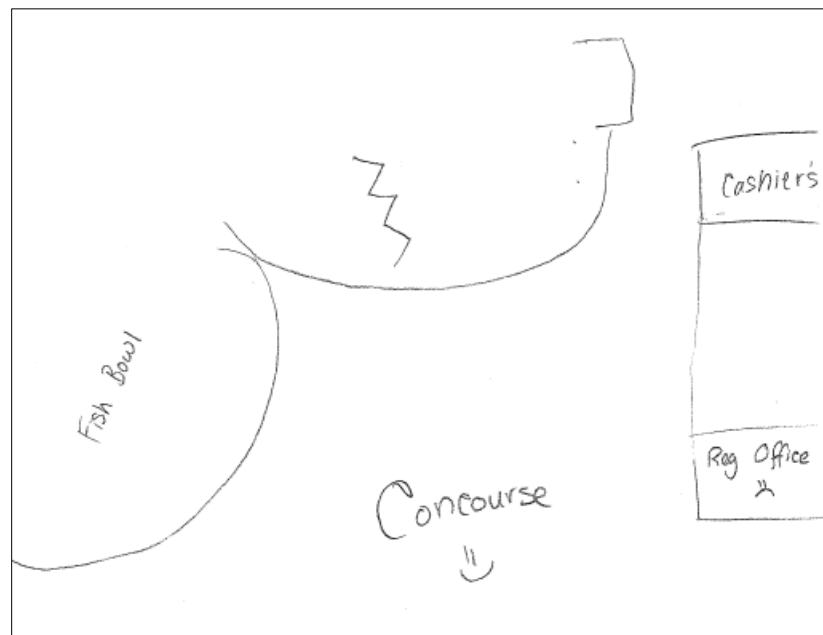


Figure 7.3. Places to Go and Not to Go: Donna's Mental Map of the Urban Campus

Where Donna used her map to signal the go and no-go areas on campus, Brayden spoke to the latter areas for him at his college's sister location. He noted:

The third floor is administration and professors' offices. As opposed to here where professors' offices are kind of located around where the classrooms are, and so at [the other campus] there's a lot of students who just never go up to the third floor. You see the stairs everywhere but it kind of..., it appears almost like an invisible barrier around the stairs to the third floor. You just don't see many students going up and down them to the point where you almost start feeling like that's not a place I'm to be. It's possibly left over from like you don't go into the administration part of high school, for example. It's less so now that I've started talking a lot with my professors who are there and going to their offices for office hours and that sort of thing, especially when you get to the higher levels it gets more and more needed to actually talk to the professors outside of class time, so now it's less of that but when I first went there it was like yeah I've never been up to the third floor and never will. And [that campus is] slightly different as well because like one of the buildings, a whole wing of it, but like one half of the 90 degree angle is the nursing program and if you're not in nursing you're actually

you're not really supposed to be in that part. So, there are definite invisible barriers everywhere.

While drawing, Mikayla also annotated her map of the Campus in the Woods in a similar way, marking the library with a heart, the nursing department with a frowny face, and the Trades building with a frowny face and a do not enter sign. Her depiction of these spaces is below (Figure 7.4) and her complete mental map is included as Figure 5.12.

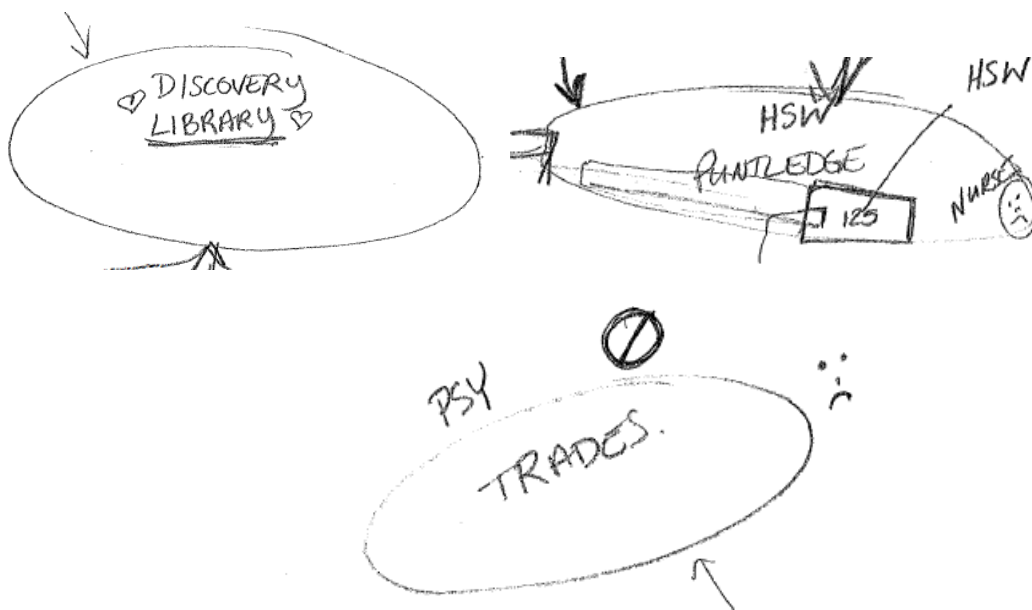


Figure 7.4. Places to Go and Not to Go: Mikayla's Mental Map of the Urban Campus

Like Brayden, she perceived the Campus in the Woods as having invisible barriers. She noted:

I don't have a very good concept of the Trades building. I'll put a little frowny face there. That building, when I think about that building I don't have a good association with it. That could be because I didn't really care for the instructor. It was fine but I didn't have very much fun in that building. We were often left to wait in the hallway and it was this really long corridor space and all the trades areas are always blocked off and it was almost like this sense of being somewhere where you aren't supposed to be. It was almost like a 'do not enter' sign, it was like going in the men's gym. Which is funny because I love wood working and I work on cars and I go hunting and I'm like such a guy girl, but I would walk in there and it was this feeling like "okay, don't go there."

While she loved her home classroom, Mikayla felt barriers to the rest of the building where it was located. She noted:

There was a lot of space in this building when I think about this, this was our room and again there was a lot of this building and this and the hallway down here was kind of like the safe space to go and then other than that the nurses were always down here and they always seem kind of grumpy and the upper level was all nursing and there was also a sense of “do not go here.” We have this little... You could come in here and we could go to our room... Yeah, [room] 125 and we could go down this hall but other than that it was like, “stay out of this building.”

In their discussion of higher education campuses, Strange and Banning (2001) summarized the three prevailing theories of the built environment. Campus design and planning has primarily relied on architectural determinism or the power of the built environment to direct people’s use and experience of space. In contrast, architectural possibilism suggests that the physical environment has a benign effect on users. Occupying the middle position is architectural probabilism which argues that good design can encourage certain behaviours but it cannot cause them.

As the examples from Brayden, Donna, and Mikayla demonstrate, the physical environment is implicated in participants’ perception and use of space. However, their responses suggest that it should not be considered alone. Missing from all three theories of the built environment offered by Strange and Banning (2001) is the role that people play in the interanimation of the physical environment. That is, theories of the built environment alone incompletely describe person-or-people-experiencing-place. In making their decisions about space, participants perceived place and interpreted the ways that others used the physical environment as cues for their own behaviour. For example, guided by previous experience, at the Urban Campus, Brayden gauged a perennially empty series of staircases as a sign that students

were not welcome on the floor where faculty and administrative offices were located. Similarly, a less than inspiring instructional experience combined with long empty hallways and closed doors alienated Mikayla from the Trades building at the Campus in the Woods. A sense of place emerged from person-or-people-experiencing-place.

## **7.5 A Sense of Place on Campus**

The multi-disciplinary literature on a sense of place ranges from architectural determinism on one end of the spectrum to cognitive perception on the other. The present study suggests that the built environment does not exist externally to the individual; architecture and design cannot unilaterally create a sense of place (Sime 1986, Relph 2008a). Participants held senses of place that had both shared and individual aspects. While the two campuses had shared meanings, as Chapter 6 indicates, these were held in different ways and in different combinations by participants. And in some cases, the same environment elicited different responses based on participants' perceptions and experiences of it. As Sime (1986) observed:

Certain qualities of a sense of place are bound up in the role of a building in a person's life experiences. The building may be imbued with particular qualities or physically modified by the eventual building users. An individual, in creating place, is involved by definition in the appropriation and personalization of a physical space through thought and action. (60)

Previous experiences guided participants' current ones, suggesting that users make decisions about place based on meanings that are additional to Lynch's (1960) findings on legibility. The findings support Shamai and Ilatov's (2005) position that "a sense of place is a combination of both the physical (environmental) and personal/social interaction" (468) as well as their conclusion that "the influence of the personal and social perception and interaction overrides the physical dimension of sense of place" (474).

In his theory of environmental action and perception, Appleyard (1979) maintained that “ordinary people view the environment as a social medium,” noting that “they interpret the environment as evidence of the actions and presence of others, and as a reflection of self” (150). His observation is consistent with the findings from this study as well as Strange and Banning’s (2001) earlier work demonstrating that campus users rely more on unintended forms of communication (e.g., how space is used) over direct forms of communication (e.g., signage). As Seamon (2013) theorized, it is person-or-people-who-experience place.

As his theory postulates and as the responses from participants suggested, the physical environment is not always a benign factor in the experience of place. Participants simultaneously read the campus environment around them and lived it through the practice of their functional and transactional routines. Qualities of the physical environment were perceived as contributing to, and detracting from, their sense of belonging to the campus, suggesting that “principles of place making can seek to promote conditions under which user experience is improved and a sense of place emerges” (Jive’n and Larkham 2003, 77).

The findings also suggest that users were looking for a sense of belonging to their campus. Those who described it as a second home felt that belonging while those who were more alienated from their campus observed a distance. For example, Brayden explained that he had not “invested” in the Urban Campus, noting:

There’s nothing that’s pushing me to invest a lot into it.

Similarly, having had a number of friends leave, Paul lamented the loss of his sense of belonging to the Campus in the Woods. As Cantor (2008) argued: “what individuals are reaching for is the recognition that what they want to do in that place, what they see the place as supporting and the meanings it expresses all come together in a coherent form” (666).

## 7.6 Place-Making on Campus

As Chapter 2 details, the campus design and planning literature has relied on the visual characteristics of the built environment to create a sense of place on campus. This study suggests that familiarity with the built environment and the presence of recognizable faces is more important than distinctive design, supporting Schneekloth and Shibley's (1995) assertion that "placemaking is not just about the relationship of people to their places; it also creates relationships among people in places" (1).

Developing a shared sense of place on higher education campuses – that is, a shared sense of belonging to community – is the challenge of identifying and fostering a common thread that binds diverse individuals together in place. The latter is crucial for the campus because as Flint (2009) argued: "[c]ommunities need not be primarily spatially based" (355). The particular task of community college campus design and planning is to design for that college's definition of community. This suggests that institutions would benefit from not only understanding user held meanings of campus, but from defining institutionally intended meanings for their campus and fostering individuals' connections to that meaning. de Wit (2013) argued that "in a contemporary context, place meanings are important to understand because they largely determine what people do with those places" (122). The findings from this study suggest the opposite also exists, that what people do in places also determines their meanings. Commensurately, I suggest belonging grounded in person-or-people-experiencing place as an approach to campus design and planning that both envelops users' desire for at-homeness and community and that leads to positive academic outcomes.

One of the most enduring criticisms of phenomenological conceptualizations of place is that they have been perceived as reifying townscapes and landscapes that existed in the past,

nostalgically harkening back to a small town way of living that has been eroded by globalization (Cresswell 2009). An associated concern is that these conceptualizations of place prize a false authenticity in people's relationship to the landscape that relies upon stability rather than progress. Not all attachments to place are positive, for example, some women and minorities have conflicted relationships with their homes and the places where they live (Rose 1996, Manzo 2005). In support of this perspective, Sime (1986) argued that "much of the work on place and placelessness speaks to the preservation of existing places rather than providing some of the tools necessary to create new ones" (55). He urged planners and designers to link the meanings of places to "the physical properties of design to which they are linked" (59).

As a place-based approach to campus planning, belonging grounded in person-or-people-experiencing place encourages planners and designers to consider how the physical environment supports at-homeness as well as community. Such an approach breaks from conventional practice that tends to take a visual and functional approach to campus design and planning and that overly emphasizes the communicative role of an independently acting built environment. This focus on discrete parts of the campus (i.e., buildings, landscape, open spaces, transit areas, etc.), rather than on their interrelationship, does not adequately consider the routine ways that participants engaged in everyday practices on campus. These patterns of use enabled participants to achieve familiarity with people and places upon which belonging is predicated. They are also the fundamental structures of Seamon's (1980) place-ballet, which posits that vibrant places arise from many people practicing their routines in a supportive physical environment.

Extending Seamon's conclusions, the findings of this study suggest that the field of campus design and planning focus its efforts on interanimating people with the physical environments of campus. Here, Gehl's (2011) work on public space directs planners and

designers to assemble people rather than buildings (81). Belonging, he argued, begins from passive forms of safe social contact and builds to more intense interpersonal relationships. Given the nested nature of social groups where belonging starts in small groups and extends outwards, the physical design of space should mirror this progression by supporting a gradual transition of people from private to public spaces. This approach supports the careful movement of people from the small private space of the home into increasingly larger, more public spaces. Using a residential model as an analogy, Gehl explained: “family members meet in the living room, inhabitants of the residential group meet in the group square, and residents from the entire neighbourhood meet on the street” (57).

His recommendations for physical design model this pattern of social interaction. They encourage belonging by gradually shifting people outward from their homes:

The establishment of a social structure and corresponding physical structure with communal spaces at various levels permits movement from small groups and spaces toward larger ones and from the more private to the gradually more public spaces, giving a greater feeling of security and a stronger sense of belonging to the areas outside the private residence. [As a result] the area that the individual perceives as belonging to the dwelling, the residential environment, can extend beyond the actual dwelling. (59)

Accordingly, Gehl advocated detailed attention to the spaces that transition people from their homes to increasingly more public areas. On the premise that basic activities such as walking, sitting, and standing as well as hearing, talking, and seeing form the basis of more intimate social activities, he turned planners’ and designers’ focus to the small scale, advocating, for example, design elements such as street-facing benches, bollards, and niches. As he elaborated:

These basic activities are used as a starting point because they are a part of nearly all other activities. If spaces make it attractive to walk, stand, sit, see, hear, and talk, this is in itself an important quality, but it also means that a broad spectrum of other activities – play, sports, community activities, and so on – will have a good basis for development. This is the case because many qualities are common

to all activities and partly because larger, more complex community activities can develop naturally from the many small daily activities. The big events evolve from the many small ones. (131)

In his work on campus design and planning, Chapman (2006) alluded to a similar phenomenon:

In today's larger, more complex institutions, the sense of community is most likely to be in nucleations, where community identity is cultivated in individual colleges, departments, dorm groups, sports teams, social organizations, and interest groups where shared purposes, outlooks and experiences can flourish. Most of these nucleations are place-centered. They occur in environments that offer proximity, contact at a human scale, and, most certainly, the functions that draw people with common interests together in the first place. (xxv)

Gehl's potential contribution to campus design and planning is his advice on how to use physical design elements to foster the small group interactions that lead to community. And in keeping with the findings from the present study, his model of social contact stems from the home and builds toward community. From a planning point of view, the spatial unit marrying home and community is the neighbourhood, a level of planning originating from Perry's (1929) neighbourhood unit design.

In the next chapter of the study, I discuss the neighbourhood as a provisional framework for community college campus design and planning. As a humanistic planning model, the neighbourhood corresponds with the principle findings of the present study and offers a frame to join geography's conceptualizations of place with urban planning and design's expertise on land-use. Based on participants' experiences and meanings of their campuses, in Chapter 8, I suggest five principles to guide the development of neighbourhood-based campuses. I follow this with a discussion of how a neighbourhood approach might evolve campus design and planning from a static, plan-based enterprise to include active, ongoing participatory design processes.

## **8. Neighbourhood: A Model for Community College Campus Design and Planning**

Initially advanced by Perry (1929), Gropius (1945), and Mumford (1954), the concept of the neighborhood has grown from a physical plan with social objectives to a municipally supported form of location-based community action. In the intervening years, as a sociological and planning idea, the neighbourhood has attracted considerable academic attention. The concept and its specific instances have drawn criticism on a number of fronts. Most prominently, its use as a tool of systemic exclusion and discrimination and a predilection for physical determinism has undermined its academic credibility (Brody 2013). Nonetheless, the concept has endured in planning and design circles and the idea has become entrenched in the popular imagination. The longevity of the concept is based on a deeply held value, if not truism, that in civil societies, people who live near each other ought to share a sense of togetherness. As Mumford (1954) wrote:

Neighbors are people united primarily not by common origins or common purposes but by the proximity of their dwellings in space. This closeness makes them conscious of each other by sight and known to each other by direct communication, by intermediate links of association, or by rumour. In times of crisis, a fire, a funeral, a festival, neighbours may even become vividly conscious of each other and capable of greater cooperation; but in origin, neighborliness rests solely on the fact of local cohabitation. There is nothing forced in this relationship and to be real it need not be deep: a nod, a friendly word, a recognized face, an uttered name – this is all that is needed to establish and preserve in some fashion the sense of belonging together. (258)

While its currency is supported by sustainability and liveability priorities, as a planning model, the neighbourhood has lasted because of an engrained belief that, properly supported, propinquity can lead to a sense of community.

In this chapter, I advance the present study by proposing a neighborhood model of community college planning and design that is formed around a theory of belonging grounded in person-or-people-experiencing place. The findings of the study suggest that participants used their campuses as they would a residential neighbourhood, setting up for their day from a home base, travelling to other parts of the campus, and returning home throughout the day. Following a discussion of the concept, based on the findings, I argue that the neighbourhood offers campus planners and designers a way to encourage the interpersonal connections that characterise higher education's goal of fostering collegiality in place. A neighbourhood model of campus design and planning that focuses on institutional mission and mandate, user home bases, transition spaces, service placement, and integration with surroundings would better align with the routine patterns in which participants travelled through their campuses. As well as fostering belonging, increased enjoyment and productive use of time spent on campus are potential benefits of this approach.

Conceptualizing the community college campus as a neighbourhood or series of neighbourhoods also calls attention to the campus design and planning process itself. Most often, planning is conducted as a time-limited exercise with the purpose of developing a future-oriented master plan (Hodge and Gordon 2014). Reasons for campus planning are typically financial and functional (Coulson, Roberts, and Taylor 2015). As a result, the exercise is sometimes more accurately described as estate planning than place-making. The findings of the present study suggest that a secondary, neighbourhood level of planning would focus campus design and planning efforts on the production of places through the interanimation of people and the physical environment that emerge from patterns of use. Just as person-or-people-experiencing place is a process, the findings of the present study point to the value of an ongoing planning

process that engages users in the design of places. Such an approach would go beyond master planning to consider the design of small spaces and places.

## **8.1 Neighbourhoods and Campus Design and Planning**

Like space, place, home, and community, neighbourhood is a broad and contested concept with multiple meanings. Neighbourhoods are generally understood to be:

multidimensional forms of urban organization, comprising a series of spatially based attributes and processes relating to the built environment, the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of the population residing within them, the interactions between residents and the forms of employment, services, and facilities located within neighborhoods, and how these are utilized. (Flint 2009, 354)

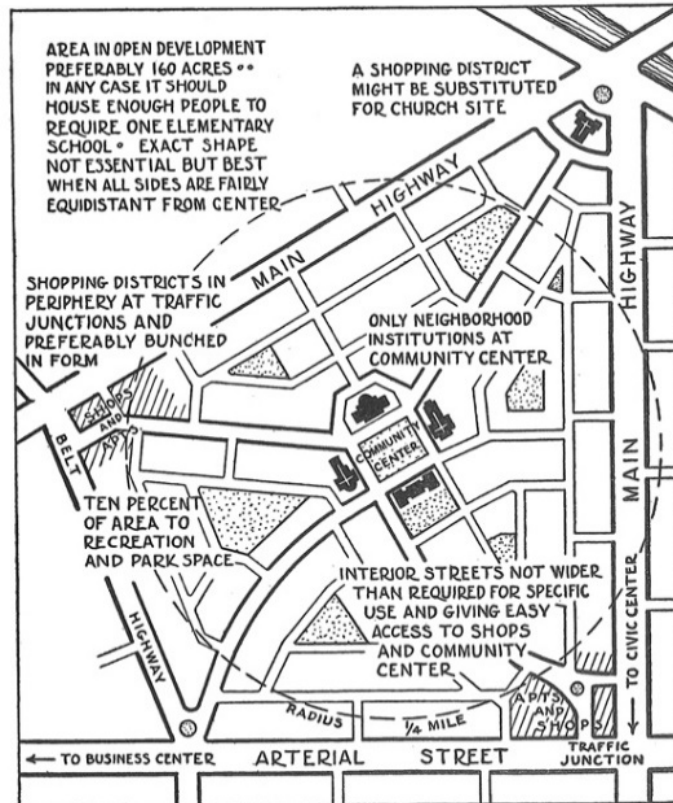
As the above definition outlines, neighbourhoods locate people spatially and are characterised by interpersonal interactions between residents set amongst a bounded array of public services such as retail, leisure, civic, and educational offerings.

Subsidiary to official community plans, neighbourhood planning has persisted because of its attention to the needs of individuals and their families. The primary function of neighbourhoods is to site homes (Flint 2009). As a planning idea, the neighbourhood physically expresses the interconnected relationship between home and community (Brody 2013). This link was expounded upon by Thomas Adams (1934) whose attention to the neighbourhood is well documented:

It is only when we think of the home as an element in the neighborhood that we realize the importance of city planning in making it a real home. A home is not a detached unit but part of a neighborhood, which in turn is part of a town; and the good quality of the home usually depends at least as much on its surroundings as on its design and construction. Hence the vital importance of ground planning and control of neighborhoods. (147)

Although many permutations have been developed over the last century, the ideal remains closely associated with Clarence Perry's (1929) plan for a neighbourhood unit which

centred a residential population around an elementary school. As Figure 8.1 details, Perry advanced six core features in his design: 1) centring the school, 2) arterial boundaries, 3) narrow interior streets, 4) peripheral placement of retail services, 5) open space, and 6) a community core.



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neighbourhood\\_unit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neighbourhood_unit)

Figure 8.1. Clarence Perry's (1929) Neighbourhood Unit Design

Perry's innovation was to create a new urban pattern that contextualized the home beyond the street where it was located (Mumford 1954). The principle that optimal urban neighbourhoods allow residents access to a range of services within a ten-minute walk from their homes is a legacy of his vision. Another is the notion that neighbourhoods should insulate pedestrians from traffic through the placement of a lattice of walkable streets bounded by auto-

oriented roads (Brody 2013, Hodge and Gordon 2014). Other design properties of great neighbourhoods which stem from Perry's design include: affordable housing, nearby access to open spaces, as well as a community centre or common (Talen, Menozzi, and Schaefer 2015).

Although neighbourhoods and communities are not synonymous, the spatial contiguity provided by the neighbourhood is understood to support the formation of the latter. On the neighbourhood, Gropius (1945) wrote, "to attain [community], our administrative framework must be humanized. It should be based on self-contained neighbourhood units, small enough to serve as organisms for reactivating normal social intercourse" (18). As elaborated by Gehl (2011), this is based on the idea that chance face-to-face interactions between strangers and neighbours begin from the comfort, familiarity, and safety of the home.

Similarly, Friedmann (2010) observed the synergy that emerges from the balance of private and public spaces that neighbourhoods afford. Community, he argued, emerges at the nexus of public and private space where interactions emerge from the practice of routine. He asserted:

A successful neighborhood is cherished by its inhabitants, even when housing is ill-maintained and the infrastructure inadequate. But housing can be renewed, new infrastructure can be emplaced. The neighborhood is cherished for very different reasons: because it has places of encounter where people reaffirm each other as who they are, or comment on the day's events; because life has a certain rhythm with which all are familiar and to which all expectantly look forward; because there are places that are "sacred" to the people; and because there are special places of gathering where events important to the community transpire. It is this rhythm, these repetitive cadences that are always the same and yet a bit different as well, like a seasonal festival, that is a measure of a neighborhood's vitality. (162)

The association between community and neighbourhood formation remains strong such that today, neighbourhood planning exceeds physical design to include broader social objectives

including fostering diversity, health, and wellness as well as economic and environmental sustainability (Corburn 2009, Rohe 2009, Hodge and Gordon 2014).

Although neither was intentionally designed in this way, the patterns of use which emerged from their walk-alongs as well as from their mental maps indicated that some participants unconsciously perceived their campus as a neighbourhood and used it accordingly. Participants demonstrated a pattern of radiating outwards from their home base in search of friendly faces and necessary services. For example, the mental maps of Sharon, Mikayla, Travis, and Donna mirror neighbourhood formations (Figures 5.1, 5.12, 5.13 and 7.3).

Given that Perry literally put education at the heart of his neighbourhood unit design, it is surprising that campus design and planning has mostly overlooked the concept. While large, land-rich higher education institutions have engaged in neighbourhood planning, their use of it has been confined to the development of residential areas (i.e., to student residences and more recently to market-based housing). Both are typically located at the edges of campus. There are only scant references in the literature to the neighbourhood as a model for the educational campus. This may be due to the very reason that I advance it here, for its association with the home. Campuses are not typically thought of as homes for their users, although the need for a home base is arguably higher at non-residential community college campuses than at residential higher education institutions. Additionally, as a built environment rather than people-centred enterprise, campus planning design is usually conducted at the larger, urban scale. However, while it has not been significant, the neighbourhood concept has briefly appeared in the campus design and planning literature.

Although his vision preceded Perry's (1929) concept, based on the small rural town, Jefferson's academical village at Virginia was designed to promote close relations between

students and faculty by housing departments in family-sized structures. More explicitly, Olmsted proposed a “model rural neighbourhood of relatively small buildings scattered along a main road and around a village green” for the Massachusetts Agricultural College (Coulson, Roberts, and Taylor 2011, 13). While his plan, which was based on meandering roads set in a park-like environment, was not accepted by the college, it was a progenitor of the park-like campuses for which he is renowned.

Today, the most prominent land-use planning model based on the neighbourhood is the traditional neighbourhood development (TND) concept that is associated with the Congress for New Urbanism. TND embraces nine essential planning principles including: mixed use, medium to high density, a community core, a gridded street system, close setbacks, rear garages, shared open spaces, common architecture and landscaping, and access to mass transit (Rohe 2009). As has been the case with many of the prevailing trends in land use planning, Canadian higher education institutions have unofficially adopted many of TND’s tenets in their campus plans. However, in campus planning, use of TND has been oriented toward the expressive capacity of the built environment with a focus on “imageability, identity, and branding” rather than on design that supports the interanimation between people and the physical environment (Gilbart and Grant 2016, 25). As it has been throughout the history of campus planning, the emphasis remains on the perceived visual impact of the built environment.

Adapted to the higher education context, a pedestrian-oriented neighbourhood framework based on Perry’s enduring ideas has the potential to offer community college campus design and planning a way to support the development of belonging to place and the concomitant academic benefits that ensue. In keeping with its close association with community, Perry’s concept of the neighbourhood unit provides a flexible framework well suited to campus design and planning. Of

particular advantage is that neighbourhood planning and design is not confined to development on newly platted land or razed sites. Small scale actions, including modifications to the existing environment, are the hallmarks of neighbourhood planning which can significantly improve their usability and enjoyability (Friedmann 2010). These improvements are often the outcome of neighbourhood-based advocacy, a form of public participation that draws from residents' sense of belonging to their homes and neighbours (Keating and Krumholz 2000).

There is no single or even dominant physical plan for the neighbourhood. Since the Second World War, the automobile with its associated impact on land use has considerably morphed the configuration of neighbourhoods yielding a number of patterns. Diversity of form is likely also due to a number of factors including: real estate industry objectives, municipal planning requirements, development incentives, and infill restrictions. However, following Brody (2016) who argued that “embedded within a particular discourse the idea of the neighbourhood unit is best understood less as a physical model than as a catalyst – a communicative tool that we use to shift our thinking or to introduce new information” (346), I argue that the neighbourhood offers the field of campus design and planning an organizing schema in which to re-think the community college campus and its purposes.

## **8.2 Principles of a Neighbourhood Model of Campus Design and Planning**

A neighbourhood model for community college campus design and planning requires a more fulsome elaboration than can be provided for here. And ultimately, to be true to the concept, neighbourhood-oriented campus design and planning is best considered with specific reference to the site. However, based on the findings and building from Perry (1929), a neighbourhood framework for community college campus design and planning might be grounded in the following, integrated principles which have heightened importance at small

scales (Table 8.1). In the following sub-sections, I briefly elaborate on each of them. These would supplement the neighbourhood unit’s traditional concern with the human scale, a pedestrian orientation, transition spaces, the placement of open spaces and services, and location-based models of public participation.

Table 8.1. Principles of a Neighbourhood Model of Community College Campus Design and Planning

Rooted in mission, values and location
A home base for users
Transition spaces that promote social interaction
Patterned connections between home, services, open spaces, classrooms, and work sites
Integration with surrounding environment, i.e., locality

### 8.2.1 Rooted in Mission, Values and Location

As open access institutions that serve a regional catchment area, community colleges have an opportunity to communicate this philosophy as well as a more specific mandate and mission, through campus design and planning. The trend to mirror the large trends in urban planning and design has resulted in too many placeless higher education campuses (Chapman 2006). As Sinclair (2008) argued:

A key point to emphasize, when considering campus design and planning, is the need to connect bricks and mortar with vision and values. Too often at universities and colleges, the connection between place and mission is downplayed, misunderstood or even ignored entirely. It is often easy to tell when an institution fails to grasp the significance of place. (205).

While this study examined user held meanings of the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods, it did so in the context of a lack of awareness of the intended meanings of the campus. Attention to mission and mandate allows colleges to express this common sense of purpose, or its definitions of community, through the campus environment. Here, the concept of the neighbourhood is informative because it turns designers' and planners' attention to the local context of the site, which this study observed to be important for both students and employees.

The campus as a West Coast landscape was a meaning of the campus noted by participants at the Campus in the Woods. William, Sharon, and Mikayla each reflected that the campus resonated with them because of its harmony with its surroundings (Chapters 5, 6, and 7). Rob and Tamika also commented on what the latter called the "welcoming nature of the campus due to its openness and the approachability of the buildings." From his perspective as a community user, Bill observed, "I like what [the college] decided to do with the buildings as far as the exterior is concerned. It is very sort of low key and welcoming. You know? It doesn't look forbidding at all."

In this respect, the campus environment did have a bearing on participants' decision to be there. Although not mentioned by participants at the Urban Campus, students and employees at the Campus in the Woods connected its physical appearance with their desire to study and work there. After 15 years away, David returned to the college and observed its permanent campus for the first time. He recalled:

So I was like wow. When I came over and I pulled into the driveway, I was like wow, this isn't what I remember it being like. I want to be here. The setting is so nice. It's a beautiful campus. It's really nice.

Twelve years of working and studying at the institution hasn't diminished his view. Rather, satisfaction with his colleagues has added to his delight:

I feel privileged to work in such an environment. Just for the aesthetic part of it. The people I work with, the students, the location is great. I feel like what I do each day really supports other people's dreams and hopes for their future.

This synchronicity between person and the physical campus represents a form of belonging that has been observed by Jackson (1994) and other geographers whose body of work on the vernacular landscape is extensive. The phenomena as it pertains to the campus has not, however, been well considered. Unlike other types of belonging, it can occur quickly, as was the case for both David, Maggie, and Mikayla who were positively inclined toward the college almost immediately on their first visit. Their experiences are congruent with Waite (2014) who found that prospects decide whether they will apply to a higher education institution within their first half-hour on campus.

### **8.2.2 A Home Base for Users**

Attention to a sense of belonging at the individual level also informs my recommendation that campuses incorporate a home base, in a variety of forms, for all regular users. This suggestion builds on findings from the present study, Gehl's (2011) recommendations on public space, and Cooper Marcus and Wischemann's (1990) work at Berkeley. The latter argued that:

Given the psychological need to have a "home away from home," it may be useful, in planning the spaces around campus buildings, to look upon such buildings as "houses" and the adjacent outdoor places as having some of the elements of "front porches" and "front and back yards."(145)

While the findings from the present study support this advice, they additionally suggest that, in addition to treating buildings as houses, campus designers and planners should implement home bases for individuals. At primarily non-residential, commuter schools, the need for a home base is increased. For participants like Greg and Brayden, the journey to the Urban Campus was long and arduous. Greg spent two hours a day driving in heavy traffic from his house to the campus

and back again. Brayden spent the same amount of time on his commute, enduring both a long bus ride and a mass transit connection to get to campus. Both arrived on campus a little weary and reflected on the need to centre themselves upon arrival. This process started from their home base. After grabbing a coffee or a coke, Greg returned daily to the group seating area outside the psychology department to see who was around and to prepare for class. In contrast, seeking solitude, Brayden temporarily occupied an empty classroom, using items from his backpack to set up a mini-camp.

Potential home bases from which to root users include, but are not limited to, lockers, study carrels, departmental workrooms, and group offices. Although this recommendation has the potential to be space intensive, it need not. Simply having a place to hang a mug was considered enough for some participants. As a result, the geography lab was a favourite home base for many students at the Urban Campus. In recognition of these ways that participants appropriated spaces on small scales, the implementation of home bases might be user driven, allowing students to establish bases that best suit their needs and styles.

Identifying user home bases would also turn designers' attention to the layout of building interiors, a scale more suited to non-residential community college design. Typically, the smallest planned unit on campus is the building. However, as is the case with the Urban Campus, megastructures are particularly common on Canadian higher education campuses and their internal and interior design demands attention if a sense of belonging is to be fostered (Hodge and Gordon 2014, 267).

As Seamon's (1979) work outlined, rejuvenation is an essential element of at-homeness. It is also a common meaning of both the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods. As their attention to outdoor and eating spaces demonstrates, the need for restorative places is well

understood by campus designers and planners. However, a missing element is the importance of people feeling at-home in those spaces. In this way, rejuvenation is tied to appropriation, recognizing Appleyard's (1979) point, which was confirmed by the present study, that:

Physical planners and designers should be much more aware of the fact that the need for identity, recognition, and even some sense of power is a basic human need which has a necessary outlet for expression in the physical environment. (152)

Since employees usually already have a home base, giving students one which they can personalise, even in the smallest ways, would meet this need and root students in a place from where they can explore.

### **8.2.3 Transition Spaces that Promote Social Interaction**

An almost universal axiom of campus design and planning is that it should encourage the chance meetings of friends, acquaintances, and strangers (Cooper Marcus and Wischemann 1990, Burlage and Brase 1995, Chapman 2006, Dugdale 2009, Jamieson 2009, Neary et al. 2010, Harrison and Hutton 2014). In making this argument, Keast (1967) pled the student development perspective:

An important criterion for evaluating campus plans would be to ask whether the campus plan encourages the maximum number of impromptu encounters with other students, with other faculty members, with visitors, with works of art, with books, and with activities with which one is not himself a regular part. Much of the education of anybody occurs outside and separate from formal courses in which he is registered, and only if the plan has the kinds of qualities which will stimulate curiosity, prompt casual encounters and conversation ... will the atmosphere which it produces be truly educational in the broadest sense. (143)

Similarly, studies point to the role that random encounters play in fostering interdisciplinary creativity and collaboration as well as advances in knowledge, both on-campus and off (Greene and Penn 1997). Universities, and to lesser extent community colleges, are participating in the development of innovation districts where higher education institutions are

co-located with start-up and established businesses to incubate new initiatives (Way 2016). From this perspective, much like a neighbourhood, campus design should encourage “chance meetings, between students, local residents, the start-up guru, and the distracted faculty member” (Way 2016, 49). This suggests the importance of on-campus transition spaces.

Attention to transition spaces should be a critical element of campus design and planning not simply because of these known benefits of spontaneous encounters. The frequency with which campus users transition from place to place is as important a factor. Owing to their institution’s timetable matrix, students, and faculty are on the move as often as on the hour. Akin (2004) has observed the importance of the timetable to campus design and planning:

In the cost-cutting contemporary university, a central activity is to coordinate the serving of the largest number of students by the smallest number of faculty, without sacrificing quality. An important vehicle for this is to schedule classes so that faculty can deliver their courses and students can attend their selection of subjects without time conflicts. Furthermore, faculty and students need to move efficiently from classroom to classroom. This makes campus travel distance a determining design criterion. In other words, the most remote classrooms on a campus cannot be farther than the ten-minute walking distance, which is the typical break time between classes. (234)

This ten-minute travel window is commensurate with that of the ideal neighbourhood, further suggesting the potential applicability of those design models to the campus. Even large campuses with end to end distances that exceed a ten-minute walk would benefit from secondary level neighbourhood planning for this reason.

Well-designed transition spaces are also important because efficient timetables, as imagined by Akin, are not always possible or even desirable. As a result, students and faculty are not necessarily directly going from one place to another. Gaps in one’s personal schedule leaves many with time to kill. This was observed by Natalie at the Urban Campus who noted:

Sometimes I'll just wait near my classroom. But yeah, when I'm bored and I have a lot of time to kill I'll just walk around and if I've got nothing else to do, but if I can do it at home, then I'll go home.

Courtney used the library for comparable purposes:

Basically, I just went to the second floor and sat. I felt bad talking in there. I didn't really even get much work done, I just waited for my next class, trying to do homework.

In campus design and planning, too much emphasis has been placed on monumental open spaces as a way of fostering interpersonal connections (Gehl 2011). As activity draws activity, these vast expanses often remain unused, especially when other spaces poorly connect to them. This proved true of the outdoor concourse at the Campus in the Woods. Unless classes were changing, the space was frequently empty. A neighbourhood model of campus design and planning would more usefully focus on transition spaces to both move and gather people. Cooper Marcus and Wischemann (1990) alerted the field to how well-designed front porches as well as front and back yards can support the chance gathering of students and faculty. Equal attention should be paid to how these buildings connect with pedestrian-oriented streets and pathways. Due to its imposing presence and the number of flights of stairs required to reach the entrance, several participants found the transition from the street to the Urban Campus to be an alienating experience, especially during their first visit. In a related manner, the spaces where people arrive on campus, i.e., transit stops and parking lots, have received almost no attention in campus planning. At both campuses, these areas appear to be viewed as containers for cars and bodies rather than opportunities to connect dissimilar people where they are every day.

Interior spaces of transition also ought to be considered as opportunities for social interaction (Burlage and Brase 1995). People encounter others in the many hallways, staircases, and elevator entrances. Stairway atriums are an example of a physical design element that allows

those who see a friendly face to move away from traffic and stand or sit for a minute and chat. To encourage social interaction, Burlage and Brase (1995) further suggested the design and placement of ‘magnets’ that physically draw people together. “Drinking fountains, restrooms, mailboxes, bulletin boards, photocopiers, vending machines, and conference rooms bring people together” (30). Hallways and staircases are also prime opportunities for people-watching and for waiting for others. These functions are usually not designed for within the campus setting. That participants practiced their campus as a functional and transactional routine speaks to the need for plentiful, well-designed transition spaces to encourage the passive forms of social contact that lead to interpersonal contact and then to new experiences.

Despite it being a goal of both the college and campus experience, few participants indicated that they visited the social and cultural amenities each campus had to offer. Most knew they existed but, in the spirit of “come and flee,” stuck to their functional and transactional routine almost all of the time. The exceptions spoke to the ways new friends connected them with new experiences. For example, Brayden at the Urban Campus made the following observation:

A lot of the issue with having, like a school like this, is it is very much a commuter campus. So, it’s very easy not to meet anyone outside of the people who are in your specific courses. But it’s...there’s not a lot to pull you in there if, like I think there are quite a few students in the school who have never been in that building. They just haven’t had need for it, and like a lot of people don’t come like anywhere past here. They don’t go to the art gallery; they don’t go to the payroll, or to HR, like... Or even the theatre which is right there. I’ve been in the theatre for..., every couple Thursdays they’d have a concert with one of the professors along with the group and one of the friends I’ve been seeing, the thing is in the music program, they have to go to that so they invited me to it once when I was interested.

While well-designed transition spaces can encourage the chance encounters that may widen people’s range of contacts and experiences, a neighbourhood model with its emphasis on

networks of use can facilitate a strong interconnection between functions, engaging more people with each other on campus.

#### **8.2.4 Connecting Home to Services, Outdoor Spaces and Work**

Like a traditional neighbourhood, an integrated campus contains the necessary services and amenities that participation in higher education requires. A neighbourhood model of campus design and planning offers ways of siting these services based on the routine ways that participants used the campus. Ready access to a suite of services, usually in the form of a community core, is a prized feature of great neighbourhoods. As Chapters 5 and 6 indicate, the location of these services on campus significantly shaped participants' patterns of use. This suggests that campus design and planning practices would benefit from a user, rather than place-marking, based approach to siting core services. In addition to classrooms, frequently visited services in this study included cafeterias, coffee shops, libraries, and Registrar's offices as well as parking lots and transit stops. While centralized siting akin to a community core may be appropriate, as well as a functional necessity, for some services like the Registrar's Office and the library, others may benefit from a more decentralized approach.

Siting those services within the order of activities that structure most users' days has the potential to not only increase their use, but to keep users on campus for longer periods of time. For example, upon arrival at their campus, the first order of business for most participants was getting a coffee. Siting coffee carts and shops closer to parking lots and transit stops and as part of large gathering spaces might result in more people lingering in these areas, increasing their enjoyability of the campus. This was an observation made by Bruce at the Urban Campus who noted:

There was a time, for a year or so, where there was a coffee bar that was out in the concourse and there was an aroma of coffee, and I'm not particularly a coffee drinker, but there were people standing there at the coffee bar, the baristas, there was a smell of coffee and there'd be a few people lined up to get their coffee, and to me that actually worked at creating a human environment and feel to this big monumental space.

Somewhat surprisingly, participants observed the social opportunities that waiting in line-ups presented. Hence visits to coffee stops and Registrar's offices were seen as having the side benefit of allowing participants to connect with others. In his discussion of third places, Oldenburg (1999) argued the importance of having neutral places to hang-out within the context of the neighbourhood. If campuses wish to encourage more hanging out, these and other service spaces would benefit from being placed within the context of users' patterns of activity.

Participants' functional and transactional routines also point to the particular importance of siting natural open spaces within these patterns of use. In his neighbourhood unit design, Perry allocated ten percent of land to recreation and open space (Figure 8.1). In this study, accessibility was as important as the amount of space. This contradicts the campus design and planning literature which tends to associate grassy and natural spaces with the imageable form of the campus rather than their function to users (Salama 2009). As McFarland et al. (2008) found elsewhere, participants in this study noted the positive relationship between natural, open spaces, and their enjoyment of the campus. Natural, open spaces were places to relax, unwind, get exercise, and contemplate thoughts and ideas as well as to meet others. In Cooper Marcus and Wischemann's (1990) estimation, outdoor spaces are integral to healthy campuses because:

Buildings 'expect' something of us (study, work, lecture, file, answer phone, go to meeting), whereas the outdoors expects nothing and therefore can be a calming antidote to the stresses of work and study, not to speak of some of the physiological stresses of institutional buildings (air conditioning, fluorescent lighting, computer screens, building materials, pollution, and so on). (147-148)

Gerry at the Campus in the Woods succinctly expressed the same sentiment:

It is good for the mind to get away, at least I find it is. Good for the mind to get away from things.

Edward confirmed the need for calm that natural spaces provide. In remarking on their absence at the Urban Campus, he shared the following thoughts:

About the only other thing that I'd say, that has either a positive or negative impact for me about the physical structure of the campus right now, is in contrast to some of the more rural campuses that I've been there aren't a lot of outdoor soft spaces to enjoy, there isn't a grassy area, there isn't a park-like area or you can sort of get outside in calm areas. We do have outside spaces, but they're fairly hard, it's concrete and brick with metal benches, and so while it can be somewhat enjoyable it's very different than what you feel at some of the rural campuses where they are surrounded by trees and forest or grassy areas, so it's got a bit of a different feel being an urban campus like we are.

Seeing outdoor spaces was as critical as the ability to be in them. This was observed by several participants at both campuses for whom window quality often made the difference between favourite and hated classrooms. Brayden was particularly assiduous in his course choice at the Urban Campus. He selected his classes based as much on the room as on the instructor. The availability of windows with a view to nature was a key element in his decision-making. To explain his motivation, he noted:

Well like if I'm at all straying in thought I would like to take a look outside, calm down a bit, relax, and get back into that learning space, and rooms without windows to the outside are definitely not conducive to that.

This supports the placement of outdoor spaces throughout the campus so that they are easily seen as well as experienced.

Outdoor spaces proved to be important gatherings spaces for participants who noted their role in developing interpersonal connections. As areas of transition, outdoor spaces allowed participants to spontaneously and casually run into each other. Thus changes to outdoor spaces

were not always well received. While pointing out some outdoor furniture that had arrived a few years prior, Bruce noted how it assembled smokers while disassembling non-smokers like himself.

Remarking on the changes, he noted:

Interestingly, the furniture arrived out there a few years ago, I've never used it. I welcomed it, I thought it was a nice attempt, but it's not being very well used. You know in the summertime it's in the sun and it's on concrete, it gets hot. I wasn't a smoker and that changed my use of the space. Up here and down there all the smokers hung outside the door and so for them it might have taken on quite a different meaning.

However, the on-campus amenity that seemed to best connect participants with new people was employment. For example, Brayden combined enrolment in a full-course load at the Urban Campus with work at two part-time jobs; one on-campus and the other off. While showing me one of his research sites, the campus' Pride Room, he spoke to the value of his on-campus work as an assistant to a favourite faculty member:

But now, especially with me talking a bit more with the people there, it's becoming more of a place I visit. I am meeting people I hadn't met before. So, having something like that does increase the number of people you meet and the diversity of who you are meeting. I mean if it wasn't for my research I probably would not have really gone into that building.

The placement of local sites of employment is a traditional function of neighbourhoods that diminished in the post-World War II period due to the car, but which has resumed importance in the last several decades. As a result, neighbourhood models of siting employment potentially have much to offer the field of campus design and planning. While the financial and employment needs of students is well understood in the academic and student affairs communities, this reality hasn't yet reached campus design and planning. As students can be employed one at a time, on-campus or nearby employment is possibly the easiest way that commuter community colleges can build campus-life. This lends some support to the non-

academic, private-sector development enterprises in which higher education are increasingly, sometimes controversially, engaged. Restaurants, retail stores, and entertainment areas all provide services to campus users and adjacent communities. If they are developed accordingly, they can also be significant sites of student employment.

### **8.2.5 Integration with Surrounding Environment**

As the previous discussion on services, open spaces, and employment suggests, a neighbourhood model of campus design and planning provides a way to think about the community college campus as part of its larger spatial environment; that is, as part of the town or city in which it is located. Neighbourhoods are not intended to be self-contained areas; rather they are planning units that emphasizes the integration of services across geography. This purposeful joining with the larger community well serves the community college campus in a number of ways. In the tradition of higher education institutions sited in urban cores, Harrison and Hutton (2014) recently promoted colleges' use of off-campus community amenities and business services as a way of diversifying and augmenting those available on-campus. Obversely, greater integration between the campus and its local surroundings increases its function of being part of the public realm. Campus visitors are indicative of institutions' responsibilities to 'the public' and allow for a cross fertilization of people and ideas that characterises "the richness of urban life" (Way 2016, 50).

Positioning them as part of their larger communities also provides an impetus to extrovert campuses that have an introverted form. This is the case with both the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods. As Figure 4.4 demonstrates, the Campus in the Woods is deeply set in a clearing of trees. Stands of Douglas Fir border the site which, as a result, is not visible from the adjacent roadways. And, although there are ungroomed trails leading from the site to the nearby

school and residential areas, there are no formal connections between the campus and the many neighbouring amenities that surround it. Participants who used the nearby retail and business services almost always did so separately from their trips to the college. Still, the potential for extending the campus beyond its borders was observed by Maggie who spoke to the connections between the Campus in the Woods and nearby facilities:

I think the annual event that is held at [a local golf course], even though it's off campus, it is a wonderful facility and so close to host an event like that. Okay, where the college showcases and recognizes employees for years of service, and also people who have retired during the year. So it's held the very end of November, early December, so a perfect time for kind of a festive party, and it is a party. The fact that it is so close and also its architecture is quite similar to ours. I remember when I first came, faculty were saying "we consider the lounge to be the faculty club." So to me the venue is beautiful and I think it so suits this campus as far as ambience, the fact that it is so close, and staff do a fabulous job organizing this lovely event every year. So while we don't have a comparable spot on campus, I think it works very well for us.

Similarly, while the Urban Campus occupies a high profile site on a hilltop in the middle of the city's downtown core, its monolithic structure is equally withdrawn from its surroundings and surprisingly poorly connected to nearby transit stops. Of the campus, Brayden observed:

It's pretty much very harshly defined where the campus is and where the campus isn't because it's such a... it's not integrated into the area around it really. So, pretty much where the sidewalk starts the campus ends here.

In keeping with their functional and transactional use of it, none of the participants at the Urban Campus frequented the nearby parks, services, and amenities. As a result, participants experienced a social isolation that may have contributed to their sense of belonging to the college community but that withdrew them from opportunities outside of it. Courtney wryly observed this, noting:

Everyone who I talked to at the school or if I'd walk up with someone from the transit station, it's all people I've met here, it's not anyone outside of the college, I guess.

This introversion of campus form as well as user behaviour does not align with students' expectations that higher education should serve as a gateway to the larger community. Blending campuses with their surroundings aids higher education institutions in meeting their educational mandates and supports Way's (2016) claim that "[s]tudents and faculty are insisting on being fully engaged participants in the post-industrial knowledge economy of the city and its urban landscapes. Students want to engage in the city" (45).

Higher education institutions have actively supported the development of these encounters by softening the boundaries of their campuses. Landscaping of entryways and access points has traditionally been used to gently transition physical campuses into their adjacent communities (Levinson 2004). In search of additional space, more recently higher education institutions have extended the boundaries of their campuses into neighboring communities through office, retail, housing, and entertainment projects that are welcome but often controversial sources of additional revenue (Halsband 2005, Carriere 2011). By partnering with local governments in community planning and economic development initiatives, some have directed their campus planning processes toward bringing residents on site by emphasizing public access to campus spaces. For example, Gumprecht (2007) documented the University of Oklahoma's efforts to bring the residents of Norman on campus. Initially based on ambitious plans to landscape the entire campus as a public park, efforts have since been directed to drawing visitors to other on-campus amenities such as theatres, museums, galleries, and restaurants. By regularly bring community members and visiting tourists on campus, Oklahoma has turned its campus into a source of community pride.

By virtue of their size and functional orientation, community colleges have been less inclined to think of their campuses as public spaces and to capitalize on the benefits that may accrue to them by opening their campuses to the larger community. In a similar vein, there has not been a strong inclination to purposefully incorporate the services and amenities that are located off campus. A neighbourhood approach to design and planning would give community colleges a framework in which to reorient their perspective toward how the campus might engage with its surroundings as well as to how it can be used to reap educational, social, and financial benefits for students as well as the institution.

A model that is influenced by the neighbourhood also has the potential to guide the campus design and planning process. As Chapter 2 outlines, conventional campus design and planning is typically oriented to the production of a forward looking, master plan centred around siting strategies, campus form, and architectural style. In contrast, neighbourhood planning normally represents a secondary or tertiary level of planning that focuses on a smaller scale. A multi-level approach would allow higher education institutions to both envision and generate support for the future through a master planning process while attending to the daily practice of the campus through neighbourhood planning. Smaller campuses like the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods may benefit from combining the two. At larger community college campuses, neighbourhood level planning may more appropriately be subsidiary to master planning.

Conceiving the campus as a neighbourhood or series of neighbourhoods where users create meaning through their interanimation with the physical environment also problematises some of the assumptions upon which campus design and planning processes are based. Building from the findings of the study, I raise three of them in the next section of the chapter.

### **8.3 The Process: Community College Campus Design and Planning**

Place-making phenomenology focuses as much attention on the people who make places as on its physical characteristics. As a result, this investigation into the experiences and meanings of two contrasting community college campuses suggests the value of an equally humanistic approach to a neighbourhood-oriented campus design and planning process. In contrast with the conventional focus on the built and natural environments, this study affirms the value of orienting planning and design efforts toward the lifeworlds of the users as well as the campus. Accordingly, the finding of person-or-people-experiencing-campus proposes that the field of campus design and planning rethink some of its activities as well as its processes.

#### **8.3.1 Linking the Purpose of the Campus to the Design and Planning Process**

As an alternative perspective on the campus, place-making phenomenology reveals a startling lack of congruency between campus design and planning efforts, on the one hand, and expected outcomes, on the other hand. The literature presents a myriad of purposes of, and goals for, the campus. These include: having learning spaces, encouraging chance encounters, high quality green spaces, physical and social accessibility, visual appeal, harmony with the surrounding landscape, improving student academic performance, intellectual (research) productivity, innovation, the achievement of learning outcomes, and building communities of learning. In many cases, these are assumed and randomly presented, rather than clearly and coherently stated with direct reference to institutional mission and mandate. As a result, the relationship between the actions contained in the plan and the desired outcomes is often nebulous at best. This makes it difficult to evaluate the success of either the plan or the campus.

Similarly, while the literature is clear that the purpose of campus design and planning is to create a forward looking plan that utilizes place-making and place-marking methods to

achieve a campus with a distinct sense of place, it is often unclear what community colleges intend that sense of place to be. The present study concludes that while shared meanings of campus exist, a sense of place is individually held. Thus, the findings point to the particular importance of understanding the effects that the campus has on individuals. As the campus is formative of user experiences (and vice versa) and meaningful to them, the study raises the question of the meanings that community colleges wish their users to hold and the behaviours they wish to support. There can be no theory of the campus in the absence of a clearer understanding of its specific purposes and how campus design and planning efforts contribute to those ends.

### **8.3.1 Designing and Planning for Campus as a Social Process**

As an interanimation of people and the physical environment, the community college campus exceeds its built environment and landscaping. In this respect, person-or-people-experiencing-campus suggests that campus designers and planners widen their parameters beyond the physical environment to include activities. This recommendation originates from Gehl (2011) who argued for the importance of assembling people rather than buildings. It also builds from O'Rourke and Baldwin (2016) whose study found that students saw activities as central to the constitution of campus.

Place-making phenomenology and the findings of this study suggest that campus design and planning efforts ought to go beyond the physical environment to include efforts that bring people together in place. As Friedmann (2010) argued, the built environment does not automatically become invested with desired meanings: "they need (institutionally supported) organizational and discursive strategies" (161). An often overlooked aspect of Seamon's (1980) work on place-ballet is his discussion of the activities that bring people to the places that form

part of their routine travel. A consistent theme of place-ballet is the role that unexpected people, activities, and events play in offsetting the familiar and routine aspects of place (Seamon and Nordin 1980). The draw of the different and unexpected contributes to a place's ongoing appeal. For example, the large television screen at the Urban Campus was beloved because its display was always changing and ranged from sporting events to news casts to information about the college. The college enticed students to gather by planning different showings and activities around the screen.

Similarly, the concourse was deemed successful not merely as a result of the space itself, but because of the activities that were located there. For example, Judith noted:

I think that the way it's designed, the stairs, and the big concourse open area is really nice, because it always feels like there is something going on. Because there's always people out there, and I like the design of that in terms of social interaction. Sometimes they will have vendors which is interesting. Then there is the different student associations that will have people set up and we will talk to them and find out what's going on at the college. They do that fairly often, I guess just to get kids out there and doing things. And just running into classmates and talking to them, and walking through to the cafeteria, you know, or to the library.

Generating social interaction through the public placement of activity based props has also been proven to draw people together. Giant chess sets, puzzles, table tennis, billiards, and pianos are recreational items that have been successfully used in urban squares to draw individuals, as opposed to groups, together. Their placement throughout campus, for example, near assembly areas such as transit stops, might encourage the interaction of strangers.

While the execution of these kinds of ideas and activities may seem to be outside the purview of urban planning and design, a closer look suggests that the field has a long history of bringing people together for community forums, charettes, and public meetings. Moving from consultative activities to social ones shifts the purpose of bringing people together but doesn't

change the intention. The neighbourhood block party is one example of a municipally supported, but community planned, social event that occurs in public space. Similarly, home owner association meetings which bring residents together to deliberate on common issues often have a strong social component.

### **8.3.1 Participatory Planning and Design Processes**

In a related manner, the conflation of space and place is nowhere more evident than when planners and designers treat the campus as a backdrop or container for activities and fail to actively engage users in the planning process. As the findings from this study indicate, to influence behaviour, planners and designers should understand what users and the institutions want from their campuses as well as how they are practiced. Toward achieving this understanding, neighbourhood-oriented planning provides a participatory model for campus design and planning that encourages the involvement of campus' users in planning and design at small as well as large scales. Community-based action is a signature of neighbourhood level planning which offers campus planning and design numerous citizen participation models to emulate (Rohe 2009).

The literature on campuses observes a particular failure of the design and planning field to engage in the participatory processes in the production of smaller spaces such buildings and outdoor areas (Jamieson et al. 2000). As Kuntz et al. (2012) argued: "inhabitants of spaces must be involved in their creation in order for them to become habitable places" (450). Extending the work of O'Rourke and Baldwin (2016), the findings from this study confirm the benefit of including students, whose past experience conditions their present perspectives, in planning and design processes. The findings also point to the importance of including faculty, staff, and administration in campus design and planning. Jamieson (2003) observed that: "[t]he physical

and technical facilities integrally related to teaching and learning have largely been seen to be the responsibility of non-academic personnel, whilst academic developers have concentrated on improving teaching practices in order to influence student learning” (120). As participants’ narratives and mental maps illustrated, staff and faculty significantly contributed to students’ sense of belonging to campus, suggesting the value of these perspectives to the process.

Broad and inclusive participation in the planning decision-making process is also vital because it engenders belonging. Appleyard (1979) claimed that “[t]he significance of citizen participation in environmental decisions is critically important, because this is the way in which people can become identified with a new environmental action, the way in which they can possess and feel responsible for it. It reduces their alienation” (152). Participant responses at both campuses bore out his conjecture. For example, Linda at the Campus in the Woods remarked:

I’m going to praise this place all day long because I love it. It has meant so much to me and every year you see improvements – outside, inside, everywhere. And 99% of the time, we have all been involved in those improvements, which in a big city or big university, I can’t see people saying “what do you think of this?” to your staff. And we get that, so it makes you feel, like the community sense, right.

As a place that was becoming more of a campus, participants at the Urban Campus shared similar sentiments. Several participants noted the regularity with which the Facilities department solicited their opinion. For example, Edward, who articulated a strong sense of membership in the college community, spoke positively of the institution’s willingness to respond to employee feedback. In highlighting the recent changes to the campus, he noted:

For years the college had done different types of outreach or surveys to try to collect information about what was and wasn’t working about the physical spaces on campus, and we were providing a lot of feedback that there really didn’t seem to be a lot of safe, warm, soft spaces for students to feel like they’re connecting with each other and a sense of community, and what we need is more of those and we didn’t know that all those changes were going to be happening in the

concourse until the proposal was put forward publicly, but we were communicating to the institution that we wanted some sort of a change.

As Linda's and Edward's passages indicate, participants' personal investment in their campus translated into a desire to be part of planning its future. For Edward, feeling at-home on campus led to caring and concern for its other residents, particularly students. Place as a field of care is at the heart of home, community and neighbourhood (Tuan 1974b). Although mostly overlooked as a planning model for campuses, the neighbourhood represents a participatory process that draws on individuals' sense of belonging to home and locality. It also recognizes the routine that is inherent in everyday living in its land-use formation. As such, it has significant potential to encourage belonging rooted in person-or-people-experiencing place.

The next and final chapter concludes the dissertation by summarizing its findings within the context of the literature. Owing to a number of factors, chiefly the fluidity of the concept and an associated lack of clear methodologies, sense of place studies continue to be rare in the literature (de Wit 2013). This study represents an initial foray into the admittedly ambitious task of explicating the meanings of campus toward informing the theory and practice of campus design and planning. Not surprisingly, in the course of this research, issues requiring further consideration and investigation surfaced. As part of concluding the study and its findings, I elaborate on some of the areas requiring additional scholarly attention.

## 9. Conclusion: Planning from the Inside Out

In keeping with its purpose, it seems appropriate to end this study with the voice of a participant, in this case Edward, who first referred to the relationship between home and community that underpins my assertion that belonging-in-place should be the basis of campus design and planning. The insights gleaned from Edward and the 22 other participants in the study confirm Friedmann's (2010) conjecture that urban design and planning has under-considered geographic conceptualizations of place in their work. "Place is experienced and sometimes transformed by those who dwell," Friedmann convincingly argued, pointing to the value of "planning from the inside out" (152). As an interpretative lens, phenomenology understands place "from the inside" (Nogué i Font 1993, 178).

At the outset, I had four goals for this study: 1) to understand campuses as places of meaning to those who use them, 2) to suggest how geographical conceptualizations of place can inform theories and practices of place-making associated with the field of campus design and planning, 3) to further develop the geographic concept of a sense of place in the context of the campus, and 4) to increase our understanding of the community college campus. At its conclusion, I will summarize the findings in the context of these goals.

The findings of the study affirm Seamon's (2013) argument that campuses and their senses of place result from an interanimation of people and the physical environment rather than from architectural determinism. For the study's 23 participants, their campus' sense of place was more geographical than architectural where meaning, attachment, and identity were developed in concert with the physical environment and as part of one's lifeworld. The findings refute the argument that a campus' built environment works as a "silent teacher" (Edwards 2000) or "built

pedagogy” (Locke 2015). The identity of the institution is not, as Kenney et al. (2005) supposed solely, “written into its buildings” (194). Rather, the Urban Campus and the Campus in the Woods were interpreted and practiced in individual, as well as shared, ways. As Cresswell (2004) maintained, community college campuses “are made and remade everyday through reiterative social practice” (39); that is, through routine.

Routine as the backbone of place-ballet was also borne out by this study which determined, pursuant to Seamon, that as part of developing their lifeworlds, participants used past experience and present needs to develop a functional and transactional routine which they practiced, almost unfailingly, every day. Surprisingly, despite many differences between the two campuses in terms of size, architecture, location, and student body, participants at both sites developed functional and transactional routines comprised of many of the same core activities. These time-space routines of campus (Table 5.1) included the seemingly basic and mundane activities of walking to and from class, getting a coffee, going to the restroom, and visiting professors’ offices. However, it was through the practice of these routines that participants both came to know their campus and established familiarity there. This platform of comfort and even at-homeness (Seamon 1979) allowed them to extend outwards and meet others nearby. A desire for familiar faces and spaces encouraged both the development and practice of these routines, subsequently turning space into place. Following Evans and Jones (2011), campus was created by the routes participants walked.

Participants’ spatial practice created lifeworlds of the two campuses with surprisingly common characteristics and, as a result, a set of shared meanings (Table 6.1). Rich, multi-layered, and sometimes conflicting, these thematic meanings encapsulate the wide range of ways that participants experienced and perceived their campus. While participants lived their campus

in unique ways, the two campuses shared five interconnected themes of meaning. These meanings transcended participants' affiliation with their campus. Whether they were students, employees or community users of the campuses, participants understood the two campuses in these same ways. These meanings include the campuses as: places of self development, gathering places for all students, places where someone is always there, restorative places, and places of support service. Each represents a broad theme that is inclusive of a diversity of ways that meaning was expressed by individual participants. Taken together, these point to a partial, but central, character of the two college campuses.

At the same time, these thematic meanings point to a similarity between two very diverse community college campuses which confirms Seamon's (2013) as well as Schneekloth and Shibley's (1995) assertions that it is people who make place through their practice. The extent to which students, employees, and the two community users shared the same meanings of their campus is perhaps the most surprising finding of the study. As Nogué i Font (1993) found in his study of the Garroxta landscape:

What varies is the different perspective and intensity through which the two groups 'live' these elements. In spite of differences of emphasis, however, there appear to be certain commonalities that arise from the interaction of these elements, and these similarities are useful to articulating [its] 'character.' (176)

While the physical environment is implicated in a sense of place, the findings also confirm that it is more the creation of human perceptions, feelings, emotions, and interpretations. In keeping with the concepts of body-subject, intentionality, and lifeworld, participants' immersion in the physical environment created meaning and conditioned behaviour. In turn, participants' behaviour communicated meaning back to other college users.

The findings also confirm Wunderlich's (2008) contention that: "[a] sense of belonging and familiarity grows out of our habitual awareness and interaction with social time-space routines of everyday urban places." The five shared meanings of the two campuses (personal development, gathering, where someone is always there, restoration, and support) straddled feelings of at-homeness and community. Both were implicated in participants' sense of belonging to campus, suggesting that efforts of campus design and planning to foster person-or-people-experiencing-place has the potential to reap the strong academic benefits that a sense of belonging fosters. This is good news for community colleges which typically have neither the financial nor land resources that pursuing monumental architecture and design requires. As the findings suggest, a distinct sense of campus can be fostered through planning and design activities that support patterns of use and the subsequent interpersonal interactions that arise from dissimilar people regularly being in the same place.

While Seamon suggested that place-ballet and vibrant places emerge from the regular and routine practice of lifeworlds in a supportive physical environment, the campus design and planning literature has been thin on theory to guide the production of the campus environment (Temple 2009). In keeping with higher education's demonstrated interest in community, I advance belonging grounded in person-or-people-experiencing-place as a potential approach to campus design and planning. Based on the findings, I suggest that the field consider belonging on a continuum that stretches from home to community. Participants' responses as well as the literature demonstrated that one reinforces the other. The comfort, familiarity, rootedness, and security of at-homeness can set the stage for social interaction. This relationship between home and community demands that higher education institutions better define the communities they wish to engender as well as how the campus supports this articulated sense of belonging.

Here the concept of neighbourhood, based on Perry's 1929 design, has the potential to offer higher education institutions a humanistic framework in which to connect home and community. In turn, Gehl's (2011) work on public space provides useful advice on this intersection through design elements that encourage the social interactions that lead to belonging. Here the focus is on small scale design and planning actions where attention to transition spaces, sitting areas, and small, walkable areas can lead to people extending their stay on campus because they are connecting with others. Appropriate to community colleges, this situates campus design and planning at smaller scales than typical and corresponds with Friedmann's (2010) claim that: "we can re-humanize the urban by focussing on and reviving urban neighbourhoods" (152).

In this regard, there is much for community college campus design and planning to consider, including this study's finding that contrary to higher education's intentions, participants did not appear to engage in as wide of an array of experiences as higher education theorizes they ought to have. As previously discussed, participants' routines were functional and transactional in that they were focused on school and work and performed in an efficient, task-oriented manner. However, the parallel finding that participants were drawn to other people on campus suggests that encouraging interpersonal interaction through supportive physical design can lead to the new experiences that are a hallmark of the collegiate experience. As Brayden observed, it was through meeting new people that he was introduced to new experiences (Chapter 8).

In the praxist tradition of planning, the findings of this study suggest that campus design and planning should orient its efforts first to people's patterns of use and then to how the built and natural environments can support practices that marry routine with engagement in new

experiences. Just as Kuntz et al. (2012) argued, the parts of a campus – people, buildings, landscaping, roads, etc. – are in “dynamic interrelation: one can never be fully separated or isolated from the other” (434). A neighbourhood frame of both analysis and planning applies this approach to a scale appropriate to the typical community college campus.

It seems, as Aravot (2002) argued, that “the phenomenological path [to place-making] has not been exhausted” (204). It does, however, require more investigation. This study represents an initial foray into operationalizing user-held place-meanings toward informing theories and practices associated with campus design and planning. The findings suggest that lifeworld phenomenology offers both a perspective and method of understanding the relationship between everyday people and place that can usefully augment other forms of environmental analyses that are more commonly used in planning and design. The field of urban planning and design has long grappled with the challenge of applying the meanings of place to practice (Madanipour 2006). The pursuit of other research avenues would strengthen this proposition, potentially solidifying phenomenology’s usefulness to the field.

As a preliminary exploration of the meanings of campus, the findings generate a number of areas for further research. Although there were individual differences, the 23 users of the two different campuses demonstrated a surprising congruency in both their use and their meanings of their campus. Given the demographic diversity and range of experience of the group, this suggests the validity of the results. However, although this sample size is consistent with phenomenological studies, it would be beneficial to examine the meanings of campus that are held by larger groups of each type of user, i.e., those held by students, by employees and where possible, community users. This would allow exploration of how diversity within those groups affects meaning. Given the effect of previous experience on the development of meanings, it

would be of value to understand the meanings of campus held by international, mature, indigenous, and LGBTQ students, among others.

Similarly, in recognition of the impact of student mental health challenges on student success, healthy campuses have become an emerging topic in campus design and planning. In the course of this study, two of the participants confidentially shared that they had been hospitalized for mental health reasons while at college. Concerns were ongoing for both of them. So far, the literature on designing healthy campuses has focused on: open spaces, streetscapes and shade, traffic management, lighting, and residence halls (Sutton 2016). However, in this study, participants attributed their health concerns to social isolation suggesting that the connections between home, community, and mental health deserve greater academic attention.

Another avenue of further investigation would examine the meanings of campus held by those who don't choose to participate in higher education as well as those who choose not to attend a particular college. The finding that participants' initially found their campus to be big and overwhelming raises the question of how the campus is perceived by those who elect not to attend there. This may be a particularly pressing concern for community colleges with a mandate to serve the education and training needs of the broader community. The sense that non-participants have of a campus may be implicated in higher education participation rates.

This handful of examples only touches upon the possible areas of additional inquiry that might focus on translating place-meanings of campus to practice. Other valuable branches of study might more fully examine the effects of previously held place-meanings on belonging on higher education campuses. Understanding changing senses of place as students' transition between secondary school, workplaces, community college, and university would increase our understanding of how place affects belonging as well as academic success. Similarly, there is a

need to better understand if belonging to campuses as places of meaning is implicated in positive academic and social outcomes. The online learning environment provides a ready comparator to the on-campus one which allows for the study of the effects of place on learning. Finally, an understanding of the perspectives of the intended audiences of higher education campuses would assist the field of campus design and planning in creating ones that contribute to higher education's goal of building community.

As this study illustrates, recognition of person-or-people-experiencing-place is the first step in developing an approach to campus design and practice that fosters community. This interanimation of people and the physical environment upends conventional thinking of the campus as absolute space and, instead, focuses on the everyday, routine ways that people practice campus as part of their lifeworlds, creating place-ballet along the way. It is through the latter that belonging and meanings are created by their users.

## **Appendix: Walk-Along Semi-Structured Interview Protocol**

### ***Prior to commencing walk-along***

How are you today? Do you feel comfortable with doing our walking interview today?

*If participant responds yes then* - I just want to remind you that you can stop our interview at any time and withdraw from participation. If you feel uncomfortable or unwell at any point, tell me and we will stop.

### ***I will ask the following interview questions while walking alongside the participant on the campuses:***

Tell me a little about yourself and what brings you to campus today?

How often do you come to campus? When?

When did you first visit the campus and how long have you been using it?

What do you normally do when you are on campus? Where do you normally go?

Describe in concrete terms, a typical day or situation in which you have experienced the campus?

Tell me about a specific experience or event on campus that you vividly remember or as it was the first time?

What thoughts come to mind when you think of the campus?

Tell me what you think of when you are here [*that is, where the participant walks*]?

What do you experience here [*that is, where the participant walks*]?

Which parts of the campus do you find the easiest/hardest to travel?

Which parts of the campus do you frequent the most/the least on campus?

Do you have a special place on campus?

What does the experience of being on campus mean to you?

How does being on campus relate to the rest of your life?

Do you have anything else to share?

**Probing/Follow-up questions:**

- You mentioned \_\_\_\_, tell me more about [that]?
- Would you share with me a specific example of that?

**End of Walk-Along**

Thank you for participating, I will follow up by providing you with a copy of the audio recording of our interview. At any time, you may withdraw from the research study and your information and responses will not be used. My contact information is on the consent form that I gave you today.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The photographs used throughout this dissertation originate from the respective institution. They serve to illustrate the dominant perspective of the campus as built and landscaped space. Regrettably, because I did not obtain their consent, I did not take photographs of the participants.

<sup>2</sup> Higher education is one of the many terms used to describe education taken after the completion of compulsory education, i.e., high school or secondary school. Other terms describing this form of education include: post-secondary education, advanced education and post-compulsory education. Institutions of higher education include colleges, polytechnics and universities. However, across the world and within Canada, the degree of variation in the meaning and use of those terms makes it difficult to accurately distinguish between them by their name. These institutions are very diverse in and of themselves. As this research is situated in British Columbia (BC), Canada, in this study I will use the terms college and university as they are set out by the relevant provincial legislation. In BC, community colleges are primarily two year teaching focused institutions that offer a broad array of one and two year career-oriented credentials as well as the first two years of university level studies. In contrast, universities offer undergraduate (baccalaureate) and graduate degrees with an emphasis on research. All of these institutions are very diverse in-and-of-themselves.

<sup>3</sup> Data retrieved from: <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfactsfactsheet.aspx>; <https://www.collegesinstitutes.ca/our-member>; <http://www.univcan.ca/universities/facts-and-stats/> October 6, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> I disclosed the nature of my relationship to each college and the potential for power-over situations, in the applications to each institution's research ethics board, including the University of Victoria and the two colleges that served as case studies. I received approval from all three research ethic boards to conduct research on human subjects.

<sup>5</sup> The exceptions were those participants who lived in one of the residential communities that are adjacent to the Campus in the Woods. As I previously discussed some of these participants noted using its walking paths for exercise and recreation outside of work and school times.