

Walking In Multiple Worlds: Aboriginal young people's life work narratives

by

Jennifer Lynne Coverdale

B.A., University of Victoria, 2006

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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The experience of the life work journeys of urban Aboriginal young people in Canada is largely unknown. This group faces multiple challenges in entering the labour force from social and economic disparities to cultural discontinuity. This qualitative case study collected stories from urban Aboriginal young people who are in search of meaningful and sustainable work. Using group interviews set within Indigenous sharing circles, 25 youth living in Victoria, British Columbia shared their stories of the supports, challenges and barriers they face in their life work journeys. In collaboration with community partners and knowledge keepers, the stories were reviewed to identify a relational model of life work shared by these young people. Participants identified their relations as their foundational support, and spoke to the role of work, education and culture in their career development. The results have important implications for theory, research and practice regarding counselling and researching with Aboriginal youth.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the youth who shared their life work stories so that urban Aboriginal young people's voices will be heard.

Chapter I - Introduction

The purpose of this research is to learn more about the life work journey of Canada's urban Aboriginal young people. Poonwassie (1995) calls for career development researchers to look within Aboriginal communities for the solution to unemployment and poor employability of Canada's Indigenous peoples and so we have collaborated with community service delivery agencies to investigate the supports and challenges these young people face. The research is part of a larger, national project entitled *Walking In Multiple Worlds* and focuses on the experience of Aboriginal youth in Victoria, BC and Toronto, ON as they enter Canada's labour force. The research question is *what are the supports, challenges and barriers to finding and keeping meaningful and sustainable work?* It is our hope that findings will inform career education and counselling services for Aboriginal young people, and be a positive developmental experience for our participants. Further, because we are grounding our research within an Indigenous paradigm, and conducting our research in collaboration with the community knowledge keepers, findings will have implications for Indigenous research and ethics procedures.

Indigenous Centre

Following the human rights movement of the mid 20th century, research that acknowledged Aboriginal voice and worldview began to arise but was still influenced by colonized epistemologies. By the 1990's Indigenous scholars, began to assert their power and author scholarship that was conceptualized and conducted from an Indigenous paradigm (Wilson, 2008). Linda Smith (1999), a Maori scholar, called for a research agenda grounded in an Indigenous paradigm that supports the survival, recovery, and development of Aboriginal peoples as they restore their self-determination. Here in Canada, Rod McCormick (1998), a Mohawk scholar, advocated for research and practice, which acknowledge traditional cultural

healing approaches to enfranchise and empower Aboriginal people. The Walking In Multiple Worlds (WIMW) project answers these calls, grounding conceptualization and design in an Indigenous context using Indigenous ways of knowing.

Background of Study

This research project was created in response to the limited career development literature related to Aboriginal communities and their Aboriginal youths' life work experiences. Despite disparities between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal engagement in the labour force, little attention has been paid to the unique challenges and barriers this group faces. Further, the voice of those who succeed and thrive in finding and keeping work, despite these obstacles, are virtually absent. Our team of investigators on the WIMW project was particularly interested in the urban youth voice as the Aboriginal youth are the fastest growing population in Canada and they are increasingly relocating to urban centres for educational and employment opportunities (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Overview of Study

The Walking In Multiple Worlds (WIMW) project is a collaboration between Aboriginal service delivery agencies and principal investigators Dr. Anne Marshall (University of Victoria) and Dene scholar Dr. Suzanne Stewart (University of Toronto) (Marshall, Stewart, Coverdale, LeBlanc & Spowart, 2011). Community partners, Elders, knowledge keepers and community champions were invited to collaborate in the research process and contribute local knowledge and contextual information to ensure the process provided respectful, relevant, reciprocal, and responsible findings (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). Each research site team developed their own approach based on community partnerships and the local Aboriginal context. In Toronto, the

research team worked with the Native Canadian Centre to interview Aboriginal youth and adults using individual and group narrative interviews, and a life mapping process called story mapping (Stewart, S., Reeves, A., Mohanty, S., Syrette, J., & Elliot, N., 2011). In Victoria, the research team partnered with the Saanich Adult Education Centre, the Westshore Learning and Teaching Centre, the Victoria Native Friendship Centre and the University of Victoria First Peoples House, to interview Aboriginal youth using individual and group narrative interviews and a life mapping tool called the Mapping Possible Selves Process (Marshall & Guenette, 2008) based on Markus and Nurius's (1986) concept of possible selves.

Present Study

This section of the research project involved the development of community partnerships and advisory members to guide the initial stages of the research at the Victoria site. In collaboration with our partners, the procedures for community entry, youth engagement, data collection and analysis were designed to be consistent with the culture of the local urban Aboriginal communities. Together, research team members and community liaisons designed semi structured group interviews called circles, to collect youths' stories of the supports and challenges in finding and keeping work. The circles were coordinated by community partners and research team members were welcomed and invited as visitors to gather youths' stories. Four group circles, in three different settings, provided a comprehensive review of the research question and rich, in-depth data identifying key supports, challenges and barriers these young people face in their life work journey.

Definitions

Aboriginal. The Aboriginal people of Canada are represented by three distinct groups: the First Nations people, the Métis people and the Inuit people. This group can include status and non-status members and represents over 600 Nations in Canada (Ball, 2004). The term Aboriginal is interchangeable with the terms Native American, and Indigenous as all serve to identify the indigenous people of the land.

Aboriginal community. The Aboriginal community is heterogeneous with diverse cultures, history and language. Acculturation and cultural engagement varies from nation to nation, city to city and person to person. Out of necessity, the communities are referred to as a whole, but the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and contexts must be remembered.

Relations. Within Indigenous worldviews, everyone and everything is understood in a relational context. When the term relations is used, it is meant to speak to this connection and includes the relationship between people, animals, land and our ancestors.

Chapter II - Literature Review

Overview of Chapter

In this chapter, I locate this research within an Indigenous paradigm and describe the Aboriginal young peoples of Canada. I focus on recent improvements for Aboriginal Canadians in labour market engagement and their challenges they are overcoming. I then describe social constructionism, the theoretical framework of the research project, and include sections on divergent research theories of the psychology of working, relational theory and life work planning theory. Following this overview of theory, I review selected literature addressing factors that facilitate adaptive life work transitions, with special attention to minority young people and urban settings. I conclude with an overview of literature that focuses on the life work of Indigenous peoples, with special attention to youth and qualitative methodologies. I conclude with the research question.

Current Context

Aboriginal people in Canada, including First Nations (status, non-status), Métis, Inuit, and those of mixed ancestry, represent over 4% of the Canadian population, with more than 1 million Canadians self identifying as members of a Aboriginal group (Levin, 2009). This group makes up over 600 Nations that each have their own distinct history, language dialect, culture and social organization (Ball, 2004). More than half of the Aboriginal people in Canada are under the age of 30; this youth population is growing at three times the national average (Davidson and Jamieson, 2010). With more and more of these young people leaving their reserves for the urban metropolitan areas, there is growing concern about their employment opportunities and preparedness.

Historically there has been a notable gap in employment rates of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal Canadians, despite improvements in this disparity reported in 2006, the recent labour market downturn of 2008 resulted again in grossly disproportional unemployment rates for Aboriginal communities (Statistics Canada, 2006; Usalcas, 2011). While most of non Aboriginal Canada has recovered from the downturn, Aboriginal people continue to look for work (Usalcas, 2011). Before 2008, Aboriginal people in Canada were decreasing their unemployment rates faster than non Aboriginal Canadians; from 1991 to 2001, communities saw a decrease of 5.4% in unemployment rates while non Aboriginal Canadians saw a decrease of 2.8% (Mendelson, 2004). This is an impressive gain seeing, as Aboriginal people in Canada are 50% less likely to complete post secondary education and face other inhibiting employment factors such as poverty, discrimination, and generations of cultural degradation and oppression (Ball, 2004). This shift is made even more salient by the global changes affecting the national labour force. With the increase in globalization, advances in technology and demographic shifts, all Canadians are facing more competitive work environments, with less defined career pathways, increased temporarily or contract opportunities, greater income disparities between workers and management, furthering education requirements, increased expectation of autonomy and interpersonal skills, and greater work-life complexities (Amundson, 2004).

Aboriginal youth ages 15-24, were especially impacted by recent changes in the labour market; from 2008 to 2010 their employment rates “declined by 5.0 percentage points compared to a loss of 2.9 points for non Aboriginal youths” (Usalcas, 2011, p. 26). As Aboriginal youth cope with unemployment rates and the growing demands of this changing labour market, there are high expectations that this will be the generation to overcome the disparities caused by generations of cultural degradation, marginalization, and the intergenerational impacts of

colonization and the residential school legacy (Kirmayer, Brass & Tait, 2000, Vancouver Native Health Society, 2008). Chief Dan George said from this generation “will come those braves, who will carry the torches to the places where our ancestors rest...this is how the void will be filled between the old and the new ways.” (Poonwassie, 1995, p.1). The employment challenges these young people will face during this journey are further complicated by “continuing tensions between the values of Aboriginal peoples and mainstream society (which) complicate the efforts of Aboriginal youth to forge their identities and find their ways in the world” (Kirmayer, Simpson & Cargo, 2003, p. 6).

Indigenous Paradigm

Indigenous paradigms reflect the shared worldview of the many Indigenous peoples around the world. While this is a heterogeneous group, Cree scholar Sean Wilson (2008), observes that all share a holistic view of the world in which knowledge is created and preserved through relationship. Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete (1994) writes that true knowledge exists only within the individual and nature, and is learned through an evolving relationship with others and the environment. Relationship constructs culture and vice versa, culture constructs relationships (Cajete, 1994, Stead, 2004). Indigenous knowledge is understood as unique to communities, acquired and preserved through daily interactions (Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000). Such common tenets of the Aboriginal communities in Canada and their Indigenous relations include: the interconnectedness of all living things, the circular path of life and learning, the inherent connection to our lands and our communities, the spiritual force within, and our relationship to the generations past and those to come. Indigenous paradigms understand knowledge as relational, the relationship among participants, researchers, communities and the environment all interconnect to produce knowledge. The concept of research objectivity is not congruent with

this fundamental relational belief and as such, Wilson (2008) posits, “Indigenous researchers ground their research knowingly in the lives of real persons as individuals and social beings.” (Wilson, 2008, p. 60). Empirical evidence still plays a part in research grounded in an Indigenous paradigm, but it is seen as one of many pieces of data that come together to produce a holistic understanding of the world. (Wilson, 2008)

Social Constructionism

The theoretical framework for this research project is social constructionism. This theory was deemed appropriate as its epistemology recognizes a relational and subjective reality that reflects Indigenous conceptualization of reality and knowledge (Morrow, 2007). Social constructionism posits that reality is created and sustained in social and cultural contexts, which produce multiple truths dependant on the interaction within them (Friere, 1993; Stead, 2004). As in Indigenous ontology, the constructionist research paradigm recognizes multiple realities made up of these relationships, “thus an object or thing is not as important as one’s relationship to it” (Wilson, 2008, p. 73). Accordingly, knowledge within this reality is considered to be equally embedded in social, historical and cultural contexts rather than objective fact and is the product of an interactional and rhetorical process (Young & Collin, 2004). Social constructionists thereby understand knowledge to be grounded within communities of meaning making and seek to understand the influences on this process. As an epistemology, social constructionism asserts, “language constitutes rather than reflects reality, and is both a pre-condition for thought and a form of social action” (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 377). Accordingly, social constructionism emphasizes that the “focus of enquiry should be on the interaction, process, and social processes” (Young & Collin, 2004, p. 377); this includes recognizing the role of social factors in construction, social process and relational practices (Young & Collin, 2003).

The social constructionist paradigm recognizes multiple realities or truths that are co-constructed by researcher and participant (Stead, 2004). Prescribers to this theory see the researcher as a part of the co-constructed discourse, and see the researcher's values and subjectivity as an integral part of the meaning making (Friere, 1993; Young and Collin, 2003; Morrow, 2007). The collaborative research process results in a more equitable and empowering relationship, which depicts mutually defined goals and an overall goal of promoting participants well being (Burr, 1997; Friere, 1993; Young & Collin, 2003).

Until recently, much career choice and development literature emphasized the perspective that people make work plans and goals in isolation from their social network, and that relationship had minor influence in the individualistic process (Blustein, 2011). Social constructionist career theory emphasizes the meaning of work as embedded within social and cultural contexts. This subjective reality of meaning making is seen as the result of interpretive and interpersonal process of vocational behaviour (Savickas, 1995). Researchers guided by the constructionist career theory emphasize this ebb and flow of personal and career issues and the interactions between the cultures of each context. Researchers emphasize personal agency and the importance of individuals creating meaning of their life work as it relates to career success and ongoing career development. (Amundson, 2005)

Psychology of Working.

Social constructionist career theory is a particularly relevant framework for working with marginalized communities who are sometimes victim of so called objective truths that are responsible for oppressing or exploiting (Blustein, 2004). The social constructionist's critical stance has been used to identify assumptions that limited previous career theory to the dominate culture. Theorists recognized that the majority of career theory and research involved those who

exercise volition in their life work transitions. To account for more marginalized communities, researchers shifted career construction theory for a “movement towards emancipatory communitarian perspectives to advocate for theory, research, and action that addresses the needs of oppressed groups, such as urban adolescences.” (Deimer & Blustein, 2007, p. 98).

Researchers observed that despite the recognition of relational context in career development, many vocational helpers continued to provide services that assume people exercise their own volition and “could make decisions that reflected their own dreams, passions, and talents in the world of work, unencumbered by family issues, cultural mores, racism, classism and sexism.” (Blustein, 2004, p. 604). Blustein and his colleagues sought to acknowledge the experience of those less advantaged marginalized persons who work for survival or to serve the needs of family and community (Juntunen, 2006). Together, these researchers identified the three central purposes for work for such people: “(a) work is critical to survival and power because it is the means by which one is able to provide food and shelter; (b) work may serve as a means for self determination and for many individuals, helps to shape their identity; and (c) work may be a major source of social connection” (Juntunen, 2006, p. 342).

The psychology of working seeks to understand career development from the perspectives of people who work for survival and power rather than those who exercise some sense of volition and autonomy in their career choice and planning. According to this theory, work can fulfill a person’s need for social connection and self-determination along with their economic needs. Research grounded in this approach attends to the impact of intrapsychic, relational, social, economic, political, historical and cultural impacts on career development, along with the interconnectedness of work and non-work domains. (Blustein, 2011)

Relational Theory.

Schultheiss (2005) compiled a literature summary of qualitative relational career findings, which reported several areas of relational influence in career development including a critical incidents study. The study examined parental influence, several semi structured interview formats for individuals to share their personal experience of relations, storied and narrative approaches, and video playback of parent-child dyads to analyze discourse for cues to career construction and interpretation. Schultheiss, found that across the literature parents are recognized for their role in supporting youth to negotiate and explore life work but can also interfere or impede child life work progress. Further, findings make known “the motivational and conflictual nature of work and family relationships can either stimulate or inhibit career progress, work-related tasks, and healthy functioning” (Schultheiss, 2005, p. 391)

Blustein’s (2011) relational theory of working builds upon the psychology of working recognition of the differing experiences of those with little if any work-based choices, and argues that this group is more rooted in and finds meaning in their relational context. After several years of research in social constructionist career theory, Blustein now calls for more research into the experience of relationships and work, and the role of relationships as instrumental supports for adaptive work based transitions. He declares, “conceptualizing working as a relational act underscores that each decision, experience, and interaction with the working world is understood, influenced, and shaped by relationships” (Blustein, 2011, p. 1). Blustein (2011) summarizes his relational theory of working in the following propositions:

“Proposition 1: Work and relationships share considerable psychological space in our internal worlds and in our lived experience, with each context of life impacting on and shaping the other.

Proposition 1a: Relational life has the capacity to influence working experiences in both adaptive and maladaptive ways.

Proposition 1b: Working life has the capacity to influence relational experiences in both adaptive and maladaptive ways.

Proposition 1c: Recursive relationships exist between relational life and working such that each domain of life experience overlaps and impacts each other.

Proposition 2: The internalization process, whereby individuals differentiate and incorporate core themes, patterns, and experiences from early and contemporary relationships, plays a major role in one's experience of, and adaptation, to working.

Proposition 3: Work and relationships take place in both the market place and in care giving contexts.

Proposition 4: The process of making decisions and exploring work and training options is facilitated and/or inhibited by, and influenced by relational experiences.

Proposition 5: The content of work-based decisions is facilitated by and/or inhibited by relationships, which function as a source of influence in the nature and expression of work-based interests and values in conjunction with individual difference factors and socialization.

Proposition 6: Individuals derive meaning from their work in relational discourse and in cultural contexts.

Proposition 7: Culture functions as a form of a holding environment for individuals as they cope with work-based challenges.” (p. 9-11)

Blustein (2011) grounds his theory on two premises, firstly that there is considerable overlap between working and relationships, and that people learn about themselves and their world through relationships. He also posits that working provides a means of social connection and interpersonal interaction. This is consistent with Barton (2004) who speaks to the inherent relational nature of Indigenous paradigms by acknowledging the teachings of interconnectedness and circularity. Aboriginal communities share a common value of connectedness, and use the metaphor of the circle to convey teachings of interdependence, reciprocity, and development (Barton, 2004; Cajete, 1993). Many Aboriginal communities' members situate themselves in a sociocentric manner, with relationship to family, Nation, and community, being of central importance (Kirmayer, 2000). Schultheiss (2007) used a relational cultural theory to evaluate the

reciprocal interactions of life work and relationships and identified four tenets relevant to the relational conceptualization of career development:

- a. the influence of family as critical to understanding the complexities of vocational development
- b. the psychological experience of work as embedded within relational contexts (e.g. social, familial and cultural)
- c. the interface of work and family life
- d. relational discourse as a challenge to the cultural script of individualism.” (p. 192)

Most recently, Jordan (2008) has added to the relational discourse with the feminist born relational cultural theory. Relational cultural theory challenges individualized paradigms that see human development as a movement from dependence to autonomy and rather posits that “we all need relationships throughout the lifespan and that it is through building good connections that we achieve a sense of well-being and safety” (Jordan, 2008, p. 2). The basis that we grow through and towards relationships is more consistent with Indigenous worldviews and recognizes growth-fostering relationships for their mutual empowerment and mutual empathy in achieving this connection momentum (Jordan, 2008). Jordan describes that such relations have five qualities that support healthy development:

- “1. A sense of zest
- 2. Clarity about oneself, the other and the relationship
- 3. A sense of personal worth
- 4. The capacity to be creative and productive
- 5. The desire for more connection.” (Jordan, 2008, p.3)

Relational cultural theory “illustrates the ways participants connections across a range of relationships enhanced and supported the process of career change and how their disconnections hindered, and sometimes halted, their movement through the transition” (Motulsky, 2010, p. 1079). Relational cultural theory has been used together with a life design career approach to better meet the needs of minority immigrant workers attesting that this theoretical framework

better reflects the “the intertwined nature of people's relational and working lives” (Schultheiss, Watts, Sterland & O’Neil, 2011, p. 334).

Life work planning theory.

The life-designing model for career interventions (Savickas et al., 2009) interfaces well with the relational cultural paradigm in that it recognizes that a person's knowledge and identity are the products of interactions and negotiations between people and groups, and that both are central to people's understanding and enactment of career. (Schultheiss et al., 2011). Blustein, Schulthesis and Flum (2004), write about the relational perspective in the psychology of working using the social constructionist claim that knowledge is constructed between people through interactions and relationships that are embedded in historic and cultural traditions. They, posit that relationships in non-work domains have direct impact on life work and so need to be included in vocational development research. Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Duawalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, Van Esbroeck, and van Vianen (2009), call this shift from a psychology of working to a place of life designing. They have identified recommendations which emphasize the importance of including the multiple life roles a client has, the evolution of these roles, a person’s changing contexts and the anticipated challenges in vocational helping. The five recommendations are 1.) abandoning the scientific states and traits approaches for a contextual model that acknowledges personal experiences and individual meaning making; 2.) focus on the ‘how to’ rather than the traditional prescription model of ‘what to do’ in an effort to support the process rather than the outcome of career journey; 3.) recognizing that evolving aptitudes, interests and changing demands at home all contribute to a dynamic life work context, a shift in the way vocation is discussed to account for the non-linear dynamics of modern life work; 4.) focus on the subjective realities and ongoing reconstruction by clients to better understand

personal measures of success and significance; and 5.) evaluation based on the stability of multiple life variables Duawalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, Van Esbroeck, and van Vianen (2009).

McCormick and Admunson (1997) developed the Career Life Planning Guide For First Nations Peoples that aims to overcome some of the shortcomings of traditional career helping strategies and take a more life work approach to vocational helping similar to Savickas's (2009) life designing. Their holistic approach to career development includes components relevant to the relational ways of knowing and being in Aboriginal communities. Modules address connectedness; balance; roles and responsibilities; gifts, aptitudes and skills; values and meaning. This Guide was later transformed into the Guiding Circles workbooks to facilitate culturally appropriate career exploration and life planning for First Nations youth, families and communities (McCormick, Neuman, Amundson, and McLean, 1999).

Life and Work Transitions

In this section, I will review research involving minority and urban young people to identify key factors that facilitate adaptive life work transitions for students and examine the relational impact of parents, siblings, and significant others in career decision making and development. I will then conclude with a review of the limited research involving Aboriginal people in these same areas. The inclusion of research from the broader minority communities is aimed to provide insights but not generalizations into the experience of Aboriginal youth.

A number of researchers have shown that youth need family and mentor support to share knowledge about life work, education and career pathways. For example, Hirischi, Niles and Akos (2011) have found families shape youths' understanding of the "functions and meanings of

work through communication of the importance of hard work and earning an income.” Kenny, Gualdron, Scanlon, Soarks, Blustein, Jernigan (2007), used semi structured interviews to learn about 16 minority urban adolescent’s career and education goals and the perceived supports and barriers to achieving these goals. They found that youth identified friends and peers as having both a negative and positive influence on their goal achievement; anti school values and social attachment interfered were found to impede on success where as emotional support and guidance supported their life work progress. Similarly, family was found to both support and challenge life work goals with family neglect of student/career goals, and family misfortunes (such as financial or health issues) interrupting goal commitments. Family was listed as supportive for their guidance, emotional support, investment in student/career goals, and stability. The final category that was found to have both positive and negative effects of life work progress was school; schools with poor structure or low curriculum expectation were seen as challenges, where as schools with engaged teachers who appeared invested in student success were seen as supports. Drugs, neighborhood violence, and racial and ethnic discrimination were also found by Kenny and her colleagues (2007) as potential barriers for a small number of study participants. These authors recommend that social support related to active engagement in career planning and development begin in early adolescence to overcome potential challenges.

Philips, Blustein, Jobin-Davis, and White (2002) also found adult mentors contributed to youth success. After conducting open-ended interviews with 17 youth transitioning from school to work, these authors reported that the availability of work-based learning, supportive adults, and an active orientation towards career development were all key factors in youth readiness for transition. They also found that participants emphasized the role of adults in their life work transitions, by providing indirect life work exposure through sharing experiencing or by

providing direct emotional and instrumental help to those transitioning. Youth who accessed career support resources (school counsellors, educational advisors, etc), whether motivated by anxiety or interest, were better able to make clear transition plans. The results consistently demonstrated that “an orientation to the adult world and the support of relevant adults all facilitate the work related skills and planning that are considered essential for an adaptive transition” (Philips et al., p. 212).

Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, and Gallagher (2003) looked at relational support at home and found that youth who perceived higher levels of family support were more engaged in school and career aspirations. Further, these youth were more likely to “view work as important in their lives, aspire to leadership in their fields, and expect that career planning will lead to success and satisfaction in their future work” (Kenny et al., p. 151). Kenny and her colleagues used questionnaires and school district achievement measures from 174 ninth graders and found that the impact of perceived life work barriers on their career planning and development was relatively weak in comparison to the contribution of social supports. Blustein et al (2002) found that youth who came from families with higher educational achievement and socio-economic status benefited from more career exploration support and were more likely to have higher career aspirations themselves. On the flip side, families who work in the unskilled labour force working multiple low wage jobs, may have little experience or lack of exposure to career opportunities and therefore be unable to engage in intentional career exploration activities with their children. Lindstrom et al (2007) found that parents with limited, low or vague hope for their children life work seem to limit youth career options and interests. Bynner and Parsons (2002) followed 1970 youth through the school to work transition and found that urban youth with a lack of parental

involvement and low levels of academic achievement were least likely to engage in education, employment or training during their transition and predicted their likelihood to not.

In their review of family of origin research in career development literature, Whiston and Keller (2004) consistently found reports of the relational influence indirectly (i.e.: family structure) and directly (i.e.: family warmth) impacting young peoples' life work journeys. Evidence across the literature showed the impact of family of origin and community mentors on exploring, committing to, and establishing a life work. Lindstrom, Doren, Metheny, Johnson and Zane (2007), found similar relational advantages in career development for young people with disabilities. They interviewed 59 youth and identified three common roles of family interaction in life work advocates, protectors and those who were removed. Advocates allowed, "opportunities for exploration and even failure, parents in this group promoted self determination and allowed independent decision making" (Lindstrom et. al., 2007, p. 360). Protectors had high levels of control and structure in their homes and rarely provided career exploration opportunities and reduced levels for independence. Removed families had little involvement and provided little support for youth career development. Youth in the first and last groups were more likely to be employed although the advocates pattern enjoyed much higher achievement levels and career related planning opportunities. Lindstrom et al. (2007) recognized the earlier contribution of youth in lower social economic status homes to sibling caretaking and household chores as instilling a sense of responsibility and strong work ethic. Further, growing up in low income homes gave these youth a higher motivation for security and stability in their futures.

Young people's relational context is also directly linked to adaptability and the ability to overcome perceptions of racism, poverty and educational disparities. Diemer & Blustein (2005) found a significant relationship between critical consciousness and progress in career

development. In other words, those urban youth who had a critical awareness of sociopolitical inequities were better able to navigate the negative effects of structural oppression. Diemer, Wang, Moore, Gregory, Hatcher and Voight (2010) expanded this study using data from the United States National Centre for Education Statistics to assess 15, 362 ninth and tenth grade minority students. Their purpose was to see whether high achieving youth could better understand sociopolitical inequalities, and the capacity to produce social change. Further, they asked if these young people were more connected to the adult life work world, and had higher life work expectations for themselves. “Theoretically, sociopolitical development empowers marginalized youth to more fully self-determine their lives and exercise their human agency by critically reading and negotiating a context of structural limitations” (Diemer, et al., 2010, p. 620). Their findings confirmed that sociopolitical development does in fact facilitate personal agency, facilitate youth development of work salience, and increase vocational expectations. Their evidence also suggests that sociopolitical development may support youth social mobility when constrained by inequities, because they may be better able to “resist the negative impact of oppressive messages” (Diemer et al, 2010, p. 620).

Ng and Feldman (2007) focused on the individual experiences of the life work transition and found that youth able to identify work role identification, or youth ability to identify with their work role, was a central tenant of success in the school to work transition. These authors posited that youth who spend a large amount of time in a work role, are attached to that role and express their personal values within that role, are most likely to succeed in the school to work transition. Ng and Feldman also found that youth who identify more strongly with their family role, rather than a balanced family and work role, have more difficulty navigating the school to work transition. Difficulties were cited in shifting between roles and simultaneously managing

the responsibilities of both. In addition, Ng and Feldman (2007) also focused on the importance of individual differences and the role of self-efficacy in navigating the school to work transition. According to their review, youth with higher levels of self-efficacy set higher goals for themselves, exert more effort towards their goals, better navigate the job search process, and have greater confidence to explore their career possibilities.

Life and Work transitions for Aboriginal young people

Limited research is available on the life work transition of Indigenous peoples, with the majority coming from our relations to the south in the United States. Juntunen, Barraclough, Broneck, Seibel, Winrom and Morin (2001), interviewed 18 adult Northern Plains American Indians in an exploratory qualitative study examining the meaning of career. They identified five domains including meaning of career, definitions of success, supportive factors, obstacles and the experience of walking in two worlds. Participants saw the meaning of career being a lifelong commitment that involved active planning and activity. Four of the participants also saw a career as a means to promote traditional knowledge and preserve culture. All participants understood success in a relational collaborative way, acknowledging family, community and future generations. For the remaining three domains, researchers identified a difference between the responses of post secondary participants and secondary participants. Post secondary education participants further acknowledged their relations as supports for their career journey and listed sobriety as an important part of success. These adults identified discrimination and alienation from Euro-Canadian culture as typical obstacles to their career journey. They added that they also experienced discrimination in and alienation from their home communities regarding their educational aspirations and career goals. For this group, moving between two worlds was seen as a constant challenge for career progress; different expectations and ways of knowing made this

an emotionally and cognitively challenging task. Secondary students saw less of the relational supports in career journeys and instead emphasized education as a key support; however, they did recognize peers, family and community as obstacles to career success, reporting lack of encouragement and in some cases, direct discouragement, for continuing education and employment opportunities. This group also experienced the challenge of two worlds, and unlike the post secondary students, saw each as distinct and distant. Secondary participants in this group reported changing their behaviours to suit the outside world, which was different from the integrative approach used by post secondary students.

Jackson and Smith (2001) found similar findings in their research, in which they interviewed 22 Navajo young people to evaluate postsecondary transitions. They identified five themes relating to inherent supports and challenges for their transitions. Family was identified as a support because of their encouragement, but also as a challenge, with family pressure, family financial problems and family conflicts influencing their transition efforts. Participants also identified the shift in learning environments from a nurturing high school setting to a demanding college setting as being challenging. Faculty were seen as a support when friendly and engaged, and as a challenge when they did not give the same level of one-on-one support and explanation received in high school. Students also reported difficulties with connecting educational and vocational constructs; researchers observed that participants were unclear or vague about how educational paths connected to job opportunities and failed to see the relationship between careers. The fifth theme was student connection to homeland and culture. While many students reported this connection as a source of strength, its absence when attending post secondary facilities off reserve was identified as a challenge. Students struggled with conflicting messages

to “leave the reservation and be successful or maintain their traditional connection to tribe land and culture” (Jackson & Smith, 2001, p. 24).

Hoffman, Jackson and Smith (2005) interviewed 29 Native American secondary students in reserve schools to identify perceived barriers to career development. Their review of the literature identified the following barriers associated with Native American transitions: lack of information about careers, cultural factors, feelings of isolation, family pressures, economic depression, and perceived hostility. Hoffman and colleagues identified concerns with the existing research, since much of it was gathered in postsecondary institutions, and was collected in quantitative formats. Their qualitative interviews provided a much more rich description of the challenges these young people faced. Interviewees reported the following perceived barriers: academic difficulties, financial limitations, and family and peer pressure to remain at home. To overcome these obstacles, interviewees identified a number of resources: teachers and parents for academic support, monetary and emotional support from family, financial aid, and personal work ethic. Hoffman et al., (2005) raised concerns about the apparent lack of understanding of the process of reaching career goals; some students felt the process would be easy and require few skills, while others had a lack of concern or knowledge of potential barriers. An additional theme showed student concerns about conforming to social pressures and expectations from peers and family members.

Poonwassie (1995) used surveys and focus groups to identify challenges Aboriginal youth face along their career journey, some of which overlapped with Hoffman et al.'s (2005) findings. Poonwassie reported the following themes: “fear of failure in mainstream educational system, unresolved hurts from family violence and/or family break up, inability to survive prejudice and discrimination in the outside world and most of all, confusion about their culture

and identity” (Poonwassie, 1995, p. 48). Long, Downs, Gillette, Sigh, and Konen (2006), also identified common concerns of Aboriginal young people managing the contradictory life values, beliefs and attitudes of Euro-American culture in contrast to their home community culture. Participants experience ongoing dissonance as they attempted to navigate two worlds. Challenges outside their communities included prejudice, and disconnect from family and community. Challenges from within their communities appeared to be much more grave; participants reported lateral violence, feelings of abandoning family, community and culture, lack of relational support for outside ambitions, as well as limited skills for communicating with outsiders in a culture of competition and independence. “Culture provides access to resources for some but also creates boundaries and limits resources to people inside and outside the culture”, (Stead, 2002, p. 394). One participant said, “the conflict is to brag about oneself; it’s ingrained in us and counter to putting a resume together and then brag about ourselves.”(p. 301). Researchers found that all participants saw leaving the community for education or employment opportunities and then returning later to be a worrisome venture due the above mentioned challenges. Ball (2004) also spoke to this concern about young people returning to communities, but from a community perspective and shared that outside-educated relations often return with education grounded in Euro-Canadian epistemologies that do not fit in Aboriginal communities. Ball also shared that many community members are still waiting for their relations to return home as more and more young people are not returning to their family and community responsibilities.

Long (2006) a Native American woman from the Northwest Coast, and her colleagues, worked with three Northern plains Native reservations and two urban Aboriginal communities to identify cultural life skills of American Indian Youth as they relate to development and transitions. The researchers used focus groups to engage 26 youth, 31 staff and 27 Elders to

assess the cultural life skills of Indigenous youth. The findings identified seven areas of interest: money, resources, spirituality, interdependence, intergenerational learning, tribal identity and multiple life ways. The theme of money speaks to the unique view of wealth in Aboriginal communities; capitalist notions of financial success equating to personal success are not shared in Indigenous epistemologies. Participants also recognized a difference in the understanding of resources; respondents reported that resources are difficult to access and concerns about confidentiality and trustworthiness often prevent young people from using those available. Researchers also learned that Native spirituality and religion were understood as complementary in fostering adult skill development, and while there is a cultural resurgence going on, both are seen as necessary parts to development.

Possibly most relevant to this research project, were the group discussions of interdependence and intergenerational learning. Long and her colleagues found that unlike the Euro-American culture, Native American cultures identified enhanced interdependence in one's family and community, rather than independence, as a marker of adult successful transition; priority is given to caring for others over individual goals. The researchers also found an emphasis on learning from family and community members to develop life skills, with participants reporting a person's belonging as directly related to this relational learning. Participants also emphasized group connection and affiliation as central to identity; knowledge and participation in tribal history, traditional ceremony and cultural activities were stressed. Brown and Lavish (2006) found similar results in their survey of 137 Native American college students using role salience and career decision-making scales to evaluate career expectations and aspirations. Students' responses indicated that home and family participation were ranked as more salient than work participation and commitment. Surprisingly, community participation did

not rank in the same way; instead, it was identified as significantly less salient as work roles. Brown and his colleagues however did find that student and community roles were considered along with home and family roles in career decision-making.

In Canada, Aboriginal ancestry is identified as an inhibiting factor to employment, along with low socioeconomic status, disability or criminal history (Graham, Jones, & Shier, 2009). Recently, Graham, et al. (2009), interviewed 72 adults who had long-standing difficulty integrating into the Canadian labour force and who had at least one of the four inhibiting factors to employment, to learn more about how they overcame life work challenges. This group identified life skills services rather than labour market skills services as providing the support they needed to overcome personal barriers that interfere with employment. The life skills most frequently recognized to be helpful in their progress were gaining a new perspective on life, understanding the relationship between past and present selves, self-awareness and understanding, along with building positive social support and social capital.

For a detailed understanding of the unique challenges of the Aboriginal people in Canada's work force, White, Maxim and Gyimah (2003) conducted a comparative analysis of labour force activity of Aboriginal and non Aboriginal women in Canada using the 1996 Public Use Microdata File. Over 16,000 persons were included in this review, with 18.8% being female youth. Results showed the primary barriers identified for Aboriginal women's involvement in the labour force included: lower educational achievement, caring for small children and being a single parent.

Dwyer (2003) examined multiple lines of evidence to identify the various multi dimensional issues of career development and advancement for Aboriginal adult employees in the Canadian public service and adds to the barriers found by White (2003) described above.

Dwyer identified discrimination including racism, stereotyping and work environments with cultures that alienate Aboriginal people as a barrier for employment mobility of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Several types of data were collected: literature review, surveys, interviews, internal Canadian Federal Public Service (CFPS) executive recruitment/competition notices, career advancement and development resources and other reports from current Aboriginal CFPS executives to determine whether or not developmental opportunities, job assignments, education levels, training, mentoring, leadership experience and networking were prominent support factors for Aboriginal advancement to the executive category. Results identified leadership experience, training and education qualifications as the most relevant supports for employment mobility.

Coasts under stress project.

One recent project that includes a focus on Canada's Aboriginal life work experiences is the Coast Under Stress (CUS) research project, a multidisciplinary, bicoastal research project which examined the impact of social and environmental changes in rural coastal communities and the impact on the community and land (Marshall et al, 2004). Here on Vancouver Island Marshall and colleagues, (Marshall et al, 2004; Marshall and Guenette, 2011) looked specifically at young people's school to work transitions in small coastal communities suffering from the impact of economic restructuring due to changes in resource based industry (ie: fishing, mining). In partnership with communities, Aboriginal and non Aboriginal youth were surveyed and interviewed to learn about the supports and challenges they faced in finding work. The findings of this project, were the starting point for the present WIMW research project, as Dr. Marshall and her Research Team identified unique life work journeys for the Aboriginal young people who participated in the project.

The CUS project found three major themes, which impact the life work of rural Aboriginal young people: family, education and economic development. Family and community were identified as supports for youth to build a healthy cultural foundation as they transition from school to work. Family and community were also recognized as challenges this time as there was a lack of motivational and inspirational messages at home and in community youth initiatives. Education was the second theme and spoke to the success of Aboriginal youth in secondary school and the future opportunities to include more culture and community in education. Youth also shared that this success was coupled with transportation challenges to and from school as ferry service to the mainland, where their high school was located, was infrequent. The final theme of economic development was prominent throughout youth and community member's narratives; many saw opportunities for employment in governance and new community partnerships but again, the required travel for education was seen as a challenge for finding work. (Charleston, Leblanc, Marshall, Stewart, and Sanborn, 2005)

The life work themes found by researchers in the CUS project overlap with literature and can be expected to overlap with this research project. However, moving into an urban setting will likely impact the findings as challenges unique to living off reserve or on an urban reserve are expected. Based on my experience working with the local urban Aboriginal young people, I expect that youth will report similar family supports and challenges, but varying levels of cultural engagement and community involvement.

WIMW Toronto site findings.

The Toronto research team has to date interviewed 20 Aboriginal young people using semi-structured interviews and story mapping. The preliminary findings of the Toronto research

team echo many of the themes present in the qualitative research studies selected for review above (Stewart, Reeves, Mohanty, Syrette, & Elliot, 2011). In 2011, Suzanne Stewart of the Dene Nation and her team, reported four main themes from the group interview data collected to date. The first meta-theme was culture and spoke to the impact of cultural discontinuity and continuity identified in the participants work lives. The second meta-theme was education with participants speaking to the challenges of integrating or balancing Euro-Canadian and Indigenous epistemologies. The third meta-theme was identity and the challenges of walking in two cultural worlds. Finally the fourth meta-theme summarized the supports and challenges participants faced in their work experience from racism to finding work opportunities.

In contrast to many of the studies reviewed above, many of the participants in the Toronto research project were often employed within the Aboriginal sector and so identified a sense of place working within a cultural environment, kinship with colleagues who shared an Indigenous worldview and the employment advantage of being culturally engaged. For those who did not choose to work within the Aboriginal sector, reports of the same discrimination and racism identified by Dwyer (2003) were found. Students outside of the Aboriginal sector also spoke to educational disparities between themselves and their non Aboriginal colleagues, and inequitable work environments. The research team is now in the process of analysing focus group data.

Summary of Literature

In this chapter, I choose to include an overview of the theoretical framework that the WIMW project was conceptualized in along with the specific theories and Indigenous worldviews that have influenced my participation in the group interview portion of our project.

After a brief introduction to the Canadian Aboriginal communities and context, I summarized current literature of Aboriginal scholars who outline an Indigenous approach to research and scholarship. Limited literature was available as it has only been over the last two decades that Indigenous scholars have advocated for decolonizing methodologies to be used with the worlds Indigenous communities. I continued by reviewing selected theories which I have blended with Indigenous epistemologies to inform the design and process of the research.

After outlining the theoretical framework, I provided an overview of existing career development literature that has looked at the school to work transition of minority youth and more specifically of the school to work transition of Aboriginal youth. Key themes in the literature include the role of family and peers in supporting or hindering life work transitions, the low levels of educational success in minority and Aboriginal groups, and the sociopolitical challenges of racism and discrimination in work experiences. Unique findings in Aboriginal populations include the role of the cultural communities in the school to work transition, the impact of cultural values and communities history in life work, and the challenges of walking in two cultural worlds during one's life work journey. Unfortunately, limited research was available to expand on this unique experience of the Aboriginal population, and none was specific to the experience of urban youth. Further, none of the available research was conducted using an approach, which included Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies.

I concluded the literature review with a discussion of the CUS project, which recognized rural Aboriginal youth experience unique life work narratives grounded in cultures and communities, and which informed the development of the WIMW project to explore if these young peoples' urban relations experience the same unique story. I included the preliminary

findings from the Toronto research team where individual interview findings are confirming that this population faces unique supports, challenges and barriers in their finding and keeping work.

Chapter III - Research Design and Methodology

Overview

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the project's methodological rationale, design, data collection and trustworthiness. To honour my commitment to an Indigenous paradigm, I have begun the rationale with a discussion of the Indigenous methods integrated throughout the project. We selected Indigenous methods, which would complement Smith's (1999) research agenda of self-determination for their role in mobilization, decolonization, transformation, and healing in community research. I also discuss qualitative methodology as it was used to complement an Indigenous methodology; specifically, I reviewed narrative methods to bring the stories of the young people to the forefront of the research.

The second part of the chapter sets the scene for the data collection, introducing the Coast Salish people and culture, the research team, our partners and the youth participants. For the purposes of this study, participants' narratives were understood as social constructions "in which the nature of inferences is derived with careful attention to the social and cultural context of participants" (Blustein et al, 2005, p. 358). I then discuss my location in the local Aboriginal communities and in the research and process of blending of Euro-Canadian and Indigenous methods. The data analysis is presented and outlines a collaborative approach that is informed by the literature and findings of the WIMW Toronto Research Team's individual interviews. Finally, I review the trustworthiness and authenticity of the design, and those involved in data collection. Several measures, which attest to the rigor of the research, are discussed.

Rationale

Indigenous Methodologies.

Historically, research in Indigenous communities has often been conducted on rather than ‘with’ participants and has been used as a tool to continue the disempowering and disenfranchising agenda of colonization while privileging Euro-Canadian ways of knowing (Smith, 1999; Cochran et al., 2008; McCormick, 1998). Recently, there has been a social movement of Indigenous peoples and scholars for a more ethical research approach which includes relevant and responsive research, cultural revitalization and reformulation, community based collaborations, and methodologies which reflect Indigenous worldview (McCormick, 1998; Cochran et al., 2008). Menzies (2001) suggests that for research to be meaningful, researchers need to shift their approach so that it becomes a means of decolonization; this can mean changing research questions and shifting methodology to promote self-determination, and to better respect and acknowledge local concerns and practices. To do this, the research team in this project sought to find ways to include Indigenous methodologies, to better understand and support the life work journeys of urban Aboriginal young people.

Atkinson (2001), identifies several principles which should inform and guide research to Indigenize methodologies including: a recognition of Nation diversity; an understanding and respect for communities protocols, principles of responsibility and reciprocity; a non-intrusive and non-judgemental approach; and an acknowledgement of the relationship formed during research and the responsibly accrued by researchers. In this project, these principles were considered from conceptualization through to dissemination. Research team members familiarized themselves with the communities and their practices through personal experience

and visits with community members. In the design of data collection a talking circle was chosen for its significance to Indigenous ontology, and a collaborative data analysis was conducted in accordance with Indigenous epistemology. From the beginning, all members of the team respected Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) four principles of research with Aboriginal people: respect, reciprocity, relevance, and responsibility, and were mindful of how perceived power imbalances could affect cross-cultural research of this type (Marshall and Guenette, 2011).

Qualitative Methodology.

Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies were blended with qualitative methods to gather the stories of the youth. Qualitative methods were appropriate for this as they are designed to capture the deep meaning of experience in the participants, own words. The purpose of this research was to collect the in depth details of the complexities and process of life work and to focus on the participants, knowledge, subjective understandings and interpretations along the journey. Qualitative research has "unique strengths that accept the value of context and setting, and that search for a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon" (Marshall et al, 2011, p. 92). Wanting to recognize and embrace Aboriginal culture and context, I used these methods as they acknowledged the social and physical setting that gives rise to internalized norms, traditions, roles, and values. Several researchers have used qualitative research with Aboriginal populations as it recognizes the communities' value of narrative and history of story based education. (Stewart, 2008; Wilson, 2008). Further, qualitative research allows for induction and emergent methodologies that privilege the process and the participant's voice over more structured, quantitative methods (Morrow, 2007).

In Indigenous methodologies, the researchers themselves have an obligation and duty to their relations including their family and their Nation and so are advised to have a *good heart* and to do research in a *good way*; this means to be aware of personal motivations and accountability in the research process (Wilson, 2008). This process is similar to that in qualitative research traditions, which indentifies the researcher as the instrument and makes space to acknowledge the personal biography in the research process. Qualitative research further echoes the values of Indigenous methodologies in that the researcher is challenged to “build trust, maintain good relationships, and respect norms of reciprocity and sensitivity to ethical issues” (Marshall et al, 2011, p. 118).

The qualitative approach I have chosen for the group data collection is a collective case study to provide a rich holistic understanding and interpretation of the supports, challenges and barriers youth experience in their life work journey. I have chosen this approach as it will allow me to include the setting of the case with contextual conditions, which impact the youths life work (Creswell, Hansen, Plano and Morales, 2007). I have chosen to use an instrumental case study of multiple cases, which I will call circles, to examine the research question to show different perspectives across the school to work transition, and have selected cases which are representative of the local communities so that findings will be generalizable (Shkedi, 2004). Further, this method will allow me to invite community members and local knowledge keepers into the findings, as their experience is pertinent to understanding the youths’ worldview and achieving a blended Indigenous and Euro-Canadian research approach.

Narrative Influences.

Blustein, Palladino Schulthesis & Flum (2004) indicate that “a key attribute of the infusion of a contextual framework in career development has been the increased use of narratives, stories, and conversation as representations of current discourses and a means of understanding career life” (p. 426). According to these authors, narrative analysis is particularly relevant to the psychology of working and the decolonizing research agenda of this project became narrative to allow researchers to explore the contextualized nature of work, and to learn about the unique experience of those who have been historically outside of the career development discourse (Blustein et al, 2005). Blustein and his colleagues recognize narrative analysis as an empowering social science that provides participants with the opportunity to share their voice, a central objective of my research agenda.

Barton (2004) maintains that narrative inquiry complements Aboriginal epistemology because it is oral traditions that narrate the cultures and history of the communities. A narrative is a story or narration of a person’s experience within social and cultural contexts. According to Moen (2006), “not only are we continually producing narratives to order and structure our own lives, we are constantly being bombarded with narratives with narratives from the social world we live in” (p. 2). Another reason this project has used a narrative approach is the relational nature of this methodology (Barton, 2004). “One of the core assumptions of narrative analysis is that it is subjective and more concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes and products” and so will be better able to identify the impact of relationship along the journey (Blustein et al, 2005, p. 359).

Research Design

Context.

The circle group interviews were held in the Victoria area, an urban city, home to over 350,000 people (<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/estspop.asp>). Victoria is located on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish people on southern Vancouver Island. Nine Nations comprise this territory, three of which were sites for data collection: Tsartlip Nation, Songhees Nation, and the Esquimalt Nation. Victoria is estimated to be home to over 15,000 Aboriginal people representing nations from all over Canada and the world. The labour market in Victoria is recovering from the National economic crisis and has seen the unemployment rate drop to 5.8%, less than the provincial average of 7.0% (http://www.workbc.ca/labour_market_statistics/docs/snapshot/2011/labourmarketsnapshot_dec11.pdf). The top four industries in Victoria are retail and wholesale, healthcare and social assistance, construction, and public administration.

Cultural Context.

The Aboriginal youth who participated in this study all live in the urban metropolitan of Victoria on Coast Salish territory and they share a common experience of walking in multiple worlds each with different cultural contexts. Stead (2004) described culture “a social system of shared symbols, meaning, perspectives, and social actions that are mutually negotiated by people in their relationships with others” (p. 392). One of the project community partners, the Saanich Adult Education Centre, identified the values of the SENĆOŦEN speaking Coast Salish peoples as: family, self respect, initiative, confidence, responsibility, respect for the rights and values of others, positive attitude and willingness to work hard, pride and honesty (2007). Coast Salish peoples see themselves as stewards of the land with the responsibility to maintain, perpetuate and

protect their culture. Stead (2004) reminds us “that many people straddle two or more cultures depending on who they are relating”, and so the social and cultural context of each participant will vary based on multiple factors including relationship to the researcher, relationship between circle participants, and relationship to urban community, and home community. He suggests these relationships imply expectations about career development and career, and so they are expected to have affected participants narratives (Stead, 2004).

Research Team.

The research team for this section of the Walking In Multiple Worlds (WIMW) project was made up of Principal Investigator Anne Marshall, community research assistants Samantha Etzel and Seneca Ambers and graduate research assistants Jackie Leblanc, and myself. Dr. Marshall is of European decent and has lived and worked on Coast Salish territory for over 30 years. She has enjoyed multiple successful community collaborations with Indigenous communities and has authored scholarship outlining cross cultural knowledge mobilization and community partnership (Marshall and Guenette, 2011; Marshall, Shepard, and Leadbeater, 2006). Samantha Etzel is Coast Salish from TSAWOUT Nation and has grown up on her traditional territory. Samantha became involved in the project through her relationship with the Saanich Adult Education Centre. Seneca Ambers is KWAKWAKA’WAKW from the TLOWITSIS-MA’AMTAGILA and NAMGIS Nations and left her home community to work with Victoria’s urban communities over 10 years ago. Seneca became involved in the project as a community knowledge keeper through her position as a Career and Education Counsellor at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre. Jackie Leblanc is from the TLI’CHO Nation of the Northwest Territories and came to Coast Salish territory to begin her graduate studies. As for myself, I am of mixed ancestry with relations from the Red River Métis Nation and from the Lowlands of

Scotland. I am born and raised on Coast Salish territory and have grown up close to the W_{ASÁNEĆ} people.

Researcher's Self-Location.

As an Aboriginal youth, student and researcher, I am strongly committed to recognizing the strengths and successes of my community. I am a strong believer in social activism and the role research can play in supporting the continued healing of the world's Indigenous people. For over ten years, I have been an advocate for Aboriginal youth in local, regional and provincial levels whereby I work for social change and increased services for my relations who have lost their spirit and identity due to the impacts of colonialism, marginalization and the legacy of residential schools. This advocacy work has informed my education and my research as I am drawn to theory and methodologies that allow me to give voice to my relations and bring attention to Aboriginal communities' resilience. I have found that the social constructionist focus on meaning making when grounded in an Indigenous paradigm supports the decolonizing research agenda. As I am also in the midst of transitioning in my life work, I have my own ongoing life work narrative, which inevitably both paralleled and contradicted the experiences of participants. In qualitative research, it is standard for researchers to share their worldviews, assumptions, and limitations to help the reader understand the researchers lens (Morrow, 2012). As such my identity, voice, perspectives, assumptions and sensitivities (Marshall et al, 2011) will be shared with the understanding that "knowledge reflects the values and interests of those who generate it" (Cochran et al., 2008, p. 24).

Being a community member and researcher I have an opportunity for what Menzies (2001) calls the insider's advantage due to my familiarity with and ability to access hidden

information within the local communities. While I am aware Canada's Aboriginal youth are not a homogenous group, it is fair to assume that my worldview will overlap in some way with my relations as I myself am an Aboriginal youth walking in two worlds along my life work journey in Victoria. Barton (2004) states the importance of locating your personal stories within the stories of participants and their connections. Thus throughout the research process, I have engaged in a reflexive process to be forthcoming about my assumptions and subjectivities that will affect my process and interpretation (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

Preparing to enter the communities.

To prepare to enter the communities and begin my research, I visited with local Aboriginal community mentors and youth with experience in the work-life transitions (friends, school district colleagues, and researchers with community based research experience). I gifted them in accordance with Aboriginal tradition and sought their insights into my research journey and the research project itself. I familiarized myself with the literature reviewed during the project's conceptualization, and completed a multidisciplinary literature search for other relevant research. To better understand the research process, I participated in the data analysis of the CUS project follow-up investigating Aboriginal youth life work experience in rural coastal communities (Marshall & Guenette, 2008). Following this preparation, I met with and gifted local Elder's to discuss my research intentions and ground myself in community and a traditional knowledge.

Partnering with the communities.

To promote a decolonizing research agenda that is relevant to the communities' needs and reality, McCormick (1998) recommends the involvement of community research assistants and minority advisory groups. For this project, three partners who provide education and employment services to urban Aboriginal youth were approached with a community partnership letter to participate in the research process (See Appendix I). The Saanich Adult Education Centre, the Westshore Learning and Teaching Centre, and the Victoria Native Friendship Centre agreed to support the research. Menzies (2001) outlines steps to respectfully engage Indigenous communities for research partnerships which were followed beginning with a discussion of research intent with potential community partners. Once the partnerships were established, we collaborated to create a research plan that accommodated cultural needs and values which included the identification of community members that could work alongside researchers to facilitate knowledge transfer and retention. Finally, the analysis and interpretation of the narratives collected was done in consultation with a community knowledge keeper, Seneca Ambers. Partnerships were also based on Marshall's (2011) tenets of a realistic site for data collection; each were evaluated to determine if they would be accessible, if they hosted a rich diversity of experience, if the research team would be able to access and build relationships with the communities, if research could be conducted in a "good way" (Wilson, 2008) that respected community protocols and research ethics, and if the data could be expected to be creditable and relevant to the general Aboriginal youth population in Victoria.

Data Collection - Circle Group Interviews.

I choose to use semi structured, in depth group interviews to gather youths' work-life narratives. This group interview format was very similar to a focus group and used the semi-structured questions to ordinate the group around the research question. Rabice (2004) contends that the main aim of a focus group is to "understand and explain the meanings, beliefs and cultures that influence the feelings, attitudes and behaviours of individuals" (p. 655). I thought this format with some added direction was an ideal method for exploring the experiences of young Aboriginal participants. Lent, Brown & Hackett (2000) suggest that researchers gathering data on career barriers should break down career developmental tasks to better understand when/where the impact takes place. They recommend: career progress, choice and formation, and choice implementation, and advancement. The semi-structured questions selected to elicit youth narratives broke down the youths' life work journeys in this way for a rich description of the process. This format was also desirable for its similarity to the traditional circle practices of Indigenous peoples in ceremony, and cultural education. I thought a group interview would also be more comfortable for youth as there is suggestion in the literature that sharing in a circle is less intimidating and encourages greater contribution (Reed et al, 1997). Focus groups have been recognized to empower marginalized and minority populations and can, therefore, further the decolonizing undertone of the research (Rabiee, 2004). Indigenous educator Cajete (1995) suggests that, by participating in circle and listening to each other's stories, youth are able to listen and reflect and then incorporate new knowledge as they create their worlds. By using semi structured group interviews, I hoped to achieve the goal of reciprocity in data collection in a mutually beneficial process.

Participants.

A total of 25 Aboriginal youth participated in four circle group interviews. They were invited to participate based “on the criteria that they have something to say on the topic, are within age range, have similar socio-characteristics” that would provide a rich depiction of the research question (Rabiee, 2004). Participants were recruited through emails to community partners and community poster announcements (See Appendix I). Reed and Payton (1997) suggest focus group participants should be made up of a fairly homogeneous group with some variability to provide different viewpoints and encourage discussion. Participants were recruited for their interest in work-life transitions and their expression of interest in sharing their stories. A snowball type sample gathered through community partners produced a group, which met research criteria of age and ancestry. Both First Nations (status and non-status) and Métis communities were represented in the final sample. Ages ranged from 17 to 29 with the majority of the youth being 23 years old or younger. All participants identified themselves as students in an academic upgrading program, a post-secondary student or actively pursuing continuing education opportunities. Detailed descriptions of the participants, who participated in each circle and the dynamics within, will be discussed later.

Data Gathering

Collecting youths’ stories.

The four group interviews, referred to as circles, were hosted on three separate occasions. Interviews were held at accessible locations in communities, and during school or after work hours to limit the inconvenience of participation. Members of the research team arrived early to each interview site to familiarize ourselves with the location, arranged tables and chairs into a

circle, set up recording materials, and informally engage the participants. My interaction with participants was consistent with my research agenda of decolonization and empowerment with probes that sought to acknowledge successes and resilience. Each of us shared our ancestry and located ourselves within the community and the research for the participants.

At the beginning of the group interview, a member of the research team reviewed the purpose of the study. That person then distributed and read over the participant consent forms (See Appendix III). The interviewer then shared the group interview questions (See Appendix II) and participants discussed in circle their experience of finding and keeping work. As interviewers moved the group through the interview questions, prompts focused on the strengths and challenges of youths' life work experience and solicited their personal narratives. Simultaneously, other members of the research team recorded responses and observations of the group.

Each of the circles lasted from 1 to 1.5hrs, and the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. Interviews were transcribed by a undergraduate research assistant and checked for accuracy by the interviewers. After each interview, the research team members in attendance debriefed their experience of the data collection and recorded field notes of personal experiences and interactions with participants. Following the first group interview, the research team addressed concerns about a question, which addressed the role of culture in life work. After some discussion, the team consensus was to rewrite the question using language that would be more easily understood.

Circle One.

The first circle was hosted in the Esquimalt community at the Westshore Centre Learning and Training, an adult education centre. Participants were invited to participate in the circle during school hours by their teacher and were led to the circle room adjacent to the classroom. Following introduction, I facilitated the group interview while Jackie recorded responses and observations of the group. There were five participants, two male and three female, between the ages of 17 and 19. All were from a small rural First Nations community outside of Victoria on Coast Salish territory and were bused to school by the school district daily. All were enrolled in the First Nations Graduation Program, a program that provides grades 10 through 12 classes with Aboriginal culture integrated into the curriculum (http://www.silverbarrel.com/portfolio_websites/wclt_v1/first-nations-description.php). Also present was an Educational Assistant whom the students had given permission to observe and who remained out of the circle in the back corner of the room. All of the students were purposely unemployed while pursuing secondary education. One of the youth had experience working an entry-level hospitality position in the non Aboriginal sector, three had been employed or had volunteered for their home Nation, and one had never worked or volunteered.

Circle Two.

The second circle was hosted in the Tsartlip community at the Saanich Adult Education Centre, an adult education centre for students who have not completed their high school diploma or who are upgrading for college/university admission. Participants were invited to participate in the circle during class time by their teacher and were gathered in the classroom where the interview

was planned several minutes before the start time. Following introduction, I facilitated the group interview while colleague Samantha Etzel recorded responses and observations of the group. There were eight participants, five male and three female, between the ages of 17 and 23. All were from First Nations on Coast Salish territory and enrolled in either the post-secondary upgrading program or the high school equivalency program. All of the students were working part-time hours or were purposely unemployed while pursuing post secondary education. Seven of the youth had experience working entry-level labour or hospitality positions in the non Aboriginal sector, three had held contract positions in the Aboriginal sector two of whom had been employed or had volunteered for their home Nation.

Circle Three.

The third circle was also hosted in the Tsartlip community at the Saanich Adult Education Centre. Participants in this group were taken to a smaller classroom down the hall from the main classroom for the circle. Following introduction, Jackie and Dr. Marshall facilitated the group interview while Dr. Marshall also recorded responses and observations of the group. There were six participants, three male and three female, between the ages of 17 and 27. Five were from First Nations and one was from the Métis Nation. All were enrolled in either the post-secondary upgrading program or the high school equivalency program. Some of the students were working part time hours or were purposely unemployed while pursuing postsecondary education. Work experience included the youth who had entry-level labour or hospitality positions in the non Aboriginal sector, contract positions in the Aboriginal sector, and volunteered for their home Nation.

Circle Four.

The fourth circle was hosted at the University of Victoria in the First Peoples House, a gathering place for Indigenous students. Participants were invited to arrive prior to the group interview to share pizza. Following introduction, Jackie and I facilitated the group interview while Dr. Marshall recorded responses and observations of the group. There were seven participants between the ages of 18 and 29. Three were from First Nations outside of Coast Salish territory and four were Métis. All were either enrolled in or pursuing post secondary education. Three were working full time in the community in the non Aboriginal sector, two were working in contract positions in the Aboriginal sector and two purposely unemployed while pursuing post secondary education. All have been employed or had volunteered for either their home Nation or for the urban Aboriginal communities in part time or full time positions.

Analysis of youths' stories

The data analysis procedure consisted of two phases, within group analysis, and across group analysis. I began by summarizing the life work stories within each of the groups by writing circle summaries, and then grouped circle responses by interview question (See Appendix II). Each group consisted of rich descriptions of youths' life work journey and the collective understanding of the strengths and challenges they faced as Aboriginal youth in urban work environments. A thematic analysis that categorized responses by similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence and causations, as described by Seldana (2003) was then completed. I coded circle transcripts line by line on two levels, first initial impressions and then secondly to identify themes consistent with the Toronto WIMW individual interview findings

and for themes unique to the Victoria data set (Stewart, 2011). Below is a comprehensive description of each step in the data analysis procedure:

Step 1: Immediately after each group interview, I wrote a description of the context of the interview including setting, participants' demographics and any interruptions/distractions

Step 2: I listened to the interview recordings and recorded first impressions of the data and summarized the groups' response to each of the interview questions

Step 3: After receiving the transcripts, I checked them for accuracy and coded speakers

Step 4: I then listened to the interview recordings and read over the transcripts simultaneously to record nonverbal data including: group dynamics, and cultural protocol

Step 5: I completed a line by line analysis and identified responses consistent with the themes found in the Toronto findings and for theme content particular to the Victoria groups

Step 6: I then grouped theme responses to identify overarching meta-themes related to the research question

Step 7: I examined all of the responses of each meta-theme for consistency and fit, and made adjustments for any duplicated or overlapping coding.

Step 8: I wrote summaries featuring participants' quotations for each of the meta-themes

Step 9: I presented the transcripts, themes and meta-theme summaries to my community peer researcher and together we discussed underlying ideas, assumptions, and ideologies in the context of Indigenous worldview and the local urban Aboriginal youth communities.

Step 10: I recorded impressions and interpretations made during discussions with the community peer researcher

To avoid inaccuracies or damaging generalizations, McCormick (1998) emphasizes the need for cultural understanding in research and suggests working with minority research assistants, and utilizing advisory councils to overcome these challenges. To avoid these pitfalls and mediate inter-subjectivity between the participants, and myself what Morrow (2007) refers to as “participatory consciousness”, I included collaboration with knowledge keeper Seneca Ambers. Seneca was invited to participate in the analysis of data as an expert in the experience of Aboriginal youth in their life work journey. Throughout the analysis, we paid attention to Wilson’s (2008) assertion that “the knowledge that the researcher interprets must be respectful of and help to build relationships that have been established through the process of finding out information”, we honoured and privileged the voices of the youth participants (p. 77).

Trustworthiness

Creswell and Miller (2000), identify trustworthiness and authenticity as paradigmatic measures of good qualitative data. Trustworthiness is understood to be paradigm bound and so working with both an Indigenous paradigm and social constructionist theory, certain measures of rigor are expected. Within the Indigenous paradigm, Wilson (2008) suggests a series of questions for the researcher to actively reflect upon throughout the research process to determine the authenticity of methodologies. The first two questions address the chosen methods and their ability to establish respectful and reciprocal relationships between the research, the researcher, and the researched. The second set of questions addresses how the researcher will personally go about developing the aforementioned respectful and reciprocal relationships. The final question

addresses the researchers' ongoing responsibility to the participants and communities. These questions guided my research process - I regularly reflected on the goodness of data and my accountability to my relations and community.

To address the trustworthiness of data from the social constructionist perspective, Morrow (2007) recommends researchers attend to the adequacy of data, researcher reflexivity, and include rich descriptions situated in the context of the research and the communities. In accordance with Morrow's (2007) suggestions, contextual descriptions included detailed information about the participants and their social and cultural community, the perspectives of the researchers, and the research process throughout the research process. Beginning with procedural dependability with triangulation built in, the reporting and interpretation of the data collected included praxis with a deep understanding of narratives and particularity of unique cases. Research reflexivity allowed me to document how my experience affected the research by making my assumptions and biases clear to self and others. Outlining my stance, motivations, assumptions, and limitations contributed to the rigor of the research (Morrow, 2007). Further, the trustworthiness of this project was demonstrated through researcher competence, participant credibility, transferability of identified themes, and the conformability in the peer debriefing process.

Authenticity was demonstrated through the fairness of narratives gathered and shared, comprehensive understanding of Aboriginal youth's constructions and my personal constructions (ontological and educative authenticity), along with the community action stimulated through participation and dissemination (catalytic authenticity).

Creswell and Miller (2000) suggest that peer debriefing adds further rigor to the data analysis. In this study, I applied another validity procedure - prolonged engagement in the field. As an Aboriginal youth living and working in the local urban communities, I was able to observe the experience of transitioning youth and better understand the context of the narratives collected. My connection to the communities also enabled me to build rapport with gatekeepers that facilitated trust building with participants which is critical to gathering trustworthy data (Morrow, 2007). Further, this engagement enabled me to include a detailed description of the context, which will assist readers to determine transferability and relevance to other communities (Morrow, 2007).

Summary

This chapter presented the research design and methods selected to blend Indigenous and Euro-Canadian methodologies to best explore Aboriginal youths' life work journeys. I provided the rationale for selected Indigenous methods and qualitative methods and a description of the collective case study sharing circles I will use to bring the young people's voices to the forefront and to provide a rich holistic description of the group and their context.

In this chapter, I also introduced the local Coast Salish communities, our research team, myself, and the participants of the circles that shared their stories. I discussed my preparation to enter the communities and the process of partnering with community agencies including protocol. I also shared the process of collecting youth stories and provided the background of each sharing circle as well as its location and make up. I then provided a detailed description of the analysis and interpretation of the data with special attention to the collaboration with

community knowledge keeper, Seneca Ambers. I concluded with a discussion of the trustworthiness and authenticity inherent in my design and methods.

The next chapter describes the findings of the study with relevant literature and community feedback cited.

Chapter IV - Across-group Analysis and Discussion

Overview

In this chapter, I present the results of the across-group analysis. Each group participant shared his or her own story within which common experiences and story themes were evident. There were also unique stories not always reflected in the across-group themes, which were inconsistent with group themes, which is consistent with the multiple truths and realities recognized in Indigenous ontology (Friere, 1993; Stead, 2004). As much as possible, I have allowed the voices of the youth to speak in the presentation of the thematic analysis. I have selected quotes to illustrate their experiences. I have also selected quotes and identified key findings from the collaborative analysis discussions with Seneca Ambers (personal communications, January 2012 - March 2012). Further, I have included relevant literature in the discussion. As there is limited research conducted with the Aboriginal communities, I have also included references to appropriate research with other populations.

Each group has been represented in each of the theme discussions, however space does not allow for quotes to be included from all participants for each theme. I have italicized youths' quotes and edited them to protect anonymity and enhance readability where necessary. Themes were topics that were discussed by each group, while sub-themes were not necessarily discussed in each group. This is in part because groups' discussions at times focused on experiences unique to their context such as those who face long commutes, or those working in the public service sector. I begin with a holistic picture of the four broad meta-themes and their overlapping relationship, depicted in a diagram. Next is a summary table of the meta-themes, the nine themes

and related sub-themes. The meta-themes, themes and sub-themes are then discussed, with relevant literature included.

The Four Meta-Themes

Across the groups, I identified four meta-themes: (1) Relations, (2) Culture, (3) Education, and (4) Work. The meta-themes in relation to each other are presented in Figure 1. The first meta-theme, Relations, is the foundational meta-theme that includes Culture, Work and Education. The analysis revealed that the youths' stories were consistently grounded in a relational context and showed overlapping relationships among the life domains. In that sense every theme and sub-theme has a relational component. This structure is consistent with Wilson's (2008) discussion of relational accountability in community and demonstrates the holism, circularity and interconnectedness of Aboriginal ways of being and knowing.

The analysis model is also consistent with theory relating to life work research in Blustein's (2011) and Jordan's (2011) relational models that recognize the interconnectedness of work and non work domains. Youth routinely shared their stories from a sociocentric perspective and emphasized the relational lens through which they interpret and make meaning in their world. Throughout the analysis, it was clear that the relational theme is foundational for youth and their narratives.

Within each of the meta-themes, key themes and sub-themes were identified across the youths' stories (Table 1). Themes have been identified for discussion purposes and are not meant to reflect separate distinct categories within the youths' stories, because, as with the meta-themes, there were overlapping relationships among theme and sub-theme data. Again, this interconnection of life domains is consistent with Aboriginal epistemology and ontology and,

accordingly, the discussion of the across-group analysis will reflect this holistic and communal worldview (Wilson, 2008).

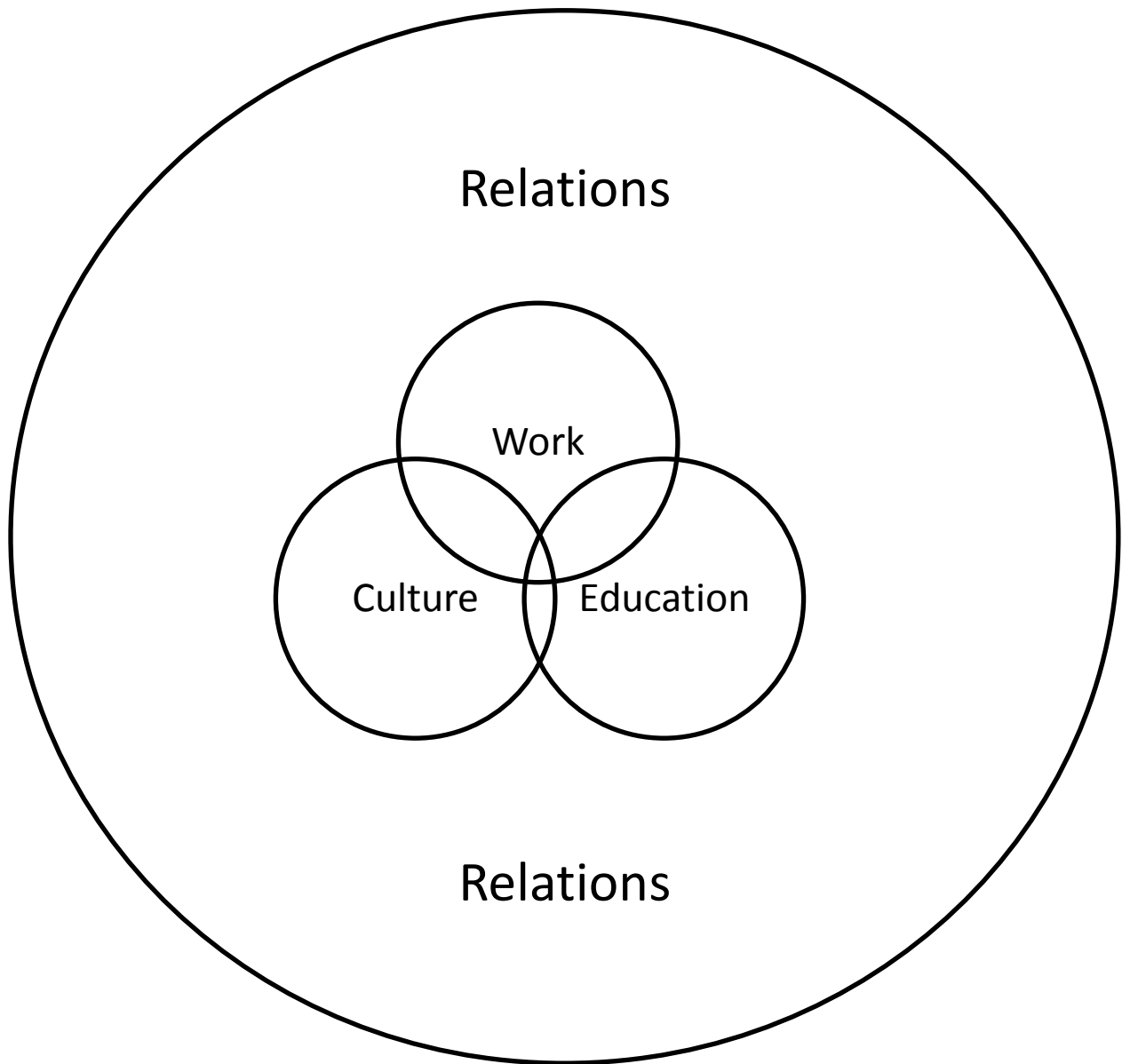


Figure 1: Meta-themes Relationship Model

Table 1: Across-group Meta-themes, Themes, and Sub-themes

RELATIONAL			
Theme	Finding Work	Keeping Work	Life Planning
Sub-themes	Community connection Mentorship Job hunt tools Encouragement	Balancing Roles & Responsibilities Family transitions Community relations	Organizing/planning Adult engagement Life teachings
WORK			
Theme	Job Hunt	Work Experience	At Work
Sub-themes	Tools Resources Certificates/Credentials	Band/Community Aboriginal “Sector” Non Aboriginal	Contracts/Hours Transportation Financial Impacts Work relations Discrimination
EDUCATION			
Theme	Academic Aspirations	Aboriginal Education	
Sub-themes	Grade 12 Post Secondary Scholarships/Funding	Cultural Education Public Education	
CULTURE			
Theme	Culture at Work	Walking In Multiple Worlds	
Sub-themes	Separate Integrated	Conflicting worldviews Way of being	

Relations

I have chosen to begin the discussion of the findings with the relations meta-theme to ground the discussion in the relational context and illustrate the relational lens through which the participants engage and make meaning of their world. As expected, the relations meta-theme data reflects the pillars of Indigenous cultures including interconnectedness, connection to communities and relationship with generations to come. The relations meta-theme is also consistent with other research findings of youth work-life experiences including the adaptive and maladaptive roles of youths' relational life in their life work journey, the impact of recursive relationships, and the role of relational support in facilitating life work planning (Blustein, 2011, Jordan, 2008; Jutenun et al, 2001; Kenny et al, 2003; Jackson and Smith, 2001). Below, each theme is discussed together with sub-themes to share the youths' relational experience in finding and keeping work.

Finding work.

Over two thirds of the youth who shared their work experience stories found their first job through their relational network. *It's not what you know it's who you know* was a common thread in the circle discussions with young people identifying family and community members as key supports in finding work. Several researchers have found young people identified family, including parents, uncles, aunties, and teachers, most often as relational supports for finding work and supporting life work goals (Kenny 2002; Kenny, 2007; Whinston and Keller, 2004; Jackson and Smith, 2001). These support people helped them make resumes, told them about job opportunities, and provided references. Below are some selected quotes to demonstrate this relationship between relational support and finding work:

My Mom heard about the job through internal postings and encouraged me to apply

Finding work was all through my network, the people that I knew and the friendships I have built landed me every job. I've built a lot of solid references through my years as a youth advocate.

I worked at a nursery. And how I found it was my auntie was telling me that they needed workers. I went and brought a resume and they hired me right away.

My Uncle called me up and said 'I got a job for you', and I took it. He just knew the contractors and everyone I needed to meet to get the job.

She is like a self proclaimed 'other mother' to all the kids in her classroom. She is a very supportive teacher and helps us make resumes and find jobs.

Got my job through my family. One of my cousins is working in the restaurant and he said he needed some help so he asked me and I was down to work.

My Uncle got me my job. He just said they were looking for workers now. And he brought my resume, and then she called me back the next day asking if I could start work like ASAP. And I said yeah.

While sharing their stories about finding work with relational support, the participants also shared stories about their mentors, demonstrating that, as in previous research (Blustein, 2001), these youth are not making work goals and plans in isolation – instead, they are connecting with successful family and friends for guidance. Blustein (2002) also found that youth who came from families with higher levels of academic achievements had higher academic aspirations. This was seen in the participant circles as well, and was acknowledged by Seneca Ambers (2012) who routinely hears, *my drive was the success of my family members*. Kenny and colleagues (2003), also found that youth who perceive higher levels of family support were more driven in their education and career planning. Several of the youth shared stories about mentors to whom they looked up and who supported their work and life planning process. Below are two of these stories:

My two uncles are actually youth support workers. So that's what made me want to do the same. They are really making a difference and I want to too.

My mentor is my brother. He just finished graduating last year. He motivated me, my Mom and my sister to get our schooling straight and because of him I want to be a nurse or a resident care aide.

Relations were also recognized for encouragement and support in youths' life work journeys. *My Grandparents were a big motivation for me, telling me to 'get up, get out, go' to get to work.*

One young woman who is currently housed by her Grandma while attending college said:

Even just hearing "I'm really proud of you," that feels good to me. Cause you know, somebody's paying attention to the fact that I'm putting all this time and effort, acknowledging the fact that I'm doing something you know.

The youth also recognized each other as relational supports in their life work journey, helping to encourage each other's engagement at school: *we all support each other, if no one's here and I'm sitting by myself then I just wanna go home.* Seneca Ambers (2012) also added that, in her experience with Aboriginal youth looking for work, this social attachment can also hinder youth as many *don't want to be separate from their peers who aren't working.* Kenny (2007) found this same dual influence of the relational peer support in her research with urban youth. In the CUS project, researchers found similar challenges in family relations due to their lack of motivation and career inspiration (Charleston et al, 2005). The circles however did not share any negative influences of their peers such as lacking motivation, anti-school or anti-work values.

Throughout the circle discussions, the youth took time to share what they would do differently, or what they would encourage the next generation of youth to consider on their life work journey. One young man said

You have to feel willing to go through that small bit of adversity. Even though everybody's experiences are different, all under different sorts of adversities, you have to be willing to challenge yourself. And I think that that's kind of the main thing. If you're not prepared to challenge yourself, if you need somebody to hold your hand the whole way through looking for work, then you're going to be in a lot of trouble finding work. Especially in Victoria.

Another young man shared that he would do things differently if he could rewind his life work journey

I would have taken my job a lot more seriously and I probably wouldn't have just been like, sorry pardon my French, but been half-assing it. That's what I done when I was younger, I was like, 'It's just a job, it's just whatever, it's just another thing on my resume.' If I knew then what I knew now, I would have taken everything a lot more seriously.

Below is a list of teachings and values the youth shared from their families and communities.

These young people spoke about these teachings in the context of relationships and thus demonstrated the Indigenous belief that knowledge is produced and maintained through relations (Wilson, 2008).

Have a solid foundation from friends and family

Work hard. My Mom, being a single mother, it was instilled in her to be a hard worker and to raise kids to be hard workers.

Don't be shy, be yourself

Talk to everyone; ask your family for connections

Pick your battles

Don't be picky, take each opportunity

Practice accountability

Knowing the right people

Be flexible and patient

Show initiative

Never be afraid to ask questions

Find a good challenge

You can only do one thing for so long, you need variety

Don't take work for granted

Work helps you grow up

As found by Hirischi et al (2011) many youth shared that their understanding of the purpose and meaning of work has been shaped through relational teachings of work ethics. The internalization of these themes and patterns is proposed by Blustein (2011) as a major part in adapting to life work.

Keeping work.

The supports, challenges and barriers to keeping work often had a clear relational component for the participants. Their experiences demonstrated the interconnection of work and non work domains and the potential conflicts with work and home life (Blustein, 2011). Many of the young parents in the circles spoke about the challenges of balancing work, school and home life and responsibilities. This finding was consistent with the survey findings reported by White et al (2003) in which Aboriginal women reported that caring for small children and being single parents as barriers to entering the labour force in Canada. One young mother shared her experience of this life work balance:

It was pretty hard when I was working the daycare. I mean I had to wake up extra early for myself, get my kid ready, bring him down, get ready for the day. And my day was opening with my mum, and then I would have to leave early just to go catch a bus just to go to school. Then I'd wait there for a couple hours for my night class to start.

For this mother and others, having support from their relations in the form of childcare enabled them to pursue work and school goals.

During the day, I have support from my Mom and brother. But when it comes to night, if I had to go to work at night, I'd have to look for a sitter because they like to go out and do their own things.

A young father shared his experience of balancing shift work and parenting:

It's hard working all night then coming home, my baby's mom goes to work and I'm trying to make bottles and not slack in taking care of my kid but I just couldn't do it.

The challenge of balancing life roles was also reported by youth without children who struggled to juggle work and school life with family life. This has been reported by Ng and Feldman (2007) as a key difficulty for youth in the school to work transition. These authors have found that those youth more attached to their family role will find the transition particularly challenging. This is of concern for the youth in the circles and for Aboriginal youth in general because the majority report home and family participation as more salient than work participation and commitment (Brown and Lavish, 2006). On the positive side, Lindstrom et al (2007) suggests this participation in family provider roles at a young age leads to a sense of responsibility and a strong work ethic, and so could benefit the youth in their school to work transitions.

For some, family life transitions such as the loss of a parent, or an unexpected pregnancy, were identified as a support in keeping work - for others though, these transitions interrupted their life work journey. One young mother identified an attitude shift following the birth of her son saying *I just want to work, to be a good example for my son*. Her sentiments were echoed by several young parents and below one young woman summarized the experience:

After I had my kids I was pretty much... Yeah, I became more responsible. Yeah, way more. Because before I just didn't care, just did whatever, whenever I wanted. And after I had my kids I was like, "whoa ok, I have to go back to school. Gotta make something of myself."

Another supportive transition was the end of a relationship for one young woman; *this may sound weird, but I went through a break up and I just started getting a whole bunch of jobs to keep myself busy*.

Others did not find the same support in life transitions. One young woman shared that her life work journey was challenged when *I lost my Mom, that's why I left my job*. Another young

mother shared that the transition to motherhood and the financial pressure that followed was a challenge for her and resulted in her being taken advantage of by her employer.

My boss said there wasn't enough funds to pay me and she wanted to keep me longer, I was pregnant and didn't have anywhere else to go so I was stuck getting way less than minimum wage.

This finding is consistent with White et al (2003), who found that the pressures of being a single parent and caring for children were primary barriers for entering the labour force reported by Canadian Aboriginal women.

Whether adaptive or problematic, the impact of family life transitions on life work journeys was routinely reported in participants' stories. They described their relationship with their community in a similar juxtaposed way; having a connection to either one's home community or to the urban Aboriginal communities was listed as both a support and a challenge in the experience of keeping work. One young woman who has relocated to Victoria twice in search of work opportunities, and recently connected to the urban Aboriginal communities, shared her experience:

Yeah, like where I'm from I know everybody, everybody knows me. We sing, we potlatch, we do all these things. So, the last time I lived here it was hard because I didn't have any of that. But now that I connected to the community and I know some of the people here, it just really helped me to branch out and to see Victoria in the way that I would like to see it.

Many young people spoke about their connection to the communities as a motivating force in their life work journey. One young man, who relocated to Victoria for educational opportunities, shared the impact his community service had on his life work journey:

When I joined the Métis Community in Victoria it was really important for me in terms of taking that step from being a student to kind of exploring, to kind of being more responsible. And it gave me a family in Victoria cause I didn't have one, all my family's back home, and then it also gave me a chance to look forward to being responsible for

other stuff that's not just me-involved you know. School is me-involved but if I have a role to play within our community then that's another form of responsibility so there's more at stake there. So I thought that was a support.

Many recognized this connection to their community as a factor in life work planning. One young woman, who echoed Juntunen's (2001) findings of work as a means to promote and preserve culture for Northern Plain Indians, said *I found what I can do, what I'm good at and what I can do to help my community.* This strong commitment to communities and life work planning that would allow young people to give back to their Nations was heard many times and was summed up nicely in one young man's story:

I would say that I feel that I've lucked out to be sitting here with you guys and I have friends that haven't lucked out growing up. So I would say my dream is to give the next generation of youth a better opportunity so that, you know you hear about those young people falling through the cracks or parents failing their children. I'd like to help make more chances for them.

Sadly, some older youth spoke of discrimination from their home communities for those who choose to be educated or work outside of the Nation or outside of the Aboriginal sector all together. This discussion began by one young person sharing *I think that there's sort of this myth out there that it's going to be easier working within your own community.* Juntunen et al (2001) reported similar concerns from Northern Plains Indians who experienced discrimination and alienation from their home communities for their education and work aspirations. Others in this circle went on to share stories about the challenges they face in their life work journey from their community. One young woman who left her community job to return to school shared

I think some of the most prejudice that I've actually had has been at the hand of my own community members. There's a huge amount of lateral violence and it makes you not want to give back and work within your community. It's really challenging, especially I think, as being young and coming up and having all these innovative and great ideas, and then dealing with a community that's not very healthy right now.

She later added to the pressure of community expectations saying

I think it's been really challenging in the sense that there's a certain expectation from your community that is imposed on you. It's like with me going into medicine, 'Oh well you're going to be doing Aboriginal medicine.' It's like, 'Well what if I don't want to? What if I want to try something else?' It's almost not even allowed, you can't talk about it, you feel guilty about not working in our world.

The struggle to pick between the two worlds is familiar for young Navajo youth who report a key challenge in their efforts to keep work is the choice between leaving the community for employment opportunities and staying to maintain connection to community and culture (Jackson and Smith, 2001). Seneca Ambers (2012) observed that youth often report feelings of *jealousy* from their relations upon returning from educational or employment opportunities. This is juxtaposed by community pride for youths' resilience and the frequently heard rhetoric about the importance of the next generation and the youth. Ball (2004) associated this with concerns about outside-educated relations returning to their Nations grounded in Euro-Canadian ways of knowing that do not fit in the community. In my experience, we are encouraged to succeed but when the education or employment opportunities go beyond those of our relations we are frequently ostracized and defamed. A personal example, of this was when I was told by my dark skinned relations that my educational success is because I am *white enough* for academia and not the result of countless hours of hard work and dedication.

Life planning.

The young people in all of the circles identified supports for *figuring my life out*. Often times, these supports would help plan steps in education or employment paths that made the journey appear more manageable. Blustein (2011) recognized this role of relations as potentially facilitating or inhibiting decision making in his relational theory but for those at the beginning of their life work journey, there was only evidence of the first as relations were routinely praised for *helping me to sort my life out*. In discussion with community knowledge keeper Seneca Ambers

(2012), she shared that for many of her clients who live at home and are very family enmeshed their *roles in the family dictate drive*. For those who are expected to excel and support the family they are motivated to find work, and for those expected to stay home and care for children, they are not motivated regardless of financial need. This could be why Statistics Canada reports lower labour market engagement of Aboriginal female youth verses Aboriginal male youth (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Many students in the circles described the teachers and educational assistants of Aboriginal education programs as supports for *trying to help us get our futures straight*. These findings are consistent with other studies that have gathered the supports of urban Aboriginal youth, which recognize engaged teachers who appear invested in students' lives as a key support in the life work journey (Kenny, 2007). One youth named his teacher as a key relational support in life planning while he upgraded for college admission:

He's a good guy and another reason I come to school and am getting my life together. From the first week that we started school he was trying to get me to sort things out, he wants me to make something of myself.

This life sorting was a type of adult engagement that many of the youth recognized as a key support for their life work journeys. Philip et al (2002) similarly found that youth identified engaged adults who had an active orientation towards life planning and career development as key factors in promoting readiness for transition. Many of the youth overcoming challenges and barriers shared stories of this type of support and encouragement from engaged adults who provided life mentorship and facilitated healthy steps *to keep us outta trouble*.

Mentorship's a strong support for me personally. I guess I have my mother, as a single mother raised me. So I depend a lot on my uncles, my grandfather, older cousins really showed me how to be a man I guess. To this day I go to them for advice if I need something or need some sort motivation to slow down, to think about things, it's them I seek.

Just as youth had discussed work teachings and values, they also shared life teachings that supported them in their life work journey and could support those coming up. Similar to the Canadian Aboriginal adults interviewed by Graham et al (2003), these youth identified life skills as a key part in overcoming life work challenges. Consistent with Indigenous values of interdependence, these young people discussed these life skills teachings in the context of their key relationships (Long et al, 2006; Wilson, 2008). When asked what they would share with the next generation of youth in their life planning journey, the circles identified important life skills they have learned from their relations:

Appreciate life no matter what the situation, no matter how hard it gets, just appreciate life.

Be determined

Have a strong confidence and believe in yourself

You have to enjoy things in life if you're going to keep doing them

Focus

Keep your eye on the prize

Putting these skills into practice will be important for the youth in the circles as community partners and employment counsellors working with Aboriginal communities identify pre employment life skills as a challenge for finding and keeping work. In discussion with community knowledge keeper Seneca Ambers (2012), she added that routine life skills such as time management and financial planning are some of the more practical life skills often missing as Aboriginal youth attempt to enter the work force.

Work

During the discussion of youths' relational worldviews and experiences, several stories were shared that were specific to the work domain. As the purpose of this research is to better

understand the experience of the supports, challenges and barriers to finding and keeping work, I will begin the discussion of the remaining three meta-themes with this work meta-theme. The discussion of youths' job hunt, work experience and the logistics of keeping work consistently overlapped with educational and cultural stories, however, for the purposes of discussion, I have identified key themes and presented them in the relational context.

Job Hunt.

All participants recognized the need for job hunt skills including preparing resumes, interview skills, job search techniques, and obtaining job certificates such as First Aid, Serving It Right, and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System Training (WHMIS). The younger youth (aged 21 or younger) tended to discuss tools as static and did not appear to understand how to develop skills or enhance tools. One younger youth shared *I've handed out so many resumes but have not gotten a single reply. A second sympathized me too; none of them called me back either. Their peer who did receive a call back said I've had one interview. I thought it went all right. Like I answered all the questions. But they didn't call me back after that.* She described the interview process as challenging as:

I kind of almost didn't know how to do it. Then they gave me all of these questions and then you have to do the questions and then they question you about everything. It's kind of hard for me because I don't know this person.

One young person speaking about her non Aboriginal friends said:

They make it look easy. My friends go and apply at McDonald's and they're hired just like that. I applied everywhere and I thought I did everything right. But I didn't get hired so I don't know what I did wrong.

In discussion with community knowledge keeper Seneca Ambers (2012), her experience showed that many of the Aboriginal youth struggle with *self promotion* and are not familiar with how to sell themselves in an interview because most Aboriginal cultures value humility and restraint in their young people.

Many of the participants appeared unfamiliar with local employment resources that provide support with job hunting tools, and job skills. This lack of information about employment and careers was also found in Native American young people and is identified as a barrier in Aboriginal career development (Hoffman et al, 2005). Some of the youth recognized that these resources existed, saying *they're probably out there, but we're obviously not finding them*. One youth said *I think there is help, my friend went to some place where they help make resumes, that's where she got hers done*. Of the small number of participants who were familiar with the available resources, one identified Band programs and school job fair resources for connecting to certification programs, and others identified specific employment programming available in Victoria including Spectrum Job Search, Springboard to Success and the Victoria Native Friendship Centre's job and life skills program called The Eagle Project. One of the older youth emphasized the increasing role of the internet in job search and identified local social media such as UsedVictoria.com as a valuable site for finding work opportunities. The youth collectively agreed that advertising job skills resources via text messages and social medias would make resources more accessible to themselves and other young people. This is an area where support is clearly needed.

All of the youth attending academic upgrading programs identified the college preparation provided in their curriculum as a key support to helping them to navigate the education system to reach their life work goals. *They give us sheets that say exactly what steps*

you need to take and classes you need for whatever you want to be when you decide to go to college. On the other hand, one young woman shared her awareness of the challenge of navigating the multiple and sometimes complicated options in the job preparation process, saying:

I don't want to put in all that time and then find out at the end that you have to do a completely different course in order to get what you want. Or a course completely changes and now you did all that and now it's for nothing and you have to go back and start all over again.

This job preparation support at the adult education centres was contrasted to the public school job preparation curriculum by many of the participants. Their complaints were summarized by one young man who said *they didn't have career stuff at all.* While the majority of participants had little to share in terms of life work supports in their public school experience, one older youth had a very different experience and shared:

When I was in grade 10, I did this, it's like a school workshop. Like an employment workshop and I was 14. We learned to do résumés, cover letters, do mock interviews. It was a really cool thing to learn at a young age.

Despite some lack of awareness of work skills and job search resources, younger youth were very familiar with the types of certificates required for certain jobs and identified these certificates as one of the most important steps to finding and keeping work saying *you have to have certain certificates to work.* But again, these young people struggled when it came to identifying where to access specific resources and the training needed for these certificates. Hoffman et al (2005), also found that the Native American youth they worked with also lacked information about career and career resources. This lack of awareness of career support resources is a concern, as Phillips et al (2002) have found that those youth who access such services are more likely to be able to make clear transition plans.

Work Experience.

Three distinct areas of work experience were discussed in the circles: Community Student Work Programs, Aboriginal Sector Work and Non Aboriginal Sector Work. The majority of participants had participated in Band supported community student work programs that included administrative jobs, childcare, culture and history, youth work, and maintenance. One youth spoke fondly of her student work experience saying:

My student job taught me work ethics, you know having to report to someone and be on time, it was a lot of responsibility for a 16 year old.

Other youth found the summer programs failed to meet their work experience needs. These programs, organized by the local bands and Aboriginal service delivery agencies, are often restricted to students much to the frustration of one young woman who said, *I couldn't participate this summer cause last year I didn't really come to school a whole lot so they didn't allow me to work.* For the students who attend school and live on reserve, these opportunities are available for all who signed up. Students are not required to submit a resume or go through an interview process *they just kind of let anyone do it, I just signed up and they tell you what to do.* Thus, although these youth gain work experience, it appears that they may not be learning the behaviours and processes needed for successful work search. Unfortunately, few of the younger youth who had participated in this programming were able to articulate work or life skills learned during their participation.

Approximately one third of the youth who participated in the circle discussions choose to work in the Aboriginal sector in the areas of culture and history, mental health, and governance. Two young people worked for their local band on language revitalization projects, made SENCOTEN booklets for children, and contributed to the online word preservation database.

Others worked in traditional roles in the *big house* and two shared that they worked as traditional harvesters in the crab and salmon industries. With the exception of the *big house* jobs, youth recognized these cultural work positions as work. For those youth involved in ceremonial *big house* work, they did not acknowledge this cultural work as part of the labour market and instead appeared to categorize it as cultural practice despite the fact they are often remunerated for their services. Seneca Ambers (2012) shared that many youth do not recognize the traditional knowledge and skills *learned from following my grandmother around* as “work” and so do not see the transferability to life work. This is similar to findings by Marshall and Guenette’s (2011) in Vancouver Island’s rural communities, that Aboriginal youth need adult support to translate skills “to the larger contexts of work and community participation” (p. 39).

Several of the youth in the circles had been involved in some sort of youth engagement work experience. Five youth chose to share stories about volunteer or work experiences that involved representing their peers and advocating for Aboriginal young people in their communities. For example, one young man sits on a provincial council advocating for youth housing needs, while another advocated for fine arts funding for urban First Nations artists and musicians. One young man described this as an opportunity *to share what the youth wanted in their futures and learn about what the Elders wanted for the youth.*

One of the older participants gained work experience as a youth leader in the Rediscovery program which is designed to reconnect Aboriginal children and youth to cultural knowledge and skills. She described the job as her *dream job* because she was immersed in her culture and community. Since moving to the urban communities, she continues her efforts to find cultural work and is currently working part time as cultural greeter for a local Indigenous gathering place.

Three of the older youth had been employed in Aboriginal mental health and governance positions on frontline service teams and policy boards. Two of these positions came through student work initiatives and the third was a regular posting. These youth had little to say about their work experiences in provincial ministries as the work itself had been overshadowed by the relational and cultural challenges that they felt result from the sociopolitical disparities they face as Aboriginal youth in Canada's labour market. These challenges and the systems these youth felt perpetuate them will be discussed as they related to the youth keeping work and walking in two cultural worlds.

The remaining stories of work shared during the circles were about positions in the non-Aboriginal sector in labour/demolition, janitorial, restaurant, childcare and retail work. This entry level work made up the majority of work experience for the younger youth and for the older youths' early experience and is typical work for youth working part time while attending school.

Few of the youth who shared their stories of work reported being able to identify with their work role, which according to Ng and Feldman (2007), is a central tenet of success. Few spent much time in their work role, and even fewer had positions which represented their values and beliefs. For those who were fortunate enough to work in the Aboriginal sector or in culturally based student positions, they reported being more connected to their work and were more forthcoming about positive work experiences in the relational and cultural domains. Ng and Feldman (2007) suggest this attachment to their work roles will facilitate a smoother school to work transition and therefore is a support for their finding and keeping work.

At Work.

When discussing their challenges in keeping work, common struggles specific to the work meta-theme were shared by the youth. All circles discussed the challenges of short term or part time contracts identified by Admundson (2004) as a result of more competitive work environments and globalization. A young person in the summer work program said *it was only for the summer, we got like two paychecks and then it was over*. Another youth in the same program said he was only able to work for *five weeks this past summer*, and many others struggled with similar *seasonal* positions that ended when school began. A youth shared similar challenges with cultural work saying *big house* ceremonial work is only available during the winter season and for events.

For others with year round work, concerns about long hours and challenging shift work were shared. One young man summed up these concerns well saying:

It's complicated, cause you're switching from mid-day, you're going to be working in the morning, and then you're switching off to the night. And then the next day it's the morning shift again. You're screwed up on your sleep. Cause it really screws up your mental self as well as your physical self.

For a group of youth who lived on the outskirts of the city, they identified their 60 minute commute into town as a challenge to keeping work. Inadequate bus service and no personal transportation meant that these youth could only get in and out of Victoria once daily, leaving in the early morning and returning after dinner. As these youth were beginning their life work, they were applying for entry level work which is most often during irregular hours (i.e. early or evening shifts). Thus, this lack of transportation is a significant barrier to work outside of the community. This is a new challenge for this group of youth as transit providers' recently ended regular service to the reserve.

They always came when no one was heading out of town, so they stopped because not many people took them. But now there are a few of us who are older and could use them now. But they won't listen, they just made it six in the morning and six at night.

Youth living closer to town also recognized the support of *having a ride*, or having access to transit *that arrives early enough for me to get to work*, or work opportunities close enough to *just walk to work*. One of the older youth identified transportation as a support for finding and keeping a job throughout her early working life saying,

I think transportation has been key. I wouldn't have been able to take a lot of jobs that I've had if I didn't have my own transportation. The buses tend not to run at the times where, like late nights at restaurants and stuff, where we were living. So transportation was really important.

Those unable to get work in their community and unable to get to work outside of their community are faced with a very difficult situation. For many, leaving the community is not an option as they are financially supported by their family and if they leave the community they face unemployment or homelessness. While having secure housing was not directly discussed as a support for finding and keeping work, all of the younger youth attending school and looking for work lived with a family member. Financial support and home life stability has been identified by Kenny (2007) for minority youth, and by Jackson and Smith for Aboriginal youth as a major support to developing education and career goals. As these youth were purposefully unemployed during school, they have no means of financially supporting themselves and so also rely on family for food and incidental expenditures. For a small number of the youth who were expected to contribute to the family finances they shared *most of the money goes to my parents to pay bills like groceries*. One young woman said she chose to be on welfare rather than work as she felt it is more reliable for paying family expenses *like rent and bills* while she goes to school. Jackson and Smith (2001) and Kenny (2007), reported that financial stressors or family financial misfortune such as this can interfere with life work goals.

For those circle participants who did choose to work outside of the community in the non Aboriginal sector, their non Aboriginal colleagues were at times recognized as a challenge to keeping work. As was reported by minority youth in the United States, and by Aboriginal adults here in Canada, discrimination and alienation from the mainstream culture are identified as barriers for the youth in their efforts to keep work (Juntunen et al, 2001; Dwyer, 2003). In discussion with community knowledge keeper Seneca Ambers (2012), youth in the communities and in the circles rarely speak directly to racism and often *deny racism* all together. Youth instead spoke about lack of cultural awareness, work place conflict and tokenism as daily struggles. One young man shared his biggest daily life work challenge was his colleagues' *ignorance*.

I would say ignorance is my barrier in the sense that people would be outwardly racist cause they're not very nice or respectful but also some of them are just, they don't know any better. So I kind of tend to, instead of getting, like I'll get upset with people and I don't have a problem to do that but only if I feel if they're coming from a bad place. If I feel if they're coming from a place of ignorance, which is usually the case, then you have to try and build some more understanding with them.

He went on to say *I am lucky, because I'm complaining about tokenism but of course there's lots of people that have to deal with the explicit forms of racism*. Other youth shared the experience of being disliked in the workplace with one young man saying that *having a boss and coworkers who don't care for you or not liking you is a big challenge*.

In both these stories and others shared, the young people seemed discouraged and did not have ideas for how to overcome these relational challenges.

Sometimes I think it would be easier to just go work in a mainstream system and not have to fight the man at every single step and have to fight the ways and trying to make things more Aboriginal

Discrimination and lack of cultural awareness was identified by Kenny (2007) as a common challenge for Aboriginal urban youth and youth who participated in the individual interview in the WIMW Toronto research also acknowledge their presence along the life work journey (Stewart, 2011). Kenny listed ethnic and racial discrimination as a barrier for a small number of her participants; Hoffman et al (2005) identified perceived hostility and isolation barriers to career development for Native American youth; Poonwassie (1995) identified youths' inability to survive prejudice and discrimination as a challenge and Dwyer (2003) identified discrimination and work cultures that alienate Aboriginal peoples as barriers for Aboriginals in the Canadian public sector. On a more positive side, Diemer et al (2005; 2010) reported that youth who learn to adapt and understand sociopolitical issues can better negotiate structural limitations and resist the negative impact of the messages.

Education

Throughout their stories, all participants spoke to the value of education. As with their work stories, the education stories were shared in a relational context and often featured academic mentors and supports. Across the circles, two themes were identified: Academic Aspirations and Culturally Inclusive Education.

Academic Aspirations.

All of the youth identified completing their Grade 12 studies as a necessary step for employment. This echoes the findings of Juntunen et al's (2001) research, within which younger youth emphasized education as a key support. Further, many of the older youth who had already completed Grade 12 said post secondary education was also necessary for a *good job*, a sentiment consistent with other research findings. Admuson (2004) found that post secondary

education was a growing expectation for people entering the labour force. The majority of the participants shared post secondary aspirations ranging from college diplomas, trades certificates, to undergraduate and graduate degrees. The most frequent area of educational interest shared by younger youth was family and youth support; older youth often mentioned education that would enable them to support communities capacity and governance. One older youth returning to post secondary education after a number of years in a youth support role said:

I want to be in a position where I'm not stuck anymore having people who are non Aboriginal or have no sense of reality to Aboriginal communities making the decisions for our communities.

Youth also discussed successes and challenges with academic scholarships and living allowance funding. Aboriginal people in Canada are eligible for education and training funding based on their ancestry, however the funding varies from a few hundred dollars to several thousand, based on your ancestry (status verses non status, First Nations verses Métis), and funding streams (Nation verses government). One youth was grateful to her Nation, saying *I definitely had a lot of help from my band office, they paid for all the schooling and a living allowance every month.* An artist in the group shared that financial assistance was also available for fine arts students and that she had had a scholarship opportunity to create First Nations art pieces for public display at the 2010 Olympics.

The Métis youth in the circles did not have the same positive experience with scholarships and funding. One youth shared

for Métis, young people for school-wise, it's more difficult to secure funding. I think there's some national programs and these type of things, but I think that's kind of a barrier for me because I remember when I was looking for some help during my third year, or how it worked for me was that it had to be my last year, so basically it had to be training funding that would lead me towards immediate work. And I think that's a government problem because that means that they want to support young people get a job rather than an education and a career

An older youth shared

I'm mad at our funding. I had two years' paid in my undergrad, which was great, but you know, going back being a little bit older I'm building some assets for myself; Good luck. Everyone turned me down this year. No more funding.

The majority of Aboriginal young people are coming from low income families and so these scholarship and funding opportunities are key supports to attaining education and training.

Limited funding opportunities or restrictions on funding can be the difference between finding sustainable employment or not.

Aboriginal Education.

Participants who attended Aboriginal education programs shared that they were more successful in these culturally inclusive programs than they had been in the public education system. They reported that they felt more engaged by teachers, had a *family style support*, and felt more connected to culture and community, sentiment shared in the literature by other minority youth (Jackson and Smith, 2001; Kenny, 2007). One of the younger youth described her experience of teachers in the regular public school system:

they just taught you, taught you, taught you, taught you, and then you're just able easy to slip out of class. I didn't accomplish anything there.

Schools with low curriculum expectations or poor structure have been recognized in the literature as a challenge for minority youth in the school to work transition (Kenny 2007). As a former Educational Assistant, I have seen many Aboriginal youth *slip through the cracks* in the public education system. Despite local school districts Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements which outline required cultural curriculum specific to the Coast Salish people, public schools do not appear to be engaging these youth and frequently report lower levels of graduation rates for Aboriginal students (Johnson, 2011). This problem was also found in Vancouver Island rural

communities in the CUS project (Charleston, 2005). In contrast, youth in the circles described the Aboriginal education programs, which include cultural curriculum and are built upon Aboriginal ontologies, as more engaging and fostering a stronger sense of belonging. One of the younger youth described that *the program had the cultural catch that I needed in order to feel really sound and to really feel like I was here*. I suspect this feeling of groundedness is missing for the youth attending public schools built upon Euro-Canadian values and knowledge.

Culture

As youth shared their stories of work and education, a connection to culture was often evident. Kirmayer and his colleagues (2003), suggest that the Aboriginal young person's journey is made more complicated by balancing the cultural values of home communities and mainstream society and this was seen in the preliminary WIMW Toronto Team findings and in the circle discussions (Stewart et al, 2011). Younger youth tended to discuss culture as separate from work and education, while older youth sought opportunities to bring these two worlds together. Culture was discussed in many ways from specific traditional activities such as, participation in *big house* and *sweat lodges*, to *protocols* and integrated values or *ways of being*.

Culture and Work.

The experience of culture in work varied considerably across the groups. The younger youth often described culture and work as *two separate things*; one young man went on to say *they should stay two separate things; there are some things that need to stay in the community*. The experience of this young person was shared with others who had work experience in ceremony and cultural practice and said they could not talk about those stories due to cultural protocols. When discussing possibilities for younger youth to bring together their cultural world

and work world, the participants had no specific suggestions for how this could happen. Older youth were more open to the possibility of this overlap and some were actively seeking culturally inclusive work opportunities in areas such as Indigenous governance, and cultural healing. This shift for older youth to seek opportunities is consistent with findings with Native American Plains youth with post secondary education who saw the career as an opportunity to promote traditional knowledge and preserve culture (Juntunen et al, 2001). However, after some discussion the older youth agreed *it is a big challenge, trying to find that job that really does fit to what my values are.*

In Aboriginal communities, cultural stories and practices are protected by protocols which identify the who, what, why, and when of cultural sharing. One young woman working in the Aboriginal public sector described the experience of protocols in a non community setting as *a constant struggle of asking permission, and feeling pressure to decide what would be appropriate to share.* Others who have worked in the public sector shared her sentiments adding:

mainstream culture has sort of accepted Aboriginal culture in the work environment as long as it doesn't interfere with what the mainstream view and goal is. So, for example like, I can smudge as long as someone doesn't dislike the smell.

One youth, hired to make a film about the history of his community, shared a difficult story about removing cultural teachings his Elders had shared in an effort to meet his employers' expectations: *there's a lot that we had to cut out unfortunately and it was disappointing but our funder wanted a certain documentary.* This experience was difficult because in Indigenous communities, knowledge keepers are understood to share teachings when and where appropriate - it is not up to the listener to determine the validity or relevance of the teachings shared. He was made to choose between his cultural values and his job requirements.

Having to choose between culture and work is a struggle many Aboriginal people face in Victoria. Researchers have shown that these tensions between Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal values complicate career identity development for these young people (Kirmayer, et al, 2003). Front line workers supporting adult employment name conflict between cultural and work expectations as a key factor for leaving or loosing work. Community knowledge keeper Seneca Ambers (2012) shared stories about Aboriginal employees struggling *to communicate cultural obligations* during winter season and not knowing how *to leave a job in good way*. In my experience, finding employers who are open to Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing is not easy and requires patience and the ability to educate people unfamiliar with Aboriginal customs and traditions. The most challenging piece of this for her has been educating employers about the amount of time social responsibilities and protocol can take, for example, grieving rituals rarely fit into the allocated bereavement period.

Barriers to cultural work also existed within the communities. Youth involved in the summer student employment programs shared that during *big house season*, and when teaching cultural practices to younger relations such as the *bone game and powwow*, the issues of protocol and seeking permission resulted in challenges and barriers:

We had to get permission; you have to get a lot of permission... Especially for some people, some families don't appreciate their children being taught their culture for specific reasons. Because for some families, it would be hard for them, having their children knowing more than them and their culture. So they don't want them to learn their culture. Because they went through a lot of trauma growing up, so they didn't get to experience our culture growing up like we do. And so a lot of families don't appreciate it.

These young people were challenged by the unhealed intergenerational hurts caused by the lasting impacts of colonization and the residential school era, and as such were wary of bringing cultural teachings their relations had been deprived of into their helping practice. Poonwassie

(1995), also found the impact of unresolved hurts in her work with Aboriginal youth on their career journey. As today's youth work to re-establish and revitalize Aboriginal culture, many are cognisant of those who did not have the opportunity to speak their language or practice their culture due to stipulations in the 1876 Indian Act such as the potlatch ban.

Some young people in the circles who worked outside of the communities in the non Aboriginal sector said they did not see a place for culture in their work. Another young person shared their experience of conflicting cultural and work place values in working in fast food saying *in a restaurant, you can't work patiently with your food like you would for your guests at a gathering*. Other young people who worked in jobs such as retail, labour, administration agreed *Aboriginal culture never came up, not at all actually*. This absence of culture in their life work is concerning as researchers recognize culture as a coping mechanism for life work challenges (Kirmayer, 2003; Blustein, 2011). For these young people it did not appear to be cultural protocol or employers preventing their cultural practice at work, but rather they themselves did not see a place for their Aboriginal culture in their work. A nursing student shared

I'm not sure how Aboriginal culture could fit in. It really doesn't in a way, if you heal people by modern man's medicine. So nope, it doesn't really do anything.

This is not surprising as these stories came from younger youth who appeared to lack developed cultural identities and had little work experience. Many of the older youth working in the Aboriginal sector were better able to identify ways that they had integrated their culture and work. One youth shared how he had found a way to bring his culture into the non Aboriginal work sector as a landscaper: *teaching about cedar, and what to pull and not pull*. For this young person and others who understood their cultural as a way of being, they engage the Euro-

Canadian world through an Indigenous lens and may be better able to integrate or balance cultural expectations at work.

Walking In Multiple Worlds.

As the youth in the circles discussed the presence or absence of Aboriginal cultures in their work, issues of conflicting worldviews and the challenges of navigating multiple cultural environments were evident as was seen in the preliminary WIMW Toronto Team findings (Stewart et al, 2011). Similar to Long et al's (2006) findings, the participants spoke about managing contradictory worldviews, values and beliefs. Seneca Ambers reported that she and other front line employment counsellors regularly see young Aboriginal people struggle with the conflict of what she named *urban verses family culture* (2012). For the older youth working outside of communities in both the Aboriginal sector and the non Aboriginal sector, more challenges with the conflicting worldviews of their home communities and their employer were shared. One youth who is working for a pharmacy while studying traditional medicines said it is *a big challenge, trying to find that job that really does actually fit to what my values are*. The group identified the most challenging piece of navigating multiple worldviews and multiple cultural environments to be the lack of cultural awareness in mainstream society. Discussed earlier as racism and tokenism, one young person involved in advocacy work said the following about his non Aboriginal colleagues:

it's not in the school system, it's not being taught in their classrooms, it's not being taught in their homes. So it is left up to us to say you know what, this is what's culturally respectful and what's right here.

Another of the older youth described the responsibility and pressure of constantly educating her colleagues, what Seneca Ambers (2012) calls the cultural value of *bringing people in*, as so challenging, she has had to take two extended mental health leaves to escape. In her work place,

employees service the Aboriginal communities by participating in one week of cultural awareness training, which she described as *a week and then it disappears*.

Overall, the younger youth who discussed culture and work as two separate things, appeared to differentiate between Aboriginal worldviews and mainstream worldviews and most often saw the experiences in each culture as distinct. This idea is consistent with Juntunen et al's (2001) findings that younger youth or those with no post secondary education see Aboriginal and mainstream culture as distinct and distant. Younger youth spoke about being motivated by Euro-Canadian values such as affluence and independence in mainstream jobs and Aboriginal values such as community enhancement in cultural jobs. Talk of affluence shows the same capitalist notions Long (2006) found with Native American youth, and is not consistent with Indigenous worldviews. Hopes for independence were also inconsistent with local Coast Salish values of interdependence and community living, and more reflect Euro-Canadian values of success (Saanich Adult Education Centre, 2007).

The idea of culture as a way of being is becoming popular among the local Elders and my mentors and more youth are beginning to see their practice of Aboriginal values rather than just their dances and games as making up Aboriginal life. One young woman explains *culture is nonstop it's in everything we do; you're hearing it, you're seeing it, you're experiencing it*. For this youth, she had been raised by her Grandmother to understand *our culture is a way of being* – and she is able to see how her cultural values and beliefs can be carried into the mainstream labour market. As cultural discontinuity has been identified by Kirmayer and his colleagues (2003) as a challenge for Aboriginal youth keeping work, this understanding of culture could be a key support for youth looking for work in the non Aboriginal sector.

Summary

The across-group analysis showed that participants' narratives were experienced within the relational context of Indigenous worldviews and of their local Aboriginal communities. Their voices illustrate the supports, challenges and barriers faced across the relational, work, education and cultural domains, and stress their unique experiences. Frequently, stories of factors that helped or hindered finding and keeping work directly contradicted others, further emphasizing the heterogeneous nature of this population. Despite the differences, most prevalent amongst younger versus older youth, all participants shared the values of interconnection and learning. All of the stories shared had a relational component, from direct relational support such as parents driving youth to work, to indirect relational support such as mentorship or role modeling what life work success can be. Youth shared work experience stories in areas that varied from no Aboriginal culture to cultural ceremony work. All participants were keen to further their education and saw education and training as a key support in their life work journeys. Finally, youth in the circles shared their struggles with working and living in two cultural worlds and their views on that balance. Youth concluded their circles with messages for the next generation and shared work and life skills learned through their relations.

Chapter V - Summary, Implications and Final Reflections

Summary of Findings

The stories shared by the youth in the circles strongly showed the relational context of Aboriginal epistemology and ontology (Friere, 1993; Wilson, 2008). The relational model, which came from the youths stories and from consultation with community knowledge keepers, is consistent with Indigenous worldviews (Wilson, 2008), and the local cultures of the urban Aboriginal communities and territories (Seneca Ambers, 2012; Saanich Adult Education Centre, 2007). Further, the relational model is similar to career development models from relational theory and relational-cultural theory (Blustein, 2011; Jordan, 2008). It is important to remember that while discussed separately, specific stories that grouped into the work, educational and cultural meta-themes, were grounded the relational domain and frequently overlapped with each other. Youth in the circles identified supports, challenges and obstacles across all thematic areas that again intersected and at times even contradicted each other. For example, participants who were young parents had mixed feelings about whether parenthood had helped or hindered their work life journey.

Also noteworthy were the thematic differences seen between the younger and older youth participants that resulted in different work life conceptualizations. While younger youth tended to think about specific jobs and spoke of work as a means of survival, older youth more often spoke to merging the two cultural worlds of work and community. Across all of the youth, the value of education was emphasized, both for themselves and for the youth in the next generation. They were aware of the growing education and training requirements for employment in Canada's labour force. From these findings flow important theoretical, research and practice

implications that could remove barriers, reduce challenges, and increase supports for Aboriginal young people on their work life journey.

Boundaries

Before I discuss the implications of the research findings, it is important to note that the design and methods have some inherent boundaries, which impact the transferability of findings. Firstly, as this is a qualitative study, and so the findings cannot be generalized; while efforts were made to ensure the participants were representative of the local Aboriginal youth population, the relatively small number and the regional focus means narratives may not be relevant for other urban Aboriginal communities in BC or Canada. The diversity among Canada's Aboriginal peoples is well known and knowledge is understood to be unique from Nation to Nation (Dei et al, 2000). Further, by inviting existing groups to participate, the homogenous samples were somewhat less diverse than a random sample of local youth. However, this relational style approach to sample is custom in Aboriginal communities research and is important for trust within the group and with researchers (Marshall & Guenette, 2011). This affects the diversity of the group as peers are often of similar backgrounds and achievement levels. Luckily, though, within the circles there is a range of age, tribal affiliation, education, experience, and cultural identity. The circle format also has some inherent boundaries, as not all participants would have felt comfortable sharing their life work stories. For some sensitive areas such as lateral violence and negative peer relations, this forum was not ideal. We have already seen differences in individual interview data in Toronto and here in Victoria as youth appear to have felt more comfortable addressing these areas.

Another limitation for the study is my involvement within the local Aboriginal communities. A few times during the research process, research team members had to point out assumptions from my Indigenous lens that I had failed to recognize. For example, the role that protocol played in collecting cultural data was at first not noted in the findings as I take for granted my teachings around what people are or are not allowed to share. Working with research team members not connected to the local communities helped me to see these assumptions. On the flip side, seeing as my ancestry is Cree-Métis I am not native to the local communities, and therefore have limited cultural knowledge specific to this land and have learned about the Coast Salish culture from knowledge keepers and close friends involved in the communities.

Implications for Theory

The Walking In Multiple Worlds project is conceptualized within social constructionist career development theory that examines life work within social and cultural contexts (Young and Collin, 2004). Social constructionism was chosen as an appropriate approach for working with the Aboriginal communities because it attends to relational and subjective realities, a central tenet of Indigenous worldviews that was indeed reflected in the data (Morrow, 2007). Indigenous scholars have advocated for the use of theories that reflect Indigenous worldviews to better produce ethical and trustworthy research with Aboriginal communities and have identified the social constructionist narrative and relational approaches as particularly useful for this work (Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008; McCormick, 1994; Stewart, 2008). The present study could be considered a hybrid approach of Indigenous and Euro-Canadian methods, due of the blending of Indigenous and Euro-Canadian worldviews. This method was comfortable for me as I myself am of mixed ancestry and was raised walking in two worlds blending Scottish and Cree-Métis

values. This blending has produced particular and unexpected opportunities and challenges for me as a researcher as well as for the team.

As the project moved forward, it has become evident to the research team that social constructionist theory would be used to complement an Indigenous ontology and epistemology, rather than attempting to Indigenize this Euro-Canadian theory. During the preparation to enter the communities, Roger John of the St'at'imc Nation (personal communication, May 26, 2010) advised the research team to identify ourselves first from our Nation in a traditional way, both in building rapport and in developing our approach. This was a central piece of grounding the research in an Indigenous paradigm as from that point forward I prefaced my interactions with the partners, the youth and their stories with this lens. This shift in perspective has impacted all aspects of the research and was made in response this meeting and to the calls of Indigenous scholars, to ground research with an Indigenous centre and resource existing theoretical frameworks rather than attempting to fit the communities into borrowed paradigms (Wilson, 2008; Smith, 1999). This shift naturally had methodological implications, but at theoretical level, led the team routinely ask *what would our grandmothers do?* when gathering and interpreting youths stories (Marshall et al, 2010). This question is a metaphor and reminder to return to Aboriginal ancestral roots to better understand a holistic view of the research question and is consistent with Indigenous psychologies. Further, routinely revisiting this question emphasized the importance of the locating the research within my Nation, the Aboriginal communities and culture.

The advantages of conducting the research informed by an Indigenous paradigm were evident as the study progressed. The research was conducted in a respectful way that recognized the interconnectedness of family, community, and culture and knowledge was gathered and

interpreted with a focus on local knowledge and Indigenous worldviews. These efforts make the findings more trustworthy and relevant to the communities. Further, this work was grounded in the everyday lives of the communities' members and so can be used to provide relevant insights to career development resources and vocational supports for their relations (Wilson, 2008). Because the Euro-Canadian social constructionist influence is also present, this research adds to the discussion of cross-cultural uses and implications of methodologies created from Euro-Canadian psychologies, and the strengths of social constructionism to recognize social, political, cultural and historical influences in Aboriginal communities.

Implications For Research

Grounding the approach in an Indigenous paradigm permitted me to refer to established theoretical frameworks and methods such as social constructionist theory, along with the case study and narrative approaches, for guidance in the design and process of the research. The interpretation of Indigenous worldviews and the blending of research methods provided a comprehensive framework that matched the purpose and research question as such a framework was not available in the current literature this has implications for future research. Using my own Indigenous lens, and guided by my studies with Dr. Emerson (class lectures, September 2009 – March 2010), and writings of Indigenous scholars such as Smith (1999), Wilson (2008), and Cajete (1994), I was able to reflect on existing methods and designs to conduct a study that both addressed the research question and met the expectations of my community to conduct respectful, reciprocal, relevant and responsible research – the four “Rs” identified by Kirkness and Barnhart (1991). In response to scholars' calls to use Indigenous knowledge in research design, I selected methods that promoted a decolonizing agenda and empowered youth on their work life journeys and this process can serve as a reference to blend methods in an appropriate

and good way (Smith, 1999). I did this by following cultural and communities' protocols of partnership and collaboration, by allowing the youth to author their own experiences through storytelling and sharing circles, and by interpreting their experiences within the local communities' context. Historically, Wilson (2008) observes that the Indigenous context has been referenced in research projects, but the research process has failed to include Indigenous methods of data collection and interpretation, resulting in gaps in understanding. Accordingly, this research demonstrates how to locate research within an Indigenous context, and collaborate with local knowledge keepers and community partners from the design to analysis; this led to a more locally relevant interpretation of stories and a more comprehensive overview of the supports, challenges and barriers these youth faced. By beginning with this Indigenous lens and constantly grounding the work in notions of culture and community, the findings are more trustworthy and authentic.

The research methods chosen for this study build upon other scholars' efforts to use relational approaches from minority communities that reflect worldviews similar to Indigenous communities (Schultheiss et al, 2011; Kenny et al, 2003; Lindstrom et al, 2007; Diemer and Blustein, 2005). Much of career development research focuses on individually-oriented experiences, supports, and struggles that are different to the experiences of youth in the Indigenous communities (Hoffman et al, 2005). The findings in this project affirm the relational approach advocated by Indigenous scholars which demonstrates that no experience exists in isolation and further emphasizes the overlap between work and life domains (Long et al, 2006; Wilson, 2008). The model created from the youths' stories can be used to inform future research projects to facilitate design and methods that address each of the life work domains and are interpreted using a relational worldview.

The findings from this research also have implications for future areas of research and show that there is much more to be learned about the experiences of urban Aboriginal young people on their work life journey. Future studies could include a more in depth exploration of the similarities and differences identified by the present participants. For example, the differences between younger youth and older youth in their conceptualization of cultural discontinuity or walking in two worlds should be explored as consciousness of this has been shown to promote resilience and work life mobility for minority young people (Diemer and Blustein, 2005). In addition, certain career development challenges identified in other research were not shared by the youth in the circles. For example, despite evidence in the literature and reports from local knowledge keepers that Aboriginal youth experience racism and discrimination in their work life experience, the participants in the circles did not report experiencing either. Seneca Ambers (2012) suggests this could be because the youth may not aware of it or are choosing to disregard the experience and so more research may help uncover challenges in these areas. Also, more information is needed to understand how relational support acts to support youth to make healthy choices.

Additional stories also need to be collected from the relations who walk alongside these young people on their life work journeys. From family members who provide indirect and direct support, to teachers who have a special gift to engage the youth, to employers who provide training, there needs to be a more comprehensive review of their contributions. Specifically, more attention needs to be paid to those relational influences not directly linked to work experience, such as those that foster life work attachment and build resilience. For example, none of the youth spoke about the negative impact of drugs, alcohol or family violence, despite evidence in the literature that these areas are challenges for minority and Indigenous young

peoples' career development. As a helper in the local Aboriginal communities, I know these are common challenges for the youth so assuming they are in fact not impacted by these challenges, more research is needed to connect their narratives to specific supportive actions (ie: school anti-drug education, family violence counselling) that have allowed them to overcome or avoid them. Further, there is more exploration needed of the experiences of youth who are not connected to their culture or who are not engaged in education; those who, as one youth said, have *slipped through the cracks* and are no longer connected to communities. It would be illuminating to see the impact of acculturation and cultural discontinuity on the relevance of the relational model found in the circles.

Implication for Practice

My focus on the lived experiences of the participants in this research has allowed the voices of the young people to speak to the need for change in educational and work development practice for themselves and their relations. Consistent with McCormick and Admunson's (1997) Career Life Planning Model For First Nations People, shifting the focus from work to life work is needed in order to better understand the experience of Aboriginal youth. What this means is vocational helpers need to expand their support from employment skill development to life skill development taking the psychology of working to a place of life designing (Graham et al, 2009; Savickas et al, 2009). It is clear the communities' young people do not make goals in isolation of their relations and so my hope is that this research will encourage vocational helpers to look to youths relations to identify the strengths within and support community members to take a leading role in mentoring life and work skills. As Jordon posits in her relational cultural theory, these growth fostering connections with their relations will enhance and support their life work journey. Consistent with Phillips et al (2002), the results show that fostering that connection to

the adult world and building supportive adult-youth relationships will help these young people along their journey.

Using career development models that recognize that these young people are more rooted in their relational context and find their meaning from those relations will improve the relevance and therefore the effectiveness of vocational helping with Indigenous young people. As was reported by Junteunen Long (2006), the young people measure success in a relational collaborative context (ie: enhanced interdependence) and so their life work goals must accommodate that. Using the relational model presented in this research, vocational helpers could assist youth to consider their career planning across the three life domains and grounding in their relational context. In my own experience, the interrelatedness of these domains is unquestionable and when I have found success in one is dependent on success in the others, for example if I am making time for family and cultural practice, I am more successful at school and work because I feel grounded and supported. According to Seneca Ambers (2012), discussing the relationships between these life paths and the potential conflicts could better prepare youth to manage challenges and overcome barriers.

In addition, helping young people to see the interrelationship among the domains will support their understanding of transferable skills from cultural life settings to work settings. One way helpers can do this is to help youth *translate* these skills into job qualifications for their resumes; for example, for those young people who participate in ceremonies that emphasize sequence in traditional protocol, these mindfulness teachings can be translated into a skill of pragmatism or thoroughness in work ethic. Schools and school districts could also be encouraged to recognize this cultural work for secondary level planning credits to begin the dialogue of cultural skill building early in career development. In addition, youth who participate in

Aboriginal summer student employment programs and band jobs need to be supported to see that these work skills developed on reserve are applicable to the off reserve job opportunities they seek. Just like their community relations, employers are looking for employees who are conscientious, responsible, display a strong work ethic, and maintain work commitments.

Youth also need to be supported to understand the changing labour force expectations in Canada and the sociopolitical challenges they will face as they begin their work life (Admunson, 2004). While all of the participants recognized the need for education and training in work life, few spoke to the resilience required to overcome the structural and political barriers they will face because of their ancestry. Further, none of the young people in the circles addressed the ongoing impacts of colonialism and the resulting intergenerational trauma and lateral violence they must learn to cope with during this journey (Kirmayer et al, 2000). Diemer et al (2005, 2010) reported that youth who learn to adapt and understand these sociopolitical issues can better negotiate structural limitations and resist the negative impact of the messages. Vocational helpers and relations can provide this context to youth to foster the resilience that will be needed.

The results of this study also emphasize the need to support the relations (i.e. the familial, social, and community connections) of Aboriginal young people rather than just the young people themselves. Many of the existing career programs focus on individual skills and promote independence: the findings suggest programs that support family development and community wellness could be more effective. Communities need to address youth employment readiness more effectively. While there are many services for youth who are unsuccessful in finding and keeping work, little is available to teach families how to prepare youth for the labour market before they are faced with unemployment. For example, during the research youth who had had success recognized early life skill development (ie: volunteerism, family housework) as a key to

their job preparation, and youth who were unemployed and struggling had little to contribute to pre-employment supports. This is consistent with Lindstrom et al (2007) who found youth who provided child care for younger siblings or performed other household chores learned responsibility and work ethic in preparation for employment. Further, the role of those who provide the indirect work life support (ie: clothing allowance, cultural foundations), such as friends, elders and grandparents needs to be acknowledged and raised up to empower those helpers and recognize their gifts. In my experience, community members who have educational barriers or work life challenges of their own, do not recognize that they too can support others' work life journeys through indirect means such as providing childcare or a wakeup call. Finding ways to engage the family of the youth in their work life journey will improve youth accountability and achievement (McCormick and Admunson, 1997).

The youth stories of accessing career resources showed a gap in awareness and accessibility of these services and this also needs to be addressed in future practice. The majority of the youth participants were either unfamiliar with or seemingly disinterested in the vocational supports available in the communities. Resource centers need to find more relevant and youth-friendly ways to engage these young people and promote work development programming. Some of the youth suggested that internet resources and school based programming were more assessable and should be the primary means of delivery for them and their relations. These resources also need to address the particular cultural and systemic challenges these young people will face in their quest for work. Specifically, job interview training is needed that supports a form of self-promotion that is culturally appropriate (ie: grounded in relational perspectives) and allows young people to showcase their skills and abilities for employers. For example, interview

trainers could draw attention to and help youth share skills learned in traditional work such as conscientious food preparation learned from helping to prepare traditional feasts with Grandma.

The final implication for vocational helping practice is the importance of ongoing dialogue with urban Aboriginal young people. All of the above recommendations have come directly from youth and their community support members and so provide trustworthy and authentic guidance. Maintaining an open dialogue with young people will help community relations, vocational helpers and researchers alike to best assess and meet the needs of these young people.

Final Reflections

Beginning with an Indigenous centre allowed me to raise up the voices of the youth in the circles and remain true to my cultural responsibility and personal mission to celebrate and acknowledge the successes in my community, rather than focusing on the continued disparities between us and non Aboriginal relations. Despite the challenges of the 2008 labour market downturn, the youth in the circles share a positive outlook on their educational and career journeys which was truly inspiring. It is my hope that their stories will inform changes to theory, research and practice that will help make their life work goals and the next generations, more attainable. I believe Chief Dan George had great foresight to see that this generation of young people will begin to overcome many of the challenges and barriers we face in our communities.

As we work to again close the gap of unemployment rates, several key supports were identified to inform our journey. My next step will be to share these findings with community members and policy makers to ensure the youths' voices are heard and changes are made to facilitate their life work development. I am particularly keen to support communities to

recognize the supports within their own families to provide growth fostering relationships through mentorship for these young people (Jordan, 2011). As Poonwassie (1995) stated over two decades ago, the answers to Aboriginal employment struggles are within Aboriginal communities and that is where we must focus support for these youth.

Participating in this research has been a transformative experience as I now better understand how to walk in multiple worlds in a research context and how to articulate my worldview as a person of mixed ancestry working in Euro-Canadian academia. The blend of Euro-Canadian and Indigenous methods grounded in an Indigenous centre felt appropriate for the work and for the youth in the circles who share the experience of walking in multiple worlds in an urban context. While this was a valuable approach, I was also very challenged as much of it was natural for me and so I struggled to recognize my assumptions and biases. I was regularly surprised to learn that my approach or understanding of my community was different from other members on the research team who did not have the insider advantage that I had.

The experience of recognizing and reflecting on my worldview and my location within the urban Aboriginal communities was also very impactful on my personal development during this research. As one youth said *work makes you grow and* I am now keenly aware of the privilege and responsibility I carry as a result of that connection to my community. I routinely felt a very deep connection to the young people and their stories and to all of my relations on their life work journey. Consequently, I struggled with literature that focused on disparities and failures, and felt defeated by the overwhelming number of challenges my relations and I face as a direct result of our ancestry and culture. Fortunately, the positive spirits of the youth and wisdom of my mentors and knowledge keepers inspired me to remain true to my goal of focusing on our strengths and successes and I have added a new discourse to the scholarship.

I would like to conclude with the voices of the youth and some of their key messages for the next generation on their life work journey. I believe that the experience of sharing Indigenous teachings of life and work skills was the most transformative and impactful part of the research. Throughout my process, these voices have stayed with and supported me to persevere through the challenges of conducting research in a new way and completing the thesis process.

Have a solid foundation from friends and family

Talk to everyone; ask your family for connections

Pick your battles

Don't be picky, take each opportunity

Practice accountability

Be flexible and patient

Show initiative

Never be afraid to ask questions

Find a good challenge

Don't take work for granted

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Appendix

Appendix I - Recruitment Materials



Department of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies

PO Box 3010 STN CSC

Victoria, B.C.V8W 3N4 Canada

Walking in multiple worlds. Aboriginal young adults' worklife narratives.

Invitation to Participate

Dear Possible Participant:

My name is Anne Marshall and I am a faculty member in Counselling Psychology at the University of Victoria. Along with my research team and Community partners, I am conducting research about the work experience of urban Aboriginal young people in Victoria, BC and Toronto, ON. This study builds on and extends findings from previous projects investigating career development for Aboriginal and non Aboriginal secondary students and young adults in rural and small coastal communities. The purpose of the present research project is to explore Aboriginal young people's experiences of the supports, challenges and barriers in the quest to find sustainable and meaningful work. The research question is: *"What supports, challenges, and barriers do Aboriginal young adults experience with regard to finding and keeping work?"* Research of this type is important because the results will help improve career education and counselling support for youth. The project is supported, in part, by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

In Victoria, this research is being conducted in partnership with _____ (Band & Aboriginal service agency names). You are being contacted because (a) you have indicated an interest in participating or (B) you have been identified by our community partners as someone who might be interested in participating.

We will be interviewing individuals, as well as groups of 5 to 8 people. Participants may choose to participate in either individual or group interviews, or in both. Individual interviews will require about one hour, while group interviews will require about two hours. If you choose a group interview, it is important to note that you will be known to others in the group. If this is a concern, you should request an individual interview.

If you are interested in participating, please complete the bottom portion of this sheet and return it to _____
(community contact or Research Assistant). You may also fax your reply to Anne Marshall at (250) 721-6190, or email to amarshal@uvic.ca. You will be contacted by Jennifer Coverdale or Jackie Leblanc, graduate student Research Assistants, to schedule an interview.

If you have any questions, please contact Research Assistants Jennifer Coverdale at (250)721-7784 or jcoverda@uvic.ca or Jackie LeBlanc at (250) 721- 7784 or dleblanc@uvic.ca, Community Research Assistant _____, or myself Anne Marshall at (250) 721-7760 or < amarshal@uvic.ca>. In addition to being able to contact the researcher and/or research assistant as above, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria, 250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca.

Thank you for your consideration,

(signature block)

Anne Marshall, PhD.

Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies

University of Victoria

PO Box 3010, STN CSC

Victoria, BC V8W 3P5

Telephone: 250-721-7851

Fax: 250-721-6190

Email: amarshal@uvic.ca

Yes, I am interested in participating in the study entitled “Walking in multiple worlds. Aboriginal young adults’ worklife narratives”.

.”

- Individual Interview ONLY
- Group Interview ONLY
- Individual and Group Interview

To set up an interview time please contact me via:

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name (print): _____

Signature: _____

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Are you an Aboriginal young person
between the ages of 18 – 29 living in
Victoria, BC?

We are Aboriginal research assistants at the University of Victoria and are studying the work experience of Aboriginal young people. This project is supported in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

We are looking at the supports, challenges, and barriers to finding and keeping work.

We will be organizing group and individual interviews over the next few months. Interviews will be about 1.5 to 2 hours long. Participants will receive a small honorarium.

If you think you would like to participate, give us a call or send us an email.

Jennifer Coverdale
(250)721-7784
jcoverda@uvic.ca

Jackie LeBlanc
(250) 721- 7784
dleblanc@uvic.ca

Community Research
Assistant
(phone) (email)

We will be hosting group interviews here at

_____ (community location)

on _____ (date)

from _____ to
_____ (time).

For more information about this research please contact Principal Investigator Anne Marshall (250) 721- 7851 amarshal@uvic.ca

Walking in Multiple Worlds. Aboriginal Young Adults' Life work Narratives

Dear _____,

My name is Anne Marshall and I am a faculty member in Counselling Psychology at the University of Victoria. Together with Dr. Suzanne Stewart a faculty member at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, I am conducting research about the work experience of urban Aboriginal young people in Victoria, BC and Toronto, ON. This study builds on and extends findings from previous projects investigating career development for Aboriginal and non Aboriginal secondary students and young adults in rural and small coastal communities. The present study, 'Walking In Multiple Worlds', brings together the University of Toronto, and the University of Victoria, partner agencies in Victoria, BC and Toronto, ON and community partners to explore Aboriginal young people's experiences of the supports, challenges and barriers in their quest to find sustainable and meaningful work. The research question is: "*What supports, challenges, and barriers do Aboriginal young adults experience with regard to finding and keeping work?*" We plan to develop this knowledge in collaboration with local people and share and discuss it with you throughout the project. With your help, our long term goal will be to help improve career education and counselling support for Aboriginal young people. We hope that by working together, we can ensure that findings will be culturally appropriate and relevant to community based services as well as local, regional, provincial and national service delivery agencies and programming.

"Walking In Multiple Worlds" will conduct its research in ways that respect the human dignity, justice and inclusiveness, free and informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and the different value systems and knowledge traditions of those who are involved in our work. Our Project will further adhere to the principle of reciprocity in sharing information. We will be committed to harmonizing the codes of ethics and research protocols of our collaborating partners in universities, and communities. Finally, we embrace the principle of benefit sharing, demonstrated by development of mutually-satisfactory ways to share in the intellectual, cultural and material benefits that may result from collaboration.

The Project has adopted the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* <http://pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/tcps-eptc/> as issued by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The Project will also be guided by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research: Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29134.html> as published by the Ethics Office of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, specifically:

- A researcher has an obligation to learn about, and apply, Aboriginal cultural protocols relevant to the Aboriginal community involved in the research.
- A researcher should ensure that there is ongoing, accessible and understandable communication with the community.
- Communities should be given the option of a participatory-research approach
- Research should be of benefit to the community as well as to the researcher
- A researcher should support education and training of Aboriginal people in the community, including training in research methods and ethics.
- An Aboriginal community should have an opportunity to participate in the interpretation of data and the review of conclusions drawn from the research to ensure accuracy and cultural sensitivity of interpretation.

Confidentiality is an ethical consideration of special concern to our Project. Confidential information will be safeguarded and not disclosed to anyone without a “need to know” within their respective organizations. Collaborating partners will strictly protect such information from disclosure to third parties. Documents containing confidential information will be clearly marked ‘**CONFIDENTIAL**’ on the covering page and in document headers or footers.

The research questions will be answered through systematic collection and recording of information using individual and group interviews with community young people. More specifically, a narrative orientation that emphasizes co-construction and meaning-making will be used to gather participants’ stories. We hope to involve members of your community in our work in many different ways. We would like to invite you to participate as a community partner to guide and advise the project and researchers as well we would like to train and hire local Aboriginal young people as Community Research Assistants to assist with participant recruitment, data collection, resource development, and workshop delivery.

Our research will only be useful if we may present our results to your community, and to our other partners among Aboriginal communities, and local, regional, provincial and national service delivery agencies. Furthermore, we will need your help in assessing the extent to which we have accurately captured the current situation the supports, challenges, and barriers of your community's young people. Finally, we wish to work with you to explore the implications of our findings for the future and work to identify local, regional, provincial and national strategies that promote support Aboriginal young peoples in their quest to find and keep work. Over the course of the project we would like to organize workshops, attend community meetings, or discuss with your community in any other way that you might think advisable so that we can present to you periodic reports on the Project's work. At any point along the way, we would be glad to receive any feedback and/or suggestions you might have to help us achieve our goals.

Our Project plans to make on-going explanations of research objectives, methods, findings and their interpretation available to your community. Subject to the requirements for confidentiality, descriptions of any data gathered in your community will be left on file there, along with descriptions of the methods used and the place of data storage. It is a key part of our Project's function to disseminate information and make it available for the purpose of learning. In keeping with the principles outlined, your community will be provided with a copy of all publications of research results related to research in which it is involved. Subject to requirements for confidentiality, appropriate credit to those who contribute substantially to the research will be given in any publication of research results.

Sincerely,

(signature block)

Anne Marshall, PhD.

Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies

University of Victoria

PO Box 3010, STN CSC

Victoria, BC V8W 3P5

Telephone: 250-721-7851

Fax: 250-721-6190

Email: amarshal@uvic.ca

Appendix II - Data Collection Methods*Group Interview Questions*

**Education Psychology & Leadership Studies
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria**

Walking in Multiple Worlds. Aboriginal Young Adults' Life work Narratives**Group Interview Questions**

Part I: Individual interview participants and Focus Group interview participants

1. Tell me about your story or stories of finding and keeping work.
2. What are the supports, challenges, and barriers you have experienced or are experiencing now?
3. Have any of you ever had work that had parts of your Aboriginal culture or other First Nations culture or traditional knowledge in it? (ie: Elder's you worked along side with, teaching drumming/dance to childrens group) If so, what parts of culture were there? What was missing?
4. Describe the roles that parents/guardians, Elders, and other community members have played.
5. Describe the roles that Aboriginal service delivery agencies and Community offices have played.
6. What is the most important thing you have learned about finding and keeping work? What would you change if you could?
7. What are your next steps? How do you see your future now?

8. What are some of your hopes, fears, and dreams for the future?

* Prompts and open questions will be used to facilitate the interview process where needed

Circle Findings By Question

1. Tell me about your story or stories of finding and keeping work.

Aboriginal Youth Employment Programming

- Band Youth Employment Programs
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre
- BC Govt Aboriginal Youth Internship
- ReDiscovery Program
- SENĆOTEN Apprentice program

Casual Work

- Restaurant (kitchen aide, server)
- Retail
- Labor: Carpentry, roofing
- Babysitting
- Housekeeping

Aboriginal Youth Volunteer Programming

- Cultural education
- Youth Advocacy

2. What are the supports, challenges, and barriers you have experienced or are experiencing now?

•Supports:

Aboriginal Youth Employment/Education Programming

- experience
- opportunity for first time work
- reserved Aboriginal seats
- Aboriginal cohorts/education models

Family

- motivation/encouragement
- guidance
- family business employment
- networking, finding job
- providing job references
- providing childcare
- transportation
- providing housing
- role modeling of family/work/education “success”

Community Champions/Mentors

- teachers advocates on youths’ behalf, encourages and supports
- SENĆOŦEN teacher encourages, provide opportunities, help navigate employment/education
- teachers help navigate employment/education
- connecting to local Aboriginal community for family, networking, navigation

Culture

- being ‘in tune with’ culture
- connected to cultural community of Victoria

Education

- having Grade 12 or college education at minimum to get “good” jobs
- getting dogwood to make family/self proud

Intrinsic Motivators

- value education
- sense of self efficacy

Extrinsic Motivators

- financial need (provide for self, provide for family)
- family expectations, make family proud
- community champions confidence in ability

Resource Support

- Band education funding
- Bus service
- Job skills training (cover letter, resumes, interview skills, job etiquette)
- Job search skills (online tools, networking skills)
- social assistance/employment insurance

•Challenges:

Aboriginal Youth Employment Programming

- Band program restricted to students
- short term contracts based on fiscal funding

Family

- responsibilities (childcare, finances)

- moving to urban community and not having family support

Community Champions/Mentors

- moving to urban community and not having community support

Education

- not having grade 12 or post secondary education

- upgrading

Culture

- conflicting values with employer

- only room for culture if it does not interfere with work

- colleagues lack of cultural awareness/respect

Intrinsic Motivators

- lack of motivation

- physical toll of balancing work/school/family life with late or long shifts

Extrinsic Motivators

- financial need (provide for self, provide for family)

- minimum wage job provides less \$ than social assistance

- family expectations

- community champions confidence in ability

- community expectations to work in community or in Aboriginal field

Resource Support

- limited Band education funding (funding for job skills not advanced education)
- no Bus service/transportation
- no Job skills training (cover letter, resumes, interview skills, job etiquette)
- no Job search skills (online tools, networking skills)

Barriers:

Aboriginal Youth Employment Programming

- Band program restricted to students

Culture

- culture and work do not belong together

Resource Support

- no Band education funding
- no Bus service/transportation

3. Have any of you ever had work that had parts of your Aboriginal culture or other First Nations culture or traditional knowledge in it? (i.e.: Elder's you worked alongside with, teaching drumming/dance to children's group) If so, what parts of culture were there? What was missing?

-in non Aboriginal agencies cultural is not encouraged ("Cultural is accepted in the work environment as long as it doesn't interfere with the mainstream goals")

-limited cultural awareness training for colleagues

-Aboriginal Employment Programs have cultural practices, cultural protocol present (youth cultural camps, Indigenous values/practices)

4. Describe the roles that parents/guardians, Elders, and other community members have played.

See Supports/Challenges Champion Themes above

5. Describe the roles that Aboriginal service delivery agencies and Community offices have played.

See Supports/Challenges Champion Themes above

6. What is the most important thing you have learned about finding and keeping work? What would you change if you could?

- Job etiquette (professional demeanor)
- Job Skills Training
- Network
- Self Efficacy
- Get experience (paid or volunteer)
- Education

7. What are your next steps? How do you see your future now?

- Continue Education

8. What are some of your hopes, fears, and dreams for the future?

Hopes:

- be a good role model
- complete schooling
- get a “good”, “well paying” job
- living independently

Fears:

- personal and family/community goals/expectations conflict
- not finish school
- be unemployed
- loosing family/community supports

Dreams:

- empowerment
- getting to a place/position to make change in government/community
- giving the next generation a better opportunity so none fall through the cracks
- financial freedom

Appendix III - Free and Informed Consent

**Education Psychology & Leadership Studies
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria**

*Participant Consent Form
Group Interview*

Project Title: Walking in Multiple Worlds. Aboriginal Young Adults' Life work Narratives

Funded by: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Researchers:

Anne Marshal, PhD.

Suzanne Stewart, PhD.

Faculty

Faculty

Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies
Studies in Education

Ontario Institute for

University of Victoria

University of Toronto

Telephone: 250-721-7851

Telephone: 416-978-0723

Email: amarshal@uvic.ca

Email: suzanne.stewart@utoronto.ca

Research Assistants:

Jennifer Coverdale, BA

Jackie LeBlanc, BA

Graduate Student

Graduate Student

Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies
& Leadership Studies

Educational Psychology

University of Victoria

Telephone: 250-721-7784

Email: jcoverda@uvic.ca

University of Victoria

Telephone: 250-721-7784

Email: dleblanc@uvic.ca

Community Research Assistant:

Community Partners: (To be determined)

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:

- The purpose of this research project is to explore young Aboriginal people's experiences of the supports, challenges and barriers they have faced and are facing in their quest to find sustainable and meaningful work. The research question is: "*What supports, challenges, and barriers do Aboriginal young adults experience with regard to finding and keeping work?*"

This Research is Important because:

- Research of this type is important because the results will help improve work and career education and counselling support for Aboriginal people

Participation:

- You are being invited to participate because you are between the ages of 18 and 26, you self identify as a person of Aboriginal ancestry, and have indicated interest in sharing your experiences related to work
 - Participation in this project is entirely voluntary.
 - Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your position [e.g. employment, class standing] or how you will be treated.

Procedures:

- Your participation will consist of one audio-taped interview with one of the above researchers. The focus of the interview will be on your experiences in searching for work and maintaining work both in the past and at present.
 - **Duration:** about 60 minutes
 - **Location:** in Victoria, BC at local community sites
 -

Inconvenience:

- We do not anticipate that involvement in this research would involve any substantial inconvenience for you other than the time to travel to and participate in the interview.

Benefits:

- The information/narratives provided by you and the other participants will contribute new insights to vocational psychology theory and will have concrete, practical relevance for educators, parents, Elders and career practitioners working with Aboriginal young people in their quest to find sustainable and meaningful work.

Risks:

- There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Withdrawal of Participation:

- You may withdraw at any time or refuse to answer certain questions without explanation or consequence.
- Should you withdraw, your comments from the taped interview will be disregarded and the transcript and all field notes or data associated with you will be destroyed. In the event that you withdraw from the study part way through you will be asked if you want the data you have contributed to be part of analysis. If you agree your data will remain in the study, if not your taped interview will be erased and the transcript and all field notes or data associated with you will be destroyed

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

- To protect your anonymity, your name will not be recorded on the transcribed data, on the interview tapes, or in the reports of the research results. A code number or name will be assigned and used in place of your name. A key to the coded names will be kept separately from the interview data. Signed consent letters will also be stored separately from any data.
- However, due to the nature of focus group interviews complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Participants will be asked not to disclose information about other participants but there is the possibility that a participant may choose not to oblige this request. As such, it is important that you are aware of the limits to confidentiality and anonymity in the group interview process.
- There are also limits to anonymity due to the nature of the interview process (you will be known to the interviewer), and the nature of selection/recruitment (if you were identified by one of the research partners as a possible participant).
- Further, anonymity cannot be guaranteed if you consent to the use of your visual recorded images (photographs) in dissemination. Images may be recognizable.

- Your confidentiality will be protected by storing interview audiotapes and the transcribed data in a locked filing cabinet. Only the researchers will have access to the data. The audio-tapes from your interview, the transcribed data, and any notes taken during the interview will be destroyed after five years.

Research Results will be Used/Disseminated in the Following Ways:

- Research findings will be communicated to participants, community partners, community members and interested professionals through interactive workshops. The results of the study will be published in peer-reviewed journals, in various scholarly publications, and will be presented at professional and/or scholarly conferences, as well as community/school meetings in your town. Summary results will be posted on an internet website.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
- Contact the Human Research Ethics Office, University of Victoria, (250) 472-4545 ethics@uvic.ca

Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Visually Recorded Images: Participant to provide initials:

- Photos may be taken of me for: Dissemination* _____

*Even with no names are used, you may be recognizable if visual images are shown as part of the results.

.....

Researcher Consent Copy:

Participant Consent Form

**Education Psychology & Leadership Studies
Faculty of Education
University of Victoria**

Project Title: Walking in Multiple Worlds. Aboriginal Young Adults' Life work Narratives

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Visually Recorded Images: Participant to provide initials:

- Photos may be taken of me for: Dissemination* _____

*Even with no names are used, you may be recognizable if visual images are shown as part of the results.