

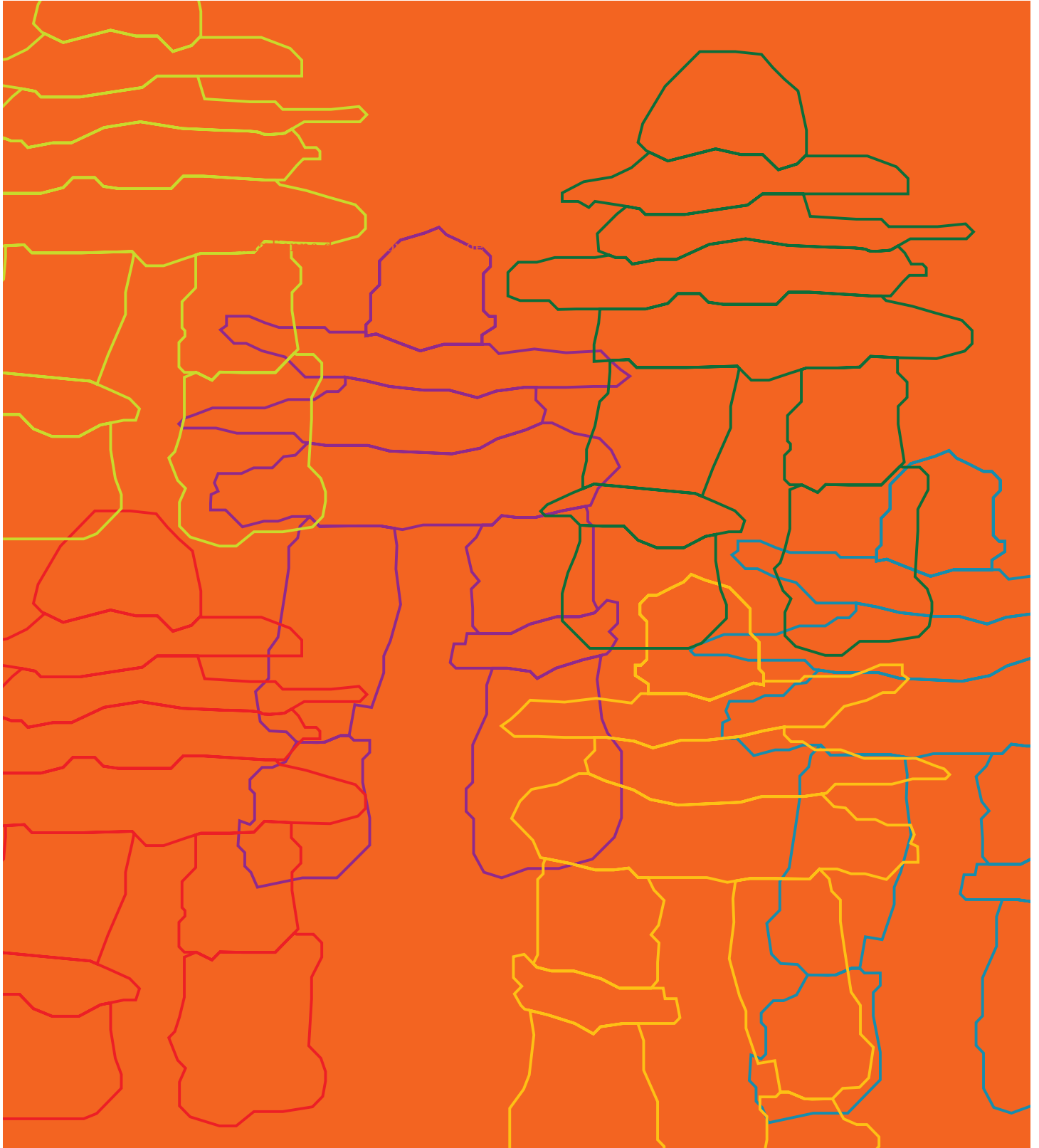


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Robert Shea, Editor/Rédacteur

Diana Leadbeater, Associate Editor/Rédactrice adjointe

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The Canadian Journal of Career Development/ Revue canadienne de développement de carrière

Robert Shea, Founding Editor
Student Affairs and Services
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Smallwood Centre, UC-5029
St. John's, NL
A1C 5S7
Phone: (709) 864-7594
FAX: (709) 864-2320
E-mail: rshea@mun.ca

Diana Leadbeater, Associate Editor
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland
G. A. Hickman Building, E-5036
St. John's, NL
A1B 3X8
Phone: (709) 864-6926
Fax: (709) 864-2345
E-mail: dianal@mun.ca

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Editorial

It is with excitement about our future that we present volume 11, number 1 of the Canadian Journal of Career Development. This issue marks our second decade of publishing peer reviewed academic research and best practices in career development in Canada and around the world. It is a significant milestone for any journal but we are especially pleased that we were able to produce a text entitled : A Multi-Sectoral Approach to Career Development: A Decade of Canadian Research to celebrate the occasion. This text was distributed to all delegates at the CANNEXUS 2012 Conference in Ottawa, Ontario.

We are also proud to announce that this issue is our first environmentally friendly virtual edition. The Canadian Journal of Career Development will now publish one edition every year in hard copy and the second edition digitally.

We are also very proud to announce that the Journal was both invited and nominated to apply to be included in the Directory of Open Access Journals. We are honoured to announce that we were recently accepted into the Directory. "The aim of the Directory of Open Access Journals is to increase the visibility and ease of use of open access scientific and scholarly journals thereby promoting their increased usage and impact. The Directory aims to be comprehensive and cover all open access scientific and scholarly journals that use a quality control system to guarantee the content." (Accessed April 20, 2012 at www.doaj.org). We are extremely pleased that our current authors in this issue and future authors will now have an even farther reach for their published work.

In this current edition we have a vast array of career related topics. In 'Accessing counselling services and achieving career goals for first-generation women university students in Atlantic Canada' by Marilee Remier, readers are introduced to the topic of support services for post- secondary students and whether they are supportive to first generation women.

From across the ocean, Oyesoji Aremu informs us about the impact of emotional intelligence training has for teachers in Nigeria. 'Effectiveness of emotional intelligence Training in enhancing teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria' is an insightful article about whether or not how career-frustrated teachers should be provided with emotional intelligence training in order to improve their teaching self-efficacy.

Returning closer to home in the article entitled 'Understanding the possible impact of a community service learning experience during university on career development' by Mark Baetz, Chris McEvoy, Keith Anderson, and Colleen Loomis the authors examine the impact that volunteer and community-service learning experiences have on university students career development and decisions. Their findings help open the door and shine light on past research in this area, as well as provide guidance to career counsellors and teachers in facilitating programs that foster student career development.

In a continuing theme regarding health and career development often medical situations occur when it is least expected and affect people in many ways. These events, can and often do, carry over into the work world and impact individual's careers. In 'Women's career decision-making after brain injury' Maria Iaquina, Norman E. Amundson, and William A. Borgen enlighten and raise awareness of this particular group need for specific career research and differentiated forms of counselling.

On ongoing societal issue is the movement of populations from rural to urban centres. Craig Tucker, Gerry White, and Ken Stevens in their article entitled 'Ten-years on student leavers from a remote island community' examine the question "where do we go from here." Working with rural Canadian students ten years after they graduated from high school, their finding provide a new lens on how future teachers are trained and how their advice impacts the career decisions of rural high school students.

In the final section of this issue we have included an informative article by Roberta A. Neault, Deirdre A. Pickerall, and Cassandra M. Saunders. In their article entitled 'Look before you leap: The role of self-employment coaching self-efficacy in facilitating client's success' the authors interview Canadian career practitioners on their client engagement, views on self-employment, and factors that contribute to CDP's usage of self-employment conversations. The article begins a thought provoking discourse that self-employment is increasing in popularity and counsellors need to be provided with the skills and knowledge to assist clients make a career decision in this direction.

As you can see from this editorial we are not resting on our laurels but embracing the opportunities the next decade will provide. We are energised by the success of the last 10 years and will assure you that the next 10 will be equally as exciting.

I hope you enjoy this issue!

Rob Shea

Founding Editor



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Etta St. John Wileman Award For Lifetime Achievement in Career Development

Why develop this award?

This award is designed to recognize and celebrate individuals who have devoted their lives to furthering the profession of career development.

To celebrate individuals who have established themselves as leaders within our profession.

Leaders who combine the role of researcher, educator, author, practitioner and career leader.

To encourage individuals in Canada and around the world to celebrate those around us who have contributed so much to our identity as career development professionals.

To establish a significant and uniquely Canadian award that recognizes those individuals who have devoted their lives to the enhancement of career development practice, administration, research and education.

Who can be nominated?

Individuals who have demonstrated significant and long term commitment to the principles and experience outlined above.

When is the award presented?

The award is presented at the annual CANNEXUS Conference in Canada. The award is presented on a less than annual basis as is determined by the selection committee.

Who will comprise the selection committee?

The selection committee is comprised of the Founding Editor of the Canadian Journal of Career Development; a previous award winner; a career practitioner; and the President of the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling.

What is awarded?

The award recipient will be presented with a hand made Innuksuk by an Inuit artisan from Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada. The Innuksuk is made from a precious stone called Labradorite native to the coast of Labrador. Each award will be presented at the annual CANNEXUS Conference.

Submissions

To ensure confidentiality and to minimize disappointment it is requested that the nominee not know about the nomination in advance.

Submissions should attest to each of the principles outlined above in the section - Why develop this award? This is an award for significant and lifetime commitment to career development. Unsuccessful nominations will be considered for a period of two further years.

Nominations

Nomination packages should be sent to:

Dr. Robert Shea
Editor
Canadian Journal of Career Development
Student Affairs and Services
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NL Canada
A1C 5S7
Email: rshea@mun.ca

Accessing Counselling Service and Achieving Career Goals for First-Generation Women University Students in Atlantic Canada

Marilee Reimer
St. Thomas University

Abstract

This study is an institutional ethnography investigating whether university support services for undergraduate women students who are first generation in their family to attend are adequately supported in their transition to a career. Two groups were interviewed at two New Brunswick campuses who had experiences with university-based health and counseling services: one group of six students accessed health services primarily and were treated for their symptoms with anti-depressants; the second group of six students accessed counselling services after a number of women counselors were hired who focused on women-centered and strength-based counselling. The groups differed in their stated satisfaction with the two forms of service, their efficacy as students in completing their programs, their self-confidence and ability to achieve ongoing objectives in their career trajectories.

This research is an institutional ethnography aimed at questioning if student services are adequate to support first generation women students' transition to a career at two New Brunswick universities. Studying this population makes clear that there is a diversity of individuals and backgrounds with varying needs present at university. The university tends to offer services that assume a homogenous group in terms of gender, generation attending, and social class. With the exception of some recently added women-centered counselling services, university services have tended to orient to a more homogenous student body with the fall-back on medicalized services that are largely debilitating and disempowering to first

generation women students. I suggest that a more holistic approach to health that includes diversity-based assumptions concerning the student body would orient services more directly to first generation women students and their efforts to secure careers.

In the last two decades, publicly funded Canadian universities have undergone a restructuring, a process of corporatization, where university operations have shifted from a "professional" to a "business" model, after substantial federal funding cuts to the provinces and universities (Turk, 2002; Reimer, 2004; Cantano, 2009; CAUT, 2009; FNBFA, 2009). There has also been a recent influx of female students from rural areas who are first generation in their family to attend university (Reimer & Mueller, 2006). They cite a lack of supports for the transition from schooling to career while attending university. I find that student services are being cut at a time when non-traditional students need support for the career process more than ever given the increased competition for dwindling employment opportunities.

Cutbacks in the area of counselling in particular mean that students are more likely to get medicalized services than the kind of counselling they need, and so they are more likely to see doctors who are not counselors, but are able to prescribe anti-depressants. Thus students get services within the medical model of illness and sickness when they need a more holistic approach to health and the diversity of the student body. Throughout the past decade, significant research has been done by both public agencies (Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey, 2008; Canadian Campus Survey, 2004) and private researchers (Terenzini et al., 1996; Grayson, 1997; Tym, et al. 2004; Pas-

carella et al., 2004; Snell, 2008; Reimer and Ste. Marie, 2011) on the distinctively disadvantaged group of first generation university students. Extensively studied in terms of whether or not they begin and complete university, courses taken, familial support, how much they work, the kind and quantity of the social and cultural capital at their disposal, their general rates of success, and rates of cognitive development, this group has received much scholarly attention. Conspicuously absent from this work, however, is a prolonged qualitative analysis of the doubly disadvantaged first generation woman student who attends university. This author finds that the experiences of this group show them to be challenged in many of the aforementioned ways, but also of being more likely to be labeled as depressed and receiving medical treatment with anti-anxiety, anti-depression or anti-psychotic drugs.

The student demand for counselling is on the rise in surveys of student mental health (Benton et al., 2003; OS-DUHS, 2008; Fuller, 2008). The likelihood that women students and first generation women students will experience distress and turn to health and counselling services is much higher than for her male or middle class counterpart (Canadian Campus Survey, 2004). Yet, in comparing the experiences of first-generation students with primarily a medicalized treatment to those with women-centered counselling, students' underlying problems are not addressed in a medicalized format and the students are not nearly as successful in achieving their goals as those in the second group. First-generation students need a more holistic approach to health and to diversity of the student population (World Health Organization, 1946)



As a discernable group of individuals in the research, first-generation students were initially identified by the American TRIO group in 1978 while considering how to best facilitate financial assistance to those most in need (Auclair et al., 2008). Since then, TRIO's description of first-generation as those people whose parents did not complete their post-secondary studies has been accepted as the 'strict definition'. Utilized by only a few scholars and public institutions (Auclair et al., 2008), this definition has been usurped as primary by a more broadly used one which uses the model of an individual being the first in their family to attend a post-secondary institution (Auclair et al., 2008). Adopted in Canada most notably by Grayson (1997), Lehmann (2007), and Berger, Motte and Parkin (2007) this definition is based on the idea that if even one parent (apparently regardless of which one) attended a post-secondary institution of any kind then they would be able to provide enough social and cultural capital for the student's various disadvantages to be neutralized. For the purposes of this study, I will refer to first generation students as those whose parents have not attended university.

First-generation research has taken on many different forms since the late 1970's. It has most frequently been approached from a decidedly quantitative perspective (OSDUHS, 2008; Pascarella et al., 2004) where statistical analyses have been used to identify the sorts and frequencies of difficulties that first-generation students may encounter. Terenzini et al., (1996) concluded that in addition to the problems of finance and familial support that these students experience, they are also more likely to suffer from a host of various cognitive and developmental problems with respect to their educational experience. Indeed, similar studies (Nunez and Cucaro-Alamin, 1998; Striplin, 1999; Thayer, 2000; Choy, 2001; Schmidt, 2003; Vargas, 2004) have all come to the conclusion that, whether looked at from the perspective of drop-out rates, work versus school effort, support networks, completion timeline and success, personal integration, extra-curricular participation, successful entry into graduate school, or a general

sense of well-being, first-generation students are disadvantaged in numerous ways. As a result, a general call has been issued by scholars and public organizations that if universities consider retention to be their priority, then this group and their difficulties must be taken into consideration, especially considering the rise in the demand for counselling services (Fuller, 2007; Benton et al., 2003).

These disadvantages associated with first-generation students are exacerbated for women. Due to the fact that women show high rates of reported anxiety, depression, and medicalization in high school (as evidenced in OSDUHS, 2008), post-secondary first generation women may also face high rates in university; that is, one might assume that the cumulative disadvantages faced by families in the Atlantic region have parallel psychological impacts on young women as mentioned in the literature. A host of disadvantages, then, that they may face include a lack of familial and financial support, lower cultural and social capital upon entry, less time to participate and so receive the positive benefits from extracurricular activities, and low self-esteem. These difficulties are considered to lead inevitably to these women experiencing significant barriers in their attempts to map out a successful career path.

As portrayed in much of the literature (Canadian Campus Survey 2004; OSDUHS, 2008; Tym et al., 2004), upon entry into post-secondary institutions many women have already experienced heightened levels of perceived anxiety and depression, which are identified with issues of low self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, and thoughts of suicide. In addition, and perhaps directly related to this, they have also reported higher rates of medicalization. Given this variety of identified psychological problems and those generally associated with being first-generation, these students likely require greater assistance from the university in transitioning into post-secondary studies, maintaining their well-being while in attendance, and, most notably, in choosing a course of action which will help them in establishing a clear career path. Similar to "second chance" students, it is the institution's responsi-

bility to respond to the needs of this group (Looker and Thiessen, 2008).

First-generation women, as a discernible group among any student population, require a very specific kind of assistance. As opposed to the medical model, where illness is often dealt with through invasive pharmaceutical treatment, the literature shows (Harvard Mental Health Letter, 2006; Devlin, 2006; Ruddick, 2008) that solution-focused counselling, wherein problems are 'normalized' (as opposed to labeled) has had significant success with a student population (Coogan and Chen, 2007). As such, first-generation females who are attempting to directly confront their various problems, and so establish a clear path into and through post-secondary education, prove to benefit more from the empowerment granted in these types of sessions. In contrast to this, those who are medicalized receive a label (such as 'depressed') which subsequently disempowers them (Lafrance, 2007) by handing the responsibility of their difficulty over to an (often male) authority figure (Lafrance, 2007).

Stoppard and McMullen argue from a feminist perspective that women's depression must be understood in its social context (Stoppard and McMullen, 2003). From their familiarity with rural women's interviews, they see women's depression not as an individual condition, but in terms of societal expectations of women and the devaluation of women's work and mothering (McMullen, 2003). As with other feminist analyses, they point to how the medicalization of women's problems cuts them out of their social context in which they make sense. They argue that more appropriate would be strategies that allow women to communicate their distress in order to discover coping strategies in a more collaborative framework.

Women-centered counselling has existed as a common approach to women's needs in the university context and draws from the literature on women's specific needs and approaches to the social world that were first identified in moral philosophy and psychology (Miller, 1976; Miller, 1991). Miller underlines the importance of appreciating the social relations of families where traditional expectations for



women frame the kind of support for the concerns of girls and women. An array of psychological techniques from creative visualization to psycho-cybernetics may be used to help young women get in touch with their feelings about the social support they receive for their ongoing goals and aspirations. Solution-focused therapy is a common approach that works well with women-centered assumptions in counselling and allows “clients” greater latitude as co-collaborators or equals in addressing the problems they face in achieving their goals.

Also known as “solution-focused brief therapy”, this is a type of counselling based on “optimism and expectancy for change”, and has “no real interest in psychopathology or in labeling people’s problems” (Ruddick, 2008, p.34). As such, it operates on the central assumptions that a person’s difficulties can be overcome by them facing their problems (Devlin, 2006, Magolda, 2008) and addressing the positive effects of their own resourcefulness and strategies they are already utilizing (Burwell and Chen, 2006). Through this process of normalization, the therapist mobilizes hope (Ruddick, 2008) and restores belief in the client that they are capable of solving their own problems and achieving their goals.

In direct contrast to the traditional psychotherapeutic model, wherein the ‘expert’ assigns a name to the patient’s illness and medicates accordingly, “solution-focused therapists do not make diagnoses... [but] encourage the client to recognize and implement alternatives” (Harvard Mental Health Letter, 2006). The client, then, is taken as the expert or author of her own reality (Devlin, 2006; Burwell and Chen, 2006) and is seen as being entirely capable of proposing the necessary course of action. Understanding “that the expectation that something will happen correlates strongly with something actually happening” (Ruddick, 2008, p. 34), solution-focused therapy empowers individuals by acknowledging that they may be already have the solution to their problems without being readily cognizant of it (Harvard Mental Health Letter, 2006).

As a kind of empowerment based therapy, solution-focused therapy falls

within the 1946 WHO statement regarding the necessity to address holistic health issues. If first generation women university students’ counselling issues are to be addressed successfully, particularly in regard to their well-being while students who are attempting to set out a clear career path, then there is a need for an alternative to medicalized health services where anti-depressants appear to this author to be administered routinely. Women-centered counselling is also an alternative that promotes women students’ well being (Stoppard and McMullen, 2003); it also situates young women as co-collaborators at a time when finding their own voice may be an integral step in defining and achieving career objectives [Fieldnotes, July 23, 2008]. In these two frameworks, empowerment, normalization, acceptance of self-authorship, belief in internalized strategies already present, and focus on positive change which achieves clear goals are some of the necessary building blocks upon which an effective counselling service for first-generation women is based. These approaches offer a basis for addressing first generation women’s problems in a way that minimizes the cost to their career success.

Method

Institutional Ethnography

In this study, institutional ethnography was used to see how people working for universities actively organized and shaped the processes resulting in unequal access to education (Smith, 2005). The institutionalized support services in health or counselling are in limited supply and their contact with the university agency will organize students differently in relation to the biomedical discourse. Studying women’s experiences with university support services provides a social grounding to their difficulties in relation to the work practices and the dominant discourses of the university agencies they encounter.

This institutional ethnography involved an analysis of dominant discourses in a context of work practices that create the relations of accessibility to career options. The study focused on

the social underpinnings of the career path, and the counseling approaches that help students to address their needs in working to achieve career goals. The social relations of support that allow students to achieve self-reliance and self-confidence are evident in this study of twelve students. An institutional ethnography is concerned with identifying the social relations which have a translocal or ruling character, which is commonly connected with dominant discourses of professional and managerial work organization. Though interviews, observations of local work practices and the institutional discourses associated with these, this study assesses the impact of discourses of psycho-pathology versus student-centered and women-focused therapies. The dominant approach to diagnosing and treating depression in medical and psychological communities is the biopsychosocial approach (Luyten et al., 2006). Depression is considered to be an outcome of genetic, personality and life stress factors. A common focus is on the physical causes of depression, such as imbalances in the brain, that are mediated by an individual’s genetic disposition and are enhanced by the stress she experiences as well as overall flaws in her personalities (Luyten et al., 2006). Because of the legal requirements universities face in relation to high risk students who come into Student Counselling, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the DSM) categories of mental illness are used in the intake process to evaluate potential high risk students.

More commonly, students are considered “depressed” and “high anxiety” and are questioned to determine if they are functioning; i.e., eating, sleeping and attending classes. An assessment in relation to DSM enters students into a priority system, in which students are assigned to different categories, e.g. “emergencies” were seen the same day while some others with “anxiety”, were assigned a three month wait for counselling; or, at “Health Services”, a student would be given a fifteen minutes “one-concern-per visit” appointment with a doctor, where many of these students were given anti-depressants. Peden et al., (2001) claim that depression is significantly higher among uni-



versity students and that more than one third of female students are affected. The work practices of counselors and doctors varied greatly in relation to the bio-psychosocial discourse given that those who do women-centered counselling are more likely to be critical of the mechanized model of the human body that neglects the wholeness of the patient and the social contexts of illness (Evans et al., 2005). The students who self-selected to be interviewed after seeing an ad were in Cohort 2, and they were the only ones who were counselled by the women counselors with alternative approaches to the common medical model.

The Interviews

The researchers conducted interviews with twelve students and seven personnel (a doctor, a nurse, four counselors) -- three of whom were administrators for counselling and health services) and an independent local feminist counsellor. The counselors were psychologists or held a masters of education in Counselling Psychology, and the administrators held doctorates in psychology and one was a medical doctor. The students had all used counselling and/or health services for health and personal difficulties. Eight of the students were from New Brunswick, two from Newfoundland and Labradore, one from Nova Scotia and one who grew up part of her childhood in a developing country and the rest in New Brunswick.

Of the twelve students, the diversity was quite typical for Atlantic Canada, not a mecca for diversity. One student was a visible minority and also a third world immigrant. One was a status aboriginal, with a non-native, francophone mother. Three of the others were an "invisible" minority, in families where one parent was a Francophone and the other an Anglophone. All of the rest were Caucasian with names that are typical of British ancestry.

Two cohorts of first generation women students illustrate the diversity of institutional supports that students receive: Cohort One was restricted to primarily Health Services where they were prescribed anti-depressants. The students in Cohort Two were able to get

counselling and were able to benefit from women-centered counselling techniques that addressed their ongoing growth as individuals. This cohort came from the academic years 2007-2008 and fall of 2008-2009, after a number of women counsellors were hired at Student Counselling whom they accessed. Their experience of a non-medically oriented counselling built on their strengths and encouraged them to complete the strategies they were pursuing while acknowledging the challenges they faced.

I refer to the counselling services as "Student Counselling" for two adjacent university campuses when discussing the effects of cutting back on service: the service was considered "full service" prior to 2004 when one counsellor was available for every 1000 students; by school year 2004-2005, this was downgraded to "limited service" with one counsellor available for every 1500 students, and; by 2005-2006 service was characterized by one of the counsellors as "not acceptable" with one counsellor for every 2000 students [Fieldnotes, May, 2006].

Results

Cohort One

To contact this group of six students, the snowball technique was used within a network of women who were social science majors.* They ranged in age from twenty-one to forty-eight and were predominantly in their final year or the year after graduation from an undergraduate program. All six were first generation to attend university, where five came from families with blue collar or service sector wage jobs, with one having a father who had a certificate in English as a Second Language and who had taught in a community college.

An honours student addresses the problems many women face in rural Canada where the university's formal "gender blind" stance is problematic:

The fact that the university is gender-blind towards the differences in the lives of its women and men students cannot be overstated...Throughout the course of my five year Lib-

eral Arts program I have had countless encounters with women students who must manage the sexist expectations of their families while completing their studies. In particular, the parents of women students do not see their daughters' education as stepping stones to competitive, empowered career opportunities. Their education is devalued as a means to a low-level position; in particular, in a care-taking context. So, women students enter the university reinforced with the notion that their education is a means to a low end. This places women students at a significant disadvantage; they learn not to be competitive and not to 'talk back' to the often 'chilly climate' of the university (Ste-Marie, 2007).

The problems highlighted here are typical of many female students who are first generation. Their contact with Health Services led to their accepting a medical interpretation of their situation as requiring medication and subsequent delays in their careers. Ronnie, for example, did not receive academic or emotional support from her family -- who wanted her to obtain a university education and to become a housewife like her mother upon graduation. She faced many problems with her family: for example, they threw her out the third year after Christmas for getting a piercing and defying their control. Typical of many first generation students, Ronnie panicked in the third year, fearing that she would not be able to meet the requirements of graduation. She worked late into the night, consuming large amounts of coffee, caffeine pills and cigarettes while attempting to raise her grades.

In Health Services, she explained to the doctor that her stomach pains were stress related as she had not been eating very much due to her state of panic. She couldn't relax and felt she was going to fail. "I told (the doctor), I can't deal with the university, the stress and everything. I said, I know that's life, we have to deal with stresses in life; I



can't do it... I'm going to be this huge failure [Fieldnotes, May 14, 2007]."

The doctor asked if she had ever been on anti-depressants. He suggested, "Why don't we try putting you on them and see if this helps with everything you are dealing with, and calm you down?" She took the anti-depressants as he advised, and was perfectly willing to accept the argument that she was unable to manage her stress without anti-depressants. She stated that she saw herself as having a chemical imbalance in her brain, and saw this as a part of life.

Interestingly, she argued that what caused her stress was "pressure put on me since I was a child". She goes on to say:

You know, I know with myself, I think a huge portion of the stress is because it's partially the way that I was raised in my household. I came from an extremely sexist family. Women stayed home and cooked and cleaned. Husband goes out and does the work and comes home. His wife shouldn't be leaving the house; they have no need to leave. But, at the same time, when growing up I was enforced on those rules however when I graduate high school it was: You're going to university and then you're going to make someone a housewife. You're going to learn to cook and clean. So, I think because of that in the back of my mind, I'm at school and I kept thinking, you know, that I don't want to become my mother [Fieldnotes, May 14, 2007].

The doctor told Ronnie to take a week off of school while her medication built up in her body. Her absence led to her being even more behind in her schoolwork. In addition to Ronnie, three other interview participants also experienced severe side-effects from their medication, such as constant drowsiness, severe headaches, vomiting and chest pains. The side-effects affected their ability to perform in school. Two of the other six were prescribed anti-depres-

sants, one by her family doctor, which resulted in her situation being viewed temporarily as a medical condition.

In Ronnie's case as well, being prescribed medication meant that she was never able to address her underlying issues. The doctor's six month follow-up was as brief as the initial meeting: rather than talk therapy, he only asked if the medication was working and if she wanted to continue on it. When she was asked if she would have benefited from a workshop with a female psychologist using feminist coping strategies, she replied:

Beyond belief, especially coming straight from that sexist house, where a woman wasn't allowed out, and then having me at school struggling to prove my family wrong; to prove their way of life is wrong... to see a woman psychologist doing all of this, I think that would have been a huge impact on myself. I think I would have gotten the understanding of what I was trying to do. By balancing things out like that, I wouldn't have needed the medications; I wouldn't have had such stress on myself and such high expectations [Fieldnotes, May 14, 2007].

Most interesting was her response as to whether she would have liked some feminist counselling:

More choice. I wish they would have said: how about we send you to have a conversation with somebody, and if you don't feel like that is helping, come back and see us and we'll see where we can go from there...If you're depressed, I think the options of medication, psychiatrist, psychologist and family sit down should be an option, the same as if you're pregnant, there's abortion, adoption, or keep them. But some options, especially when it comes to anti-depressants, don't get talked about... I didn't know the school had all

these psychologists until I found out that they hired the female... a woman who I could have sat down and expressed my thoughts and issues and beliefs with and gotten someone else's perspective [Fieldnotes, May 14, 2007].

While psychologist Michelle LaFrance has recently written a beautiful discursive analysis of women's medicalized accounts of depression, and the relief women experience with what they see as an "objective" diagnosis (LaFrance, 2007), I find that the students are quite outspoken in rejecting the validity of the medical model a year or two after diagnosis. For example, one of the most outspoken students was psychology major Maureen. In the third hour of interviewing her when we discussed her experience of sexual abuse and emotional bullying by her ex-common law partner, I asked if we should turn off the tape recorder. She stated "No, that's why I'm doing this, because if it helps someone then we can get away from the same old thing – the men going getting the education and the women staying home. Like, I'm all about equality [Fieldnotes, May 21, 2007]."

Maureen faced major anxiety much of her undergraduate experience. This was no surprise, with her traditional family expecting her to attend university and to then become a housewife, when her objective was to attend a community college program. Her parents made her feel "slow" compared to her older brother, and when she had mononucleosis in high school, she began taking anti-depressants. In her second year of university, she had a fight with her parents, who weren't fond of her boyfriend. She moved out to live with him, landing in a moldy apartment, poverty, emotional and sexual abuse, and increasing credit card debt.

After Maureen moved back home later that year, she dropped out of university. Although she did resume classes after that, her debt-adverse parents insisted she work long hours, which amounted to twenty hours per week, to repay the credit card debt. Working in a non-unionized grocery



store, she had an enormous workload with inadequate training, and because the manager harangued her daily, she usually began her shift crying over her situation. Like the others in Cohort One, she had a negative experience with Health Services as well as with Student Counselling. Although she was able to get into counselling, the counsellor sounded well intended but harried. She had been feeling down and hoped to discover some concrete coping strategies. But there was no follow-up on what the male counsellor asked her to do, or what her feelings were; he forgot to give her reading materials he promised and double booked her for an appointment with another student. The counsellor stated at that point that he thought she was doing fine and was finished with counselling. As she put it, she gave up on counselling because he gave up on her.

Maureen's experience with counselling reflected the common priority placed on functioning as a student: we see the counselor stating that she was coping much better by working and attending classes. Yet, her major conflicts with her parents remained unresolved, which included her immediate goal to attend community college, their dissatisfaction with her (her choice of boyfriends and her school performance) and their insistence on her paying them back immediately so that she felt compelled to accept a high workload at the grocery as well as to endure workplace harassment on a daily basis.

Maureen was also at Health Services for an illness; however, she was not able to find any workshops on "students and depression". In an interview, the administrator at Health Services stated that the university needs alternative ways of organizing services for women; for example, "student health fairs, a health promotions coordinator, workshops on drug education and all dimensions of wellness from spiritual to vocational" [Fieldnotes, May 11, 2007]. However, the universities had not allocated the resources for such services.

Maureen's career plans evolved from her own personal growth and the realization that you cannot count on anyone but yourself. Although she completed her major in psychology, she has a preference to steer clear of the job

of psychologist with its connections to bio-psychology and the medical model. Alternatively, she could see her strengths as a guidance counsellor, who focuses on a person's abilities, what they have accomplished, and what she or he wants to change. In this short quote, she talks about this approach to personal growth:

That's actually not talked about in psychology that much. Like when I took the psych classes, that was hardly mentioned. And it's getting more pronounced and it's – Like people are realizing that everything that was talked about in psychology is actually quite old-fashioned as opposed to like what we're talking about right now [Fieldnotes, May 21, 2007].

She identifies a student discourse in which she is a part that rejects deterministic psychology, as well as the assumptions of stress discourse, such as the idea that stress is normal and that you just have to learn to deal with it. As she disparagingly put it, "you just have to stick it out, it's okay if you hate your job". Maureen's spontaneous suggestions for an expanded student orientation included an array of relevant workshop topics, including coping strategies, problem solving, and student-friendly suggestions for how to market them, e.g., "Starting a fun adventure? Come and share your experiences".

The institutional ethnography is not claiming to be generalizable to all similar contexts. However, to conclude in relation to the current organization of student services that this rather small Cohort accessed, a tentative picture emerges. In both counseling and health services, the biomedical discourse dominates with a narrow focus on the breakdown of individuals coping in the construction of the depressed woman student. Once focused on the breakdown of individual coping and the treatment of depression, treatment often narrows to a discussion of stress management, and the functional realms of eating, sleeping and attending classes (Fieldnotes, May 14, 2006).

As Stoppard and McMullen argue, this common approach does not assist women to identify the practical issues they need to address within the social context of their lives. For first generation women students, this would involve seeing how, as students did, the personal experiences of depression are related to the social context of women's inequality in relation to their families and relationships, the workplace, and the classroom, and in a way that is supportive to their career goals. In order to move beyond the medicalized approach to depression, there must be the will to establish women-sensitive support services and programming. This path is less frequently taken in a university setting when women's needs remain invisible and where they face the competitive disadvantage of being medicalized and internalizing the responsibility for social inequality. This especially affects first generation women students in their transition to the workforce and to the much coveted career.

Cohort Two

Cohort Two responded to advertisements on campus and were a self-selected group of students from twenty to thirty-seven years. Overall, their experiences were much more positive as they were a group that had only accessed Student Counselling and five of the six met with a woman counsellor who addressed her situation as a woman struggling to achieve her goals. After three more women counsellors were hired to replace departing male counsellors, the outcome clearly had changed for students who were fortunate enough to get in. Four of these six students were first generation students, providing some comparison to two students with university educated parents. From these interviews, we also get a strong sense of the disadvantages that first generation students face coming from a background with less education and from a lower income group. These students form a distinct group that often remains invisible to the university, as do their specific need for transitional supports for their career development and for distinctive support that is different from those of middle class or other students with "helicopter parents".



For example, when attending a parents' orientation at the beginning of the year, one got the impression that an assumed audience of parents existed with certain commonalities. An administrator informed the parent and student audience that it was "time to cut the apron strings" and to allow the child more latitude at university. When we begin to examine some of the first generation students' family background, a plurality of families comes to the fore. This is illustrated by "Liette", a status aboriginal raised by her single francophone working class mother. She stated that she was the first on both sides of the family to attend university. "...and stick with it more than half a year. In my entire family – both my dad's side and my mother's side...out of like fifty people. So it's a big deal [Fieldnotes, November 12, 2008]."

As for motivation to attend university, this honours student with university credits for two full "Academic Preparation" high school courses cited the following:

Looking at my family and saying "I'm not going to be like that." Because my entire family is on welfare...my mother was always the type where it's like, "Ugh, if you want to go to school today, you can. If you don't, don't bother...skip another class. That's fine!" Halfway through the summer – before I came here – when one of my teachers – I was walking by him at the mall and he said, "So did you apply to [university] yet? And I was like "Nooooo!" He was like "If you don't I will kill you". And cause I was kind of afraid, I did and got in [Fieldnotes, November 12, 2008].

This student learned from the affluent students at high school in part the value of an education and the need to work hard. Her single mother's low skill wage-labour job did not provide career knowledge and how it is something that the student has to develop by making it a priority, even by researching the possibilities in the labour force. What may not be visible within the university pro-

gramming without transition programmes for first generation students, is that many of these students have defied the odds to even have made it to university. For example, four of the students cited fundamentalist churches as having an impact on their lives, including such religions as Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostal denominations, which are quite common in rural Atlantic Canada. This was the case with "Janice":

So I think I found – even at a young age, I found um it very cultish. Like we weren't allowed to bother with worldly people and we were to keep to ourselves..But I remember coming home one day when I was in – I think it was grade nine and I was all excited because I had a Career Day and I came bursting through the doors and I said "Oh my goodness – listen Mum. Listen to all these things that I can be when I grow up." And they sat me down and said that I shouldn't have an interest in that because we weren't going to be here long enough to worry about a career. Because Armageddon was coming...so that was squashed right there...If you are here even long enough to finish high school your main concern is to ... get out and – and witness. Preach the work to help people. You know, find the truth.. And get married and have a family and yeah. Just worship God – like that's your calling and nothing else is your calling [Fieldnotes, August 21, 2008].

Although she would not accept the family's ultimate plan for her, she had not been expected to do well or to value education in elementary and junior high; basically she was not to worry about it. Janice stated that she was rebellious once and, just shy of age sixteen, she left home with her boyfriend and was married at sixteen.

Like Janice, another interviewee, "Shirley" was a mature student and also came from a family with low literacy. Her parents had been teenagers when she

was born and getting a job at a fast food restaurant would have been an accepted long term strategy. She married young, and worked for many years as a teaching assistant, and had a child in her late thirties. She had begun an editing business from home, and when she gave birth was able to access federal training while coming off of maternity leave. She had two difficulties, one being she lacked confidence to do the marketing required for her business, and the second was dealing with her husband's disapproval of her taking university courses, when he had once been unsuccessful, prior to becoming an electrician.

Shirley explained that what helped her was the counselling offered on campus. She credited the counsellor, "Amanda", with being able to address the difficulty of returning to school as a problem that had a lot to do with "being female":

Especially because coming back to school – especially at my age – it's such a risk...and not with the support of Charlie. He's against this – he thinks I should wait until Trina is in school and ...So I can't ask for any help at home...I'm doing something that he doesn't agree with so I better be able to handle it without any extra help because he is willing to – support the family and all I have to do is care for Trina. And why won't I just stop [university]? (laughs).

That's where that self-confidence comes in is that with Amanda (counsellor) well I know – I can stand the – discomfort of him not being happy. That's too bad that he's not happy but it's – really, he'll be all right and so will I. There's a different confidence now because before, in my twenties, if Charlie had disapproved, which he did, um, but I don't think that was a major factor but I wonder if it did play in there I would have given up – easier. Right? Because it upset him [Fieldnotes, November 14, 2008].



Shirley described a course of eight counselling sessions that were necessary to address the deeper issues that affected her self-confidence. She identified Amanda's approach as different and better than the usual cognitive behavior therapy she had encountered previously with a psychologist. Not only did this take longer than the "five sessions you will get on Blue Cross", but like other women with positive experiences in counselling, her strengths were addressed, and she was given the time to delve into underlying issues that involved the unconscious. Amanda took her on a different exploration that included drawing pictures, making inferences and seeing the connections about some very traumatic childhood experiences. Shirley was quite positive, as were other women, about counselling that focuses on one's strengths:

I didn't even realize that was on purpose. But at the end of each session she would note – ah just make a short recap of all the strengths she saw and, ah, how capable I was as a person and the things I was doing and – just – I just assumed that was just the wrap-up or whatever. But it did have an effect. And it – cause it did – she almost mirrored for me the beliefs I need to have in myself to be functioning and capable [Fieldnotes, November 14, 2008].

She went on to say how having a discussion regarding her "boundary" issues with the counsellor had been so important, as she sorted out what her educational priorities are and how to set boundaries with other students at university. She concluded that some of the male-female issues that surround one's education must be sorted out and she was helped to operate from a place of self-confidence rather than always depending on the priorities of her spouse and child. She hopes to return to counselling with Amanda to address the complications of being a mother and having to struggle with time management, a common problem of "juggling" for women students, in terms of being able to put your own priorities first

when dealing with other family members.

Discussion

"Juggling" Priorities and Finding a Voice

This problem of "juggling" priorities is a significant issue for first generation women, when family members do not realize the demands of university. For example, a third year student, "Marie-Jose", has been juggling her family of origin's priorities ever since her father became ill and eventually died. She was first to attend university from a rural New Brunswick family whose parents were a woodsman and nurse, her mother francophone and father anglophone. She made contact with Student Counselling in her first year when she had to face the year without her boyfriend, who returned to another province at the end of summer. She had to learn to be happy on her own, and she realized that this involved something basic about her own self-confidence. She was extremely positive about her counselor, Mary Ann, who saw her the better part of a winter semester. They used a book to do exercises that related to being a strong woman:

Working on just not having to have anyone else. Just to be happy. I mean confident. And I think a lot was self-esteem. We talked a lot about that. And I remember we talked about some breathing exercises and stuff cause I was having panic attacks. I remember drawing lots of things (laughs)... Going there and having that experience made me realize that – I won't feel like that forever [Fieldnotes, November 12, 2008].

The optimism that she gained from counselling provided her with the self-confidence that she was looking for her first year, that is, the confidence to be happy on her own: and her relationship with her boyfriend ended as well. Marie-Jose would have appreciated some initial workshops on the career process rather than spending five years,

and taking an additional year of credits to be able to teach in French-immersion. In career terms, she now wants to gain experience in teaching that will contribute towards entry into an education program, however, she is torn between helping the family, after her father died, and moving ahead and gaining career-related experience. She identified what she learned about being a woman as part of what is keeping her from moving ahead on career plans. She comments on how similar she is to her mother:

She's just very giving and – she always puts like other people before herself? I think I'm a lot like her. And I think (coughs) and I think that's part of the problem because that always – like people who put themselves – put others before themselves sometimes don't – don't always think about themselves, right? Like I really want to go to France and teach. But I wouldn't because I feel like I should have to take care of my mom and my brother [Fieldnotes, November 12, 2008].

The issue of helping the family comes up for single and coupled women students alike. Janice, who left home at sixteen and started a family, later found that when she began reading on transition and self-efficacy in her Bachelors of Education program, she encountered heavy resistance from her military husband. In and around Fredericton, the military has a heavy presence with a military base that was the largest in the Commonwealth until quite recently. The process of finding a voice is not always as obvious as this one, but Janice's progression to a Masters in Education very likely depended upon her ability to stand up for herself.

If I wanted to talk about something he didn't want to talk about, he didn't even want to look at me, he would just....put the hand in my face...very, very, very controlling and intimidating. And I think what happened with us is about four



years ago, when I started to read up on, transitioning and self-efficacy and that type of thing, I drew upon my own strengths in being able to stand up for myself and saying, “No I’m not going to agree with that, just to make you happy. You know I understand where you’re coming from but I really don’t think that it’s good for our family so we should talk about it.” And he didn’t like that. So as soon as I started to have a voice. There! That’s what I’m looking for...then his response was um, “Well you – you’re gonna do what you want anyway. What’s the point of talking about it?” Like it was just a really bad attitude [Fieldnotes, August 21, 2008].

The process of developing a voice takes place over time, and the more Janice was able to speak on her own behalf, the worse her relationship got until it disintegrated. Re-settling with her three children was a task in itself, and fortunately the graduate advisor pointed her in the direction of Student Counselling, where she was counseled by “Katherine” on how to help the children transition. She was also encouraged to begin to appreciate her strengths by Katherine:

She said you’re still here, I mean everyday you get up and you come in here and you know the fact that you’re coming to -- to counselling or coming to talk to somebody -- is not a sign that you’re breaking down or you’re becoming weak. It’s you looking for the help or support that you need to keep on going. So that’s a strength in itself – that you’re able to reach out for help. So that was good, cause you ended up leaving the building feeling like “Okay that was a good thing to do”. People aren’t going to be thinking you know, “Look she had to go for counselling” [Fieldnotes, August 21, 2008].

Through women-centered counselling, Janice was being appreciated for her strengths, countering her ex-husband’s message to her family that she was “mentally ill” for finding a way to speak up. While Janice continued on medication, as I found was true nine of the eleven women who were prescribed anti-depressants, she was benefitting from what one counselor called the process of “normalizing” her experiences. By the counselor framing her decisions in relation to the notion of how typical and ordinary these types of problems are for women, the student came to appreciate how her actions are practical and to be expected in achieving her educational goals.

Of the six students responding to the ad for students who had contacted Counselling Services, two were graduate students who were non-first generation students. I interviewed them in order to have some comparison to make to the experiences of first generation students. These students’ parents both had university educations, and had greater resources to support themselves financially – including on-campus jobs that were using skills that a parent or brother may have had, or on-campus work in a company owned by family friends. And certainly, they had a lot more knowledge of the career process that surrounds entry into medical school or other graduate work. Still, in a very competitive graduate environment, they had some of the same needs and expectations for support from a good counselor, as “Emily” comments:

I guess I would expect – hopefully – someone who could help me to realize – I mean I know my strengths but to really believe in myself a little bit more. And how to connect with people – I think, too, is a big thing. I’m often isolated – by choice a lot of times...um, social skills. [Fieldnotes, August 27, 2008].

She goes on to say that she does not appreciate the approach of the medical model where a doctor or counselor probes to discover illnesses, rather than asking “how can I help you” and then really listening to a person’s situation.

I’m not just this person who doesn’t sleep and – you know, who’s crying. I’m this person who, you know, takes photos and, you know, is interested in people. I’m doing my own reading on strength-based resiliency theories... that’s something that I’ve done this summer that’s also changed my whole perspective on – on life and how I approach Education and everything. Definitely, that’s what’s needed [Fieldnotes, August 27, 2008].

More than two weeks after the initial intake interview at Student Counselling, Emily was still waiting to see a counselor and was quite discouraged that she was not contacted sooner. While she has a long psychiatric history, she may suffer from appearing stronger than she feels, with her Masters in Nursing underway and her on-campus job; these may mask the fact that she is quite lonely and is reaching out for help and for social networks.

The second graduate student with university-educated parents was the only one out of eleven women students who were offered to take anti-depressants and decided against continuing with them; in her case, she quit four days after starting them, as they put her to sleep prior to taking the Graduate Record Exam. Both of these graduate students were more geographically mobile than the others, with scholarships and attendance at three or more universities. For “Ruth”, a doctoral student, her positive counselling experience was at her last university in Quebec, where she was helped to deal with exam-anxiety after an ambitious schedule of preparation for the exam and employment related to her field. She felt that she had benefited greatly from five months of cognitive-behavioral therapy to address her negative thinking, her tendency to take on too much, and just to learn how to relax. Similar to strength-based counselling that the women in Cohort Two discussed, Ruth learned to focus on what she can do, and how to improve those areas where she lacked confidence, and on how to give herself credit for those things at which she is successful.



This course of counselling stood out as quite positive and perhaps involving strength-based counselling techniques as well. It motivated Ruth to seek counselling once she arrived on campus in New Brunswick, for which she had waited four months due to bureaucratic matters. The extensive counselling that Ruth was offered at the research university where she completed her masters appeared to involve a strong allocation of university funding to support students through cognitive-behavioral and strength-based counselling. Ruth is confident that she will receive the same kind of beneficial counselling again and is investigating international agencies where she might work upon completion of her doctorate.

Comparison of Cohort I and Cohort II: The Benefits of Student Counselling

The first generation students in Cohort I differ markedly in the outcomes they experienced from those of Cohort II. While all of the Cohort II students recently accessed counselling, and two graduate students were through the intake process and awaiting counselling, they overwhelming spoke about the benefits of solution or strength-based counselling that focused on their strengths as women. With the exception of the one student who discontinued counseling after one session, the other five spoke of the benefits they accrued from being supported in sessions that were often spread out over an entire semester, and allowed for in-depth discovery of underlying issues that they were unaware were affecting their coping abilities and goal achievement. Three of the four first generation students, in second to fifth year or recently graduated, were positive about their experiences and, like the two non-first generation students, stated that they would be going to Student Counselling in future to address difficulties that remain.

Cohort One students were quite a bit less successful and received a different kind of service at Health Services, and for one, through her family doctor. The approach they described was organized around seeing if the student was physically functioning, attending

classes, eating, etc. When students spoke of symptoms of depression or anxiety, all six were given prescriptions for anti-depressants. Their ineffective strategies led to poorer performance in courses, with five of the six taking an additional year to complete. While five did complete their degree, of that group one received Academic Probation and two received Academic Dismissal (one of which was successfully appealed). Two went on to graduate school after receiving mentoring from professors. However, these students' ineffective strategies led to a lack of information, late graduation, low marks and academic sanctions. Most of them voiced a desire for alternative programming for women within student services or student orientation, and specified a desire for counselling that addressed their situations as women.

Student Counselling and Health Services administrators indicated their own struggles with professional to student ratios, underfunding and a desire for greater programming. Perhaps when large numbers of students receive services where professionals are unable to devote much time to each student, a more "functional" approach is taken. Medicalizing a student's problems is least constructive in terms of the students' ability to function well in their programs, but possibly the most familiar route for the doctors in Health Services. Were there more of a commitment to provide women-centered counselling to more students, the students in Cohort One may have experienced very different outcomes. For example, given a collaboratively-constructed long-term plan to realize her goals, Maureen might have avoided the third year panic and the side-effects of medication. She could have been advised that it would require her another year or two to rectify her transcript so that she would be more competitive for graduate school.

Given a similar long-term plan, Ronnie may have obtained confidence to collaborate openly with her parents, addressing a long-term plan to re-pay her parents and to switch to a major that was more to her liking. Such a long-term plan could have addressed her parents' fears about accruing debt and staying within disciplines that are considered 'safe'.

Conclusion

Alternative Programs for First-Generation Women

Failing the institution of a transition program for first generation students, universities could hold orientation workshops where students and parents could jointly explore feasible career path options and debt repayment/salary level comparisons. Rather than assuming that career planning fits an individualistic model, the university could acknowledge that some students have parents who are involved on an ongoing basis in their child's university education.

Since at least 2006 the needs of first-generation students have been gaining attention in universities from Memorial in Newfoundland to Simon Fraser in British Columbia. Transition programs in these provinces, as well in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, address issues of financing, basic orientation and the technical skills required to successfully navigate university – and very likely have to be customized to address regional specificities. McMaster University, for example, has initiated a series of programs through their First Year Experience Office which seek to mentor their first year first-generation students by pairing them with more senior first-generation students. Acknowledging the fact that 30% of their applicants fall into this group, they are seeking proactive ways to encourage self-confidence and promote the well-being and achievement rate of their students (Pereira, 2008, p. 9-10).

Since women students comprise approximately 60% of undergraduates across Canada, addressing the fact that a great number of these will also be first-generation students requires special attention. By developing women-sensitive workshops which would consider issues of importance to women, especially regarding the career process from first year to post-graduation, universities would both enhance the general well-being of their student population and increase the success rates of their graduates.

Understanding that specific problems require equally specific solutions, counselling and mentoring, especially regarding the stressful and important



area of career path options and decisions, are the most effective ways of dealing with the social difficulties of university education. Although medicalization is often the first choice of health services in dealing with the symptoms associated with anxiety, both the literature and the narratives of the women interviewed in this study conclude that a solid support network of first-generation women and women-centered workshops would preclude medicalization and make the career process more transparent.

While one parent presentation during orientation week encouraged parents to back off from their children's shaping of their university education [Fieldnotes, September 2008], this stance assumes that parents have been intensively involved and now it is the student's turn to take control. However, the interviews show that first generation parents who lack knowledge of the career transition are involved in decisions about a range of issues central to career planning, including the number of hours students worked in paid employment, their loan repayment schedules, and sharing in care-taking and emotional support of family members. The all too common individualist discourse that underpins university policies does not adequately assist students and their parents in coming together and learning the school-to-work process, and perhaps, reaching agreed-upon, or at least mutually respected, expectations.

Many of the students who were interviewed retain close ties to their families and are still economically dependent. Their narratives included, for example, students who faced defying their parents with life choices, student difficulties in care-taking for family members, and in dealing with mental health issues on one's own. Not only are students encouraged and expected to deal with career strategizing alone, but they may face their families' expectations that they work hard in university while maintaining a thirty hours-plus work week. This is true despite the Student Handbook recommendation that students undertake no more than ten hours of paid work a week. So students who lack the resources to focus solely on their schooling and parents who are debt-adverse are at a disadvan-

tage unless they are made aware of what is at stake should they forego accessing available student loans.

Were the university to work in a more collaborative fashion with first generation students and their families, a program would be needed to make the university-to-career process more transparent. The importance of the "ten hour work cap" and its effect on maintaining a competitive grade point average could be highlighted and documented for first generation families. The fact that students who work long hours regularly take five years to complete university – and often with lower marks – is useful information, and has serious ramifications with the new student loan caps requiring a four year completion rate to qualify for student loan forgiveness. The advantages of gaining volunteer or work experience that fulfills the entry requirements for professional programs such as Education and Social Work, could be communicated as some of the "hidden requirements" of the post-graduate programs.

Such orientation would be extremely useful to women students who often overexert themselves in relation to families' expectations. Students then present themselves in counselling believing that they are suffering from depression, when exhaustion and unrealistic role expectations are the root of their problem. For women students who are less aware of the career process, first year university can feel a bit like groping in the dark. In quite an individualized environment focused on achievement, students intuitively blame themselves for poor performance. Research on first generation drop out rates shows that many drop out despite good marks because they sense a lack of "fit" or cultural capital between themselves and other students (Lehmann, 2007).

As one counselor pointed out, what most students lack is self-confidence [Fieldnotes, February 18, 2009], and this is magnified when the disjuncture between family and university expectations arise. Women-centered counselling introduces and reinforces the need for a woman student to take her situation in hand, to listen to her developing voice, and to normalize her actions in relation to the sometimes unrealistic assumptions others make re-

garding her possible contributions, be it to family or the workplace. In the context of a social disjuncture between the school-to-career preparation students receive in high school and university orientation, women-centered counselling becomes the fall-back for the first-generation student who is aware that she isn't able to resolve her doubts on her own or with the help of friends and/or family members.

While universities are being polarized in terms of the available funding between the well financed and the least, it would be a shortsighted policy indeed that failed to note the connection between the large number of first generation women students and their requirements to remain in university and fulfill their career aspirations. Medicalization, as the literature suggests as being the first line of defense that many women will take in dealing with their difficulties, needs to be reconsidered in terms of its usefulness. First-generation women students need to have their social, familial, and financial problems addressed in a supportive, holistic manner (Magolda, 2008).

Transitions are never simple affairs (Murff, 2005), and while attempting to maintain their financial needs, address their lack of social and cultural knowledge, establish an acceptable career path, first-generation women students require administrative attention that acknowledges their very specific problems without relying heavily on available medical services. Universities that break with the past may enhance their "women-friendly" reputations in a way that benefits everyone.

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Effectiveness of Emotional Intelligence Training in Enhancing Teaching Self Efficacy of Career-frustrated Teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria

Amos Oyesoji Aremu
University of Ibadan, Nigeria
&

Jude Akomolafe Moyosola
Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria

Abstract

This study experimentally investigated the effectiveness of Emotional Intelligence Training on teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 60 randomly selected career-frustrated secondary school teachers (Male = 48 & Female 42; Internal Locus of Control = 24 & External Locus of Control = 36) in Ondo state. Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale, Locus of control of Behaviour scale and demographic data form were administered to the teachers. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) were used to analyse the data. The results of the study showed that Emotional Intelligence Training effectively enhanced teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers. Locus of control significantly influenced teaching self-efficacy of the experimental group, while gender was not significant. The implications of the findings for counselling and school administration were discussed. It was recommended that emotional intelligence training of career-frustrated teachers should be encouraged to improve their teaching self-efficacy.

Teachers are highly fundamental to the realization of quality education worldwide. In whatever angle the teacher is viewed, he/she seems one of the most important human characters in the life of a child. The success of a child could, therefore, depend greatly on what he/she makes out of the different encounters he/she has with his/her teachers as he/she journeys through the school system. The effectiveness or otherwise of the teacher in the school system would be apparent in the lives of their students now and in the future.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) in Nigeria acknowledges the central position teachers occupy in the educational system by stating that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers.

The concepts, “teacher” and “teaching” are interdependent variables, and both are crucial to school effectiveness (Ajibade, 2005). Their relationship is likened to sight and seeing. Without the eye, it is impossible to see. Thus, in like manner, without the teacher, teaching may neither be done nor effective. In spite of the computer, the teacher is still needed to prepare the materials to be fed into the computer for the use of the students. According to Okolie (1991), a teacher is one at the centre of the success of any educational programme no matter the quality of learning activities’ blue-prints, learning materials and available prevailing physical facilities. This further stresses the importance of teachers in the school system and society at large. Thus, it is very important to regularly carry out research into the activities and psycho-social conditions of teachers in order to maintain efficiency and high productivity in the teaching profession. For teachers to be effective and committed to their jobs, high teaching self-efficacy has to be maintained among them. Gorrell and Hwang (1995) have argued that there is a research trend towards “understanding teaching and teacher education in terms of development of teaching and personal efficacy beliefs.(p.101)“ Indeed, teaching self-efficacy has been found to be one of the important factors consistently related to positive teaching behavior and student outcomes (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ashton & Webb; 1986; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Enochs, Scharmann, & Riggs, 1995; Henson, 2001).

However, studies (Adegrooye, 1999, Ajibade, 2005; & Aremu, 2007) have demonstrated that many secondary school teachers in Nigeria have low teaching self-efficacy. Low job performance has also been found among them. Most teachers in Nigerian schools are also reported not to be satisfied with their jobs (Adegrooye, 1999; Adeyoju, 1999 & Uwaimiye & Onyewadume, 2001). According to Nwagwu and Salami (1999), there is high turnover syndrome among teachers. This low teaching efficacy among the Nigerian teachers is fallout of poor service, low prospects and low prestige (Salami, 2007). These could have been the major causes of career frustration among secondary school teachers. From this perspective, it stands to reason that Nigerian teachers might probably be unhappy and could be living unfulfilled lives. This assertion could be the reason why many Nigerians see teaching job as a last resort when looking for employment. In spite of the efforts being made by the professional body of teachers in Nigeria, Nigeria Union of Teachers to better the professional lots of teachers, through advocacy for better conditions of service, teaching remains the least sought job in Nigeria.

Studies into the teachers’ affective domain, which includes emotions, moods, and the feeling states, seem to be one of the areas of research which probably would provide answers to these problems. The reason being that teaching transcends physical contacts with learners; it also involves expression of feelings of which emotional intelligence is involved. Emotional Intelligence (EI) was partly derived from earlier ideas about social intelligence, which was first identified by Thorndike who defines social intelli-



gence as the ability to understand (Fatt & Howe, 2003).

Emotional intelligence is also included in Gardner's inter and intra personal intelligence in his theory of multiple intelligence (Gardner, 1983). The interpersonal intelligence consists of the ability to understand others. Intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to develop an accurate model of the self and use it effectively to operate through life. These skills are very important for social interaction and understanding of one's own emotions and behaviours. However, the re-conceptualization of inter-personal and intra-personal intelligence in a broader and comprehensive framework was done by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Salovey and Mayer (1990) define EI as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.

Goleman (1995) sees emotional intelligence as ability to know what you are feeling and using that knowledge to make good decisions. Goleman (1995) then identifies five components of emotional intelligence as self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and adeptness in relationship. These components were later broken down into two abilities: empathy and social skills. In an attempt to further simplify the concept, Bar-On (1997) makes a case for EI as being concerned with effectively understanding oneself and others, relating well with people and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands. Bar-On (2006) also later divides EI skills into 5 components and 15 sub-components. These include:

Intra-personal Abilities: These include awareness of oneself and an understanding of one's emotions, the ability to express thoughts and feelings nondestructively, the ability to be self-reliant and free of emotional development on others and the ability and drive to set and achieve personal goals.

Inter-personal Abilities: These include awareness of others and emotions, feelings, and needs, as well as the ability to

establish and maintain cooperative, constructive and mutually satisfying relationships. People who are skillful in this area tend to be good listeners and are able to understand the feelings of others.

Stress Management: This is the ability to effectively manage and control emotions.

Adaptability: This includes ability to realistically and flexibly cope with immediate situation and effectively solve problems as they arise.

General Mood: This involves the emotional skills that fuel the self-motivation needed to set and achieve goals. These skills include an optimistic and positive outlook combined with a feeling of happiness and contentment with ourselves, others and life in general.

In literature, EI is considered very important for success in the world of work (Bellamy & Bellamy, 2003; Adeyemo & Aremu, 2005, 2007; Aremu & Lawal, 2009; Adeyemo, 2009). Specifically, Goleman (1995) affirms that EI contributes as much as 80% to an individual's success in life, while the remaining 20% could be as a result of other factors. While this remains contentious in literature, the overall import of EI to effective human functioning cannot be overemphasized in that human accomplishment is tied to his/her state of emotions. In fact, utilizing these emotions in a best possible way and for the good of self and others is the hallmark of the philosophy behind EI. In this wise, this paper experimentally investigates the effect of emotional intelligence training on teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers.

Teaching-self efficacy is consistent with the general formulation of self-efficacy. Teaching self-efficacy is defined in various ways, such as the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect students' performance (Berman, McLaughlin, Bas, Pauly & Zellman, 1977); teachers belief in their abilities to have a positive effect on students' learning (Ashton, 1985); the extent to which teachers believe they can affect students' learning (Dembo & Gibson, 1985); teachers' beliefs or convictions that they can influence how well students learn, even those that may be difficult or unmoti-

vated (Guskey & Passaro, 1994); and they believe that he or she can reach even the most difficult students and help them learn (Woolfolk, 1998). From these definitions, it is clear that a teacher with a strong self-efficacy would not only impart knowledge effectively, he/she would also do so with ease and passion. The underline inference from the teaching behaviour of such a teacher is that even his/her difficult students would be more motivated to learn.

The teaching of self-efficacy begins with the evaluation of whether teachers believe they could control the reinforcement of their actions (Armor, Conroy-Oseguera, Cox, King, McDonell, Pascal, Pauly & Zellman, 1976). Research works have demonstrated that teachers with a strong sense of efficacy tend to exhibit greater levels of planning, organisation and enthusiasm, spend more time teaching in areas where their sense of efficacy is higher, more open to new ideas, and more willing to experiment with the same ideas to meet and better the needs of their students. In this wise, such teachers persist when things do not go smoothly and are resilient in the face of setbacks. In addition, studies show that they tend to be less critical of students who make errors and work longer with students who are struggling (Gibson & Dembo, 1984, Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibbs, 2002; Coladarci, 1992; Tschannen and Woolfolk, (2001), Coladarci & Brenton, 1997, Saklofske, Michayluk & Randhawa, 1988). It is therefore no overstatement to reason that a self-efficacious teacher is a complete teacher whose main preoccupation is to effectively impact on the students.

In the United Kingdom, where the standard of education is higher than that of Nigeria, the Department of Education and Training (2005) states that improving teacher efficacy has four times impact on students' outcomes than improving school effectiveness. By inference, and although school effectiveness represents a sine qua non for teaching-learning, the overall import of teaching and effective learning is on a self-efficacious teacher whose emotion is on giving his/her students the best. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) then suggest that "the substantial variation in teacher efficacy may result in part from



variance in teachers' emotion" (P.339). In essence, emotions are tied to teaching. A few studies have reported some links between emotional intelligence and teaching self-efficacy. Penrose, Perry and Ball (2007) examine the linkage between emotional intelligence and teacher efficacy beliefs. Their finding shows a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and teaching self-efficacy. They recommend the use of emotional intelligence education to enhance teaching self-efficacy. Salami (2007) similarly examines the relationships between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy to work attitudes among secondary school teachers in Southwestern Nigeria. In his finding, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy were found to have significant relationships with teachers' attitude to work. Ng and Hor (2005) investigate the relationship between teaching attitudes and emotional intelligence. Their finding shows that teachers' attitude positively correlated with emotional intelligence. Chan (2004) further underscores the relationship between EI and self-efficacy by reporting that self-efficacy beliefs are significantly predicted by the components of emotional intelligence.

Empirical evidences show that emotional intelligence is related to career commitment (Carmeli, 2003; Aremu, 2005) and career commitment is related to job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Iaffaldono & Muchinsky, 1985; Ostroff, 1992; Hellman, 1997; Jamal, 1997; Bamigbade, 2000; Adeyemo, 2001). The established relationships among emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, career commitment and self-efficacy show that if career-frustrated teachers are exposed to appropriate and effective emotional intelligence training programme, their teaching self-efficacy could be enhanced. This research antecedent is not well documented in Nigeria probably because researchers have not deemed it necessary to study secondary school teachers who are frustrated. Given that career frustration could hamper effective functioning in the work place, and that emotions could be worked on to redirect thoughts of frustrated teachers, the current study investigated the influence which EI could engender in an experimental condition on the teaching efficacy of career-frus-

trated teachers. In attempting to realize this objective, we set out to address three research hypotheses:

There is no main effect of treatment on the teaching self-efficacy of participants exposed to emotional intelligence training and the non-treated group. There is no main effect of treatment on the teaching self-efficacy of male and female participants exposed to emotional intelligence training. There is no main effect of treatment on the teaching self-efficacy of the participants with internal and external locus of control exposed to emotional intelligence training.

Methods

Research Design

A pre-test, post-test and control group quasi-experimental approach that utilized a 2 x 2 x 2 quasi factorial design was adopted in the study. The participants of the study were divided into three groups A₁, and A₂. Group A₁ was treated, while group A₂ served as the control. Therefore, the experimental and the control groups made the two rows - A₁ and A₂, while the male and female participants were constituted into columns - B₁ and B₂. Internal and external locus of control respondents were assigned into the column C₁ and C₂. Experimental group was pre-tested and subjected to the therapeutic treatment (Emotional Intelligence Training). The control group was equally pre-tested and subjected to a non-therapeutic talk.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all secondary school teachers in Ondo State, Nigeria. Ondo State which is one of the 36 states in Nigeria is in the Southwestern part of the country. There were 11,680 teachers in the State as at the period of the field work (Ondo State Teaching Service Commission, 2008). It was from this population that a sample of 60 career-frustrated teachers was randomly selected from nine secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The participants were randomly selected into the experimental and control groups. There were 32 males (53.3%) and 28 (46.7%) females. The participants also had 24 (40%) and 36 (60%) internal and external locus of

control respectively. The mean scores of the sample and population/group norm on frustration scale were 145.83 and 128.32 respectively. Thus, teachers selected for this study were more frustrated in their job than an average teacher in Ondo State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the pretest mean score of the participants was 77.42 (S.D=10.98) on teaching self-efficacy, while that of the population was 119.5 respectively. This revealed that the participants' level of teaching self-efficacy was very low compared to an average teacher in Ondo State. For the locus of control, the mean score of the participant was 36.32. Notwithstanding, for the purpose of this study, respondents who scored 68 and above were randomly selected for external of locus of control, while those who scored 17 or less than that on the questionnaire were selected for internal locus of control. These baselines were chosen in order to ensure that the participants chosen for this study truly had either internal or external locus of control. Based on the scoring of the instrument used, 17 is the maximum score a participant could get if he/she completely demonstrated internal locus of control, while 68 is the minimum score a participant could get out of 85 if he/she completely yielded external locus of control.

Measures

teacher frustration scale (TFS.)

Teacher Frustration Scale (TFS) was adapted from Organisation Frustration (OF) by Spector (1975). The OF was constructed to measure personal frustration in an organization, while the adapted TFS is meant to measure the frustration level of teachers in schools. TFS is a 32-item scale which examines individuals' perception of co-workers acts of aggression, time-wasting, sabotage, unreasonable demands to self and government neglect. TFS is at the one end of a continuum with jobs satisfaction. The scale is 6-point likert scale ranging from Disagree Completely to Agree Completely. Scores above 128 indicate high frustration and scores less than or equal to 128 indicate absence of frustration.

For Organisation Frustration Scale (OFS), Spector (1975) provides the psy-



psychometric properties for American samples, while the properties for Nigerian samples were extrapolated from a frustration test developed by Dicke (1997) that is equivalent to OF in content and number of items. A coefficient alpha of 0.88 was reported by Spector (1975) for a sample of 50 medical employees and a construct validity coefficient of 0.59. Dicke (1997) correlated the OF equivalent with Frustration Anxiety Inventory by Girdano and Everly (1979) and obtained a concurrent validity of 0.98. To determine the psychometric properties of the adapted TFS, a pilot study was conducted prior to the experimentation. The researchers used test re-test method after a two-week interval to find the reliability of the instrument on a separate sample of career-frustrated teachers. The test re-test reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained.

the locus of control of behaviour scale.

The Locus of Control of Behaviour Scale constructed by Craig, Franklin and Andrews (1984) was used for the study. The scale is a 17 item scale measuring the locus of control of behaviour. It was constructed with reference to I.E. scale by Rotter (1966). Respondents are to indicate their degree of agreement with each item by ticking one of the four options-Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). For the purpose of minimising the possible effect of social desirability in responding, some items were reversed in terms to internality and instructions emphasised no right or wrong answers.

The 17- item test was scored in the externality direction. That is, SA=5, A = 4, D =1 and SD = 0. The seven items relating to internality (items 1, 5, 7, 8, 13, 15 and 16) were reversed such that SA = 0, A=1, D= 4 and SD= 5 respectively. According to Nunnally (1967), the coefficient alpha for the 17 items was .79. This demonstrated that the scale has high internal reliability. A test-retest reliability of the scale was determined by Salami (1999) using Nigerian students. Salami (1999) reports a reliability coefficient of 0.75. This correlates with Rotter's I.E scale ($r = 0.67$ for male and $r = 0.67$ for females). This shows that the

instrument is suitable for Nigerian respondents. To further affirm the reliability coefficient value of the scale, the researcher, with the assistance of the study's supervisor, obtained 0.83 coefficients using a test-retest method.

teacher sense of efficacy scale.

Teachers' self-efficacy was measured using the long form of Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The developers have investigated both construct and discriminant validity for this instrument. The questionnaire includes 24 items measured on a nine threshold Likert-type scale, ranging from "nothing" (1) to a "great deal" (9). The instrument has three subscales namely: Efficacy in student engagement (SE), Efficacy in instructional strategies (IS) and, Efficacy in classroom management (CM). The internal validity of each of these subscales was satisfactory for our sample (SE: $\alpha = 0.87$; IS: 0.91; CM: $\alpha = 0.90$). Respondents' scores would range between 24 and 216. In a study conducted by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), an estimate of 0.94 reported as the reliability coefficient of the scale. The test re-test coefficient value obtained by the researchers was 0.91.

Procedure

This study was conducted for a period of eight weeks consisting of four phases: recruitment, pretest, treatment and post-treatment evaluations. A written approval was secured from the Ministry of Education, Ondo State, before the commencement of the eight-week intervention. The 60 participants were randomly selected and distributed into Emotional Intelligence Training Group and a control group. The objectives of the emotional intelligence training include providing accurate information about the adaptive functions of emotions; assisting group participants to identify feelings and express them appropriately, particularly the negative; educating about emotions and their respective meanings and; Identifying helpful and adaptive mood and emotion regulation strategies in managing unpleasant or toxic feelings and enhancing pleasant feelings

experimental group A,-emotional intelligence training (EIT). There were eight sessions summarized as follows:

Session I: General orientation and administration of instrument to obtain pretest scores. In this session, the researchers had some initial rapport with the participants in which the purpose, objectives and benefits of the training programme were explained. Pretest administration was conducted in the session.

Session II: Discussion of historical background of intelligence. During the session, participants were exposed to evolution of emotional intelligence and how its impact is felt in education and other fields of human endeavour.

Session III: Explanation of the importance of emotional intelligence and characteristics of high emotional intelligence. Participants were trained on how to develop interpersonal abilities such as self awareness, understanding of one's emotion, and ability to constructively express thoughts and feelings. Participants practised how to convey their feeling to others along with the reasons behind those feelings.

Session IV: Explanation of interpersonal skills which include awareness of others emotions, feelings and needs. Participants were taught how to establish and maintain cooperative, constructive and satisfying relationships. They practised how to effectively demonstrate empathy and basic social skills that are vital to building good working relationship.

Session V: Discussion of ways and methods of managing and controlling emotions. Benefits derivable from effective management of stress were explained. Suggestions for improving stress management skills were discussed and practised.

Session VI: Participants were provided psycho-educational materials on how to manage change. This requires people to realistically and flexibly cope with their immediate situation and effectively solve problems as they arise. Suggestions for improving adaptability skills were given.



Session VII: Emotional skills that stimulate self-motivation needed to set and achieve goals. Participants were taught how to develop optimistic and positive outlook combined with a feeling of happiness and contentment with oneself, others and life in general.

Session VIII: Revision of all activities and post-test administration. This is the closing session in which appraisal of the earlier sessions was done. Participants were protested. Generally, participants were given assignments at the end of each previous session.

Data Analysis

To assess the effect of emotional intelligence training on teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) were performed

Results

Table 1 below shows the difference in the participants' level of teaching self-efficacy before and after exposure to the experimental group. Table 1 reveals that pretest mean scores of 78.20 and 76.63 were obtained from emotional intelligence training and control groups respectively. Thus, the pretest mean scores of the two study groups demonstrated little or no difference in their teaching self-efficacy. The posttest mean scores of 178.00 obtained from the participants exposed to emotional intelligence training showed a significant and substantial improvement in their teaching self-efficacy compared to their counterparts in the control group that was not treated. This is an indication that there was a marked difference in the participants' teaching self-efficacy after treatment.

Table 2 reveals the difference in the participants' level of frustration before and after exposure to experimental treatment. As presented in Table 2, pretest mean scores of 151.70 and 149.93 were obtained from the participants exposed to emotional intelligence training and their counterparts in the control group respectively. This clearly revealed that both groups had similar level of frustration before the commencement of the

treatment program. The drastic reduction observed in the posttest mean score of 80.67 for the emotional intelligence group compared with 145.83 from their counterparts in the control group could be attributed to the positive effects of the treatment.

Table 3 shows if there was a significant difference in the participants' frustration level before the emotional intelligence training group was treated. The results presented in Table 3 revealed that the calculated t-value of 0.598 is less than critical t-value of 2.00 at 0.05 level of significance. This showed that there was no significant difference in the teaching self-efficacy of the participants before they were exposed to treatment. Table 4 clearly demonstrates if there

was a significant difference in the participants' level of teaching self-efficacy before the emotional intelligence training group was treated. Table 4 above revealed that the calculated t-value of 0.334 is less than the critical value of 2.00 at 0.05 level of significance. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the pretest mean scores of the participants exposed to emotional intelligence training and their counterparts in the control group.

Hypothesis One: This hypothesis was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance using analysis of covariance. The result is as shown in Table 1

Table 5 above summarizes the computational details of the tested hypothesis

Table 1

Comparison of Pre and Posttest Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Teaching Self-efficacy

Group	N	Teaching Self-Efficacy			
		Pretest		Posttest	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
Emotional Intelligence Training	30	78.20	9.67	178.00	14.47
Control	30	76.63	10.62	78.83	11.73

Table 2

Comparison of Pre and Posttest Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Teacher Frustration Scale

Group	N	Teacher Frustration			
		Pretest		Posttest	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
Emotional Intelligence Training	30	151.70	20.38	80.67	24.62
Control	30	149.93	20.92	145.83	19.71

Table 3

t-test Analysis of Difference in the Pretest Mean Scores of Participants on Frustration Scale

Group	N	\bar{X}	S.D	df	t-cal	t-crit	P
Emotional Intelligence Training	30	78.20	9.67	58	0.598	2.00	> 0.05
Control	30	76.63	10.62				

Table 4

t-test Analysis of Difference in the Pretest Mean Scores of Participants on Teaching Self-efficacy

Group	N	\bar{X}	S.D	df	t-cal	t-crit	P
Emotional Intelligence Training	30	151.70	20.38	58	0.334	2.00	> 0.05
Control	30	149.93	20.62				



using ANCOVA. The post-treatment scores of participants exposed to EIT and those in the control group showed that treatment effect was significant at the 0.05 alpha level, the F-ratio is $F(1, 56) = 838.91$ and $P < 0.05$. Since $P < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected. This reveals that there was significant main effect of intervention on the teaching self-efficacy of male and female participants exposed to EIT and those in the control group. In addition, there was a significant interaction effect between the treatment and gender of the participants ($F(1, 56) = 5.73$ and $P < 0.05$).

Hypothesis Two: This hypothesis was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ using analysis of covariance. The result is as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 summarizes the computational details of the tested hypothesis using the post-treatment scores of male and female participants exposed to EIT. The result of the analysis using ANCOVA at the 0.05 alpha level shows that there was no significant main effect of treatment in the teaching self-efficacy of male and female participants exposed to EIT. The gender had F-value of $F(1, 27) = 3.17$ and $P > 0.05$. Since $P > 0.05$, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

In order to know the direction of the difference, Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) was carried out as shown in Table 7.

The result from Table 7 shows the mean for the two groups, male and female treated with emotional intelligence training. The male group had the highest adjusted post-test mean score ($= 181.18$), while the female group had the least adjusted post-test mean score ($= 170.39$). The values were obtained by adding the grand mean ($= 178.00$) with the respective adjusted deviation. Though no significant difference between the teaching self-efficacy of male and female participants exposed to EIT was found, the results in Table 3 show that male participants were more likely to benefit from the treatment more than their female counterparts

Hypothesis Three: This hypothesis was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ using analysis of Co-

Table 5

2x2 Analysis of Covariance using EIT and Control Groups

Source of Variation	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean squares	F	P	Remark
Rows	1	9249.00	9249.00	838.91	<0.05	S
Columns	1	20.06	20.06	1.82	>0.05	NS
Interaction	1	63.12	63.12	5.73	<0.05	S
Error	56	617.68	11.03			
Total	59	9949.86				

* Significant at p. < 0.05

Table 6

Analysis of Covariance Using EIT and Gender

Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F	P	Remarks
Pre-test	1	557.19	557.19	2.87	0.01	NS
Gender	1	614.78	614.78	3.17	0.09	NS
Explained	2	1171.97	585.99	3.02	0.07	NS
Residual	27	5236.03	193.93			
Total	29	6408.00	220.97			

* Significant at p. < 0.05

Table 7

Multiple Classification Analysis of EIT and Gender

Variable + Category	N	Unadjusted Deviation	ETA	Adjusted for Independent Variable	BETA
Gender					
Male	16	2.25		4.54	
Female	14	-2.86		-5.19	
			0.18		0.33
Multiple R Squared					0.183
Multiple R					0.428
Grand mean = 178.00					

variance. The result is as shown in Table 8

Table 8 shows that there is significant main effect of treatment in the teaching self-efficacy of the treated participants with internal and external locus of control. The computed outcome has the F-ratio of $F(1, 27) = 32.52$ and was significant at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. In order to know the direction of the difference, MCA was carried out as shown in Table 9

Table 9 shows the mean scores for participants with internal and external locus of control treated with emotional intelligence training. The participants with internal locus of control had the highest adjusted post-test mean score ($= 191.42$), and the participants with external locus of control had the least adjusted post-test mean score ($= 170.39$). The values were obtained by adding the grand mean ($= 178.00$) with the respective unadjusted deviation. From the results, participants with internal locus of control were more likely to benefit from

Table 8

Analysis of Covariance Using EIT and Locus of Control

Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F	P	Remarks
Pretest	1	557.19	557.19	5.67	0.25	NS
Locus	1	3196.90	3196.90	32.52	0.00	S
Explained	2	3754.09	1877.05	19.96	0.00	S
Residual	27	2653.91	98.29			
Total	29	6408.00	220.97			

*Significant at p. < 0.05



Table 9

Multiple Classification Analysis of the EIT and Locus of Control

Variable + Category	N	Unadjusted Deviation	ETA	Adjusted for Independent variable	BETA
Locus					
Internal	12	13.42		12.88	
External	18	-8.94		-8.59	
			0.75		0.72
Multiple R Squared					0.586
Multiple R					0.765
Grand mean = 178.00					

the treatment than the participants with external locus of control.

Discussion

It should be reiterated that the goal of this study was to investigate the experimental influence of emotional intelligence on teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers. This specific goal sums up the direction of the discussion of the results obtained in the study. On the hypothesis one, the post-treatment scores of the EIT group were significantly different from that of the control group. This result shows that emotional intelligence, irrespective of the gender of the participants, was very effective in enhancing the teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers. This explains that there was a significant observation from the post-test behaviour of teaching self-efficacy of teachers exposed to emotional intelligence education. Thus, emotional intelligence could be said to contribute to this change in observed behaviour of the treated teachers. This finding is aligned to the assertion of Byron (2001) that understanding one's emotional processes can have far-reaching effects for social functioning and the quality of individual life, irrespective of gender. Similarly, Chan's (2004) study reports that self-efficacy beliefs are significantly predicted by the components of emotional intelligence. From these two submissions, and the finding in the current study, significant influence of emotional intelligence in enhancing teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers cannot be overemphasized. Aremu (2007) similarly reported a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and

teaching self-efficacy of career-frustrated teachers in Delta State, Nigeria. Inferentially, this could promote teaching effectiveness in that a teacher with enhanced self-efficacy would not only be committed to his/her job, but would also be effective in the discharge of his/her duties.

Perry, Ball and Stacey (2004) are of the opinion that emotional intelligence enhances teachers' effectiveness. In the same vein, Fer (2004) also submits that emotional intelligence training could be used to foster teachers' effectiveness in their private lives and in the classroom. Therefore, an emotionally intelligent teacher would be a complete teacher.

Our research hypothesis concerning the main effect of treatment on the teaching self-efficacy of male and female participants exposed to emotional intelligence training indicates that there was no significant difference between the teaching self-efficacy of male and female participants exposed to emotional intelligence training. This finding provides that the gender of career-frustrated teachers (male and female) had no significant influence on their teaching self-efficacy. In this wise, what dictates teaching self-efficacy of the participants was not a function of their gender. This finding contradicts that of Russell-Bowie and Dowson (2005) and Huang, Liu and Shiomi (2007) that gender significantly influenced the teaching self-efficacy of teachers. In Russell-Bowie and Dowson's (2005) study, for example, female teachers were more likely to report self-confidence in teaching than their male counterparts. Variation in these findings perhaps could be as a result of the fact that Russell-Bowie and Dowson (2005) made use of pre-

service teachers for their study, while the present study made use of in-service career-frustrated teachers.

This, notwithstanding, the finding, however, is in harmony with the ones reported by Bursal (2008) in which gender effect was not a significant factor among pre-service elementary teachers' teaching self-efficacy. Along the same contention, Cakiroglu, Cakiroglu and Boone (2005) also reported no significant difference in the teaching self-efficacy of teachers.

The existence of no significant difference between the teaching self-efficacy of male and female participants in the current study seems to stem from the fact that both were frustrated as testified by Adeyemo and Aremu's (1999) that teaching profession has suffered a reversal of fortune in Nigeria. Besides, both male and female participants had equivalent amount of representation, exposure and experience related to the scale items. This, perhaps, reveals that the proportion of benefits gained from the programmes by male participants is commensurate with that of female participants. In essence, each treatment could be applied effectively across male and female gender.

On the third hypothesis, there was a significant difference in the teaching self-efficacy post-test scores of participants with internal and external locus of control treated with emotional intelligence. This finding extends the previous study by Rockstraw (2007) who examined the influence of locus of control on self-efficacy of undergraduate students and found a significant increase in self-efficacy of internal locus of control students than the external ones. There was, however, no direct evidential finding to the current one being reported. This may be due to the paucity of related literature in this area.

In spite of this, we feel strong to submit that the significant improvement made by teachers with internal locus of control in teaching self-efficacy could be explained on the premise that people with internal locus of control do generally engage in activities that could improve their situation, strive for achievement and work hard to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities. One other explanation is that such people are always inquisitive and try to fig-



ure out why things turn out the way they do. Our finding therefore suggests that when teachers are frustrated on the job, their locus of control could be worked upon if they are emotionally intelligent. Implications of our findings concern improvement of teaching quality through appropriate psychological interventions of which emotional intelligence was an educational tool in the present study. Government and other educational stake holders could facilitate teaching of emotional intelligence with a view to enhancing teachers' effectiveness. Second, career-frustrated teachers should be exposed to attributional retraining programme. From the study, teachers with internal locus of control significantly improved their teaching self-efficacy than their counterparts with external locus of control. Moreover, the study reveals on one hand that most of the career-frustrated teachers were teachers with external locus of control. From this perspective, teachers with internal locus of control could be less susceptible to career-frustration., and when they do, they could be easily assisted to readjust. The clues provided in the study add to the literature base on career frustration in teaching profession, most especially in Nigeria where there is paucity of research in the area.

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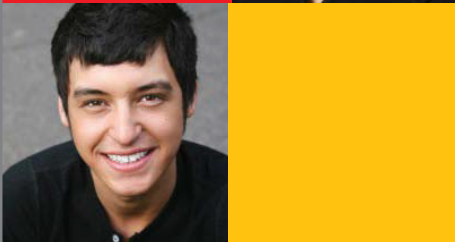
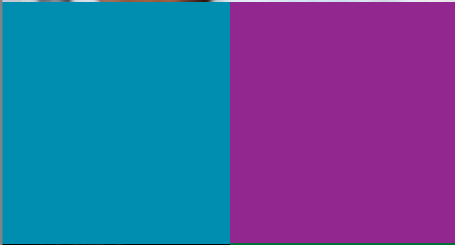
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Understanding the Possible Impact of a Community Service Learning Experience during University on Career Development

Mark Baetz, Chris McEvoy, Keith Adamson, Colleen Loomis
Wilfrid Laurier University

Abstract

There is general consensus that volunteer and community service-learning (CSL) experiences are important to career development even though research remains unclear on the relationship and about how best to help students make a link between service and career decisions. This study investigated the possible impact of CSL experiences on students' career development among a sample of Canadian university students. Interviews were conducted with students ($N = 36$) who had completed a CSL component in one or more psychology courses. Responses revealed that there are many factors and stakeholders involved in the relationship between a service-learning experience and career thinking, and different aspects of the experience can affect career choice in different ways. It was also found that students' responses in personal interviews did not always match up with prior responses on a closed-ended survey; 68% gave consistent responses in both the survey and interviews, whereas 26% gave inconsistent responses and all of these participants had initially reported no impact on a survey and then later discussed in interviews how CSL had confirmed a career choice. Further analysis of interview data found a connection between CSL and career thinking either towards or away from confirming a career choice and the type of impact varied by four characteristics: (1) the number of placements, (2) reflection assignments and activities, (3) emotional engagement, and (4) matching/degree of fit between the placement setting and a student's expectations for the placement. A subsequent review of the Campus Compact course syllabi web database of 50 disciplines showed that 8% of syllabi explicitly address work, career, or job issues and these syllabi provide useful

examples of reflection questions for linking the service-learning experience to career development. An important implication for assessing student CSL outcomes is that asking students one direct, closed-ended question to reflect on how a CSL placement has affected career thinking is too simplistic. Our findings may explain the inconclusive and unexpected findings of past research and guide career counsellors and teachers in facilitating reflections that foster student career development.

Career development counsellors play an important role in university settings through their work with students, faculty, and curriculum development and they actively seek to update the tools and resources used in these functions. In addition to administering well-known inventories and conducting interviews with students, a classic tool used is volunteer experience. Since at least the mid-1990s counsellors have been using community service-learning (CSL) (Keith, 1995) both for facilitating career development and to process students' reflections about possible career choices. Yet, research on the relation between CSL experiences and career decisions remains unclear, leaving career counsellors with questions about the role of CSL in career development. Community service learning is an educational approach involving students in a service experience which "is expected to meet community needs and to improve students' learning, growth and development" (Gray, Ondaatje, & Zakaras, 1999). CSL can occur as a graded component in a course or take place outside the curriculum as a non-graded activity such as an "Alternative Reading Week". CSL is most effective when it includes "key elements drawn from experiential education theory, especially developing critical thinking and intentionally facilitating reflection." (CACSL, 2010). As

part of the reflection process, several possible learning outcomes can be considered (Gemmel & Clayton, 2009) and one of the potentially "profound" learning outcomes from CSL involves career development (Franta, 1994, p.132, based on Ellis, 1993).

From the literature, the possibility of a significant impact of CSL on career development seems to have three categories. The first category relates to career choice, i.e., "Service-learning can help students investigate careers they may be interested in and clarify for themselves how interested they really are before they have spent time and money to prepare for that career" (Franta, 1994, p. 132). In other words, CSL enables students to gauge their interest in a particular career by actively experiencing the settings, populations, and organizations associated with that career in order to become more confident about a career choice. One study highlighted the importance of the setting and population involved when it was found that students are more likely to involve themselves in community service "when they intellectually perceive its importance and when they experience (or expect to experience) an emotional connection with the service recipients" (McCarthy & Tucker, 1999, p. 559). Another research study investigating the impact of various contextual and experiential factors influencing career choice found that "learning experiences (e.g. science/math grades) had the most influence on the career choice model...and directly and indirectly affected career choice through self-efficacy, outcome expectations and interests" (Garg, et al., 2010).

A second category of impact relates to career preparation such that CSL can represent a significant learning and skill development experience, which makes the student more qualified and better prepared for a variety of possible ca-



reers. A third type of impact occurred when the CSL placement site offered professional networking opportunities. More specifically, the community partner staff or the staff in a CSL Centre can become a potentially significant addition to a student's "network of career contacts" (Ellis, 1993, p. 131). These contacts may be able not only to provide further guidance about career choices and career preparation, but are also "good sources for reference letters from people who actually know a student's work" (Franta, 1994).

A review of the empirical research on the possible impact of CSL on career development finds that most studies have found an impact, although the focus of most research has been on the impact of CSL on career choice. Eyler, Giles, and Braxton (1997, as cited in Wolff, 2002) sampled 1,500 service-learning students across the U.S. and found that students who participated in CSL were significantly more likely to choose a career in a helping profession than were students who did not participate in CSL. Similar results were found in student self-report surveys that indicated a great proportion of students were committed to community service, working with children and/or educational careers after participating in service-learning (Tartter, 1996). Further, service-learning, as compared to community service in general, was found to be a critical factor in selecting a service career (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Service-learning can contribute to an increased desire to pursue service related careers (Astin & Sax, 1998; Jung et al., 1999). In a survey of students in all service-learning courses at their university in 2000, Hodge, Lewis, Kramer, and Hughes (2001) found that 36% of students indicated that service-learning had affected their career plans (i.e., they questioned, confirmed or changed career plans). At another university, surveys of university students in psychology courses with a CSL component/ community placement found that 64% reported an impact on career decisions in 1987, and in 2000, 48 % reported an impact (P. Davock, personal communication, February 14, 2005).

There have also been studies that found CSL did not have a positive impact on career development. In a large

scale study, Gray and colleagues (1999) found no association between participation in service-learning and "confidence in your choice of career" and "preparation for your career" as variables under the broader category of "Professional Skills" (p. 40). In a much smaller study, Wolff (2002) found that students in a controlled service-learning project shifted, as anticipated, "from self-focused career motivation to other-focused value motivation" (p. 68) but also unexpectedly became less confident in their ability to engage effectively in career decision-making tasks or activities as measured by all of the subscales of the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale (from Taylor & Betz, 1983). In attempting to explain this unexpected outcome, Wolff speculated that the students "may have realized that they did not gain additional career insight but found enjoyment in their ability to work with children" (p. 69) or they "may have thought of other career opportunities, possibly increasing distress about their careers while decreasing self-efficacy" (p. 69). Another possible explanation for CSL reportedly not having a positive impact on career development may be an absence of an "explicit effort by the instructor to relate the experience to career options" (Batchelder & Root, 1994, p. 354). In this study students reported with a yes or no response that CSL had an impact on career, but this type of response restricts our knowledge because it cannot tell us qualitative characteristics about the impact such as a positive reinforcing effect or a negative effect repelling one from a career.

Overall, the empirical research leaves us with a number of unanswered questions about why different studies come to different conclusions about the impact of CSL on career development, leaving implications for how to use CSL in career counselling. Given the unexpected research results, one question is whether researchers have chosen the most appropriate approaches or taken into account the many contextual and experiential factors which can be involved in assessing possible influences on career choice. Another question is which aspects of CSL might explain why students' career development is affected so differently such that nearly half of the students in a survey report no

impact. To develop a more complete understanding of the impact of CSL on career development it appears that research assessments need to move away from using a restricted response option of either "yes or no" when asking about the impact of CSL on one's career choice. The next step in this line of research is to explore how students might (or might not) connect CSL to career decisions such as whether a student questions, confirms, or changes career plans.

In summary, research shows that service-learning experiences impact career development for some students. Research to date has focused mostly on the outcome of whether CSL impacts career choice. No clear evidence has been found that explores how a student may connect CSL experiences to one's career thinking. The current project fills this gap in the literature by asking the following research questions: (1) Which factors play a role in students' connecting CSL experiences with various career decisions? (2) What are the similarities and differences in CSL experiences between students who report making a connection and those that do not?

Method

This survey study was designed to explore how students link service-learning experience to thoughts about a future career and to compare students who previously reported that a CSL experience impacted their career choice to those students who reported no impact. The study was reviewed and approved by the associated institutional review board for research involving human participants.

Sampling and Participants

A stratified random sampling strategy was initially used resulting in a smaller than desired sample size so convenient sampling was employed for the replacement sample. The goal was to have 40 participants in the study, 20 from each group (i.e., impact and no impact). We invited 45 students to participate in the study from those students who had completed 1 of the 8 psychology courses offered with a CSL component, which included two third-year courses (psychology of exceptional children, youth and adults and Introduction



to Clinical Psychology) and six courses at the second-year level (3 of these were related to developmental psychology and one course each in abnormal, community, and educational psychology). The sample was selected by students' previous responses on a paper and pencil survey about whether the CSL experience had an impact on career. Those students who had said "yes, it impacted my career" were in one group ($n = 27$) and those who reported no impact were in another group ($n = 18$). Of those 45 students, 19 agreed to participate in this study (11 in the "yes" group and 8 in the "no" group). To increase the sample size we recruited 17 additional students who had completed a service-learning experience; there was no previous record of responses to survey questions for these students. In the end, our sample ($N = 36$) was comprised of a stratified random sample ($n = 19$) and a convenience sample ($n = 17$). Even though the sample is smaller than our original design, in studies using qualitative data gathered through individual interviews this sample size is sufficient and even larger than that in many studies with 10 or 20 participants. All participants were undergraduate university students, both men and women in their second, third, or fourth year of studies who had taken a university course with a CSL component; students' responses differed by year with more advanced students reporting an impact, but subsequent analyses showed that this difference was related to the number of courses taken with CSL rather than year of study alone; it is the case that as the year of studies increased so did the number of CSL courses taken.

Instrument

The instrument for data collection in this study was an interview guide with both open- and closed ended questions that asked students to describe the placement and how it may have impacted their thinking about career choices. Sample questions included: Please describe your CSL activity. How, if at all, did learning about yourself through this CSL activity influence your thinking about career choice? How, if at all, did connecting course content with CSL affect your career choice? How, if at all,

did working with this population through your CSL placement apply to your thinking about career choice? Is there anything else that might have influenced your thinking about career?

Procedure

The initial sample was identified (as specified above) and invited via email and telephone to participate in the study. For the replacement sample, potential participants were invited through announcements made in class and by oral invitations made in the hallways near classroom entries. Interested students provided contact information and the research assistants followed up with them to schedule an interview. Participants signed a consent form, engaged in an individual interview, which lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes, and received \$10 compensation. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim into text. Data were managed using the NVivo 7.0 software package.

Analysis

Analyzing these data was an interactive and iterative process that, although non-linear, may be presented as three different analyses conducted. A first type of analysis included reading all transcripts ($N = 36$) to understand in general how students connect service-learning to their thinking about a future career. All 36 transcripts were analyzed using open coding with a priori defined themes that corresponded directly to the research questions, as well as for themes that emerged from the data. This approach required multiple readings of a transcript. This open coding was performed by teams of two research assistants with each one first reading and coding the text independently then meeting to review their codes and to develop a consensus code for each selected section of text (i.e., a code with 100% inter-rater agreement). A definition and summary for each code was written and representative quotations (i.e., raw data) were noted. Next, axial coding was performed to look for relationships among the codes. Related codes were grouped together to form a theme. Finally, the themes were compiled to document how students link their service-learning experiences to

their career considerations. A second step involved analyzing the 19 cases with previous data for consistency across survey data and interview data. In a third type of analysis, we compared responses of students who reported that their CSL experience had influenced their career thinking to those students who said it had not. Again, consensus coding was used this time among three data analysts.

Findings

With the combined sample ($N = 36$) we found five themes that emerged as influential factors on students linking CSL experiences with thinking about a future career: (1) personal skills development and a match with their interests; (2) satisfaction with their placement; (3) family; (4) friends; and (5) CSL experiences that reinforced previous experiences. In the first section, these themes are reported in order of descending importance in the data (e.g., the first theme is the most prominent finding). Quotations are used as illustrations and the number following a quote indicates a particular research participant.

Half of the students ($n = 18$) reported that the degree of match, or relative closeness, between a student's skills and interests and characteristics of a CSL placement were important to influencing career thinking.

It kind of strengthened the way I feel about kids, so now I know that I actually do really want to work with them because there's an autistic kid and like, the way I saw him, I just felt that there was more that somebody could do for him...and it's just something I really want to do...I didn't know I cared so much and I just kind of figured that out. (#36)

Early on I realized I enjoyed helping people deal with emotional situations...and I was good at it, and I had the patience and the trust...and I give good advice and people like that...and I thought if I can do this and make money doing it, then that would be ideal. (#21)



Many of the participants ($n = 10$) explicitly commented that they were satisfied with their placement experience. They mentioned that their placement provided an opportunity to gain experiential knowledge of a particular work environment, the clientele, and the work activities of their chosen career. Other participants commented that their placement experience provided an opportunity for a process of elimination for career choices or that they enjoyed the placement setting but would choose a different population for their future career. Overall, students found that their contact with staff and other volunteers within their placements influenced their career thinking. For example, students appreciated how staff created a family-like atmosphere and demonstrated overall enthusiasm and passion for their work. Staff also provided supportive relationships including tangible support such as writing letters of recommendation.

Do you know what I mean, like I did a suicide intervention program, and I did a first aid program, and just stuff like that really helped. I mean interacting with volunteers is always helpful, too, because they have the same interests that you do. (#11)

It's a very tight knit relationship between the volunteers and the staff. It's a very small school, so I think there is like . . . eight or nine teachers, so it, it's very tight knit, family... and I liked that idea. (#1)

Another influence on career thinking is family. Familial influences on career choice were mentioned by 27% ($n = 9$) of the participants. Students often discussed that their parents or family members were involved in a particular career, which the students now found interesting after completing their CSL placement. Several participants also mentioned that discussions with family members positively reinforced career interests.

I think that if my parents hadn't have pushed me, then, that is probably the biggest in-

fluence because I don't think without that I would be that interested . . . So you know they were always just trying to push me to do the best that I could do. So they were definitely my first and biggest influence on that I would say. (#4)

Just that, my dad was a teacher, and so that was what actually drove me towards this career, and then actually having two volunteer positions helped me confirm that yes, this is what I want to do. (#34)

I think it would be interesting with like my Kin degree and a Psych minor, um, it's a good background to get into graduate school and I want to have a career sort of in the health field but, not physiotherapy, um, I don't know, it was one of those options that my mom mentioned and I thought well, I'll try speech language...that's interesting I guess. (#15)

A few participants ($n = 4$) mentioned that their peers positively reinforced their career thinking by telling them that they had the skills to be successful within their placement environment. Participants' also mentioned that working with their friends who shared the same career interests helped to create connections and deepen interest in a particular career.

Ah, well I didn't, at first I guess, I didn't really consciously decide that, people were just saying: "Oh you'd really make a really good teacher", you know, so then I said, oh, I don't want be a teacher...And then you know, I got in, I don't know, it's probably half way through high school and I started volunteering and doing things like that, and then realized that I really liked it, and it did kind of suit my personality. (#4)

Like a couple of my friends...they're really involved in the community as well, so I see them like being

so devoted to their jobs and I'm just like "Man, I really want to be that person too. (#16)

Some of the participants, 8% ($n = 3$), also reflected on how having had previous experiences that were similar to those in the CSL placement reinforced their ability to perform within that particular context.

I've worked with kids before, but always a much like younger group (e.g., toddler, even infants, up to two, three, four years old) but never in a public school setting. And I found a lot of the things that I didn't realize would translate did, kind of in fact, translate over pretty well...So maybe I gained some confidence because I realized that some of the skills are more generalizable than I thought they were, as long as your conscious of the age bracket you were working with and make it appropriate. (#32)

In closing the presentation of the findings for the first research question, analysis of interview data resulted in five themes emerging as influential on students' thinking about their future career.

Now, we turn to findings for the second research question exploring similarities and differences in CSL experiences between students who report making a connection and those that do not. First, we found that students' ($N = 19$) responses in their interviews did not always match up with their prior responses on a closed-ended survey. Of the 19 students, 68% ($n = 13$) gave consistent responses in both the survey and interviews, whereas 26% ($n = 5$) gave inconsistent responses and those five individuals had said no impact on the survey but when interviewed said that the CSL experience confirmed their career choice. (Note: The total percentage is 94 because one participant is not included in these calculations because of reporting both yes and no impact for multiple placements.) Of those students checking "yes" on a survey about CSL



impacting career choice ($n = 11$), 100% gave interview responses consistent with their survey responses. Of those students checking “no” on a survey about CSL impacting career choice ($n = 8$), 63% ($n = 5$) gave interview responses inconsistent with their survey responses. Students who had initially said there was no impact on a survey discussed in interviews how CSL had confirmed a career choice.

I think it confirmed a lot of the traits that I knew I had, because I worked with young children a lot before... Things like being capable of carrying for young children, patience, compassion, those are things I think just confirmed them, not that I found that they were new, but they just sort of renewed them. (#17)

I think it was just a good experience... you get to just go and hang out with kids and it really brightens their day... it makes you feel a lot better like I always left there feeling great and it was a really good experience. It definitely taught me that I want to focus on other kids. (#31)

Another finding is that even in interviews students sometimes go back-and-forth between yes and no responses about how a CSL experience may have impacted career thinking.

Actually, no [impact on career] because I knew that I wanted to be a teacher ever since I was very young, and so these experiences helped me to confirm that yes, this is what I want to do. (#34)

Given the finding that interview data were more credible than a single-item with a yes or no response and in order to increase the validity of our data we expanded the sample size to include the entire sample ($N = 36$). Using a grounded theory technique we first divided students into two groups based on whether or not CSL had impacted their career thinking. Ninety-two percent ($n = 33$) reported that CSL had impacted their career thinking and 6% ($n = 2$) re-

ported no impact or indecision about an impact, with one participant who reported both: an impact for one CSL experience but not for another. Further analysis of those who reported an impact revealed that there were two distinct subgroups—CSL had confirmed either towards (61%, 22 of 36) or away (31%, 11 of 36) from a career choice. Given these findings, we regrouped the sample from two to three groups before comparing the groups to examine how CSL experiences may have differently impacted career thinking.

A comparison across three groups revealed four themes that emerged as characteristics that differed among the groups: (1) the number of placements in which students had been enrolled; (2) reflection activities and assignments; (3) level of emotional engagement; and (4) choice/matching.

Number of Placements

When analyzing interview transcripts across the groups there was a noticeable difference in the number of service-learning placements completed. For the undecided category no students indicated that they had completed or been enrolled in more than one class with a service-learning placement during their time as an undergraduate. In the confirmed-away impact group 27% (3 of 11) of the students indicated that they had engaged or were currently engaged in more than one service-learning placement. Within the third group, students who indicated confirmed towards a particular career, 45% (10 of 22) indicated that they had or were currently engaged in multiple service-learning placements.

Reflection Activities & Assignments

Only students in the confirmed-towards group mentioned reflection assignments and activities as a part of their service-learning experience; none of the students in the other two impact groups mentioned either reflection assignments or activities. Students in the confirmed-towards group discussed how the reflection activities helped them to connect their placement experiences to course and class material, linking theory to action:

I saw both... individual learning along with [the] community school environment [*the location of the CSL placement*] that we were learning in class so yeah it definitely went hand in hand. (#31)

Another student who felt the CSL experience impacted career noted that the placement provided a tangible example for theories presented in the classroom:

[I] Think it's really so important, especially because, you know, psychology classes are... about helping people... it really gives you real world experience and able to see the theory in action. (#10)

Level of Emotional Engagement

When students were discussing their awareness regarding the needs and resources of their placement organization/community, or their learning about themselves, a difference was found in the language students used to describe such awareness. Students who indicated that their placement had impacted their future career choice towards a particular career were found to use more emotional and expressive language. In other words, students in the confirmed-towards career group used language that reflected a higher level of emotional engagement in describing their learning about the community needs and resources. For example, one student commented:

I feel like the first time I went and I called my dad and I was crying, I was so upset, and I was like 'these people have so little and I have so much'... like this is how much I want to be there for them... it tells you about you, about who you want to be... it just reaffirmed, kind of, what I want to be, in working with the elderly. (#3)

Students in the undecided and confirmed-away groups did not express emotional connections. They discussed more skills development and learning with some emotional distance.



We learned to withhold judgements... and the other thing is just to try to be a bit desensitized but still sympathetic. (#21)

So I think the placement better helped me to understand how kids are, how they interact, and how to interact with them. (#20)

Choice/Matching

When students discussed their experiences within their service-learning placement, they talked about the extent to which a match existed between their personal expectations and the type of client, population, or organization in which they were engaged. Participants discussed their placement settings in distinct ways that matched their impact category. Within the categories, students often described their placement settings in similar ways; across categories there was a noticeable difference in the ways in which participants discussed their placements.

Students in the undecided group communicated that their thinking about their future career was likely not influenced by their placement experience. For example, some of the participants discussed that they already had a future career in mind. In contrast to the undecided group, participants in the confirmed-away group discussed their placement experiences largely in relation to what they perceived was a hectic or stressful work environment.

[in the placement] I found the classes were definitely oversized. I found that the teacher was doing a lot...So at times I felt, those children who needed extra means, or more attention, who tended to not be on top, or have just, you know, little problems...they definitely didn't get the attention that they needed. (#20)

Many students in this category often recognized the lack of adequate resources to address community/client needs, and the stressful work environment that resulted. Students often commented on lack of resources in classrooms to adequately facilitate learning, oversized classrooms and

teachers not having enough time to devote attention to students who needed it. Students in this group also described how non-profit organizations often struggle with minimal budgets to provide their services.

Because it takes a lot of money to run a place like that; and it's not coming through the memberships. So I just kind of, in my eyes, took me out of my bubble. (#15)

Well, just in terms of what supplies and stuff the teachers need; the fact that they don't have a lot of help in the class room. There are public students that don't speak any English, so it was hard to even get them to talk during class, so just a lot of quality resources and really just a lot of English as a second language. (#2)

Another finding within the confirmed-away category was that there was a mismatch between what students were expecting and what students experienced. Some of the students in this category commented that they liked their placement and the clients they served, however, for their career choice they would modify one or both of these characteristics. For example, students in classroom placements often referred to liking the youth, but would pick a different age to teach.

So for me though I think I learned that I knew that I wanted to be a teacher but I don't think that I want to go that young... [I] learned that I like teaching...like not that I didn't think I liked kids...but I really like kids...like possibly like as a career...like I go into teaching like, at the junior level. (#26)

In contrast, students in the confirmed-towards group discussed their experiences in relation to how their placement context matched their needs, values, and goals. They described their service-learning context as familial and tight-knit, facilitating a productive placement experience that was congruent with their expectations.

It's a very tight knit relationship between the volunteers and the staff...and I liked that idea...that's why I came to (this university): small, its more intimate, it's tighter knit...that's the kind of job that I like; I like interaction with people, and ...building relationships with people. (#1)

I think that every placement I've done has influenced my learning and what I want to [do]...like I never would have thought of doing a project with single mothers but, this group was really influential and I wasn't really considering teaching to be an option until this year, so I thought 'Okay, I'll do this placement and see what it would be like to teach this specific age or this specific population, I guess.' And they were great, so I really want to go into that. (#3)

Discussion

Most students involved in CSL report that CSL experiences impact their career development. Students' thinking on career issues is impacted by other volunteers and staff in the community partner, parents, peers, past CSL experiences, and their personal skills and interests. These multiple sources of influence may explain the inconclusive and unexpected findings in past research. Students may not always recognize a connection between CSL experiences and career decision-making because there are many influential factors on career development. Some influences may be more easily perceived such as being in the exact setting of a selected future career, while other influences may be less noticeable such as in cases where a CSL experience may be confirmation of skills or traits which then in turn confirms a career choice. This combination of direct and indirect influences was also identified by Garg and colleagues (2010).

One important finding is that students are not always aware of a link between a CSL experience and how they think about selecting a future career. When students were asked whether a



CSL experience had impacted their thinking about career and were given a yes/no option for a response many of those who say no when asked for more information in an open-ended style question report some sort of confirmation of a career. One possible explanation for the different responses may be that students may not understand that “impact” may mean confirming towards or confirming away from a career. Further confusion could arise if some aspects of the CSL experience confirmed towards a career and other aspects confirmed away from a particular career. Another possible explanation is that the awareness of or a connection to experiences may be delayed such that students who initially respond that there is not an effect of CSL on career thinking later realize that the CSL experience shapes career decisions. A third possible explanation is research method bias. Such bias may exist because assessing an impact of CSL on career thinking with a yes/no response is too simplistic and it may be that qualitative analysis is needed “to uncover the sources and content of what is learned through service” (Hedin, 1995). For example, it is clear from our findings that students may encounter challenges in clarifying links between the actual CSL experience and career thinking. Future research can test for method bias by administering the two assessments simultaneously, rather than sequentially as done in the current study, and in using qualitative approaches attending to disentangling seemingly contradictory (e.g., no it did not have an impact and then yes, it did) reports from research participants.

Influences of CSL on career thinking are based, in part, on prior influences. Clearly some influences are occurring before a CSL placement begins. Yet, the CSL experience plays a role in reinforcing previously entertained ideas. In addition to playing a reinforcing role, CSL placements provide other influences that shape career thinking. Findings from this study suggest that CSL experiences may act as a subtle confirmation or as one step in a continuum of confirmation of a career choice.

Another possible explanation for the range of previous research findings on the impact of CSL on career decision-

making may be due to the variability of the use of reflection exercises that tie the learning placement to career thinking. Our findings show that reflection activities and assignments played a key role in students’ ability to make concrete connections between their CSL placement and career thinking, and previously authors have mentioned that some instructors do not have an explicit reflection component for career thinking (Batchelder & Root, 1994). Course instructors are concerned with delivering the course content in effective ways, often having students reflect upon their placement in relation to the course material, without relating the content specifically to career development. As a result, some students may not be making explicit efforts to reflect on how their service-learning and classroom experiences are affecting their thinking about a future career. Our findings suggest that in order for career thinking to be influenced students’ CSL experiences need to be accompanied by guided reflection.

Findings from the current study also indicate that those students who are positively influenced use more emotionally expressive language when describing their experiences within their placement, which is consistent with an earlier study’s findings (McCarthy & Tucker, 1999). In our study, students personally affected by client issues are more likely to connect their CSL experience with an impact on their career thinking than students who do not feel an emotional connection to their placement. Through this heightened level of understanding and exposure to social issues, students are able to appreciate more fully the many challenges faced by their clients. Furthermore, not only do students appreciate client issues, but through the placement, they are given opportunities to engage themselves in ameliorating client situations. Our study’s findings reinforce previous research on this point which found that students who engaged in service-learning have an increased inclination to engage in careers which involve helping people or alleviating social issues (Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; as cited in Wolff, 2002).

Limitations and Implications

Of course, our study has limitations to consider. We were unable to reach the designed stratified sample. This smaller sample size of 19, however, did lead to an interesting and potentially significant finding about how students who may initially report no impact may have been impacted. On a slightly different note, this study had a small sample of non-impacted students, so findings from this part of the study should not be generalized.

Our findings have a number of implications for future research, career counselling, service-learning programming, and maximization of student outcomes. An important implication for assessing student CSL outcomes is that asking students one direct, close-ended question to reflect on how a CSL placement has affected career thinking is too simplistic. There are likely to be many factors at play that a student will need to consider in answering such a question. In future research a more finely tuned assessment would ask a series of questions based on the possible roles and impacts of the various stakeholders potentially involved in the CSL process. In addition, asking open-ended questions such as “How was your career thinking impacted?” or “What aspects of your CSL experience moved you toward or away from a particular career?” would help generate more in-depth responses than a closed-ended question with a commonly used dichotomous response set (e.g., yes/no). In order to understand more fully which processes and characteristics of service-learning programs affect student career thinking, career counsellors and researchers must ask multiple open-ended questions in order to illuminate the many different direct and indirect relationships associated with service-learning that affect students’ career decisions.

Our findings also have implications for future service-learning practices in order to maximize student outcomes. Reflection processes can be of a concrete or abstract nature, with concrete processes often associated with future actions to be considered or taken (Burke, Scheuer, & Meredith, 2007). Reflection assignments and activities incorporated into course syllabi and service-learning coursework, delivered by



faculty that facilitates students making-concrete connections among their placement experiences, experiential learning, classroom learning, and their career thinking, will yield a higher degree of connection between a CSL experience and a career choice. In order to maximize student outcomes, explicit efforts must be made on the part of both direct and indirect stakeholders of the service-learning process to relate student experiences and learning to desired outcomes such as classroom learning, skill development, and career thinking. Career counsellors can use this information and help students connect their CSL experiences to career thinking. They may also help instructors develop how CSL is used and reflected upon in courses. Another implication is that counsellors may further facilitate students' reflections by eliciting emotional language (in addition to rational) with questions about how the experiences made them feel (happy, sad, angry, frustrated, rewarded, gratified, etc.).

Given the role of the teacher as a key stakeholder in the reflection component of the service-learning process, we undertook a further analysis of how teachers of courses with a CSL component may have attempted to make a concrete connection to career thinking as part of the CSL reflection process. This analysis was based on the Campus Compact course syllabi web database with syllabi posted in 50 disciplines. In our analysis of these syllabi we asked three questions: (1) Given the importance of classroom/reflection assignments for ensuring students connect a CSL experience to career development, to what extent do the syllabi include reflection/assignment questions which involve career development issues? (2) Given that there are likely multiple sources of influence involved in connecting a CSL experience to career development, are there reflection/assignment questions dealing with career development which acknowledge multiple sources of influence and if so, what sources are acknowledged? (3) Are there reflection/assignment questions which acknowledge the complexity of assessing the impact of a CSL experience on career choice i.e., certain aspects of a CSL experience may confirm a student's interest in a particular career

choice while other aspects of the experience may move a student away from a particular career choice?

In answering the first question we looked for reflection/assignment questions which referred to career development issues by either using the word "career" or referred to "profession", "professional", "job", "employment", "work" or "occupation". It was found that eight percent (45/595) of the syllabi entries across 21 of the 50 disciplines had reflection/assignment questions which involved career development issues. It should also be noted that some syllabi were posted to more than one discipline so that there were actually only 30 different course syllabi with the career development connection. Overall this small number indicates that generally teachers appear not to be making an explicit effort to connect a CSL experience to career development issues.

In answering the second question we found three examples of reflection questions which specifically identified at least three sources of influence in connecting a CSL experience to career development as follows:

"Your journal should clearly illustrate the connections you are making between the campus community, the service learning community, your specific community partner, the local community, your chosen profession, and the larger society. (Cahill & Phillely, 2001)

"(In the journal) ... is the recording of thoughts and feelings as one interacts with clients, staff and peers in various ways with growing awareness of one's own qualities and evolving interests in helping and in professional social work." (Fairless, 2001)

"What "teacher skills" did you need to use in this (CSL) project? What knowledge or abilities did you develop as a result of working on this project? What skills or abilities do you now recognize that you need to develop?...How might what you learned about service, social issues or community agencies impact your future teaching of elementary social studies? (Wade, 2008)

In these examples there is clearly a recognition that to fully appreciate how the CSL experience can be connected to career development, multiple sources of influence should be considered. The influences identified in these examples in-

cluded personal interests, skills and knowledge, and contact with peers and staff from the campus and service learning community, community partner staff and clients, and other members of the local and broader community.

In answering the third question we found that questions dealing with career choice were open-ended e.g., "how has this experience affected your (career) plans" (Coplin, 2001). There were no reflection/assignment questions which specifically guided the student to consider whether the CSL experience confirmed a movement either toward or away from a particular career choice. Thus, career counsellors may want to avoid using closed-ended questions as well as open-ended ones that are too broad or vague.

Overall, while relatively few course syllabi made any reference to career issues, in some cases a strong connection was made including specific reflection questions dealing with either a specific career or more general career issues. In other words the level of guidance to career issues among these syllabi varied widely. Future research could explore the impact on student assessment of the impact of CSL on career development in CSL courses because of varying levels of guidance provided through specific CSL reflection questions.

Conclusion

Limitations notwithstanding, findings from the rest of the study are generalizable to the population of undergraduate students. The impact of CSL on career decisions stands in a complex context of a student's learning about oneself (e.g., skills and values), differences between CSL and volunteer activities, responsibilities, reflection activities and assignments, and learning about the client population served. Our research illuminates that for a majority of students, service-learning experiences can impact career decision-making, and career counsellors, researchers and teachers in courses with CSL will be more likely to find (or foster) this connection using open-ended questions.

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Women's Career Decision-Making After Brain Injury

Maria Iaquinta
Douglas College

Norman E. Amundson
William A. Borgen
University of British Columbia

The career development and counselling literature has not included disability within the framework of diversity (Whiston & Breichesen, 2002) and has especially ignored women with disabilities (Flores et al., 2003). Consequently, the career development of women with disabilities is at an early phase of inquiry (Noonan et al., 2004) with no extant studies on the career development of women with acquired brain injury (ABI). Thus the purpose of this study was to give women with disabilities a greater priority in career research and to elucidate the career decision-making experiences of women with ABI. The social model of disability, which treats disability and normality as socially constructed statuses (Gill, Kewman, & Brannan, 2003), and positive psychology (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005) served as frames for the study.

Concerns in Career for Women with Acquired Brain Injury

ABI is a significant health concern with heterogeneous epidemiology and consequences which result in lifelong impairment of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial functions (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2006; National Institute of Health (NIH), 1998; Golden, Smith, & Golden, 1993). ABI may be traumatic, such as from vehicle accidents or falls, or non-traumatic in nature, such as from aneurysms, strokes, or tumours. There are approximately 18,000 hospitalizations annually for traumatic brain injury which equates to 456 hospitalizations per day. The Brain Injury Association of Canada (2011) estimates that 1.4 million Canadians are living with an acquired brain injury.

Brain injury is frequently a lifetime disability with varying rehabilitation needs over the lifetime (NIH, 1998). Rehabilitation has offered limited op-

portunities for decision-making, has focused on helping people adapt to intraindividual change and neglected the use of enablement approaches that provide environmental modification. Notwithstanding the severity of traumatic brain injury (Rush, Malec, Brown, & Moessner, 2006), better outcomes have been related to peer support, vocational counselling, and cognitive remediation (Ragnarsson, 2006). Individuals with ABI are at an elevated risk of developing mental health disorders; these may be subclinical and expressed in the context of additional stressors or lack of protective factors (Williams & Evans, 2003). Depression, with an average prevalence of 50% (Fleminger, Oliver, Williams & Evans, 2003), has consistently emerged as a correlate of poor outcome. The influence of the social environment in ABI and the possibility of continued improvement in neuropsychological functioning at 5 years post-injury (Millis et al., 2001) denote the need for a career decision-making process over time.

Application of Career Theories

There is an emerging consensus in vocational rehabilitation that there is neither the need nor the possibility of a separate theory of career development for persons with disabilities (Szymanski, 2000). However, a significant disadvantage of traditional career theories is their limited conceptualization of the environment that influences individuals' careers (Collin, 1997). Despite attention to context, emerging career theories continue to conceptualize disability as an intraindividual difference (e.g., Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000; Patton & McMahon, 1999). Blustein (2001) has suggested that replacing the current theoretical emphasis on the study of careers with the study of the psychology of working will result in inclusion and

an integrated perspective on the work lives of individuals. Consequently, this study defined career as activities done over time including work and other life activities.

Career Development of Women with Disabilities

Qualitative studies on the career development of women with disabilities offer a tentative understanding of the career development of women with ABI. Conyers, Koch, and Szymanski (1998) investigated the life-span perspectives of employed college graduates with physical and sensory disabilities on disability and work. Participants identified the interaction of disability and female gender as one of four key factors that mediated or impeded a sense of self in relation to disability. Participant self-perceptions of disability varied according to physical and social surroundings, such that having a disability was central to self-concept in some situations but not in others. The positive expectations of others, especially during times of self-doubt, were especially potent leading to renewed focus and commitment to educational and career related goals. Work played a central role in the lives of the participants contributing a sense of identity and of purpose. Work thus reduced the self-perception of being "disabled" and the sense of dependency frequently associated with disability.

Noonan et al. (2004) investigated facilitative factors in the career development of highly successful women with physical and sensory disabilities. Their resulting model of the vocational experiences of the women is a dynamic system, organized around the core category of the Dynamic Self containing interconnected identity constructs of disability, gender, and racial/ethnic/cultural identities. Participants with acquired disabilities emphasized the importance



of accepting disability as part of identity and of developing an integrated view of self. The social context mediated disability identity while social support was critical to the implementation of a sense of self as a worker with a disability.

Women with disabilities (Noonan et al., 2004) face unique career concerns such as the lack of role models with disability; the interaction of gender, racial, and disability issues; the need for positive coping mechanisms in dealing with antisocial prejudice; and the role of educational and family experiences in expectations regarding paid employment. For women with ABI, particular concerns about identity may further be embedded within the unique career concerns of women with disabilities because the experience of "loss of self" (Nochi, 1998) and of discontinuity (Secrest & Thomas, 1999) is intensified in interaction with others.

Method

This study illuminates, through phenomenological psychology (Osborne, 1990; Wertz, 2005), the experience and meaning of career decision-making for 8 women with ABI. Phenomenological psychology is a qualitative research method that seeks to understand the participants' experiences of their world and the structures of meaning that are common for groups of people. Influenced by constructivism, the method stresses the socially constructed nature of reality. Person and world constitute an interdependent unity. Thus neither person nor world can be considered in isolation and objective realities cannot be separated from a person's subjective experience. The researcher strives to put aside preconceptions and to empathically enter the life world of participants in order to focus on the meaning of written descriptions, such as interview transcripts, as given by the participants. The method stresses trustworthiness and credibility rather than the truth value of the results. Respectful listening and description replace observation and measurement; and openness to participants replaces theory and measurement.

Phenomenological psychology is suited to this study because the career decision-making experience of women

Table 1

Comparison of Careers at Injury and Post-Injury

Participant	At Injury	Post Injury
1	Bank Services	Student, Volunteer
2	Technician Internet Services	Writer, Musician
3	Single Mother, Advocate, Secretarial	Dip. Student, Mother
4	Mother, Hairdresser, Sales, Volunteer	Hairdresser, Mother
5	Manager, Volunteer, Mother	Manager, Mother
6	Hairdresser	B.SW Student, Language Translator
7	Legal Assistant	Contract Legal Assistant, Mother
8	Victim Services, Model, Server	Social Worker, Mother

with brain injury is unknown. The reflection upon the actual experiences as described in the participants' words in this study has been categorized as a more empirical (Hein & Austin, 2001) or descriptive (van Manen, 1990) phenomenology.

Following ethical review approval, purposeful sampling for information rich cases (Patton, 1990) was used to select volunteer participants. Recruitment letters and poster advertisements were sent to list serves for individuals with brain injury and to professionals with the request that they forward them in confidence to female clients who had sustained a mid-career ABI. A mid-career injury facilitated selection of women whose perspective encompassed pre- and post-injury career decision-making. Participants were at a minimum of 2 years post injury; living independently in the community; working at the time of injury; and actively participating in the community as student, worker, and/or volunteer at the time of interview. Participant criteria, associated with higher quality of life for persons with ABI (e.g., Vickery, Gontkovsky, & Caroselli, 2005), and the focus on personal meaning served to integrate a positive psychology approach.

Eight residents of Western Canada volunteered for the study following consent and confidentiality procedures. The average age of participants was 44 at time of interview and 38 at time of injury. Four participants sustained traumatic brain injury when struck by a car or during a fall. Four participants sustained non-traumatic brain injury due to strokes, ruptured aneurysms, or benign brain tumour. All participants received inpatient physical rehabilitation. Four participants received counselling support: one participant received long-term

psychological counselling; two participants received short-term vocational rehabilitation counselling; and one participant received short-term employment counselling. Counselling was funded by government or private insurance. Pre- and post-injury education levels ranged from grade 7 to Master's Degree with high school as the modal level. Table 1 outlines career at injury and post-injury.

Participants richly articulated detailed subjective descriptions of their experience of career decision-making during in person phenomenological interviews. The individual two-hour interviews focused on two broad questions: (a) What is your experience of making career decisions? and (b) Describe any issues that might have influenced a career decision to stay or to leave. Interviews incorporated the lifeline technique (Amundson, 1998) in order to deepen exploration of career decision-making and key career decisions.

Participant interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed according to the procedural guidelines described by Colaizzi (1978) and Osborne (1990). Transcript analysis culminated in an idiographic psychological structure (Wertz, 2005), an individual thematic analysis, of career decision-making that was validated by the respective participant. Individual themes, with aggregated meanings and original statements, were then compared across participant accounts to delineate commonalities in experience and meaning across persons.

The researcher addressed trustworthiness throughout the study and bracketed preconceptions in an ongoing process of self-reflection (Osborne, 1990; Wertz 2005). Participant checks for the individual themes and biographi-



cal profiles were obtained as a check on the accuracy of interpretations and on their goodness of fit with the participants' own accounts. Peer review occurred during the selection of significant meaning statements; the formulation and clustering of meanings into individual themes; and the development of common themes. A psychologist with a specialty in counselling persons with brain injury reviewed the thematic analysis for coherence and resonance. Changes in understanding from the peer and expert reviews were incorporated into the thematic analysis. Finally, two university professors, experts in career research, concluded that the common themes provided sufficient evidence of coherence, the extent to which the thematic presentation hangs together and adds to the readers' understanding of the experience.

Results

The six themes and five sub-themes that emerged in the analysis and participant distribution are presented in Table 2. Themes are not completely discrete nor is there an absolute order of themes. Rather, participants described their experiences as interactive and continuous

with some themes having greater salience than others at different points in their experiences. All participant names used in this study are pseudonyms chosen by the participants

Continued Centrality of Career

Eight women endorsed the continued centrality of career post-injury within two interrelated sub-themes of an intensified meaning of a paid work career and of the critical influence of rehabilitation in career decision-making.

the intensified meaning of a paid work career. The eight women described paid employment as a central aspect of their lives from which they derived self-esteem and identity and which underscored the importance of the women's function as economic providers for themselves and their families. Seven women variously described the personal meaning of work as equality, sense of pride, fulfillment, and independence. For Katherine, work outside the home fulfills the need to be something more: "I felt that was going to be my salvation." Work ethic remained unchanged and offered an increased sense of pride in self. Ramona stated: "I'm really good at what

I do here and I'm doing a really bang up job for this guy and that feels really good."

Three participants described a strong sense of desperation to return to their pre-injury plans. Rylan described the emotional context of an early return to work as a drive for normality:

...this job was on hold for me and it felt like so many pressures on myself to just get everything back to the way it was...It was a difficult time for my whole family... everyone was told that I probably wouldn't make it... I just wanted my life to be back to normal.

the influence of rehabilitation in career decision-making. Six women described the experience of rehabilitation as a central influence in a continuous career decision-making process that variously gave rise to determination, defiance, uncertainty, and increased empathy. The women described rehabilitation professionals as important others to whom they most often needed to prove themselves. A strong sense of self-determination to prove their abilities flowed from negative interactions in which rehabilitation professionals insisted on lowered career expectations. Sophie continued to hold on to her pre-injury career plans for a university degree:

My prognosis was pretty bleak. I had a lot of people and professionals and experts telling me that "Sophie, be realistic... You have a lot of cognitive impairment and it's just going to be too much" ... that was almost fuel adding fuel to my passion... "No. No. Wait a minute here! You don't quite know me. You don't understand this is something that I am going to do. Like my mind is set."

Rehabilitation professionals also served as positive or negative career role models. Elisabeth made her decision to become a social worker as she observed the staff in the acute care setting: "I was so impressed with how knowledgeable

Table 2

Distribution of Participant Themes, Subthemes, and Selected Elements

Themes, Subthemes, Selected Elements	Participants
	n
Continued Centrality of Career	8
The Intensified Meaning of a Paid Work Career	8
Fulfillment, Development, Salvation	6
The Influence of Rehabilitation in Career Decision-Making	6
Sense of Determination to Prove Self	4
Influence of Being Nurtured	5
Continued Centrality of the Relational in Career	8
Sense of Life Purpose and Altered Life Perspective	7
Increased Agency in Career Decision-Making	7
Sense of Continuity and Change in Identity	8
Sense of Increased Vulnerability in Interactions	8



the staff were ... whereas I was so much older but I had not had the maturity at those ages to do these things." The experience of being helpless and being nurtured underscored the importance of "having someone in your court" and of nurturing others. The rehabilitation experience thus gave rise to career decisions in which participants could implement increased compassion and empathy.

Continued Centrality of the Relational in Career

This theme highlights the continued centrality of interpersonal domains in the women's experience of career decision-making and the salience of familial domains especially when children were young. Seven women endorsed an accentuated significance of relatedness in multiple career contexts after brain injury. Jane explains that it is through brain injury that she has learned to make time for herself and for the people she loves. She connects self care to mothering, "You are mothering yourself here too. You are mothering him (her son) and you are mothering yourself and so I did a lot of that."

For the five mothers in the group, the simultaneous experience of mother and paid work careers did not differ after brain injury. Career decision-making which allowed the mothers to attend to whichever was more salient in a given moment, described as home and work balance, was experienced as intentional, value driven, and occurring within a familial context. Through strategies, such as flexibility of work schedule, proximity to the home, and decreased work demand, mothers ensured a continued ability to simultaneously mother while engaged in paid work. Ramona values her current work situation as it "gives me a lot more freedom to also focus on my home life." and care for her 12 year old stepson, a child with special needs. The simultaneous experience of "mother" and "paid worker" careers was not limited to the mothers in the group. Elisabeth's realization that she would not have children fuelled a desire to integrate contact with children in her paid work career.

Seven women emphasized the fulfill-

ment attained through the relational context of their paid work career. Ramona finds a deepened meaning in her work as a legal assistant by helping and nurturing clients. Four women experienced a heightened fulfillment and meaning in paid work careers that offered a deeper human connection. In choosing social work after brain injury, Sophie intentionally elected to intensify the relational in her paid work career. Lucy experiences a desire to make a difference through her writing career: "I thought that it was more useful... than working for a corporation, making money and being self-important. But rather maybe not making much money but making a difference."

Three women further described the connection between the relational in a work context and maintenance of mental health. Rylan explained this connection: "I am a very social person so to stick me somewhere just doing one thing at a time; ... that whole depression thing that comes into play when all of a sudden [I'm] not feeling really active.... Active for me is that interaction with people."

Sense of Life Purpose and Altered Life Perspective

This theme highlights the meaning that participants drew from their experience of brain injury and benefit finding following brain injury. Seven women understood their recovery from brain injury as a near death experience and as a miracle or a second chance at life with a concomitant transformation in perspective or purpose and understanding of what is meaningful in life. The women described this transformation as a changed perspective; a clear sense of life purpose; a sense of true appreciation for life; or a secure knowledge of what is truly important in life. The women further endorsed a connection between their altered perspective or life purpose and an increased agency in their career decision-making.

Three women described their changed perspective as an all encompassing view of life that affected all life decisions. The "sense of urgency that it's life going by" obligates Elisabeth "to do something positive with it rather than just drifting again." Jane's unex-

pected recovery confers a sense of life purpose that takes on a spiritual dimension: "I am here for a reason.... it is like a spiritual thing. There is a meaning here, there is a purpose in my life and I am in this time and place for this." Sophie's experience of purpose served as a turning point in her career decision-making:

I had a very strong sense of purpose. I was sort of put on this earth to do something, and obviously I lived for some odd reason... I am meant to be here for something; just that real sense of knowing there is something else that is planned for me and it wasn't my time yet to leave.

Her "struggle," on behalf of persons who have a brain injury, has been to prove to lawyers and rehabilitation professionals that "there is life after brain injury". She entreats professionals to temper their assessments with an appreciation of the individual and not "shut down people's possibilities."

Six women described the experience of brain injury as a source of fulfillment and contentment from which they derive a sense of true appreciation for life and knowledge of what is truly important in life. A more active and congruent experience of decision-making is a direct function of this knowledge. Elisabeth experiences brain injury as a total blessing "It was a total blessing.... It was probably the single best event if I was to pick one. ... it is like it woke me up. I had really been half asleep.... I am a lot happier as a person since I am making more active decisions."

After injury, Ramona finds fulfillment and understands a paid work career as secondary to life: "anybody who's taken a walk on the other side will come back and say, ... what really matters in life... you've got to have fun and feel fulfilled. I feel fulfilled."

Whereas previous to brain injury, Ramona sought recognition from others in the workplace, after injury she is motivated by finding enjoyment in her work.



In line with a more internal definition of what is important in their lives, six women place a decreased importance on money or status in their career decision-making. Lucy directly connects excitement at newly found sense of purpose, to inspire others and make a difference, with a decreased importance of remuneration and status in work: "I just found that a bit ironic that I made so many career choices based on money and that changed for me."

increased agency in career decision-making. Seven women describe a direct connection between a secure sense, following injury, of what is truly important in life and an increased sense of agency in career decision-making. Related to an intuitive knowledge of what is important in life is an equally intuitive understanding of what is superficial. Following injury, Elisabeth views hairdressing as a profession "that is so superficial that it would not satisfy me". "Going back to school [to study social work]" was her first active career decision. Ramona describes this connection between experience of brain injury and a sense of what matters and doesn't matter: "When you've had something happen in your life where the rug has been completely pulled from out beneath you so much stuff seems inconsequential." Newly "secure in herself," she experiences an increased ease in her career decisions: "I'm just more in control of my life now. Bottom line, life's too short."

For six women, an increased agency in career decisions reflected an increased regard and appreciation for their own needs across life contexts. Lucy describes self-regard in future career decisions: "It's going to have to be something that I want to do, that's going to support me... emotionally. I don't think my jobs prior to this decision did that. ...I don't think that they took into account "What does Lucy really want to do?"

The determination to pursue and implement more internally driven values such as fulfillment, meaning and contribution to life resulted in a more congruent, secure, and active experience of career decision-making across multiple career contexts.

Sense of Continuity and Change in Identity

This theme encapsulates the women's simultaneous experience of continuity and change in identity as relevant to career decision-making. While endorsed by the eight women, this theme was more salient for the four women who sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

The four women who sustained a TBI related the experience of identity loss to the loss of pre-injury career including employment, education, or volunteer activities. Lucy experienced an acute sense of loss: "identity is so linked to what we do out in the world, for employment.... It took me all of those years to create the identity that I had and that was wiped out in that accident." Changed self-presentation intensified Sophie's sense of loss: "my identity was shattered as who I was before and how I presented myself."

Interconnected with the experience of loss is the protracted experience of "rebuilding" or "reinventing" a sense of identity. Often the recognition that previous identity no longer works precedes a deliberate development of the post-injury identity. Rylan experiences a simultaneous learning process: "still trying to be that person that has not been working for me; so trying to learn how not to be that person has been the most difficult." For Lucy, comfort with aspects of the "reinvented" identity precedes "letting go a piece" of the pre-injury identity "a little at a time." The process of establishing a new identity was also perceived as an opportunity to develop an identity more congruent with the real self. Jane comes to appreciate the freedom inherent in this opportunity: "The freedom to build myself and be who I am in my identity....that is a wonderful thing to have but in the beginning it was forced because of the emotions ... I had heightened fear and anxiety."

Lucy's post-injury self-presentation is a more complete expression of self "[brain injury has] also given me access to my creative self again....it's now allowing me to see part of myself that hasn't really surfaced in over twenty years....my interests have changed...or they've just reverted back to where they started before the money thing entered in the picture."

This heightening or accentuation of pre-injury personality was an integral aspect of simultaneous experience of continuity and change of identity. Rylan explained: "a lot of the things that I see that are different they are just heightened."

Continuity was also experienced through career decision-making that was more inclusive of aspects of identity and thus more consistent with identity. Jane stresses that her career decision to enter a helping profession is more consistent with her lifelong "passion to help people" than pre-injury career decisions. Lucy also describes the experience of career decision-making as an enhanced connection to pre-injury creative identity: "I've always been an artist... I won't have to compromise this time."

Sense of Increased Vulnerability in Interactions

This theme elucidates the participants' sense of increased vulnerability in interaction with others as inherent in the experience of career decision-making. This theme consists of two inversely related sub-themes: (a) sense of being devalued; and (b) sense of equality.

sense of being devalued. The eight participants endorsed differing degrees of feeling diminished across settings. Participants spoke of being discounted; being disempowered; being disenfranchised; not being understood; being treated like a child; being labeled; and being given decreased expectations. Generally, the sense of being devalued by others was most salient in settings where others were in a position of authority such as in interaction with professionals in rehabilitation settings and in interaction with superiors in the workplace. Four women also experienced internal self-devaluation that culminated in increased sensitivity to others' judgments. Invisible disability operated as double edged sword that resulted in others diminishing the participants' experiences of loss. The sense of being devalued frequently triggered an anger which provided an impetus to regain self-determination.



For six women the sense of being devalued occurred within an imposed, impersonal process in litigation, rehabilitation, and employment contexts. Jane described this objectification: "I had handfuls of professionals in my rehabilitation but they weren't really on my side. They just liked to fill out the forms... I felt like I was a number." The women experienced degradation when professionals imposed lowered expectations during assessment processes. Participants, determined to reach their potential despite reduced expectations devoid of hope or encouragement, refused to comply with lowered career expectations. But self-determination came at the cost of proving themselves without professional support at a time of great need. Sophie's outrage fuelled her resolve "How dare you place those judgments on me when you don't even know who I am! Yeah, the stats show all this and yes the prognosis isn't great. But you don't know me as individual and the strengths that I do have and the gifts that I bring."

Charged with anger, Katherine pronounced: "No, I am not into this process. I am going to get back to work and it will either be with your approval or without your approval." Still she was obliged to sign a waiver that she would not hold the agency responsible. Women, who further perceived lowered expectations from friends and family, asserted self-determination by keeping their career decisions from others.

Workplace interactions, in which employers or coworkers enacted negative assumptions about the participant's competence and work ethic, contributed to a sense of being devalued with concomitant negative effects on mental health. Ramona left a workplace that hindered her health:

"They would give me an instruction and they'd look at me and ask me to repeat what they had just told me....basically treating me almost like I was 5 years old." Self-comparison to a pre-injured self in the workplace further exacerbated the sense of being devalued. After injury, Lucy first experienced a sense of being unwanted: "They make me hand in my ID... my job was posted, my phone was disconnected. I was disenfranchised. ...I was just cut away from the whole scene."

sense of equality. Conversely, respect and a positive support from others provided six women with a sense of equality in career decision-making. Furthermore, the women directly related a sense of being valued to positive mental health. A critical ingredient of positive support was the demonstration of belief in the women's capacity to succeed in self-determined career decisions. Notably, the presence or absence of hope and of the belief in the participant are key distinctions between positive support related to sense of equality and negative support related to sense of being devalued. Jane illustrates the effect of a positive support: "It was great for support... It gave me a lot of hope in recognizing my potential to succeed again in a different way."

Elisabeth described a key support experience in her return to school decision: "On my very last day, the speech pathologist gave me homework. ...I gave her the speech the next day. And she was impressed but more I was impressed ... And so then I decided to go back and I started taking classes."

Katherine perceived physical rehabilitation in preparation for return to work as a joint venture:

My husband and I had worked really hard on my rehabilitation ... we would go to the beach and we would walk ... every single day, rain or shine... and the gradual thing of being able to start to swing my arm, take my arm out of my pocket, being able to put on a glove...all those little milestones became huge.

Ramona highlights respect from employers and being appreciated in the workplace as the source of her workplace happiness: "they all treat me with a huge amount of respect, they think the world of me... they love me here."

Sense of Insecurity and Emotionality

This theme highlights the women's sense of insecurity and emotionality in career decision-making as related to awareness of changed cognitive or physical capacity and to the consequent need for accommodation. The eight women expressed the sense of insecurity

as uncertainty, not feeling comfortable, insecurity, self doubt, mistrust, taking a risk or a loss of confidence. For six women, the sense of insecurity also comprised financial insecurity. Concomitant with a sense of insecurity, seven women experienced emotions of depression, anxiety, apprehension, or fear. Six women further described coping strategies that included withdrawal; presenting as normal; tentative decisions; decisions made slowly or with considerable thought; plunging into the anxiety provoking activity; reframing difficult tasks as skills to be learned; taking baby steps; and engaging in volunteer or unpaid work positions. Four women noted that the sense of insecurity varied with self perception of success. Furthermore as the women experienced small successes, insecurity gave way to a sense of confidence.

An integral aspect of the sense of insecurity was self-comparison to pre-injury cognitive abilities or physical abilities. Lucy's changed learning ability created insecurity in career:

"It's an acceptance that I'm going to make a lot of mistakes... I have insecurities around it." Sarah harbors the "hidden thought": "Am I ever going to be able to be solid in any work? ...Am I not dependable? It brings up that fear in me." She further points to government policies that force people to return to work in low paying jobs and that offer only one chance for retraining as significant contributors to her fear.

Jane copes with residual anxiety from the trauma of almost losing her life with reframing self-talk: "you are safe...everything is fine...it's not really about safety but it is maybe ...a skill." Reframing career goals as skills to be learned facilitates movement towards her goals: "I will likely go after it... to me that is bait." She thinks that her career "decisions will be different" if she can "get more comfortable with expressing myself" and "separate from anxiety."

Post-injury, Rylan experiences a "fear of jobs": "When I think about other things to go into, I am pretty emotional about it because I am afraid of those things." Due to good social presentation coupled with a personality tendency to "push myself," Rylan fears that she will find herself in work situa-



tions where she will “feel like a failure.” She feels apprehension because she often misses the “warning signs” that should alert her to work performance issues. She manages insecurity about the possibility of planning for all that she must consider by giving her career decisions “a lot of thought.”

The sense of insecurity and experience of fear were not limited to situations of poor work performance. While generally successful and confident, Sophie also experienced a high emotional cost in a recent position: “I do a good job of whatever I take on but it was not without a lot of distress and dislike... multi tasking and management work is not my strength.” Post-injury, Elisabeth minimizes fear and the sense of risk by taking “baby steps” that facilitate a cycle of small successes: “I got an A-for psych 101 and that was within six months of brain surgery...having had the success is what kept me going... it just went around and around between the motivation and the success and that in turn motivated me.”

Although confident and successful in her return to work, Katherine nonetheless experienced a sense of risk in choosing to accommodate for fatigue: “It was a big decision to decide that I would only work four days a week... I didn't know whether the [employer] would accept that.” Ramona also experiences a sense of insecurity related to cognitive changes and to part-time hours required to accommodate fatigue: “I was giving up full time work and contracting...I didn't have financial support... that's contract work, a huge risk.” While a successful independent contractor, she is still “trying to figure out a way that I could actually work in a firm, get coverage, get all the benefits, have a great job there without having to work full time.” Ramona experiences a lack of confidence in future career decision-making because “I don't really know if I have capacity for it [new learning].” To accommodate for post traumatic stress, she will “not going to put myself into a high pressure position.”

The women's experience of insecurity varied according to the social context and perceived ability to succeed in individual settings. Inability to predict performance in new settings, disclosure

of limitations, or request for accommodations contributed to the sense of risk in career decision-making.

Discussion

The present study revealed the experience of career decision-making to be a highly complex ongoing experience imbued with emotion and subjective meaning for each of the eight participants. Acquired brain injury and rehabilitation experiences were intrinsically related to a post-injury career decision-making aligned with espoused values and often more congruent with identity than pre-injury career decision-making. Sense of purpose and life perspective following brain injury was connected to increased agency in career decision making. Paradoxically, increased agency occurred within a context of greater struggle and increased barriers to career decision-making in the form of restrictive government policies, and negative support in work and rehabilitation contexts. Brain injury contributed to uncertainty of functioning in new environments and emotionality in career decision-making. Social interactions and the societal context significantly influenced the experience of career decision-making, giving rise to positive or negative emotions that facilitated or obstructed career decision-making.

Participants' descriptions of loss of value as a person that accompanied the loss of work and return to work as source of personal fulfillment resonate with findings in the qualitative brain injury literature (Levack, McPherson, & McNaughton, 2004; Power & Hershenson, 2003). Previous studies, however, do not convey the strong emotions of desperation and determination or the importance of rehabilitation experiences in career decisions. Participants described a continuous active process of career decision-making in rehabilitation settings in which they perceived rehabilitation professionals as positive and negative career role models. Rehabilitation settings emerged as major influences that afforded limited opportunity for autonomous career decision-making and imposed reduced career expectations.

This study contributes to extant literature on relational influences in

women's career development by illuminating the accentuated significance of the relational in career following brain injury. The experience of being nurtured during rehabilitation emerged an important relational influence in participants' career decisions.

Kroger (2000) suggested that identity development following loss involves not only readjustment to the loss and finding new life meanings but also retaining important identity elements thus establishing visible forms of continuity. Previous studies (Nochi, 1998; Secret & Thomas, 1999) have identified a sense of simultaneous continuity and change in identity following brain injury. The participants in this study delineated the significance of reconnection with core values to the sense of continuity and identity maintenance. As catalysts for a deeper exploration of core values, brain injury and recovery were integral to the determination to align career decision-making with espoused values. Continuity was further experienced through the integration of meaning and the expression of core values in career decision-making.

This study augments our understanding of the effects of positive and negative interpersonal support on the career development of women with disabilities (Conyers et al., 1998; Noonan et al., 2004). As in the Conyers et al., the manner in which study participants responded to low expectations, such as determination to reach one's potential, constructive anger, and a motivation to prove the self capable, served as a mediating factor which influenced career development more than the negative feedback itself. This study details the specific ways in which a positive emotional support facilitates career decision-making for women with brain injury. Emotional support, especially in a partner relationship, is the element of support most associated with good quality of life (Steadman-Pare, Colantonio, Ratcliff, Chase, & Vernich 2001). A positive emotional support comprising belief in the person's capacity imparts hope to the individual which reduces vulnerability to devaluing interactions in career situations.

Career decision-making that focused awareness on post-injury changes and the potential need for accommodation in



actual and possible career environments gave rise to a continuum of negative emotions, ranging from uncertainty to apprehension. Uncertainty about the expectations and actions of others in the career environment may further increase self-perception of disability (Conyers et al., 1998) and give rise to a sense of insecurity. The participants in this study pointed to the contribution of government policies (e.g. programs that offer one chance at retraining; lack of supports for persons who make return to work or training decisions contrary to program directives); of workplace practices (e.g. non availability of good part-time work; lack of accommodations); and of insurer practices (e.g. denial of long term disability for part-time work) to increased insecurity and emotionality in career decision-making. These policies and practices disregard the emotional and physical costs of full-time work for persons with brain injury (Levack et al., 2004) and possibility of continued improvement in neuropsychological functioning at 5 years post injury (Millis et al., 2001).

The findings of this study highlight the role of emotions and of interactions between the individual and the broader environment in the career decision-making experiences of women with brain injury. The elevated risk to mental health in ABI within the context of additional stressors (Rush et al., 2006), such as occur in the non supportive workplace, imparts urgency to the women's experiences of emotional distress in the workplace and in career decision-making.

Implications for Counselling

Information from the study results will assist counsellors to challenge their own biases when offering career counselling to women with ABI. One potential bias, identified by study participants, is a low expectation for career potential. To counteract this potential bias, Wehman, Targett, West, and Kregel (2005) have recommended that professionals receive training on the potential of persons with ABI.

Study results concur with assertions that career decision-making occurs within the life context and is not productively addressed in isolation and that cognitive, behavioral and emotional is-

suues are not readily separable in real life (Richardson, 2000). Traditional career theories fail to address critical aspects in the landscape of career decision-making for women with ABI. Consequently, the simple matching of career decision and measured interests and abilities, deemed inappropriate in career counselling practice generally (Peavy, 1996), is especially indefensible in practice with women with ABI. Traditional theories do not suggest enablement approaches nor focus therapeutic attention on the emotionally charged and uncertain context of the decision-making experience (Gelatt, 1989; Phillips, 1997). The career counsellor is challenged to adopt an expanded role in order to effect change at the societal level. For example, the career counsellor may advocate for the development of government and insurance policies aimed at ameliorating barriers, such as lack of access to counselling during times of workplace change or personal stress.

The results of this study indicate that recent career theories and models of career counselling, influenced by constructivist philosophy and espousing an enlarged focus in career counselling, may be appropriate to career counselling practice for women with ABI. However, study results suggest the judicious application of selected aspects of career theories rather than reliance on one single theory in career counselling women with ABI. The utility of the Systems Theory Framework (Patton & McMahon, 1999) is as a metatheoretical framework for identifying influences (McMahon, 2005) within a collaborative career counselling process. Contextualist Action Theory (Young et al., 2002) directs the career counsellor's attention to the roles of anger, fear, and the determination to prove oneself in the career decision-making of women with ABI thereby enlarging the therapeutic focus of career counselling. Through the concept of joint action, career counsellor attention is directed to the social context of career decision-making such as the influence of interactions with counsellors, rehabilitation personnel, and employers. The focus on narrative and meaning in Peavy's (1996) constructivist career counselling model converges with recommendations for therapy aimed at restoring meaning and

purpose and expanding possibilities in life after brain injury (Prigatano, 2005). The women in the present study expressed meaning as a sense of purpose or an altered perspective which they related to a good life after brain injury and which importantly guided career decision-making. Narrative facilitates self-construction in the counselling process (Bujold, 2004) and emphasizes meaning as the central subject of career. Through the use of narrative, the counsellor can assist women with ABI to see their future as a continuation of their life story; to create career narratives that are meaningful and fulfilling; to clarify the meanings of decisions; and to become agents within the context of their own lives (Cochran, 1997). However, the career counsellor must exercise caution, good judgment, and serve as a facilitator for the reconstruction of meaning only when the client is so ready.

Additional roles for the career counsellor are suggested by the coping strategies that the participants implemented to diminish the sense of risk inherent in career decisions. As in Planned Happenstance Theory (Mitchell, Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz 1999), the career counsellor is encouraged to teach the skills, resources, and personal flexibility that would enable women with ABI to seize opportunities and to create satisfying lives for themselves. The counsellor can help women with ABI to value positive uncertainty (Gelatt, 1989), tentative commitments, and trials of alternative experiences as opportunities to refine self-awareness and to develop new skills and new strategies. Career decision-making models which promote the wisdom of provisional commitments and teach skills recast the career decision-making strategies of women with brain injury into a more positive, universal frame with the potential to diminish negative emotions and support a more positive mental health.

The experience of vulnerability in interaction with rehabilitation and career professionals has critical implications for the therapeutic relationship as a process in career counselling. Study findings suggest that the demonstration of respect for the integrity of the person, patient understanding, and belief in the potential of the person are critical to the



establishment of a supportive therapeutic relationship in career counselling. Amundson (1998) has highlighted the role of the career counsellor in nurturing and affirming a person's positive self-concept, self-knowledge, and self-belief and the necessity of respecting the uniqueness of the whole person in creating a mattering climate. Imparting hope, an important source of personal validation, was notably absent in the participants' devaluing experiences with rehabilitation and career professionals. The instillation of a realistic sense of hope has been described as an important component in therapy which helps to overcome hopeless and helpless feelings (Prigatano, 2005) and which may assist to minimize devaluation (Chamberlain, 2006). Thus, a further integral element of the therapeutic relationship for women with ABI is a counsellor attitude of hope that stems from a belief in the person's potential.

A positive psychology approach (Duckworth et al., 2005; Snyder, Lehman, Kluck, & Monsson, 2006) highlights the strengths of the individual in overcoming obstacles and builds on positive emotions, positive qualities and meaning. A greater focus on positive individual attributes and potentials are important components of hope in career counselling for women with ABI. Hope theory emphasizes that individuals who are high in hopeful thought are more likely to attain the goals they set for themselves and that hope, as a goal directed motivational process, can be taught. The career counsellor may assist women with ABI to make challenging and achievable goals; to plan main and alternate pathways to reach goals, and support agency or motivation to reach goals. As with other approaches to career counselling, positive psychology must be offered within an affirmative and supportive relationship (Amundson, 1998) and must instill hope through both content and process.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Three limitations to this study warrant consideration. Findings from this study may serve to expand the counsellor's knowledge of the potential range of career decision-making experiences

for women with ABI. However, other similarly placed women may not share the experiences described by the women in this study. Participant self-reports of career-decision-making experiences, which formed the data for this study, were likely altered by the passage of time. Nonetheless, common meanings of career decision-making in her in participant accounts.

Through selection criteria of articulateness and community involvement the women included in this study represent a very select group of women with brain injury. Thus, results of the present study cannot be applied to differently situated women with ABI

Future research investigating the experience of career decision-making of persons with brain injury should be conducted with larger groups of participants and with more diverse groups of women and men. Future research may also seek to delineate the social and societal factors which contribute to enabling and devaluing career decision-making experiences in rehabilitation. An explicit purpose of this research would be to develop practices that promote the sense of equality and diminish devaluing experiences. A longitudinal investigation of the long term career decision-making experience would provide an increased understanding of issues that may arise in the career decision-making journey and serve to inform policy and program development for life-span approaches to career decision-making. Finally, investigation of the career development of successful persons with brain injury inform rehabilitation professionals and counsellors about the potential of persons with brain injury and possibly diminish the attitudinal barriers which obstruct the career decision-making of persons with brain injury.

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CONFÉRENCIERS D'HONNEUR CINDY BLACKSTOCK



Cindy Blackstock, Ph. D., est la directrice générale de la Société de soutien à l'enfance et à la famille des Premières Nations du Canada et

professeure agrégée à l'Université de l'Alberta. Elle s'intéresse notamment aux causes des préjudices subis par les enfants et les familles autochtones.

ROXANNE SAWATZKY



Roxanne Sawatzky est présidente et fondatrice d'Empowering Change, un organisme qui permet à des fournisseurs de services novateurs d'améliorer

leurs relations avec des personnes aux prises avec de multiples difficultés.

DEBBIE MUIR



Reconnue comme l'une des plus grandes entraîneuses au Canada et un chef de file à l'échelle internationale,

Debbie Muir continue d'exercer son influence au sein du système sportif canadien. Elle soutient les entraîneurs et les dirigeants pour créer un environnement propice à l'atteinte de résultats de calibre mondial.

MARK TEWKSBURY



Mark Tewksbury est un athlète accompli qui a brillé de tous ses feux aux Jeux olympiques de Barcelone. Ce champion olympique a remporté

des médailles d'or, d'argent et de bronze et a fait la couverture du magazine TIME. M. Tewksbury est chef de mission de l'équipe olympique canadienne 2012 qui compétitionnera à Londres.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

CINDY BLACKSTOCK



Dr. Cindy Blackstock is the Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada,

and Associate Professor at the University of Alberta. Her key interests include exploring and addressing the causes of disadvantage for Aboriginal children.

ROXANNE SAWATZKY



Roxanne Sawatzky is the President and Founder of Empowering Change, a leading organization empowering innovative service

providers to enhance interactions with multi-barriered individuals.

DEBBIE MUIR



Debbie Muir is one of Canada's greatest coaches, is an internationally recognized leader, and continues to be a person of influence

within the Canadian sport system. Debbie supports coaches and leaders in creating the best possible environment for world-class results to happen.

MARK TEWKSBURY



Mark Tewksbury is the star athlete who burst out of the water at the Barcelona Olympics, an Olympic Champion with

gold, silver and bronze medals and a cover appearance on *TIME* magazine. Mark is the chef de mission for the 2012 Canadian Olympic team competing in London.

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Ten Years On - School Leavers from a Remote Island Community

Craig Tucker, Gerry White & Ken Stevens
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Abstract

Senior high school students in rural communities face the question “where do we go from here?” In small schools in isolated areas of Canada and Australia senior students often have to migrate to larger centres to enroll in the final years of high school to undertake post-secondary education or to seek employment. The question “where do we go from here?” was examined by one of the authors in a rural school in Queensland, Australia before the other two authors considered its implications in a remote high school in Newfoundland and Labrador. Ten years after graduating 34 students from a rural Canadian high school were contacted (from a graduating class of 62) and surveyed by questionnaire about the major influences on their post secondary educational and career choices. The significance of the problem of rural students seeking to comprehend the non-local world before migrating to it had many implications for their life chances. This rural educational issue has implications for the pre-service education of future teachers.

Les étudiants de collège aînés dans les communautés rurales font face à la question “où allons-nous à partir d’ici ?” Dans de petites écoles dans les régions isolées d’étudiants d’âiné d’Australie et de Canada doivent souvent émigrer à de plus grands centres pour s’inscrire aux dernières années de collège pour entreprendre le post-enseignement secondaire ou chercher l’emploi. La question “où nous allons à partir d’ici” a été examiné par un des auteurs dans une école rurale dans Queensland, l’Australie avant que les deux autres auteurs ont considéré ses implications dans un collège lointain dans le Terre-neuve et le Labrador. Dix ans après le fait de sortir 34 étudiants d’un collège canadien rural ont été contactés (d’une classe obtenante le maîtrise de 62) et étudiés par le questionnaire des influences importantes sur leur poste sec-

ondaire éducatif et choix de carrière. La signification du problème d’étudiants ruraux cherchant à comprendre le monde non-local avant le fait d’y émigrer avait beaucoup d’implications pour leurs chances de vie. Cette édition éducative rurale a des implications pour l’éducation de pré-service d’enseignants futurs.

Isolation is readily associated with rural schools, particularly those in communities located far from major centres of population (Golding, 2001; Stevens, 1998). In two of the geographically largest countries in the world – Australia and Canada – physical isolation becomes an important consideration in the lives of rural secondary school students, particularly when faced with the necessity of migration to larger centres to be able to access post-compulsory education or to search for employment.

Two studies – one in Australia and the other in Atlantic Canada - followed geographically-isolated senior high school students from small rural communities as they made their post year twelve educational and vocational choices. The Australian study addressed the ongoing concern about the education of rural students in that country in terms of their lower participation in post-secondary programs than their urban peers (Abbott-Chapman, 2001; Chote et al. 1992; Commonwealth Schools Commission, 1975,1987; Golding, 2001; James et.al. 1999; Wyn,1998). The Canadian study had its origins in the earlier study conducted in outback Australia, in the state of Queensland (Stevens 1998), and was refined and further developed by Tucker and Stevens (1999) in Newfoundland and Labrador. Almost all students in both countries had to leave home and migrate to larger centres to be able to continue post-compulsory education or look for work. In the Canadian study, a decade after graduating, members of the year

twelve high school class were contacted and asked about their career development.

The Original Study: Career Choice in Rural Australia

Some rural high school students in Australia face the problem of living in geographically-isolated communities and, from them, having to make career decisions about places, institutions and careers about which they have little direct knowledge or experience. Final year students in small rural schools have to answer the question “Where do we go from here?” While all school leavers have to consider this issue, in the case of rural students it often means migration to urban centres and entry to unfamiliar environments and lifestyles.

The Australian origins of the Canadian research, outlined below, were in outback Queensland, far from major coastal centres of population (Stevens, 1998). Stevens undertook a study of 30 final year students in a remote community in the interior of the state who had to make post year ten educational or vocational career choices at around the minimum leaving age, which was fifteen at the time of the study. No formal education was provided in the community beyond year ten at the time of the study and there were few local jobs for school leavers. In making post school educational and career choices it was revealed in the Australian study that some young rural people were more isolated from post-secondary school educational and career opportunities than others while living within the same community. Those young rural people who had had little direct personal contact with the non-local world were found to be particularly isolated from post school educational and vocational opportunities. This is not a widely-recognized feature of rural life in spite of the social and educational implications that it entails (Boomer, 1987; Golding, 2001;



James et.al, 1999). A move from a rural to an urban community and school is not merely a physical change of location for students; it involves intellectual and emotional adjustments and rural school leavers can experience these in different ways (Bell, 1987; Chenoweth and Galliher, 2004).

Traditionally, school leavers in the rural Australian community could readily find employment with the shire council, the state railway or on the vast sheep and cattle stations that extend throughout the interior of the state (Stevens, 1998). However, at the time of the study the community could provide almost no local employment for school leavers as the economy was in recession. Almost all students in the year ten class that was the focus of the study had to leave their small, rural community to either continue their education to year twelve and graduate if they wished to enroll in a university or institution of higher education, or leave in search of employment or trade apprenticeships elsewhere. There was confusion among the school leavers in the study as to where they could or should go at the conclusion of their final year at school. Many members of the class faced the issue of making personal sense of the non-local world that had, in some cases, never been directly experienced (Stevens, 1988; Stewart, 2003). The study explored how young people leaving school in a rural community made their post year ten educational and career decisions. It was difficult to claim that rural students had educational opportunities equal to their urban counterparts when they could not undertake full high school courses in their own community (Henry, 1989; McGaw et.al.,1977). Since the study was undertaken, full secondary education in the community has been introduced with classes to year twelve.

The study began with a broad question, identified three decades earlier by the Schools' Commission (1975;1987) and the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in Australia (1976; 1978) that young people in rural schools did not enter higher educational institutions in numbers proportionate to their urban counterparts. Partly on this basis, the Schools Commission identified rural schools in Australia as being education-

ally disadvantaged along with women, migrants and aborigines. The issues raised by the Commonwealth Schools Commission and the Commission of Inquiry Into Poverty formed the basis for an exploratory study into the post-year ten dimension of rural educational disadvantage in the small and isolated Queensland community.

Almost all the boys in the study (86 per cent) provided a match between their occupational aspirations and expectations, but only 38 per cent of girls' aspirations matched their expectations (Stevens & McSwan, 1995; Stevens, 1998). A partial explanation for this was reluctance on the part of many students, particularly those with least experience and knowledge of the non-rural world, to leave the community. For some school leavers, any local job, even if it was unskilled and low-paid, was preferable to migrating to an urban centre in search of further education or a career. Reluctance to leave familiar surroundings is at best a partial explanation for the mismatch between the girls' aspirations and expectations. In this community a strict sexual division of labour existed in which paid work was mostly undertaken by men. This may have influenced the gap between girls' aspirations and expectations.

Students in the Australian study were influenced in making their post-secondary educational and career decisions in several ways: by their nuclear and extended families, by their local and non-local peers, by the school and by significant others. Almost all boys listed their father as an influence on the post school educational and vocational decision while the majority of girls were strongly influenced by their mothers. The school had very little influence on the post year ten decisions of boys, with only one citing this institution as an influence. Students were more influenced by local than non-local peers and were influenced only by their friends of the same sex. Significant others influenced relatively few students. However, when present, the significant other influence was very strong because it came from people mostly in the chosen occupation of the student or from related media.

The Follow-up Study: School Leavers in Rural Canada

Final year students in some small rural schools in Canada, as in Australia, have to answer the question "Where do we go from here?" Some Canadian rural high school students, like their Australian counterparts, faced the problem of living in geographically-isolated communities and having to make career decisions about places, institutions and careers about which they had little direct knowledge or experience (Tucker, 1999). While all Canadian school leavers have to consider this issue, in the case of rural students it often means migration to urban centres and entry to unfamiliar environments and lifestyles. As with their Australian counterparts, this could be a difficult process for rural students and their families. A study of Canadian school leavers from the remote Fogo Island community located off the north coast of Newfoundland was undertaken to ascertain where students were and what they were doing a decade after they completed year twelve. Fogo Island is about 25 kilometres long and 14 kilometres wide. It has a population of 2,706 (2006 census) that is organized into eleven communities. Until the depletion of cod stocks in the 1990's, fishing was the main economic activity on the island. Sixty-two senior high school students from Fogo Island participated in the original study that was undertaken in 1998. Of those able to be located ten years later, 34 members of the original sample responded, providing a response rate of almost 55 percent.

The aspirations and expectations of rural high school students tell us a lot about their perceptions of their communities, the local opportunities available to them, their understanding of other places and their evaluation of local versus non-local futures. The last major study in this area in Newfoundland and Labrador was carried out by Craig Tucker (1999). In terms of the students' aspirations and expectations, Tucker found that "for the most part the careers listed (by students) are those that are found on this isolated island." Re-visiting the outcomes of the aspirations and expectations of the graduating class of 1998 provides a unique opportunity to



study the impact of the family, school, peers and other influences on these outcomes within the rural setting.

Methodology

Research Questions

The study sought to find answers to the following questions 10 years beyond high school:

1. What careers did students select?
2. To what extent did their career choices match their original aspirations?
3. How did the aspirations and expectations formulated at school, as identified by Tucker, guide students in their choices over the past seven years?
4. What influenced their choices? (e.g. peers, family, school etc?)

Instrument

A survey instrument was designed based on the original survey to capture educational and occupational related data as well as job satisfaction and influences on former students' present careers. Questions were re-written to reflect the fact that these former students may have gone on to higher education or joined the labour force directly from school. For example, rather than asking questions about what students intended to do when they left school, the survey instrument asked what they actually did after they left school. The survey instrument also included questions concerning major influences on career choice such as family, media and teachers. A final question asked respondents if there were any other things that they would like to say about how they arrived at their current career or educational choice.

Procedure

Upon acceptance of the research proposal, letters were sent to the local media describing the study together with its ethical considerations. A research assistant was hired to contact the former students using home contact information collected at the time of the first survey as well as contact information collected by Craig Tucker who worked in the area up until the time of

the study. Once contact was made by telephone, former students were asked if they would like to participate in the follow-up study. Those that agreed were sent a consent form to sign and return. They were then contacted for a 30-minute formal telephone interview.

Participants

Of the 62 students in the original study, contact was made with 34 members of the class in the summer of 2007, providing a response rate of almost 55 percent. Sixty-two percent of the sample was female, meaning they were slightly over-represented from the original study in which they represented 53 percent of the class. A chi-square analysis showed that these differences were not significant, $X^2(1, n = 34) = 2.21, p > .05$. Further analysis was undertaken to determine if the contacted participants differed from those not contacted, using variables from the original study. The variables that were considered important were "the perfect job" they wanted, mother and father's General Education Development (GED) and Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) levels together with the number of academic and non-academic courses taken in school.

GED values range from 1 to 6 with lower values associated with simple levels of reasoning, mathematical and language development. Higher values are associated with advanced levels of reasoning, mathematical and language development. SVP looks at the level of training an occupation is required to have. SVP values range from 1 to 9. Value 1 indicates short demonstration only with a score of 9 indicating over 10 years of vocational preparation (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1989). Further analysis was done using ANOVA on GED and SVP levels of the perfect job ($F(1, 60) = 1.93, p > .05$); $F(1, 60) = 1.89, p > .05$), mother's GED and SVP ($F(1, 51) = 0.02, p > .05$); $F(1, 51) = 0.15, p > .05$), and father's GED and SVP levels ($F(1, 54) = 4.47, p < .05$); $F(1, 53) = 2.60, p > .05$), the number of academic courses $F(1, 60) = 0.30, p > .05$ and non-academic courses $F(1, 60) = 0.08, p > .05$ to see if those surveyed were different from those not surveyed. All but father's GED

turned up not significant. This would indicate that those who did survey were very similar to those not surveyed. The surveys were administered during the months of June and July, 2007. Only two people refused to be interviewed with the rest being unable to be contacted.

Ethical considerations

The proposal to complete the research was presented to the University's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR). In the ethics proposal participants were asked if the researchers could use data collected by Craig Tucker for his 1999 thesis.

Data analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS for Windows (SPSS Inc, 2005). Due to the descriptive nature of the study frequency distributions were used in the results section while cross-tabulations and Analyses of Variance were used to determine if the participants who were contacted were similar to those not contacted.

Results

Postsecondary choices by Rural Canadian Students

Almost 90 percent of those participating completed some form of post high school educational program covering 44 different programs, the most common types being non-university related. Most educational programs in which the students participated were in the community college or private sector and all were completed away from the remote island community. Eight students (26.7 percent) obtained degrees while the majority completed programs that were of three years duration or less. The major reason stated for undertaking an educational program was personal interest (39.1%). When asked what they thought their parents wanted them to do after school, most students indicated that both their mothers and fathers wanted them to continue their education after high school. Three students, however, did not complete any educational programs: one abandoned her studies



when her father became ill, another reported that he did not enjoy the program and a third expressed the need to earn money immediately rather than continue studying. Eighty percent of the courses undertaken by the students when they left their island community were within the province and twenty percent embarked on courses beyond Newfoundland and Labrador.

Career choices by Rural Canadian Students

Most of the respondents (88.2%) were employed at the time that they were interviewed in 2007 and seventy-six percent were in the same job that they had the previous year. When asked what type of employment they were in currently most indicated that they were employed in the field of medicine and health (47.8%), while 13% were in construction and trades followed by product fabricating. Most jobs (76.7%) were full-time and most were located away from Fogo Island with 36.7% indicating that they were employed elsewhere in the province. A third of the students indicated that their job was outside the province and one was beyond Canada. No one was dissatisfied with their work, with the majority indicating that they were “very satisfied” with what they were doing (63.3%). The remaining students indicated that they were “satisfied” with their current employment. When asked if their work was related to what they expected to do after leaving high school, 62.3% indicated that it was “related.” However, only 23.3% indicated that it was “very related”, with another 23.3% indicating that it was “somewhat related”.

Table 1, above, identifies influences on the Canadian students’ current careers. The most significant influence was “personal interest” with over 90% indicating that this accounted for “a little” or “a lot” with over 70% expressing a lot. Parents exerted the next highest level of support, at over 70% for “a little” to “a lot” for mothers and over 70% for “a little” to “a lot” for fathers. The desire to remain at home was the next greatest influence with just over 40% indicating a little to a lot. Table 1 indicates that the media and guidance counselors had little influence and teachers

Table 1
Retrospective of Influences on Current Career.

	Number	Not at all Percent	A little Percent	A lot Percent	Mean
Mother	30	23.33	56.67	20.00	1.97
Father	30	26.67	53.33	20.00	1.93
Siblings Male	22	77.27	22.73	0.00	1.23
Siblings Female	26	61.54	38.46	0.00	1.38
Cousins (extended family)	28	78.57	21.43	0.00	1.21
Guidance counselor	30	86.67	13.33	0.00	1.13
Teachers (Fogo)	30	56.67	43.33	0.00	1.43
Instructors (Elsewhere)	30	80.00	16.67	3.33	1.23
Friends (Fogo)	30	60.00	36.67	3.33	1.43
Friends (Other places)	30	63.33	30.00	6.67	1.43
Media (Fogo) Type	30	90.00	10.00	0.00	1.10
Media (Other) Type	30	76.67	20.00	3.33	1.27
Personal interest	30	6.67	20.00	73.33	2.67
Desire to remain home or near home	29	55.17	24.14	20.69	1.66
Others – specify	27	88.89	3.70	7.41	1.19

were only moderately influential in the careers chosen by students.

When asked, using an open-ended question, the reasons for selecting their current occupation the responses varied widely with almost 60 reasons given. For most it was personal interest (16.9%), good money (15.3%), they liked working with people (8.5%), they needed money (6.8%) and personal satisfaction (6.8%). While the media and field trips had minimal influence on choice of career, two students (6.7%) indicated that the Internet had the greatest influence on their career choice. The survey found that 93% of fathers wanted their children to continue their education after high school while only 7% wanted their children to begin employment immediately rather than enroll in a post-secondary institution. Mothers expressed similar feelings with only one (3.3%) expressing the view that their

child should enter employment immediately after high school.

Table 2 shows the influence of home, family, community, school and media on future plans in the original Canadian study (Tucker, 1999). The greatest influence on career choices after leaving school was from courses with 62.0% answering yes. This was followed by the influence of relatives with 59.0% indicating that relatives helped them decide what they would be doing after high school. Fifty percent indicated yes when asked: Have you gained any knowledge or received any information on the T.V. or radio that helped you in making plans for your future? Equal numbers of students (32.0%) indicated that they had sessions with counselors concerning their future plans and had used a computer or the Internet to obtain information about possible career or educational choices.

Table 2
Home-Family-Community, School-Media-Information-Technology Influences on Career Choices After Leaving High School (N=34).

Influence	Percent responding - Yes
Home-Family-Community Q5. Have any of your relatives helped you to decide what you are going to do after high school in terms of either jobs or education?	59.0
School Q2. Have any courses that you have done helped you decide what your future plans will be?	62.0
School Q4. Have you had any information sessions with the guidance counselor concerning your future plans?	32.0
Media Q5. Have you gained any knowledge or received any information on the T.V. or radio which helped you in making plans for your future?	50.0
Media Q7. Have you used a computer or the internet to obtain information about possible career or educational choices?	32.0



Those Who Were Employed But Chose No Postsecondary Education or Training

Four of the students that were interviewed did not go on to any form of post-secondary education. While they are a small number, they provided insight into where they are at present. Three of these students were male. All had a good idea of what it would take to get the perfect job, such as obtaining good marks at school and then entering a training program or some form of further post-secondary education. These students all had mothers and fathers who worked in traditional occupations such as fishing and trapping, processing and clerical work. An analysis of their high school grades indicated that on the whole their average marks were in the lower level of the class with grades in the 50% to 60% range. The four students were all employed at the time of the survey.

Those Who Were Unemployed at the Time of the Study

Four female students at the time of the survey were not employed. Three had attended post-secondary institutions after high school and one obtained a Bachelor's degree in Science and the others obtained business diplomas and, in one case, a commercial cooking certificate. The students had all undertaken educational programs out of personal interest when they left their remote island school. One of these respondents indicated that she had had seven different jobs over the past five years. Of the four, one indicated that her last job was "somewhat related" to what she expected when she left school, one indicated "a bit" related and two indicated that their last jobs were not at all related to what they expected when they left school.

Discussion

This research has shown that most students from the class of 1998 went on to do some form of post-secondary training. The majority of these students did non-university related programs. The most common reason for undertaking the programs was out of interest. Many of the students were employed ten years on. Most were working in areas which were related to what they

expected to be doing after high school. Personal interest was a strong factor related to their current career choice. Parents exerted a great deal of influence on their career choices. Not surprisingly, the desire to stay in their rural community had an impact on their current career choice. Those who did not go on to postsecondary schooling had relatively low high school marks and parents who worked in traditional occupations. However, all were employed at the time of the study. Of the 4 who were not working at the time of follow-up, 3 indicated that they were not working because they wanted to raise their children.

Conclusion

The problem "where do we go from here?" is common to rural students having to make non-local further education and career choices. In rural Australia and rural Canada several common responses to this question can be identified. Young people in both countries experienced isolation in different ways even though they lived in the same small communities. For school leavers in Queensland and those in Newfoundland and Labrador the move from their small and isolated communities to other places, including cities, involved not just a physical change in the location of where they lived but also intellectual and emotional adjustments. In both the Australian and Canadian studies rural school leavers often expressed a desire to remain in their home communities and migrated reluctantly for further education or employment. In both studies parents of school leavers were influential in the post-school choices that students made. In the Australian study, fathers were found to have more influence on sons and mothers were more influential in the decisions of their daughters.

Several issues from the Australian and Canadian studies deserve attention from educational policy makers that have not been emphasized in previous research. First, school leavers from rural communities experience isolation in different ways. Some are more isolated from the non-local world than others, depending on the nature and extent of their contact with other places. Second,

recognition within pre-service teacher education courses of the problem facing many senior students in rural schools making post-secondary educational and career decisions may help teachers reduce the impact of physical isolation on educational outcomes. Teacher awareness of the issue of rural student migration to urban education and employment may assist young people to make, what is for many, a necessary but often difficult transition. Third, the question why the school, teachers and professionals such as counsellors have so little influence on rural students' career choices in both countries is unclear and needs further investigation. Finally, the role of interactive social media, virtual classes (Stevens, 2003) and the Internet as influences on career choices were alluded to in the Canadian study but the nature and extent of their impact is unknown. In the meantime, "where do we go from here?" remains a central issue in the education of school leavers who live beyond major centres of population.

Acknowledgements

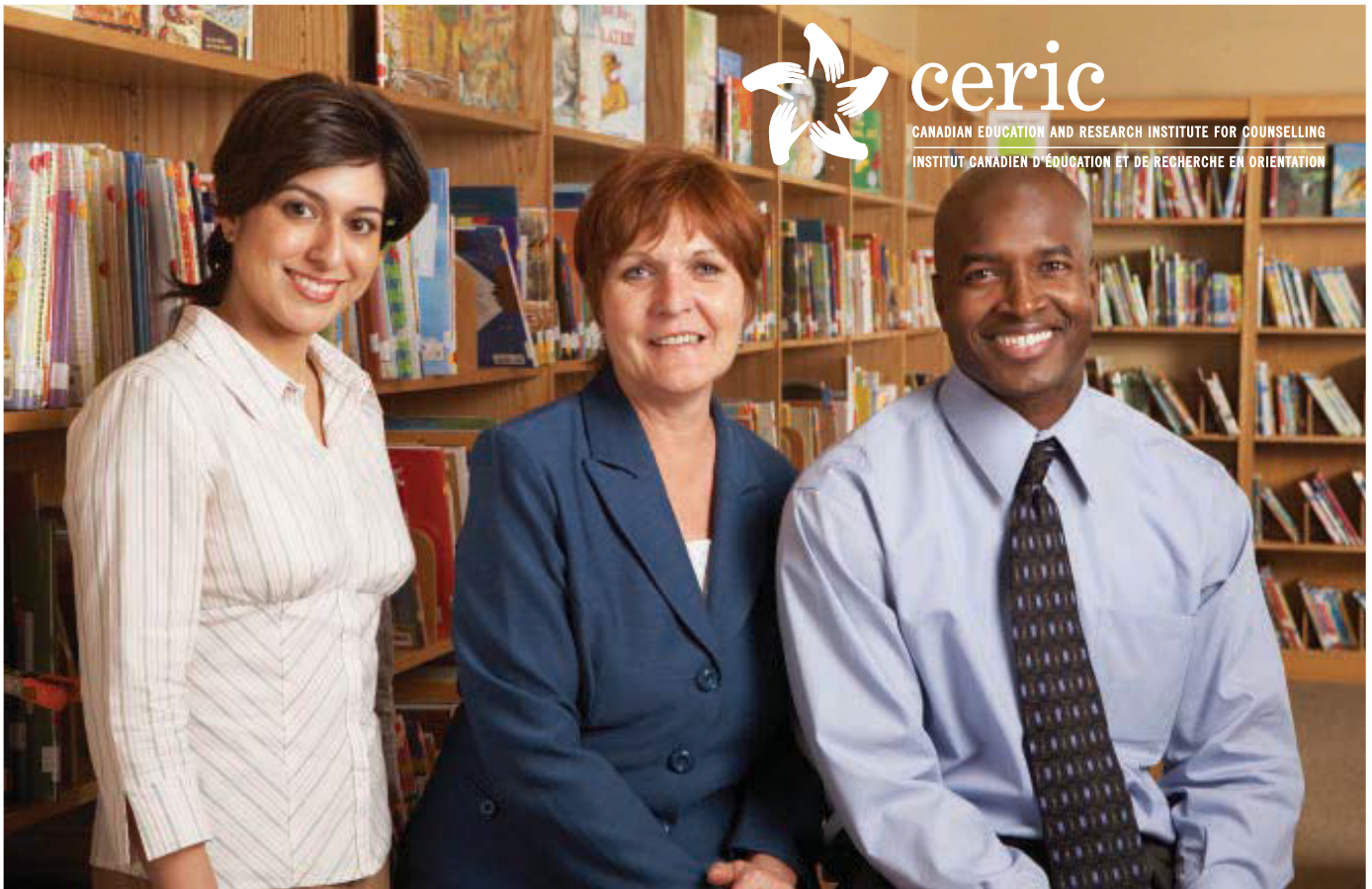
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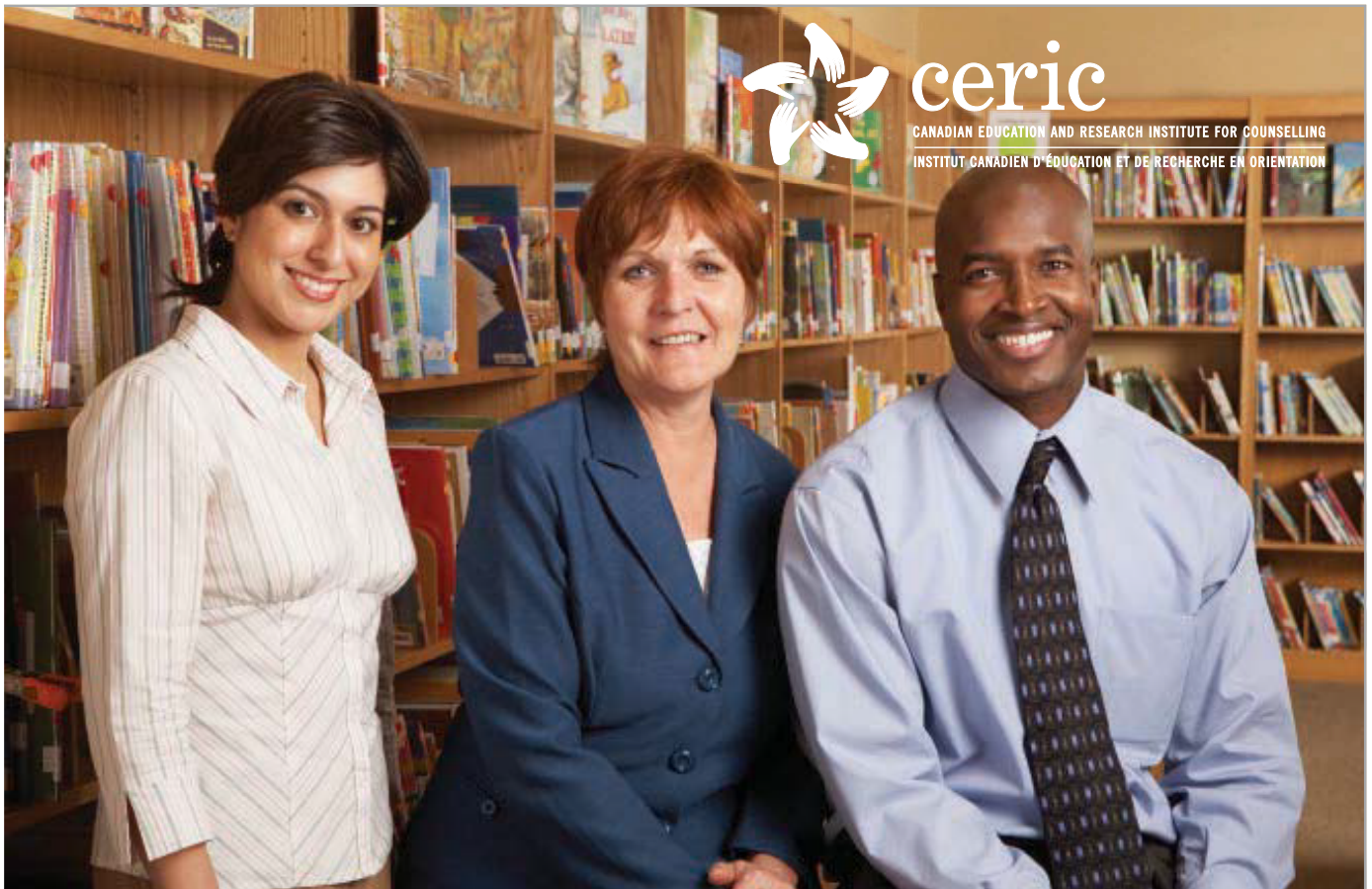
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Look Before You Leap: The Role of Self-Employment Coaching Self-Efficacy in Facilitating Client's Success

Roberta A. Neault
Deirdre A. Pickerell
Cassandra M. Saunders
Life Strategies Ltd.

Abstract

In follow-up to the *Look Before You Leap: Self Employment Survival Strategies* project, the authors engaged Canadian Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) in an exploratory study looking at their overall opinions regarding self-employment, including whether or not it is a viable option for clients and the factors that contribute to CDPs engaging in self-employment conversations. This article begins by reviewing the “Look Before You Leap” project and the various resources developed through project activities, then outlines the findings from the follow-up study where the authors coined the term *self-employment coaching self-efficacy* and link this concept to the frequency with which CDPs engage in self-employment conversations. Results revealed that CDPs are less likely to engage in conversations with clients if they don't feel fully equipped to have those conversations. Other aspects related to perceptions of self-employment as a viable option for clients are also explored.

By the end of 2010, almost 2.7 million Canadians were self-employed (Industry Canada, 2011), accounting for approximately 16% of the total employment in the country. Economic downturns, such as the global recession that started in 2008, have been historically linked to increases in self-employment; it's not surprising, therefore, to find that in the year beginning October 2008 self-employment in Canada rose by 3.9% while paid employment fell in both the public sector (-1.6%) and private sector (-4.1%; LaRochelle-Côté, 2010).

Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) play a significant role in helping unemployed Canadians re-attach to the workforce (Bezanson, O'Reilly, & Mag-

nusson, 2009). Given the number of Canadians who are self-employed overall, and especially the rise in self-employment during tough economic times, it seems important that CDPs are equipped to support individuals contemplating self-employment or becoming self-employed (Kendall, Buys, Charker, & MacMillan, 2006).

In some jurisdictions, self-employment is embraced as a return-to-work strategy (Congregado, Golpe, & Carmona, 2010); in other cases, it is only explored as a possibility once all other viable options have been exhausted (Ministry of Social Development, 2011). However, neither extreme considers the individual and economic characteristics that contribute to self-employment success. Previous research, specific to the vocational rehabilitation sector in Australia, found that “while agency policies sometimes facilitate the choice of self-employment as a vocational goal, the office environment per se is perceived as quite negative towards such a goal” (Kendall et al., 2006, p. 204). It seems apparent, therefore, that CDPs are receiving mixed messages about supporting their clients to consider self-employment and many feel ill-equipped to engage their clients in self-employment exploration. During 2010 and 2011, with support from the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC), Life Strategies Ltd. developed a suite of “Look Before You Leap” resources to fill this perceived gap; the project is described in the following section.

The “Look Before You Leap” Project

Co-authors Neault and Pickerell have a long history of helping CDPs better understand self-employment; our team has presented workshops, published articles and journals, and been in-

terviewed about self-employment topics. The “Look Before You Leap” project originally focused on supporting CDPs to move beyond government contracts to explore self-employment opportunities (e.g., providing career development within organizations, establishing a private practice of their own, providing career services within educational or vocational rehabilitation settings). In 2010, we presented *Look Before You Leap: Survival Strategies for Self Employed Career Consultants* at BC's Career Development Conference; recognizing a need for additional research and financial support to further develop the self-employment resources, we approached the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC) with a partnership proposal for funding.

Within that application we noted that CDPs, and individuals interested in pursuing work as self-employed contractors or consultants, had an urgent need for accessible training and resources on the topic. This broadened our original scope beyond simply facilitating the self-employment of CDPs to equipping CDPs to better support their clients to explore self-employment possibilities. As training for CDPs and counsellors typically doesn't offer self-employment information, many individuals working in the field are poorly equipped to engage in self-employment discussions with their unemployed and underemployed clients. CERIC agreed to partner on the project.

Research and Survey Development

The project began with a brief literature review focussing on the realities of self-employment, self-employment as a viable option for the unemployed, and factors contributing to self-employment success. To further explore self-em-



ployment, a brief (8-item) survey was sent to our network. The survey comprised quantitative and qualitative questions including: What is your self-employment status?, What's one thing you know now about self-employment that you wish you knew before?, and What percentage of clients do you have self-employment conversations with? We also asked participants to select the three most important entrepreneurial characteristics (e.g., empathy, independence, self-discipline, risk-taking) from a list of 10 derived from our research and personal experiences; an "other" option allowed participants to identify any additional characteristics they considered important for entrepreneurial success.

Results

Ninety individuals responded to the survey; some (n = 59) were currently self-employed and the rest had all been self-employed at some point in their careers. Respondents identified 42 characteristics of self-employed individuals; the top three were self-discipline (25%), people skills (13.73%), and persistence (12.75%). Similar results were clustered, resulting in a final list of 35 characteristics of the successfully self-employed; each was then coded as a knowledge, skill, or ability (KSA). From responses we were also able to identify 10 strategies for self-employment success.

Checklist

From our list of 35 characteristics, we then developed a checklist which allows individuals to self-rate against 105 entrepreneurial items using a 5-point likert scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). When scored, results were clustered into the 35 characteristics, with a total score classified as *low* (i.e., few of the identified characteristics), *average* (i.e., some of the characteristics), or *high* (i.e., many of the characteristics). Neault and Pickerell (2011) presented a condensed version in the *Look Before You Leap* book.

Components

The "Look Before You Leap" project resulted in a suite of resources for CDPs and their clients including: (a) a 2

week (20 hour) facilitated e-learning course and (b) book focussed on self-employment, (c) a dedicated website (www.lookbeforeyouleap.ca), with annotated links to relevant resources for the self-employed, (d) a facilitator's guide to support CDPs and counsellors interested in teaching the course, and (e) a PowerPoint presentation to support in-person delivery of the course. We also developed (f) an interactive blog (<http://lookbeforeyouleap-selfemployment.blogspot.com/>) and (g) Twitter feed (@lookb4leaping) to share resources and highlight project activities.

Evaluation

To ensure the resources being developed would work for the intended audience(s), we conducted several small focus groups with CDPs and individuals who were self-employed in a wide variety of fields. We also conducted two pilots of the course; the first as a mixed-mode post-conference session (i.e., combining an in-person workshop with e-learning extension) and the second fully online. There were 5 participants in the mixed-mode session, all CDPs; however, the second pilot, also with 5 participants, included self-employed individuals and those considering self-employment, from a variety of sectors. The diverse group of participants in the second pilot allowed us to test the assumption that two distinct groups (i.e., CDPs interested in learning about self-employment to better support their clients and individuals considering self-employment or already self-employed) could be mixed. Results of both pilots were positive with 100% of participants reporting they enjoyed the course overall. They also reported that course length and pace was about right (56%), the Leap book was very useful/useful (89%), and that the combined pilot worked well (44%), with the remaining 56% saying it worked for some discussions and not others; no one indicated that it didn't work.

Overall, the "Look Before You Leap" project met all of its objectives. The course materials and book have been very well received and there has been growing interest in the topic. While our focus was initially to help CDPs consider their own self-employment opportunities, that focus expanded

to equip CDPs to better support their clients contemplating self-employment. The second pilot expanded the target group even further, demonstrating that the Leap suite of resources is suitable for any individual interested in better understanding the realities of self-employment.

Follow-Up

Building on our findings from the "Look Before You Leap" project, and to further assist CDPs, this article is intended to deepen understanding of clients' needs related to self-employment, explore attitudes about self-employment as an option for the unemployed, and encourage development of knowledge and skills through continuing education. To build a solid foundation for this next step, we revisited the literature.

Literature Review

The context of self-employment is impacted by labour market trends and economic conditions; therefore, CDPs can't assume that self-employment knowledge from their past would be adequate today or in the future. Because self-efficacy is subject-specific, it's important to understand what would contribute to CDPs being able to competently and comfortably support their clients to consider self-employment possibilities. The following sections summarize literature related to today's self-employment context; self-employment knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and self-efficacy, especially as it relates to the ability to facilitate clients' exploration of self-employment as an option.

Self-Employment Context

Self-employment growth in recent years is not only a Canadian phenomenon; it has been noted in Australia and the United States (Kendall et al., 2006) and throughout many parts of Europe (Congregado et al., 2010), just as a few examples. In investigating the movement into and out of self-employment, Congregado et al. (2010) described a "recession-push hypothesis" (p. 831), finding that in times of higher unemployment, especially during a crisis, there was an increase in people starting-



up new businesses (i.e., becoming self-employed). LaRoche-Côté (2010) reported a similar trend in Canada, most recently during the recession that began in Fall 2008. This type of recession-related self-employment boom is typically followed by a bust where self-employment growth slows and some of the self-employed re-enter the traditional workforce as employees (Congregado et al., 2010; LaRoche-Côté, 2010).

Of particular interest to CDPs may be government policies related to self-employment. In some jurisdictions, policies encourage self-employment to reduce unemployment rates and, perhaps, create additional jobs (Congregado et al., 2010) or to facilitate a return-to-work for injured clients or people with disabilities (Kendall et al., 2006). In other cases, self-employment seems to be discouraged, with few supports in place to help individuals make a successful transition from unemployment to working on their own (Ministry of Social Development, 2011).

Congregado et al. (2010) cautioned, however, that policies aimed at increasing self-employment may attract poor entrepreneurs. Individuals who move into self-employment to create a job for themselves aren't likely to engage in job creation (i.e., hiring others). Further, recent Canadian research didn't indicate that the increased self-employment in recessionary times was a result of the unemployed moving into self-employment; rather it seemed that as people left their jobs to become self-employed, the unemployed filled some of the resulting vacancies (Industry Canada, 2011).

In some instances self-employment merely served as temporary measure (Congregado et al., 2010) or a stepping stone into employment (Kellard et al., 2002). However, Jarvis (2003) described the new work paradigm as more about contracts/fees and personal freedoms than salaries/benefits and job security. Similarly, Vande Kuyt (2011) noted "we live in transformational times where job security is shaky at best" (p. 18). Self-employment is well suited for such a paradigm, so it's possible that self-employment won't "level off" as we come out of the current recession, but rather will continue to grow. Neault (1997a; 1997b) also highlighted the importance of an "entrepreneurial spirit"

for *all* workers to succeed in their workplace and the new economy – so understanding self-employment success characteristics may facilitate re-employment as well as self-employment. At some point those with an entrepreneurial spirit will move into action (Neault & Pickerell, 2011) and it's important for CDPs to be prepared to assist them.

CDP Self-Employment Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

In order to appropriately support clients, CDPs need a sound knowledge base so they can carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages of self-employment versus traditional employment (Peel & Inkson, 2004). There is an abundance of research available on the topic of self-employment, exploring concepts such as why do people become self-employed (Lee & Cochran, 1997; Neault & Pickerell, 2011), what contributes to self-employment success (Kellard, Legge, & Ashworth, 2002) and self-employment satisfaction (Schjoedt, 2009), and self-employment realities (Delage, 2002).

Lee and Cochran (1997) identified eight themes from interviews with self-employed individuals about their decision to become self-employed: individuals were (a) motivated, either negatively or positively; (b) had a definite goal and appropriate connections; (c) learned about the workplace reality; (d) developed competence; (e) experienced a change in circumstance associated with favourable conditions; (f) accessed a supportive network; (g) built confidence; and (h) felt responsibility/ownership. Although this research is older and limited by participant numbers, it provided an understanding that "the purpose of career counselling for potential entrepreneurs is to actualize conditions of action that enhance a sense of agency, enabling a person to make a decision on self-employment" (p. 107).

Once the decision is made to explore/pursue self-employment, consideration should be paid to success and satisfaction factors. Schjoedt (2009) identified a link between self-employed persons' job satisfaction and (a) autonomy in scheduling and determining work procedures, (b) variety of activi-

ties involving different skills and talents, and (c) direct or clear performance feedback. In addition to financial and non-financial support (e.g., business planning), Kellard et al. (2002) noted that those who are successful in self-employment had a good employment history and previous exposure to self-employment. However, the research literature and anecdotal conversations reveal mixed beliefs about self-employment as an option for unemployed clients (Kendall et al., 2006).

When Kendall and her colleagues (2006) began to study self-employment as a vocational rehabilitation strategy, they believed that vocational rehabilitation practitioners in Australia viewed the option quite negatively; however, that's not what their research revealed. Rather, they found that the counsellors themselves had quite positive views about self-employment for many of their clients (as long as financial resources were in place and their clients had the necessary social skills); the roadblock appeared to be at the organizational level (i.e., respondents reported a lack of agency support for self-employment as an option). This seems similar to the current situation in British Columbia as a new model of employment services is about to be launched by the provincial government. Among other requirements, before discussing self-employment as an option CDPs will need to demonstrate "that no suitable Insurable Employment opportunity is available for the Client" (Ministry of Social Development, 2011, p. 100).

Although traditionally there has been a preference for, and focus on, moving individuals to employment rather than self-employment (Lee & Cochran, 1997), taking a last resort stance on participation in self-employment can be problematic, leading to failure of such programs (Rissman, as cited in Congregado et al., 2010). According to Congregado and his colleagues (2010), individuals who have been unemployed long-term and qualified, motivated entrepreneurs represent two distinct group and, thus, should not be treated the same. Clients who've been repeatedly unable to succeed within other employment programs/interventions likely have limited potential to succeed as entrepreneurs. Conse-



quently, self-employment policies that reflect the client's self-employment success potential may be more viable than policies that permit self-employment support only to those who are otherwise unemployable.

Two of the authors of this article (Neault and Pickerell) have been self-employed for most of their careers; both have presented, taught, and written extensively on self-employment and entrepreneurial approaches to effective career management (Neault, 1997a; 1997b; 1998; 2003; Neault & Pickerell, 2011). However, through their work on the "Look Before You Leap" project and the additional research for this article, both had several assumptions shattered and biases revealed. In the four stages of learning model (Businessballs, n.d.), unconscious incompetence is a stage where people simply don't know what they don't know; they are, therefore, unaware of skill gaps. Shattering of assumptions/biases is an example of moving through the stages of learning into conscious incompetence; it's at this stage one is aware of the need to learn and may be motivated to develop additional skills or knowledge. As self-employment realities change with shifts in the economy, this highlights the importance of ongoing professional development on this topic. However, with limited participation in the "Look Before You Leap" course beyond our initial pilot, it appears that CDPs may not see the importance of professional development on this topic, are unwilling or unable to invest in it, or are simply unaware of their own skill gaps.

Self-Employment Coaching Self-Efficacy

The significance of optimism (Neault, 2002) and hope (Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2011) to both career success and job satisfaction has been well established; the literature confirms that these elements are similarly significant to the self-employed (Cassar, 2010). However, in neither case is this to be naïve optimism; rather, it is optimism grounded in knowledge about oneself and relevant contextual factors, supported by the capacity (e.g., skills and resources) to handle challenges that will inevitably be encountered (Neault &

Pickerell, 2011). The importance of reality checking is fundamental to the "Look Before You Leap" suite of resources. Our goal was to support CDPs (i.e., those personally considering self-employment and also those supporting clients to make informed decisions) to facilitate a realistic, informed optimism based on a solid understanding of what successful self-employment entails. This fits with Bandura's (1986) recognition that self-efficacy is subject-specific – it seemed important, therefore to facilitate the self-employment coaching self-efficacy of CDPs as well as the self-employment decision-making self-efficacy of individuals exploring entrepreneurial options.

Specific to counsellors, Marshall (2000) identified a developmental process that counselling students experience when forming their "counsellor identity or their belief that they can be a counsellor" (p. 4); this process includes specific education, supervision, practice, and reflection. Similarly, Williams, Cox, and Koob (1999) described a service-learning approach to increase self-efficacy whereby individuals learn through reflection and experience. It makes sense, therefore, that a similar process of training, supervision, practice, and reflection could also build self-employment coaching self-efficacy.

Our original research, conducted to support the "Look Before You Leap" project, informed the development of the suite of Leap tools and resources. In this present study, our research specifically examined (a) whether or not CDPs see self-employment as a viable option for clients, (b) the factors contributing to CDPs engaging in self-employment conversations with clients, (c) how self-employment discussions are initiated, (d) how CDPs learn about self-employment, and (e) whether or not self-employment knowledge contributed to a willingness to engage in self-employment conversations with clients.

Method

Because the literature on this topic was limited, ambiguous, and in some cases contradictory, this exploratory study investigated relationships between a wide-range of variables including: location (i.e., province/territory), client

population, age, employment sector/type, self-employment experience, opinions and beliefs about self-employment, self-employment knowledge level (self-rated and assessed), self-employment program/service mandatory qualifying conditions and factors contributing to program success, and frequency of self-employment conversations.

Participants and Procedure

Intended survey respondents were Career Development Practitioners (CDPs) who, as defined by Bezanson, O'Reilly, and Magnusson (2009), are individuals providing services in the areas of career education, career counselling, employment counselling, human resource development, career coaching, training in employment skills, training in work-related areas, and vocational rehabilitation (i.e., people who play a key role in keeping individuals employed and getting the unemployed back to work). To reach these individuals, survey invitations were sent through the authors' database, relevant provincial association listservs (e.g., BC Career Development Association [BCCDA]), and strategic key contacts throughout Canada. In addition, information about the survey was posted on several social media sites (e.g., LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook). To maximize participation and promote timely responses, the survey period was deliberately short (i.e., 2 weeks). There was immediate pan-Canadian interest, as well as some international responses, with over 100 completed surveys within the first 24 hours and 195 total responses at the end of the survey period; of the 192 who reported being in a position to make career suggestions, almost all (n = 190) reported that they would present self-employment as an option.

Most respondents were Canadian (96%) with 4% from other countries (e.g., US, UK, Australia). The highest representation in Canada was from BC (54%) – not surprising, given that the researchers are BC-based. However, there was a coast-to-coast representation with the second largest cluster of respondents in Ontario (21%), followed by significant groups from Manitoba (7%) and Alberta (7%), and 1% each



from Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories, New Brunswick, and Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, we didn't have representation from Newfoundland, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, or Yukon Territories. Many respondents (46%) came from metropolitan areas (i.e., population of 100,000+), were between 40 and 54 years old (42%), and were either employed directly by the government or by government-funded community-based agencies (65%). To a certain extent, self-employment experience of the self-selected respondents (i.e., those who chose to respond to the survey) was skewed. Compared to 16% of all Canadians who are self-employed (Industry Canada, 2011), 27% of our survey respondents reported being currently self-employed, with an additional 39% reporting that they had been self-employed in the past; only 34% had never been self-employed.

Survey Development

The 25-question survey, which was uploaded to Survey Monkey, primarily comprised multiple choice questions with an opportunity for qualitative responses through an "other" or "comment" box. The questions were informed by the literature and the lead researchers' extensive experience within career development sector and with self-employment. The survey began with demographic questions (e.g., I work primarily in [region], I am [age], Have you ever been self-employed?) followed by content-specific questions (e.g., As a career practitioner, when would you present self-employment as an option? What percentage of clients do you have self-employment conversations with?). The final eight questions were an objective measure of self-employment knowledge derived from information in recent Statistics Canada reports about self-employment (e.g., In Canada, self-employment represents approximately ___% of total employment?; In Canada, which gender is represented to a greater extent in self-employment?). For each of these questions, multiple choice answer options were provided.

Data Analysis

Survey responses were downloaded to a Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS) program and all raw scores were coded appropriately (i.e., assigning a value to each possible response). Some variables were arrived at through the *transform, compute variable* command which assigned a single overall score. Some survey questions provided respondents an opportunity to select "other" and specify a response beyond available response options. Where appropriate (i.e., when a respondent's written comment matched an available survey option), "other" responses were recoded into the available response options. Given the diversity of question formats and response options, results were analyzed through various statistical procedures including frequency distributions, correlations, and regression.

Qualitative responses were analyzed by manually coding answers with keywords and concepts similar to the approach used by Lee and Cochran (1997). In many instances, respondents' written comments included multiple keywords/concepts; following the template analysis model described by King (2005), some components of single items were assigned to more than one theme. Similar themes were clustered and frequencies were calculated. To ensure appropriate coding, quick Internet searches were completed to clarify unfamiliar terms or acronyms. Theming using coloured highlighters, symbols, and post-it notes was an emergent process (i.e., we didn't select pre-select themes and categories but, rather, extracted themes from the responses).

Results

The following sections present survey results organized by CDPs' knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding self-employment and the frequency with which they engage in self-employment conversations.

Self-Employment Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

Most respondents reported a mid-level of self-employment knowledge and skills. On a 5-point scale, with 1 being very limited and 5 being excellent, the mean scores for respondents' level of knowledge/skill in supporting clients to (a) *explore* self-employment

as an option and (b) *implement* their self-employment plans were 3.7 (SD = 1.05) and 3.4 (SD = 1.36) respectively. The two scores were significantly correlated ($r = 0.76$, $n = 193$, $p < 0.01$), but weakly correlated with whether or not the respondent had been previously self-employed (i.e., with exploration $r = .25$, $n = 192$, $p < 0.01$; with implementation $r = .21$, $n = 192$, $p < 0.01$). All respondents were able to self-rate their knowledge and skills (i.e., no one chose "I'm not sure"). Due to the intercorrelation, we combined the knowledge and skill variables, creating a new variable which we named "self-employment coaching self-efficacy." These scores ranged from 1-5, with an average (mean) of 3.7. Responses clustered in the 3-5 range displaying a normal, but positively skewed distribution.

Most respondents (84%) indicated participation in professional development activities related to self-employment; the most common types of learning included self-study (48%), 10+ hour course or program (30%), short course (3-10 hours; 20%), and brief webinar, conference presentation, or workshop (less than 3 hours; 18%). An overall professional development variable was calculated by weighting each response (0 = none; 1 = self-study; 2 = brief webinar, conference presentation, or workshop; 3 = short course; 4 = course/program). Scores ranged from 0-10, with the average score being 2.65; however, there was a bimodal distribution of scores with the largest groups reporting self-study ($n = 56$, 29%) and full courses or programs ($n = 48$, 25%). Although we hypothesized that knowledge scores (from a brief quiz on self-employment facts and trends) would correlate with participation in self-employment professional development, no significant correlation was found.

In the future, 96% of participants anticipate engaging in further professional development on the topic of self-employment; most would prefer a face-to-face workshop, seminar, and/or course (70%), but close to half of respondents would consider an online course (50%), webinar (47%), consultation or coaching (44%), or use of printed materials (44%). Fewer (33%) indicated that they intended to increase



their knowledge by informational interviewing someone who is self-employed.

To explore respondents' self-employment attitudes in relation to potentially challenging client groups, we used an open-ended question. Although 35% of respondents ($n = 59$) indicated that there were no groups they would exclude from exploring self-employment, other responses clustered into three themes: client characteristics, financial barriers, and lack of business knowledge and skills. Almost half of respondents identified specific client characteristics that could preclude self-employment (49%; $n = 81$); these included limited social support systems, low skills, disability and mental illness, newcomer status, personal characteristics, no interest in self-employment, a history of unemployment/discrimination, youth and inexperience, criminal background, homelessness, living in a remote location, and multi-barriers. Significantly fewer respondents (11%, $n = 19$) indicated concerns about exploring self-employment with clients who had financial barriers (e.g., poverty, limited savings). Only 5% ($n = 8$) expressed concerns about their clients' lack of business knowledge/skills, previous business failures, unrealistic expectations of time/effort, and lack of "big picture" thinking.

Nearly all respondents (91%) indicated that self-employment works for some clients but not for others and should, therefore, be considered on a case-by-case basis. A few (7%) indicated that, in today's economy, self-employment is essential and that everyone should explore it as an option. At the other extreme, 2% of respondents believed that full-time employment was always preferred to self-employment.

We asked respondents two questions concerning self-employment programs. The first focussed on the mandatory client qualifications for entry into self-employment programs while the second asked respondents to consider what client characteristics/conditions contributed to successful completion of these programs, regardless of restrictions or mandates.

Respondents identified a wide variety of mandatory conditions including viable business ideas (73%), entrepreneurial personal attributes (72%), being

legally entitled to work in Canada (71%), and skills/knowledge relevant to the specific business product and/or service (70%); they also noted the importance of an active EI claim (39%) and being unemployed (45%). The client characteristic that was least endorsed was low skilled (4%), indicating a recognition of the skills required to become successfully self-employed. Approximately 25% of respondents identified other mandatory conditions for self-employment; these included specific entrepreneurial characteristics (i.e., passion, drive/dedication, understanding of costs), resources, interest in self-employment, and Reachback status (i.e., a person who has had an EI claim in the 3 years prior to applying for provincial assistance; Government of British Columbia, n.d.).

When survey participants were asked to reflect upon a client's chance of successfully completing a self-employment program if there were no mandatory qualifying conditions to consider, their responses clustered into a slightly different pattern. Personal attributes (93%) and viable business idea (90%) were still the highest rated. Similarly, skills/knowledge of specific business product and/or service (89%) remained important considerations. However, having an active EI claim (19%) and being currently unemployed (22%) were, not surprisingly, not seen as contributing in a major way to successful completion of a self-employment program (i.e., although, as mandatory qualifying conditions, they may facilitate entry into a self-employment program, they are not seen by many as contributing to successful completion of that program).

At the end of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to share additional comments or recommend self-employment resources; at this point, many returned their focus to groups that they perceived as unsuitable self-employment candidates (e.g., people lacking business knowledge or entrepreneurial characteristics; insufficient financial resources). However, others provided case examples where self-employment appeared to be the only option for their clients.

As noted in this section, there were significant differences amongst survey

respondents' knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding self-employment; this, in turn, seemed to impact their likelihood of engaging in self-employment conversations with their clients. We explore the impact of this in the next section.

Self-Employment Conversations

Most respondents (76%) reported having self-employment conversations with fewer than 25% of their clients; a few (4%) indicated not having self-employment conversations with any clients at all. Frequency of conversations was slightly, but significantly, correlated with self-ratings of knowledge and skill in supporting clients (a) to explore self-employment as an option ($r = .28$, $n = 192$, $p < 0.01$) and (b) to implement their self-employment plans ($r = .29$, $n = 192$, $p < 0.01$). We were somewhat surprised to find that the self-employment experience of CDPs themselves was not significantly correlated with the likelihood of having conversations about self-employment with their clients (i.e., this apparently wasn't an influencing factor).

Respondents indicated that they presented self-employment as an option if the client indicated s/he would like to be self-employed (77%); if an assessment indicated self-employment as an option (66%); if the client demonstrated self-employment knowledge, skills, and abilities (64%); or if the client indicated s/he had been self-employed in the past (41%). Some respondents, however, indicated that they would only introduce self-employment after they'd explored all other options (16%). A few (11%) were at the other extreme, indicating that they would explore self-employment options when they first met with a client.

A step-wise regression analysis was conducted to determine which variables best predicted CDPs engagement in self-employment conversations with clients. We considered variables related to CDP demographics (i.e., city size, age of practitioner, and personal experience in self-employment) and engagement in professional development related to the topic of self-employment. Although each of these variables was hypothesized to potentially impact the



likelihood of self-employment conversations, the regression revealed that the best predictor variable was what we have labelled self-employment coaching self-efficacy (i.e., the career practitioner's self-ratings of knowledge and skill in supporting clients to explore self-employment as an option). This single variable was only responsible, however, for 20% of the variance; further research is necessary to determine what else may influence CDPs to explore self-employment as an option for their clients.

Discussion

Overall, our findings indicate that CDPs have diverse attitudes and beliefs about self-employment and, also, about which circumstances would lead them to engage in self-employment conversations with their clients. The pivotal point seems to be self-employment coaching self-efficacy, a term we've used to refer to the CDPs' belief in their ability to explore self-employment as an option for their clients and, where relevant, to support their clients to implement their self-employment plans. It's this specific type of self-efficacy that appears to be impacting the frequency with which CDPs are conversing with clients about self-employment, more so than the CDPs' own self-employment experience and/or specific self-employment training.

From our findings, it seems that an effective way to encourage more CDPs to engage in discussions about self-employment with their clients is to facilitate the CDPs' self-employment self-efficacy. As both learning and reflection strengthen self-efficacy (Marshall, 2000; Williams et al., 1999), it makes sense that CDPs may benefit from learning more about self-employment and, as a result, be better equipped to explore self-employment as an option for their clients. The Leap project resources were designed for exactly that purpose; together they comprise the breadth of approaches to professional development that study participants indicated an interest in (i.e., face-to-face and online training, webinars, and self-study using printed materials). However, as with other types of professional development in the career and employ-

ment services sector, many CDPs recognize the *importance* of continuous learning but struggle to find the *time or money* to fit more professional development into their lives.

In addition, this research surfaced some apparently biased and unfounded assumptions amongst CDPs about factors that may preclude self-employment success. Although some CDPs reported that they would be unlikely to explore self-employment with people who have disabilities or mental health concerns, in some cases, self-employment may be the only viable option for members of these groups to return to productive work. Similarly, although some respondents expressed concern about exploring self-employment as an option with someone whose previous business had failed, there are countless success stories of people who have turned their lessons learned from business failures into successful entrepreneurial endeavours. Ellsberg (2011) reported interviewing many college dropouts who became millionaires and billionaires – they consistently credited their business failures as contributing to their exceptional longer term successes. Some CDPs also reported reluctance to explore self-employment with youth; however, biographies of such successful entrepreneurs as Bill Gates (Microsoft), Steve Jobs (Apple), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook), and Richard Branson (Virgin Records) clearly indicate that self-employed youth can thrive. To overcome these assumptions that may be unconsciously limiting their clients' options, it seems important to engage CDPs in learning more about self-employment realities and success factors; courses, brief articles, blogs, and discussions with peers may help to fill the gaps.

Another interesting finding was that, although almost all CDPs (93%) ranked entrepreneurial attributes as the most important contributing factor to the successful completion of self-employment programs, considerably fewer (72%) reported that such attributes were among the mandatory client qualifying conditions for entry into such programs. Similarly, although 90% of CDPs reported that having a viable business idea was an important factor in determining successful completion of a self-employment program, only 73% indicated that

clients needed a business idea to qualify to enter such a program. Combined, this seems to suggest a disconnect between program entry requirements and factors contributing to a client's success, perhaps something of interest to program designers and policy makers. The CDPs who responded to our survey seemed to recognize that their clients' successful completion of self-employment programs may require more than the baseline requirements for program entry.

Limitations

Although attempts were made to ensure research was comprehensive, this study does have some limitations important to address. Our participants comprised only a small fraction of CDPs working in the field; to further extend this research, broader representation is required. In addition, there was a clear self-selection bias; those who responded to our survey on the topic of self-employment had, on average, more personal experience in self-employment than the average CDP would have.

Although we tried to objectively measure CDP knowledge of self-employment, our approach didn't produce statistically significant results when compared to a variety of respondent factors. Not only was this component of the survey small (i.e., 8-questions), and many respondents opted not to respond to this section, our selection of knowledge to test was arbitrary and specific (resembling a trivia quiz). This clearly didn't effectively capture self-employment knowledge that many of our CDP respondents may have had. Although CDPs may not know specifics about self-employment statistics in Canada, with their broad knowledge base (e.g., LMI, research, coaching) they can still support individuals interested in pursuing self-employment.

Recommendations

Whether or not funders (e.g., government policy makers) perceive self-employment as a viable option for various clients, many CDPs reported that self-employment should never be restricted to a certain "type" of client; instead, all should have the opportunity to consider it as an option. This contradicts some program mandates (e.g., BC's new service delivery



model) where self-employment is a “last resort”; instead, we’d recommend that a self-employment plan be considered a valid outcome of most career exploration interventions.

Canadian CDPs have a clear set of core competencies, and areas of specialization, as presented in the Canadian Standards & Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&Gs). Based on the results of our research, and the importance of developing self-employment coaching self-efficacy, we’d also recommend self-employment coaching be included in the S&Gs within the core competencies or as an area of specialization. Perhaps by embedding self-employment skills and knowledge into the S&Gs, CDPs and their managers may begin to understand the importance of developing specialized skills and knowledge in this area. This may be especially important given the belief, by many CDPs, that certain “types” of clients (e.g., disabled, youth) shouldn’t be considered for self-employment; seeing self-employment as a viable option for diverse clients may enhance their chances of a successful attachment to the workforce.

Conclusion

In summary, although CDPs seem willing and able to assist individuals exploring self-employment when it’s appropriate, more research is needed to better understand the development of self-employment coaching self-efficacy within CDPs as well as what barriers may impede client self-employment success. Clients, CDPs, program designers, and policy makers need to develop a shared understanding of self-employment and work together to ensure services that best support their clients.

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