Assessing the Effectiveness of a Career Program

for International Students

by

Angela Bohonos

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

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Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology

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ABSTRACT

The number of international students attending North American universities is growing exponentially and represents a large economic industry for these countries (Spencer-Rodgers, 2000). For many post secondary institutions international student tuition brings much needed revenue. However, there is a consensus in the literature that the Student Affairs departments of universities have a responsibility to assist international students with preparation for post-graduation life, including the school to work transition. There is an absence of literature relating to the post-graduation career search needs of this student population and of effective interventions for meeting these needs from a Canadian perspective (Arthur, 2004). The literature that exists echoes the staff of the University of Manitoba Student Counselling and Career Centre's own experience that the international student population has unique career needs which require programming designed with their needs in mind.

In order to address this need t a unique program specifically designed to help international students who are intending to seek employment in Canada was designed. This study describes the program and the results of pre and post tests completed by participants that measured their level of acculturation, changes in confidence and knowledge level and career preparation needs as well as researcher observations and feedback from participants. Programs of this type are extremely rare, therefore, it is vital that its effectiveness be empirically evaluated in order to allow continued services and to provide tested curriculum for student service departments at other universities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

This study grew out of an unpublished manuscript based on a study conducted in 2007 by Gavriela Geller and Michael Mandrusiak and the need to illuminate their findings and add Canadian information to the field.

Chapter one provides the background and context for the current study. The chapter includes the following topics: the impact of globalization on career development, the systemic barriers to employment in Canada for international students, an historical perspective, the current status of policy development in Canada, a provincial perspective of Manitoba's higher education career development programs, the unique aspects of the University of Manitoba career program, goals and assumptions, and the current study. The chapter concludes with the significance of this study and responding to the career needs of international students

Impact of Globalization on Career Development

The world is becoming smaller everyday. Advances in technology and trade have created a global marketplace. An evolving aspect of this globalization is international education. Globalization impacts higher education. Due to decreases in government funding, post secondary institutions have been forced to generate revenue from other sources. International recruitment is considered a high priority at most post-secondary institutions as a mechanism to generate revenue and create diversity on campus. In 2003, international students contributed upwards of $3.5 billon to the Canadian economy. The number of international students choosing a

post-secondary education in Canada is steadily increasing. In the 2004-2005 academic year, 72,500 international students attended Canadian universities (Arthur, 2004). A report in the March 8, 2009 Ottawa Business Journal indicated that currently there are approximately 176,000 international students studying in Canada. Consequently, the number of international students seeking employment in Canada after graduation is also increasing. However, many international students are pessimistic about their chances of securing employment in Canada upon graduation. A study conducted between 2005 and 2007 by the Canadian Bureau of International Education (Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE), 2007) found that only one third or 33% of international students intend to stay in Canada after graduation due to the potential barriers they face in securing employment in Canada; these barriers are systemic, linguistic, and cultural (Bond, Areepattamannil, Brathwaite-Sturgeon, Hayle, and Malekan, 2007).

Systemic Barriers to Employment in Canada for International Students: Historical Perspective

At the time this study was conducted, the regulations governing post-graduate work permits for international students were impractical and, as a result, difficult to obtain. In Canada, prior to April 2008, international students were required to obtain a post-graduate work permit that allowed them to remain in the country for up to two years, provided they acquired a job offer related to their field of study within 90 days of completion of studies. An international student had to receive a job offer from an employer prior to obtaining a work permit from the government. In addition, the employment was required to be related to their

degree major. For example, a job as a server in a restaurant would not be considered career related and therefore a work permit would not be issued; however, a management position in a restaurant may lead to a work permit for a business/management graduate. The inclusion of career related as a criterion is the significant term. This term means that, unlike a domestic student who could secure any type of employment, international students were required to prove that their employment was related to their field of study. This was a daunting task for many international students.

> For example, international students in Canada face a "catch 22" dilemma in securing employment. On the one hand, employers are legally prohibited from hiring international students unless they have received proper immigration authorization. On the other hand immigration officials will not issue a work permit until the student presents confirmation of employment. There is uncertainty about whether students will receive authorization and when they will actually be available for work. From the employer's point of view, holding a job for an international student does not make sense when domestic employees are readily available (Arthur, 2004, p. 44-45).

These work permit restrictions added to international students' difficulties obtaining employment and increased the need for job search assistance. At the time of this study, the guidelines in place for immigration officers to determine if a job offer was career related or not were ambiguous or nonexistent, As a result, international students experienced difficulty obtaining employment in Canada became frustrated and discouraged with the job search

3

process. A report published by the Canadian Bureau for International Education in the fall of 2007, stated:

> "…a serious disconnect between the stated intent of the Post-Graduation Work Program and its delivery. Students were offered the opportunity to work but within such strict boundaries that it was impossible for many to participate. Employers balked at offering jobs to foreign grads when they found out that it would take two months following the offer of work for their new hire to obtain a permit".

Many international students report feeling little confidence in their ability to obtain employment in Canada which can be attributed to these significant barriers to employment. In a recent study of 1,000 international students studying in Canada, nearly 80% were pessimistic regarding their employment prospects in Canada (Bond et al, 2007). A recent survey of international students conducted by the Canadian Bureau for International Education in a 20 month period from May 2005-January 2007 showed less than 14, 000 or 47% obtained a Canadian work permit (CBIE, 2007). This situation left many international students forced to either continue further studies in order to stay in Canada or to leave the country as they were no longer legally able to stay.

Another systemic barrier to employment in Canada for international students is employers' lack of information. Many employers appear to be unclear about the regulations and processes around work permits and are reluctant to make a job offer. According to a survey conducted by the Canadian Bureau of International Education, many employers do not know that they are now allowed

to hire international students and graduates. Even when they are informed, they are reluctant to do so until the Government of Canada provides better guidance on the regulations" (Bond et al, 2007). This lack of knowledge prevents international students from being considered for employment as many employers screen them out solely as a result of the lack of information.

> The strict guidelines regarding work permits combined with employers lack of knowledge made employment success seem unobtainable to international students. The Government of Canada needs to do a better job of educating employers about the hiring process for international students so they can see the long term benefits both for their organization and the Canadian economy. International students are a viable but untapped resource that can help Canada build it's workforce and strengthen it's economy. Due to an aging population Canada will likely experience a labour shortage in the near future. New immigrants, who will soon account for nearly all of population growth in Canada are understood to offer an important source of new labour- specifically highly skilled labour- that is needed if Canada is to maintain the workforce considered necessary to sustain the Canadian quality of life (Goldenberg, 2007, p.3.)

International students have the potential to play a vital role in both in Canada's economy and in the global marketplace. Many, however, are unprepared to conduct a job search in Canada due to a lack of knowledge. Consequently there is a responsibility on the part of post-secondary institutions to provide supports and services to assist in the transition to the workforce. Some higher education institutions are striving to better meet the unique needs of international students who complete a university degree at Canadian institutions but face significant barriers to employability. As a result, post-secondary institutions and career services departments are beginning to recognize this role and are creating programs to assist international students with their job search.

Current Status of Policy Development in Canada

Citizenship and Immigration made changes to the immigration rules in April 2008 after this study was conducted (www.cic.gc.ca). These changes may be attributed to the extensive advocacy conducted by the Canadian Bureau for International Education. "The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) has advocated for changes to the Post Graduate Work Permit since the current scheme came into effect in 2005" (CBIE, 2008)

In April 2008, CIC Minister Diane Finley announced that, effective immediately, international students graduating from Canada's post-secondary institutions would be eligible for:

- An open work permit – no longer tying them to employment directly related to their field of study, and making them employable immediately upon receipt of a job offer;

- Up to three years of work after graduation – previously only one year was possible in Canada's three largest cities (Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver) and two years elsewhere (CBIE, 2008).

Provincial Perspective: Manitoba and Higher Education Career Development Programs for International Students

The number of international students in Canada has increased in conjunction with the number who wish to obtain professional work experience in Canada. However, many of these students have neither an understanding of job search techniques in Canada nor, more importantly, the skills required to conduct a successful job search in the competitive Canadian labour market. By speaking

further with international students who were graduating, I determined that many of them were experiencing significant barriers in their search for employment. These barriers included: lack of knowledge of Canadian workplace culture and employer expectations, poor communication skills, low self-confidence, a limited knowledge of job search resources available, limited on-campus resources available, and confusion regarding work permit and immigration rules and procedures. A career-development needs assessment conducted by Spencer-Rogers in 2000 showed that international students seek assistance "obtaining work experience, overcoming interview barriers and developing job search skills". In response to this growing need, many career professionals are searching for ideas and ways to meet the needs of this population. Although many Student Affairs professionals recognize the growing needs of international students, there is limited research on job search programming tailored to their specific needs. In the academic school year 2007-2008, the staff of the University of Manitoba Student Counselling and Career Centre, who provide direct career service to international students, determined that the current services offered to international students were not adequately meeting their needs. While Career Services at the University of Manitoba offers various programs to assist all students with their employment goals with the philosophy of assisting students to develop self-efficacy in their job search by providing the tools to conduct an autonomous, self-directed job search with the support of the career staff. These programs did not appear to address the needs of international students. The programming offered provided information in a lecture format, where participants were passive learners, with little variation of

learning activities. The workshops were designed with the assumption that participants were familiar with the tools and techniques required to conduct a job search in Canada. The workshops were comprised of students with various learning styles and varying levels of knowledge. Facilitators of these workshops noticed that many international students participating in the workshops appeared to have difficulty understanding the content evidenced by the fact that they asked numerous questions during the workshops and stayed behind to speak directly with the facilitators. During the workshops, the facilitators felt torn between whether to hold back domestic students who already had basic knowledge of job searching in Canada or leave international students who had limited knowledge behind. This situation emphasized the need to provide targeted workshops for international students.

Many international students have little work experience and are unaware of Canadian job search techniques such as preparing for a Canadian job interview, and expressed a lack of confidence in participation in the Canadian marketplace. The University of Manitoba, Student Counselling and Career Centre has offered seasonal programming tailored to the specific needs of students who were graduating including a special session for international students. This annual session entitled; "Job Searching for International Students who wish to stay in Canada" was very popular and well attended every year it was offered. Based on these needs, a job search program specifically for international students wishing to remain in Canada upon graduation was created in 2007.

This program was created with the goal of assisting international students increase their knowledge and skills to conduct a successful job search in Canada. The program provided an opportunity for these students to practice their interpersonal and communication skills with the goal of building confidence. A secondary goal of the program was to encourage international students to be more strategic regarding their job search in Canada in order to increase the potential for obtaining employment.

Although international students from Eastern cultures are used to a passive lecture based learning style(Kelly, 2009, Kennedy, 2002), the facilitators wanted to provide opportunities for participants to increase their communication and interpersonal skills Accordingly, the new program was developed specifically for international students using problem based learning strategies that encouraged participants to integrate and apply what they had learned. The program was learner-centered and incorporated a variety of learning methods to better meet the needs of the participants learning goals. These learning methods included small group work, hands on practical activities and one- to -one interaction. The methodology allowed for the inclusion of activities that involved solving real world problems such as writing a resume and interviewing successfully (Bloomberg, 2009). Moreover, as the learners were adults, the method allowed participants to have input in the learning process (Bloomberg, 2009). The facilitators developed the program with the intent of providing opportunities for international students to feel empowered by understanding diversity, promoting self-discovery and encouraging change (Mojab, 2002). Given that the majority of

international students who sought career development assistance were of Chinese descent, the facilitators deemed it a priority to be culturally sensitive and considered the cultural norms of the group and created a learning environment in which learners felt comfortable and safe enough to take risks. For that reason, a shared learning philosophy where participants and facilitators had the opportunity to grow and learn from each other was implemented. According to Stewart, "group interventions are very important for immigrants with a collectivist world view" (2003). Principles of adult education such as shared learning and the role of the facilitator to help in the learning process rather than simply providing information were crucial in the program planning (Amundson, 1999).The facilitators developed a program that incorporated the perspectives of all the participants by using interactive, hands-on activities rather than a traditional Western style lecture format.

At the University of Manitoba prior to the development of specific career programming for international students, international students were integrated into regular career programming. The initial program the University of Manitoba Career Services held was offered in January of 2007: 2 hours, once a week, for six weeks. The initial program had 20 participants 35% male and 65% female, 45% of the participants were from China, 40% from other Asian or Southeast Asian countries and the remaining 15% from non-Asian countries.

Unique Aspects of the University of Manitoba Career Program

The University of Manitoba Career Program for international students was built on a pilot project that formed the basis of the current study that formally addresses the career needs of international students. In comparison to other career development programs offered across Canada, the University of Manitoba program was unique as it was presented over an eight week time period and was provided to a closed group of international students. In other provinces, career programs for international students are offered as a one or two hour presentation accessible at various times throughout the school year.

The University of Manitoba career program that the current study is based on is unique because it was tailored to meet the career needs of international students. These needs were determined during the first session of the program where facilitators solicited direct input from the participants to develop the specific program goals. These goals included: discussion of Canadian culture and workplace culture, key skills required by Canadian employers, employer expectations, resume and cover letter writing, job search strategies and interview preparation advice. The first session was interactive and learners were provided with opportunities to interact in small and large groups. Each learner was given a workbook to take home for self-directed activities which included listing positive personal attributes and conducting self-assessments. The students were invited to meet with one of the facilitators individually at any time to discuss their individual concerns. Each participant also had the option to participate in a mock interview with the one of the facilitators where the participants would have the opportunity

to apply what they had learned as well as receive feedback on their interview technique. Although the initial program in 2007 was very successful and received positive feedback from the participants, the participants offered suggestions for improvement: additional sessions, additional small group discussion, and additional focus on resume and interview preparation. Interestingly, the students felt sessions related to career decision making were unnecessary as for many career decision making had been already determined prior to coming to Canada. In traditional Chinese culture, career decisions are usually made by the family not the individual, career decision making brings honour to the family and the child does not place their needs above the expectations of their family (Tang, 2009). The program in the current study eliminated the career decision making aspect in response to this cultural value and increased the focus on employment topics.

Goals and Assumptions informing the Development of the Career Program at the University of Manitoba

This program was developed with the belief that providing opportunities to learn about Canadian workplace expectations as well as the practice of interpersonal communication in a supportive environment may alleviate the anxiety international students experience regarding their career search and enable them to be more competitive in the job market.

Three key components guided the development of the program and the study.

1. To determine if, by incorporating activities and opportunities to practice interpersonal communication, participants would feel more confident and knowledgeable regarding conducting a job search in Canada.

12

2. To determine participants' level of acculturation and whether their level of acculturation had an effect on their job search confidence and knowledge.

3. To determine whether the creation of a program tailored to the career development needs of international students wishing to obtain employment in Canada would be well received by participants.

Current Study

The purpose of this current study is to illuminate the findings of the pilot study of the first international student career program offered in January 2007 conducted by Michael Mandrusiak and Gavriela Geller. Due to high demand, the University of Manitoba offered a second session in the fall of 2007; this program was expanded to 8 weeks to allow additional time to focus on job search skill development and interpersonal communication. The current study, conducted in January 2008, included a new variable of measurement, that of acculturation utilizing the Vancouver Index of Acculturation, (VIA). This instrument was designed to provide independent measures of identification with mainstream and heritage cultures. The current study focused on four areas in the program:

a) the career preparation needs of international students in the areas of work experience, job searching and career planning

b) acculturation level of participants

c) changes in participant confidence and knowledge related to finding employment in Canada

d) qualitative feedback and suggestions for improving the course

Analyzing these four areas, the current study attempted to determine if the participants' level of acculturation influences their feelings of increased confidence around job search and employability in Canada.

For international students who wish to stay in Canada upon graduation, securing employment is a significant concern. International students regard employment issues as their second highest concern after immigration (CBIE, 2007). International students have legitimate concerns, according to Spencer-Rodgers & Cortijo, "international students have to deal with unique concerns and vocational challenges such as language and cultural barriers, burdensome legal requirements and bureaucratic procedures" (1998). Yet numerous international students appear to have a limited understanding of the process of how to look for a job in Canada and more importantly, the skills and abilities required to both obtain employment and succeed in the Canadian workplace. In response to these identified needs student services departments are developing specific programs tailored to the needs of international students. The University of Manitoba Student Counselling and Career Centre began offering career programming specifically for international students wishing to work in Canada after graduation in the winter of 2007. As the majority of participants were of Chinese decent therefore this study has focused on meeting the needs of students from China.

Significance of the study

This thesis study looked at the career needs and acculturation levels of international students studying in Canada as well as their self-confidence and job search knowledge prior to and upon completion of the "Finding a Job in Canada – Career Seminar for International Students". Additionally feedback was collected from participants regarding their satisfaction levels and suggestions for improvement. This study was significant for various reasons, both in terms of adding to the research and improving current practice.

Since Career Services staff at the University of Manitoba had already recognized the need to modify services to better meet the needs of international students this study will collect information that will help to improve current services.

As there is little literature available on the career needs of international students in Canada, this study may be an additional resource to the current literature.

As feedback is provided by students this information may be helpful for other student service staff in their work with international students.

Responding to the career needs of international students

International students studying in post-secondary institutions in Canada who wish to find employment in Canada upon graduation have unique career requirements. It is important for career service providers to be aware of these requirements when offering programming in their departments. By sharing the results of this study, the information may be incorporated into current career

programming to provide programming that better supports international students in their career pursuits. Post-secondary institutions are beginning to recognize the need to create career services to better meet the specific needs of international students who wish to stay in Canada. If higher education can assist in effectively supporting international students in their search for employment in Canada, Canada can strengthen its role as a leader in international education (CBIE, 2007).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature regarding international students studying in Canada and the United States; barriers to their employability, as well as, their career development and programming needs. The literature review is organized into eight topics; international student recruitment, cultural barriers/acculturation, language, challenges international students face with Canadian policy development, career development programs in the United States and Canada, connection between career development of Asian international students and self-efficacy, rationale, program planning, and learning styles.

Despite increased enrollment of international students in post secondary studies there is little research available regarding their career development needs (Arthur, 2004). Experts in the field have identified a gap between the high numbers of international students recruited and the responsiveness of institutions in providing adequate infrastructure to support these needs (Arthur, 2004). This literature review focuses on the publications that are most relevant to purpose of this study: to measure international students experiences, knowledge of and confidence regarding conducting a job search in Canada as along with their acculturation level.

International Student Recruitment

The recruitment of international students is a priority of higher education across North America. In 2003, the number of international students studying world-wide was 2.1 million, this figure is expected to increase to 5.8 million in the year 2020 (Grayson, 2007; Bohm, Davis, Meares, & Pearce, 2004). In the United States, the number of international students enrolled in post secondary institutions has increased dramatically to approximately half a million students and the number is increasing. (Yang, Wong, Hwang & Heppner, 2002). As there is the potential for many of these students to remain in Canada or the United States upon graduation provided they can find suitable employment, it becomes necessary for post secondary institutions to provide career development assistance. In a 1997 speech, Neil Rudenstine, President of Harvard University stated, "We really have to sustain our commitment to international students and faculty exchange programs. We need those international students, and we need our students to be out there studying abroad" (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner & Nelson, 1999).

Globalization is an important issue in today's world and impacts higher education giving rise to strategies for internationalization. The recruitment of international students is considered by many as a way to enhance globalization and develop internationalization of the institution. In order to gain a clear understanding of globalization a definition used by Muni Figueres at the opening plenary session of the Global Issues Seminar will be used; "Globalization is a long-term historical process of ever increasing integration among societies on a global scale. This integration occurs through trade; exchange of customs, values,

knowledge, and beliefs; and as a result of conflict and war" (Merriam, Courtenay, & Cervero, 2006). Canada believes in the value of globalization. At a speech given at the Canadian Bureau of International Education annual conference in 2006 The Honourable Perrin Beatty President and CEO of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters stated, "We need to help Canadians and their governments understand the important competitive advantage international education gives our country... whatever your perception, there is definitely a common thread we can all agree upon globalization means change-extensive and dramatic change." Today recruitment of international students is a high priority in post-secondary institutions in North America for a number of reasons. For post secondary institutions international students bring diversity, enhanced globalization, and economic compensation. At many post secondary institutions international student tuition fees are much higher for example at the University of Manitoba International students tuition is approximately three times higher than domestic students (University of Manitoba, "2009-2010 Tuition, Endowment and Student Organization Fees").

> When asked to indicate their most important reasons for recruiting and enrolling international students, almost all respondents (92 percent) said their institution did this to promote an internationalized campus and greater diversity on campus. While cited as the next most important reason overall, generating revenue was rated much lower, by 62 percent of respondents. Moreover, only 10 percent of all respondents rated it as their first reason for recruiting international students. The next two most frequently identified reasons overall were to increase enrolment in specific programs and to enhance institutional profile and increase contacts, which were reported by close to half of respondents. As higher education institutions continue to face government cutbacks the recruitment of international students has become another way to generate

revenue (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), 2007).

The Canadian government recognizes the importance of international student recruitment. In 2000, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) stated that international students contributed approximately $ 3.5 billion to the Canadian economy (Cudmore, 2005). The number of international students on Canadian campuses has grown rapidly to approximately 70,000 full-time and 13,000 part-time students in 2006, this number is expected to grow to 400,000 by 2020 (Bohm et al, 2002; Arthur, 2006). It is also estimated by the same authors that over two-thirds of the demand for global education will come from Asia. However, in the competition for the recruitment of international students, Canada currently is falling behind the leaders, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom (Cudmore, 2005). According to AUCC, "although this diversity on Canadian campuses is encouraging, we face significant international competition in the years ahead for our share of the international student market" (AUCC, 2007). By providing improved student support services for international students Canadian post-secondary institutions can increase their profile internationally.

The literature indicates international education is a growing commodity across the world. If Canada wishes to participate in this competitive market it must ensure adequate supports are in place for international students attending post secondary institutions. Providing quality programs and services for international students is the basis of any proposal to increase the numbers of international

students and to retain those presently enrolled (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner & Nelson, 1999). As a strategy to increase recruitment many post secondary institutions are turning to their Student Affairs departments to ensure they are assisting international students with their academic, personal, social and career development. Consequently international centres and counselling centres on campuses across Canada are expanding their services to meet the needs of this growing population. According to Peterson et al, "if student and academic affairs leaders are to recruit and retain more international students, they must be sensitive to the perceptions, needs and concerns of prospective and enrolled international students." (Peterson et al, 1999).

Coming to a new country to study can be both an exciting and frightening experience. Many international students face tremendous problems adjusting to life in a new country. Some of the issues students face include: loneliness, homesickness, depression, culture shock, the preservation of self-esteem, language problems, finances, stress, difficulty making friends and employment (Grayson, 2008; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007; Arthur, 2004; Lin & Yi, 1997). Many post-secondary institutions are beginning to recognize these issues and as a result are attempting to improve programming to better meet the needs of these students. By providing effective programs institutions not only improve the experiences of international students but can also improve their reputation abroad which can be another marketing tool in the recruitment process.

> Providing quality programs and services for international students is the cornerstone of any initiative to increase the numbers of international students and to retain those presently enrolled. Colleges and universities with good academic programs and well-trained staff who provide

courteous, accurate, timely service, and informative programs
to international students will reap great benefits from their investments
(Peterson, et. al., 1999).

Often the reasons for choosing a particular post-secondary institution can
be based on that institution's reputation abroad, often through word of mouth.
Offering programs that assist international students can be mutually beneficial,
and enhance the institution's reputation.

In a recent survey conducted by AUCC (2007), when asked whether
their institution offered specific programs to ensure a successful experience for
international students during their academic stay in Canada, 47 percent of
respondents said yes, 17 percent said these services were being developed, and 37
percent said no. While the types of services varied across individual universities,
the most frequently mentioned services included:

- ongoing counselling and non-academic support;

- orientation program upon arrival;

- designated international student support staff;

- academic advising or support;

- international student clubs; and designated international support office.

The need to implement supports for international students is being recognized and
several post secondary institutions are developing and expanding on current
programming to better meet the unique needs of international students.

China has been and continues to be the leading country of origin for
international students in Canada and the United States since 2001. Bohm, et al,
anticipate that in the future over two thirds of international students will originate

from Asia (Bohm, et al, 2002). In 2004, China accounted for 23 percent of full-time visa students in Canadian universities, totaling close to 15,000 students (Institute of International Education (IIE), 2001).

At the University of Manitoba, the number of international students has increased dramatically from 4% in the 2001-2002 academic year to 9% in the 2005 – 2006, academic year. (Office of Institutional Analysis, 2007). The total international student population at the University of Manitoba in the fall of 2008 was 2,419, an increase of 15%. Of these international students 1,691 were from Asia: 1,160 were from China and 103 from India. Of these students 479 were enrolled in Graduate Studies (Office of Institutional Analysis, 2007).

Although no statistical figures exist, anecdotally the number of international students seeking career and employment assistance at the University of Manitoba Student Counselling and Career Services appears to have increased significantly as well.

In their annual report, the AUCC recognized international students as a valued source of immigrants to Canada, combining the benefits of an advanced education and a familiarity with Canada obtained through their studies in the country (AUCC, 2007). However, many international students end up leaving Canada as they are unable to find employment due to the many barriers and frustrating legislation. In a study conducted by the CBIE from May 2005- January 2007 of 30,000 students who applied for a post-graduate work permit only 14, 000 were approved (CBIE, 2007). As Canada's workforce ages and its population declines there is clearly a need for educated workers. "New immigrants, who will

soon account for nearly all of the population growth in Canada are understood to offer an important source of new labour- specifically highly skilled labour-that is needed if Canada is to maintain the workforce considered necessary to sustain the Canadian quality of life "(Goldenberg, 2007). Canada is beginning to see the value of immigrants and provinces like Quebec and Manitoba and these provincial governments have taken initiatives to increase the number of immigrants coming to their provinces. In 2006, Manitoba welcomed 10,000 new immigrants, the highest number in the last fifty years, the province's target is to double that number in the next decade (About Women, 2007). By assisting international students in their job search it may be possible to increase the number of students who find employment and choose to remain in Canada. However, in order to be successful in this area post secondary institutions must be aware of the cultural barriers that exist and create programs that better meet the needs of international students (Lin & Yi, 1997).

Cultural Barriers/Acculturation

Important issues that are being raised by the increased competition for international students by higher education institutions are the admission requirements and the allowance of students with minimal English language fluency in order to increase recruitment numbers (Arthur, 2004). As a result there is a range of competencies regarding English language proficiency and conversely a range of acculturation levels. As international students continue to leave their home countries to study abroad the issue of how efficiently they are able to become accustomed to the new culture becomes critical. An important key to a

successful transition to another culture is the ability to fully understand and communicate in the target culture, in other words to become acculturated into the new culture (Yang et al, 2006).

As globalization increases the amount of research regarding acculturation and intercultural adjustment has also increased (Patel, Salahuddin, & O'Brien, 2008, Yang et al, 2006, Berry, 2001, Zheng, Sang & Wang, 2003, Kosic, 2004). There are several studies that support the notion that the closer the student's culture is to the culture of the host country the easier the adaptation (Campbell & Li, 2008, Fritz et al, 2008, Yang et al, 2006). There has also been research that shows countries that have value systems that are vastly different, such as eastern and western, the process of adapting to the new country can be difficult (Zheng et al, 2003). This adaptation is often referred to as acculturation. Berry defines acculturation as, "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (2005). There has been a great deal of research on the topic of acculturation (Yang et al, 2006). Acculturation is the result of contact with a nonnative culture and is a complex process which involves cultural, interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects (Yakushko, Backhaus, Watson, Ngauiya and Gonzalez, 2008, Yang et al, 2006, Berry & Sam, 1997, Mirnada & Umhoefer, 1998). One's ability to adapt to a new culture involves far more than language competency, it is a combination of cross-cultural understanding and one's own self-confidence in the new culture (Arthur, 2004). Many researchers have correlated English language fluency with level of acculturation however;

acculturation entails more than simply English language competency (Yakushko et al, 2008; Sam & Berry, 2006). It has been theorized that high self-confidence may be a better indicator of acculturation than actual language fluency (Yang et al, 2006). Individual experiences, gender and personality characteristics also have an important role in one's level of acculturation (Bemak & Chung, 2002; Yakushko et al, 2008; Yang et al, 2006). There are some researchers who believe that language prowess and skill in intercultural communication is required in order to feel confident and at ease in another culture (Yang et al, 2006). In this current study there appeared to be a range of levels of acculturation which may be based on factors such as: participant's English fluency, confidence, and contact with native English speakers and number of years in the country (Yang et al, 2006). Students who feel alienated in a new culture may lose confidence and feel isolated from social and academic environments (Kingston & Forland, 2008). Self-confidence in a second language refers to a sophisticated level of competence in that language (Clement, 1986). Some researchers argue that self-confidence is a better predictor of acculturation success than actual language ability (Yang et al, 2006). A study conducted by Yang et al showed the significance of the role of language on cross cultural adjustment. Their study suggests a direct correlation between language competency and contentment based on the notion that the ability to express and share ideas with others affects psychological well being and increased self-confidence (2006). Specifically the ability to express basic needs results in the ability to successfully perform daily tasks (Yang et al, 2006). Many of those who learn to speak another language may be fluent and competent in that

language but may not feel confident in themselves or their knowledge of the culture to adequately use their language skills and as a result have little contact with native language speakers. Participants' degree of acculturation was an important factor in this current study. The facilitators observed distinct differences in the degree of acculturation demonstrated by the program participants.

International students may have difficulty adjusting to their new culture and as a result may have low self-esteem and experience social isolation (Kingston & Forland, 2008). The struggle to maintain a balance between one's own culture and the host culture can be difficult especially when the cultures differ greatly, for example Western and Eastern cultures (Patel et al, 2008). Asian international students come from a culture which is predominately characterized by a collective value system (Yang et al 2002; Lin & Yi, 1997). Western culture is based in individualism, which often creates conflict for those of Eastern culture who value collectivism (Hofstede, 1980). Individualism promotes independence, while collectivism favours interdependence (Triandis, 1995 cited in Hwa-Froelich & Vigil, 2004; Watkins, 2000). Collectivism is defined as a world view established on the belief that the needs and welfare of the social group to which the person belongs take precedence over that of the individual. Collectivism and interdependence characterize the deep value structure of the Chinese worldview (Kuo, 2004). However, collectivism does not mean a denial of the individual's well-being or interest; it is unconditionally assumed that maintaining the group's well-being is the priority for the individual (Hofstede, 1980). In a recent study of Chinese adolescents and Asian university students in Canada revealed coping

types which correspond to Asian values of conformity norms: family honour, social harmony, emotional control and humility. (Kuo, 2004). Kennedy (2002) refers to a study by Trompanaars (1993) that found in Hong Kong Chinese culture their collectivism is prevalent as well as a preference for membership in a social group and solving problems through the use of group work.

These values stem from Confucianism. Since 134AD Confucianism has influenced Chinese people and formed the basis of Chinese culture (Chhokar, Brodbeck, & House, 2007; Li, 1986) Confucians follow five virtues, benevolence (ren), righteousness (yi), propriety (li), wisdom (zhi), and fidelity (xin). For centuries China has been a country ruled by its people (Chhokar et al, 2007). Chinese people have a term, guanxi which refers to social networks (Song, 2007). The concept of guanxi derives from the Confucian ideas about social roles in society. Guanxi ties people together according to the specific relationship between these people (Chhokar et al, 2007). The reason guanxi is so important is because China is a country "ruled by people" (ren zhi) not by law (fa zhi). The notion of rule by people can be seen as a belief in morality as defined under Confucianism which provides the foundation of Chinese cultural values.

For centuries, the individual was downplayed in Chinese society. Instead, the concept of obligations and responsibilities as a member of the society was emphasized. In China, social relationships are of great significance, and relationships are often considered more important than individual goals (Farth et al, in Song, 2007). Furthermore, these relationships are likely to create an interdependent self as opposed to a Western-based independent self (Tsui & Farh,

in Song, 2007). Individuals from a collectivist culture place higher importance on the input of parents and other family members regarding career decision making which differs from the Western norm of independent career decision making (Brown, Reynolds & Constantine, 2007; Tang, 2009). Family members play a crucial role in the career decisions of students from a collectivist culture. This became clear in this program when it was determined by participants that career planning was not one of their goals or interests. A study by Tang (2009) showed similar results to this study regarding the career needs of international students, the most needed intervention was job seeking skills and information about the labour market rather than career development.

International students need to develop an understanding of Canadian cultural norms, social interactions and work attitudes in order to successfully obtain employment (Yik, Bond, & Paulhus, 1998). International students often struggle with finding a balance between Western culture and their own culture, while at the same time learning to adapt to Western culture (Lin & Yi, 1997). Successful job seekers in Canada are confident and demonstrate good interpersonal communication skills and often have relevant work experience. Confidence markers that Canadian employers' value are a firm handshake, good eye contact, voice volume and clarity. These may seem simple behaviours but these behaviours often create a cultural conflict for Chinese students conducting a job search in Canada as there are cultural norms regarding eye contact, hierarchy, and male/female roles (Stewart, 2003). Direct eye contact with an elder is

disrespectful, as is eye contact between males and females who do not have an existing relationship.

Chinese culture values humility and modesty; as a result many Chinese students have difficulty expressing themselves in a positive manner in a job interview, especially females (Paulhus, Duncan & Yik, 2002; Lin & Yi, 1997). According to Boucher et al, showing humbleness and modesty in a job interview may be viewed as lack of ability by Canadian employers. The values of humility and modesty create difficulties in a Canadian interview where this could be misconstrued as lack of confidence. Confucianism emphasizes modesty therefore for Chinese students who follow this belief face a cultural conflict. Chinese culture is patriarchal and women often hold roles of less importance (Kennedy, 2002). For Chinese women, participating in interviews in Canada requires talking about themselves in a positive way which can be very difficult.

From an employment perspective, acculturation and language fluency are potential predictors of employment success. Knowledge about the Canadian workplace culture, customs and language can assist in career attainment and advancement. The ability to adapt to Canadian environment and culture, to develop understanding of Canadian cultural norms, social interactions, and work attitudes are essential for employment success (Yik et al, 1998). Many international students experience intense cultural conflict and resulting anxiety when they begin their job search in Canada due to lack of knowledge of Canadian workplace culture. In many Eastern cultures increased emphasis is placed on academics and consequently many international students come to Canada with no

employment experience (Kennedy, 2002). This becomes a significant barrier to employment in Canada. A report published in 2001 by Job Start and Skills for Change stated that many foreign trained professionals identified barriers to employment as; "lack of Canadian work experience, inability to access the "hidden job market" and the concept of networking, lack of knowledge of interviewing techniques and communication skills". International students often have no Canadian work experience and are unable to obtain Canadian work experience because they have no experience; it becomes a conundrum. To add to this problem international students are often declined professional career related employment due to lack of work experience and communication skills (Arthur & Collins, 2005). This becomes another barrier to obtaining employment in Canada.

Language

Another employment barrier is English language competency and limited competency hampers students' abilities to self-market. International students experience unique stressors when studying abroad as compared to domestic students, specifically English language fluency (Mori, 2000; Lin & Yi, 1997; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007; Mathews & Aydinli, 2008). A study conducted by Lin et al, with Chinese students attending university in Canada, found English language fluency to be a significant cause of anxiety (2001). For most international students studying in Canada, English is not their first language and English language fluency is a concern for many international students. They often have a limited English vocabulary and struggle with accents and pronunciation. As a result, a major barrier for international students seeking employment in Canada

is their limited fluency in English and resulting weak interpersonal communication skills (Amsberry, 2008). International students do not always have an adequate command of one of Canada's two official languages, creating a need for language services and testing- both prior to and after admission to a Canadian campus (AUCC, 2007.) Some international students appear to have only a basic level of English language fluency.

Most four-year colleges and universities require proof of a high level of English language proficiency, generally in the form of a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Yet there are concerns regarding the stringency of these requirements. An area of concern is the apparent lack of English competency, despite completion of higher education study in Canada. Some international students attend high school in Canada and are able to receive university acceptance with no language proficiency requirements (Blais, 2006). Although many international students successfully complete degrees in Canadian post-secondary institutions these same students demonstrate poor communication skills and appear to struggle with daily conversation. Clearly many of them are uncomfortable with their English language abilities. Many international students who have sought assistance with their job search have demonstrated difficulty and discomfort with basic conversational English. Moreover international students expressed difficulty comprehending native English speakers due to difficulties with accent, dialect, jargon, and use of idioms and slang expressions (Amsberry, 2008). Numerous Chinese international students report the most significant barrier they faced was English language fluency. This included difficulty with accents,

diverse communication styles and difficulty reading text. This may be due to the fact that languages cannot be learned through textbooks. English language textbooks tend to refer to formulaic, routine conversation, but conversational English is not predictable. This creates lack of confidence in conversational skills especially as topics change quickly and second language learners may not be able to follow. Confidence and fluency in another language requires real life practice (Kaplan, 1997). Language competency is considered one of the most influential factors in the cross-cultural experience of international students (Arthur, 2004). Yet English language fluency has been shown to be a source of enormous concern for many international students and as a result many feel this limited ability is a significant barrier to obtaining employment in Canada (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). Developing linguistic prowess involves the ability to follow conversations which is one of the most difficult aspects of learning an additional language (Kaplan, 1997). As well, several international students reported limited exposure to conversation with native English speakers which resulted in lack of knowledge and confidence communicating with employers. One of the reasons is that conversational English is not "rule governed"; there are no predictable roles, topics, sequences, and settings governing patterns of speech that would make conversation amenable to formal language instruction (Kaplan, 1997). This is especially evident in technical disciplines where international students often have excellent technical knowledge, but difficulty with basic communication skills. For those seeking employment in Canada this becomes a significant barrier as Canadian employers' value and require communication skills and these student do

not feel confident in their ability to communicate effectively with employers. Strong English communication skills, both verbal and written are crucial for career success. The Conference Board of Canada publishes a list of essential workplace competencies which stresses communication, interpersonal skills and the ability to demonstrate self-confidence as fundamental to success in the workplace (Conference Board of Canada, 2008). In the job search good communication skills are essential in order to effectively convince an employer of one's qualifications.

It is critical that post-secondary institutions do not disregard the language needs of international students in their haste to increase recruitment numbers. Some institutions have been flexible regarding language fluency admittance requirements. As a result there is an increased need to have supports in place to accommodate international students (Arthur, 2004).

Often students revert to their native language when they feel incompetent in English. Lee, in studying Chinese students learning English found that there was sometimes "excessive dependence on the mother tongue to solve communication problems, which deprives learners of the opportunity to listen and speak in the target language" (2005). The same issue occurred in a recent study that stated "pupils' use of Cantonese was the most prominent difficulty that occurred during tasks because this practice conflicted with teachers' espoused goal of the learners using English" (Littlewood, 2006). This occurred in our study as at times students would communicate in their own language rather than asking the facilitators for an explanation or clarification. Littlewood, citing, Carless and Seedhouse states, "in communication tasks, students may focus on completing the

task to the extent that they sometimes produce only the modest linguistic output necessary to complete it" (Littlewood, 2006; Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). A study by Liu and Littlewood (1997) found that many Chinese students did not ask questions in class due to perceived inadequate English language competency, lack of exposure to participatory learning styles and resulting lack of confidence. A similar study conducted by Paulhus et al (2002) found that Chinese students did not speak up in class due foreign language anxiety, a fear of being wrong, as well as their belief in the traditional values of modesty and obedience which are valued in Chinese culture.

Many international students reported choosing majors based on their perception of the amount of English language communication skills required (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). For instance many Chinese students reported taking technical programs because there were very few written papers and in class presentations. In a study conducted with Chinese international students by Shan a student reported their reasons for choosing clerical accounting "…Fast and easy to get into the field. Plus, it is very easy for Chinese to learn accounting. You don't have a whole lot of barriers in language,…And accounting is also a hard skill…This way, I am kind of by passing my weakness [in language] (Shan, 2007). Reynolds and Constantine (2007) state limited English language ability as a potential career barrier that results in international students choosing to study mathematics, science and engineering as these fields are perceived by them to require less English language proficiency. At the University of Manitoba some international students reported taking a three year degree in Economics with a

minor in Business because they could not gain admittance into the Bachelor of Commerce program. The benefits of pursuing this program of study were twofold: students were able to obtain parental approval and through informal student networking and information sharing they learned that there were less written papers assigned in Economics. (Anecdotal personal communication, 2008).

Strong English communication skills, both verbal and written are crucial for career success. McFerran (2006), in his weekly newspaper column recommends that immigrants seeking employment demonstrate good communication skills. He further states, the ability to clearly express an idea is an essential quality for all workers, regardless of their background (McFerran, 2006). However, based on their cultural values of Confucianism Chinese students are often uncomfortable talking about themselves and their abilities, for many this is seen as disrespectful and bragging. Recognizing this issue student services departments are developing specific programs tailored to assist in interpersonal communication and addressing the needs of international students (Lin & Yi, 1997). For example, the University of Manitoba offers the Leadership Development Series, the Buddy Program and the Star Lake Intercultural Orientation program. These programs assist International students with learning about Canadian culture and interpersonal communication practice.

Often international students come to Canada with limited English language preparation and thus struggle with basic everyday conversation. Arthur, in her book, *Counseling International Students: Clients from Around the World* refers to an article by Huxuer et al, 1996 that states International students'

competency for communicating in the host culture impacts both their sense of confidence about approaching host members and the quality of social interactions (2004). Informal conversations involving the researcher and international students illustrated that many have difficulty with English comprehension and articulation and consequently avoid conversations with Canadians. Often international students learn English in their home countries, but they do not receive exposure to conversational English and as a result may experience difficulty following conversations (Kaplan, 1997; Lin & Yi, 1997). Strong English communication skills, both verbal and written, are crucial for career success (Mathews & Aydinli, 2008). International students whose English fluency is weak struggle in a competitive labour market that values strong communication skills.

Challenges international students contend with based on Canadian Policy development

An added challenge for international students at the time of this study was the time limit set by Citizenship and Immigration Canada that allowed international students only 90 days from the time their final marks were posted by their institution, to obtain degree related employment (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). This was difficult as studies show that the average job search for domestic students can take up to two years. (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities of Ontario, n.d).

Obtaining fulltime employment for any job seeker requires planning, however, international students need to be more strategic in their job search as they face multiple barriers to employment, many of which domestic students do

not face. The first barrier is English language fluency. At the University of Manitoba many international students have sought assistance with their job search and have stated difficulty using basic conversational English. Language fluency research shows that it takes a minimum of two years to become competent in an additional language and to become fluent may require seven years (Kaplan & Patino, 1996). Many international students come to Canada with limited English language preparation with few opportunities to practice and therefore struggle with everyday conversation. Informal conversations conducted by the writer with international students illustrate that many have difficulty with English comprehension and articulation especially in conversations. For example, a student reported difficulty understanding what to say after a native English speaker asks, "How are you?" Consequently their self-confidence is low and their employment interview success is deemed unattainable.

In addition employers have reported to the writer that some international students are not able to understand basic conversational English. An employer reported that at the beginning of an interview with a Chinese student, polite conversation regarding the weather was initiated but the student appeared unable to understand the conversation. The employer rephrased the statement three times, with no response and ended the interview out of frustration.

As a result of these limitations increasing numbers of international students are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety regarding their job search in Canada. A recent survey of international students studying in Canada conducted by the CBIE showed, "students are deterred from working in Canada

by inconsistent and confusing policies and practices." (Bond, S. Areepattamannil, S. Brathwaite-Sturgeon, G. Hayle, E. & Malekan, M., 2007). Literature shows that English language proficiency is a source of anxiety for some international students. This combined with culture shock, confusion about role expectations, homesickness, loss of social support and discrimination has been defined as "acculturative stress" (Reynolds, 2007). Career programming for international students must include activities that allow for developing a sense of their personal power and self-worth.

Cultural Considerations of Help Seeking Behavior and Impact on Career Development of International Asian Students

There is limited research regarding career counselling for international students however as the recruitment of international students continues to increase, research consequently must increase (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). Unfortunately, many career theories are based on Western cultural values (Watkins, 2000). Brown refers to Super's statement, "The ability of current data on career maturity to ethnic minorities has been looked into but is still in need of further study." (Brown, 2000). Regardless of the limited amount of research, there is a very present problem the need to provide career services appropriate to international students. However, Student Service departments need to be cognizant of the stigma some cultures attach to seeking assistance, especially from counselling services, when promoting services to international students. In Asian culture personal problems are handled within the family, however in a new country with the family absent students may turn to counselling centres for

assistance. Often the barrier to accessing counselling services is lack of knowledge of services provided (Hayes & Lin, 1994). A strategy to address this concern is better promotion of counselling and career services at events across campus. Career Counsellors need to be proactive in promoting their programs and services to international students by working in conjunction with other campus departments such as International Centres or Residences (Arthur, 2004). It is important for career centres to engage in formal and informal networking with international students to develop rapport and familiarity (Yanget al, 2002). Once international students become familiar with staff and services offered they may be more receptive to seeking counselling assistance. There is need for counselors working with international students to engage in culturally responsive behaviours that may be perceived by students as possessing increased levels of expertness, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and cultural awareness. (Olivas & Li, 2006). Post-secondary institutions counselling departments are recognizing and prioritizing relationship building and programming to meet the needs of international students.

Career development programs servicing international students in higher education: United States

Current research in this area shows career preparation programs tailored to the needs of international students have promising results. Heim Bilkos & Smith Furry (1999) conducted a "Job Search Club" for international students consisting of a series of five to seven ninety minute sessions for closed groups of up to 15 members. Each session consisted of three parts:

a) presentation of a specific job search skill;

b) an opportunity to practice that skill;

c) discussion and sharing of personal experiences.

Topics covered were: developing plans for job search, using career resources, preparing resumes and cover letters, interviewing, networking developing references and researching potential employers. This study found increases in participants' confidence and use of job search skills and recommended improvements such as discussion of North American workplace culture and laws related to job search for international students. A component related to work permit regulations and North American workplace culture was a component missing from their study which was added to this current study. Similar studies were conducted by Yang et al (2002) that measured students' self-efficacy in the transition from school to work. In their study the authors refer to Bandura's definition of self-efficacy as "peoples' judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (Bandura, 1986). Yang et al (2002) created career development programming specific to the needs of international students at the University of Missouri-Columbia and reported international students at their university benefitted and valued the improvements made to their career services.

Staff of the University of Missouri-Columbia Career Center developed Career Services for International Students as a way to meet the unique demands of international students at their institution. This program was developed specifically for Asian international students as they represented 55% of their student body (Yang et al, 2002). The University of Missouri-Columbia career program had

similarities to this current study. The program emphasized job search skill development rather than career decision making. The staff at the University of Missouri-Columbia also recognized that international students value pragmatic skills for example, resume and interview skills. The program differs from the current study in the following ways: the University of Missouri-Columbia program involved two main components: individual consultations and on-line, email consultation rather than group work, and the University of Missouri-Columbia program also included international graduate students studying counselling and psychology as peer models who provided the consultation service.

Some research has suggested that international students prefer to focus on pragmatic areas; for instance job search rather than other domains of their career development (Arthur, 2004; Spencer-Rodgers, 2000; Tang, 2009). This was found to be true in both the University of Missouri-Columbia program and the current University of Manitoba study.

In the initial study at the University of Manitoba the facilitators had added a career decision making component but in response to discussion with the group this portion was eliminated from the current study to increase the amount of time spent on employment related issues. Participants in the current study stated their main concerns were employment related rather than career related, for example, resume development and interview skills. This may be due to the 90 days time constraint and immediacy of their employment needs.

This may also relate to the composition of the group, as many were from Chinese cultures and rely primarily on the family regarding career decision making, not an external counseling service.

Career development programs servicing international students in higher education: Canada

Currently several Canadian higher education institutions offer career development workshops for international students. An internet search in the spring of 2009 found that almost Canadian universities except one provide specific career programming for international students however the programs are in the form of a one-two hour workshop scheduled at various times throughout the school year. Simon Fraser University offered a series of 4-6 workshops for international student entitled the Canadian Workplace Readiness Series for International Students Topics included essential skills for job success (topics included Canadian employee rights, workplace etiquette, tips for succeeding on the job), post-graduation employment (immigration options), interview skills, resumes & cover letters, and work search. There was no job club component attached to these workshops. The program was eventually phased out due to a number of factors such as attendance rates, and overlap in content being presented (Personal communication, 2009). Based on this review of current programming offered across Canada the career program at the University of Manitoba appears to be unique; first it is the only program offered over an eight week period. The University of Manitoba program is tailored to meet the needs of the participants,

the curriculum is flexible, participants have input into the topics presented and it is a closed group for registered international students.

There are many issues that need to be considered when providing career assistance to international students as they have many unique barriers to employment. Brown refers to the importance of language in the career development of ethnic clients, "One obvious suggestion is that language should be given priority consideration when dealing with minority clients" (2000). Career counsellors have been concerned about issues such as the reading level of tests and inventories, but language issues in the provision of services to facilitate school to work transition relate to more than one's reading level.

Culturally Relevant Scales used in Career Development and Challenges

Concerns about language relate to factors such as students' ability to communicate in the workplace, the influence that occupational stereotypes may have on the results of instruments that are used to assess variables such as Holland's (1997) personality types, and the potentially deleterious impact that poor proficiency in the use of English language may have on employment screening devices such as tests and interview behaviour (Arthur & Collins, 2005). Holland's career choice theory states that congruence occurs when an individual's personality and work environments complement each other and therefore job satisfaction is achieved (Tang, 2009). Research regarding the congruence between Holland code types and career choice for Asians found career choice relates to parental approval rather than individual interest (Tang, 2009; Yang et al, 2002).

An article by Yang et al (2002) recommends that counsellors are knowledgeable regarding cultural values when deciding on the use of assessment tools.

Connection Between Career Development of Asian International Students and Self-Efficacy

There are several career development and adult education theories that relate to working with international students, which are relevant to this study. Bandura's social learning concept of human behaviour which is based on reinforcement and observational learning theory was used in this study (Bandura as cited in Sharf, 2002). This theory is based on the concept of learning and interacting with others as a way to develop self-esteem (Patel et al, 2008). There is significant research to support the importance of positive reinforcement in career counselling (Sharf, 2002). Many international students voice the belief that "international student are unable to find work in Canada." (CBIE,). This is a generalization that often prevents them from feeling confident in their own ability to find employment in Canada (Sharf, 2002). As a result many international students feel discouraged and hopeless regarding their job search success.

Krumboltz's notion of social learning theory states, "the goal of career counselling is to facilitate the learning of skills, interests, beliefs, values, work habits, and personal qualities that enable each client to create a satisfying life within a constantly changing work environment." (Krumboltz, 1996). This theory emphasizes the importance of learning about oneself rather than focusing on decision making and seems to fit with the values of Chinese students (Krumboltz,

1996). This theory provided a good framework for this study to assist participants in the development of self-confidence.

Regarding career development, the social cognitive career theory framework provided a good model for this study. The social cognitive career theory framework states that positive career development depends on an individual's experiences that result from interactions between environmental and personal factors (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994;Yakushkoet al, 2008.) This theory focuses on the importance of a person's self-efficacy and beliefs about consequences of one's actions, as well as individual characteristics such as gender, race and ethnicity and has been effective when working with cross cultural groups (Sharf, 2002; Yakushko et al, 2008.)

Often international students experience low self-efficacy when in Canada due to the many barriers to employment. The incorporation of opportunities to learn from others, through observation, role modeling and positive reinforcement created positive results for participants involved in this study. Similar results were found in a study conducted by Spencer-Rodgers (2000) who found international students wanted help primarily with obtaining work experience, job search skills and lastly career planning. Participants in the Spencer-Rodgers' study also expressed a need to overcome language and cultural barriers in the interview (2000). Findings of Spencer-Rodgers study showed international students demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the labour market and job search skills.

This current University of Manitoba study found Chinese students show a lack of knowledge regarding Canadian workplace expectations. This may be

due to the fact that in China, part time employment during academic study is discouraged, and almost absent as a strong emphasis is placed on academic achievement (Arthur, 2004). Historically in China academic success often guaranteed employment success, hence the focus (Kennedy, 2002). In Canada it is common for high school and post-secondary students to maintain part time employment while they are attending school. This lack of experience and exposure to the workplace in Chinese students often results in failure to understand the unwritten norms of behavior, especially non-verbal behaviors. Canadian job seekers have the advantage of familiarity with workplace expectations due to their work experience (Brooks, 2006).

As previously stated, international students often have not had exposure to the Canadian workplace and therefore require opportunities to develop self-confidence through employment programs that include hands on activities and practical application of employment skills. International students often have limited interaction with English speaking peers and therefore miss out on career information that could be gained through socialization with peer groups (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007). As well, since international students often have had little exposure to the Canadian workplace small closed groups may be most effective as a safe environment to ask questions and voice concerns is created. Yang et al stress the importance of developing "proactive services such as workshops and structured group interventions" (Yang et al, 2002). The use of small group work is effective as it allows participants to develop rapport and build their confidence. A group composed of peers at the same level of career development creates a social

environment that motivates adult learners to persevere (Kerka, 1995). For participants who may demonstrate high levels of anxiety blending the format between lecture, large group discussion, small group work and partner activities may develop their confidence and lessen their anxiety (Blumberg, 2009). In this study we recognized that Chinese students were more comfortable with a lecture format; however, a lecture style is ineffective in developing rapport and fostering occasion for peer interaction. In a lecture style environment students remain passive and lack opportunities to develop confidence in their abilities (Blumberg, 2009). Blumberg refers to the importance of social engagement and opportunities to interact and collaborate with others in order to enhance learning. There has been research that shows small group activities have positive implications for those who are part of underrepresented groups (Kennedy, 2002).

The use of group activities helped to develop a safe, comfortable and welcoming atmosphere among participants which created the foundation for the growth of self-confidence.

Studies by Littlewood(1996) and Watkins and Biggs(1996) support the need for active learning with Chinese learners despite the misconception of a preference for "rote" learning.

The implementation of activities and role plays was critical to the success of the study as the goal of the study was to build self-confidence and increase subject area knowledge. Blumberg recommends providing opportunities for participants to reflect on their own performance, have opportunities to learn from their mistakes and have opportunities to offer feedback to peers and

themselves. This also allows for shared power within the group as participants are invited to share their opinions and provide feedback (Blumberg, 2009). The concept behind social learning is that people learn from observing each other; both fellow participants and facilitators (Blumberg, 2009). The social constructivist view, states that knowledge is constructed when individuals engage socially in talk and activity about shared problems or tasks. Participants provided positive feedback regarding the group activities and role-plays where they gave feedback to the facilitators as well as the role plays where they received feedback from each other and from the facilitators. In order to help develop confidence in communication and public speaking opportunities for practice should be provided while simultaneously, coaching and modeling ways of effectively communicating with others. The basis of the program used in this study was to create structured activities where participants could learn about Canadian culture, conducting a job search in Canada and build their communication skills. This was accomplished by demonstrating and allowing time for practical application. According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), "Making meaning is thus a dialogic process involving persons-in conversation, and learning is seen as the process by which individuals are introduced to a culture by more skilled members."

Program Planning

Cross Cultural Understanding

Educators must have an understanding of cross cultural issues in order to better meet the needs of international students. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) acknowledge the importance for adult educators to consider the learners'

perspective and cultural background when creating programs. Adult educators working with international students need to be aware of cultural issues such as language barriers, values, traditions and level of acculturation and be willing to adapt programming and teaching to match the needs of these learners. Literature supports the importance of building supportive relationships, incorporating cultural sharing activities, respect for cultural values and opportunities to learn about Canadian customs and traditions (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Yang et al, 2002). It is important to note that culture is often one of the significant factors that impacts adult development and change (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). If possible, educators may wish to collaborate with other departments on campus such as international student centres to ensure understanding and cultural sensitivity. In this study staff from the International Centre for Students facilitated sessions about work permit issues and their knowledge and cultural awareness was well received by participants. In order to connect with international students it is crucial to create a welcoming atmosphere, and to be proactive in recruitment efforts. Staff must create a presence on campus by attending international student events and talking about available programs (Chen, 1999). Creating programs that incorporate a sense of community and opportunities for participants to learn from each other in a supportive environment is also crucial. Recognizing that language and communication needs were important concerns creating a learning environment that made participants feel comfortable and welcome is an important component (Kerka, 2003).

Job search programs for specialized groups have been in existence for many years and are common when working with specific marginalized groups. Yang et al stated that "Although many of the services provided by Career Centers are useful to international students, there are numerous other needs that international students have that require services that are uniquely tailored to them." (Yang et al, 2002).

The creation of programming specific to the career needs of international students should be a priority for post-secondary institutions.

Learning Styles

Educators working with international students must recognize there is a lack of homogeneity amongst learners and be willing to adapt their programs to various learning styles. (Knowles, 1996). Although learners may all be of a similar cultural background they each have a different upbringing, life experiences, levels of acculturation and language fluency. Illeris' three dimensions of learning model accommodates varied learning styles of the participants. His model refers to three dimensions to learning; cognition, emotion and society which are always present in any learning activity. The dimension of society is particularly applicable when working with international students, "it is the dimension of external interaction, such as participation, communication and cooperation. It serves as the personal integration in communities and society and thereby also builds up the sociality of the learner" (Merriam, Cafaralla & Baumgartner, 2007). This model relates to a learning experience which is connected to emotions and social interaction and the opinions and perspectives of others. This is an aspect of learning that may be

absent with international students studying in Canada since they are less confident with their English competency they have less interaction with native English speakers and are therefore more self-conscious regarding communication. A study conducted by Grayson (2007) found that international students frequently report difficulty in making friends in the host society due to low self-confidence in English language ability (Grayson, 2007).

Variations in levels of English fluency and acculturation may impact on the participants' confidence and degree of participation. It appears that students who were exposed to English early in their education and had occasion to obtain basic conversational fluency before coming to Canada had higher levels of both English fluency and acculturation. In informal conversation with students it appears that those from a colonized nation with an English influence such as India or Singapore demonstrate higher levels of English fluency and appear more acculturated than those from mainland China (Yang et al, 2002). Another factor to consider with international students is the learning environment. Most learning experiences are highly situated; a learner may display different behaviour in different learning environments. For example, a learner might appear extremely confident and self-directed in one area of learning, the classroom, but very dependent and unsure in another, the job interview (Knowles, 1990).

International students studying and living in Canada are experiencing a variety of changes: in teaching and learning, ways of interacting with others, food, the list is endless. Educators working with international students must be cognizant of these changes. An important factor of an adult education program is

the expectation of change as an effect of participation. Change can occur in several ways: individual change due to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, organizational change, community and societal change. According to Hall and Hord, " …change is a process through which people and organizations move as they gradually come to understand, and become skilled and competent in the use of new ways" (as cited in Cafarella, 2002). There is significant research to support this notion of thinking of program planning as a process that is constantly changing (Houle, 1972; Cafarella, 1985; Sork and Caffarella, 1989; Cervero and Wilson, 1994). This model of program planning allows facilitators to alter the program to better meet the needs of the participants. The interactive nature of this model allows planners to take into account the differences among cultures in the way these programs are planned and conducted (Caffarella, 2002). This model also allows the incorporation of feedback from participants on how to best address their needs. The Interactive Model of Program Planning relies on seven assumptions (Brookfield, 1986; Cevero and Wilson, 1994, 1996; Houle,1996; Knowles, 1980, Sork and Caffarella, 1989; Wilson and Cervero, 1997; Caffarella, 2002). The assumptions most relevant were as follows: focusing on learning and change, attending to planning and last-minute changes, honouring and taking into account diversity and cultural differences, understanding that program planners work in different ways and lastly understanding that program planners are learners. It is not enough to recognize and respect these differences; educational planners must be able to design workshops that fully engage people in learning who might have very different cultural traditions and expectations (Caffarella,

2002). This study implemented changes from the onset. Originally the facilitators had planned to focus primarily on career development however, based on the needs of the participants the focus was changed to employment. As well, the facilitators felt that a lecture style would be best suited for international students as this style is common in eastern education but the facilitators quickly realized this style was inappropriate for the development of interpersonal communication skills. A vital aspect of program planning is learning that occurs by trial and error (Caffarella, 2002). Often changes need to be made in order to insure learning objectives are met.

Another important aspect of program planning is determining learning outcomes. There are five key categories of learning outcomes: acquiring new knowledge, enhancing cognitive skills, developing psychomotor skills, strengthening problem-solving and finding capabilities, and changing attitudes, beliefs, values, and/or feelings (Kemp, Morrison, and Ross, 1996; Smith and Ragan, 1999). When working with international students the most relevant are acquiring new knowledge, strengthening problem solving skills, acquiring the practical skills to apply to their lives and changes in beliefs or feelings.

There is a significant amount of research that shows that adult education and training programs are offered for several reasons: to encourage continuous growth and development, to assist people in responding to practical problems and issues of adult life, and to prepare for current and future employment opportunities (Craig, 1996; Merriam and Cafferella, 1999: Wilson and Hayes, 2000). The facilitators of this study implemented a program that was learner focused and used

various types of teaching methods that adapted to the participants various learning styles. Active learning leads to greater skill development, improved communications skills and stronger interpersonal and social skills compared to passive learning styles (Kelly, 2009). This style of learning can better prepare students for the workplace as the learners are exposed to various learning and work styles (Kelly, 2009).

Summary

This literature review presented information on the topic of creating career development programs for international students studying in Canada, looking at the issues of international student recruitment, acculturation and language fluency. The number of international students choosing to study and eventually remain in Canada is dramatically increasing therefore post-secondary institutions are turning to student service departments to create programs to meet these needs.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology:

This study looked at a career program for international students that used a problem-based teaching and learning format. This study was conducted from January 29, 2008 – March 25, 2008. This chapter describes the methodology of the study including the selection of the research method, participants, position of the researcher, rationale for group approach, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, ethics approval, informed consent, research instruments and a description of the program. Three key components guided the development of the program and the study:

1. to determine if by incorporating career search activities and opportunities to practice interpersonal communication participants would feel more confident and knowledgeable regarding conducting a job search in Canada.

2. to determine participants' level of acculturation and whether their level of acculturation had an effect on their job search confidence and knowledge.

3. to determine if the creation of a program tailored to the career development needs of international students wishing to obtain employment in Canada would be well received by participants.

Selection of Research Method

The intent of this study was to examine the career development needs of international students planning to stay in Canada upon graduation. The study used a mixed method approach, blending aspects of quantitative and qualitative research. A mixed method approach was used as it presents a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2009). The concept of mixed method research strategies was developed in 1959 by Campbell & Fisk (reference). A mixed method approach to research incorporates both the researcher's and participants' perspectives and is thought to offer the best insight of the research topic (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). Due to concerns regarding language and cultural biases a mixed method approach is recommended for cross cultural research and is thought to be effective when advocating for marginalized groups (Triandis, 1994). This method is also recommended in fields where there is little research available (Creswell, 2009). This study collected data using a survey then used observations, process notes and participant feedback to develop the results in more detail.

This study included several measures to ensure validity. Survey questionnaires were used to measure job search knowledge and confidence as well as participants' level of acculturation. At the same time job search knowledge and confidence were explored using observations, process notes and participant feedback. A questionnaire and emails were used to determine if participants felt the program was a beneficial and a good use of their time. Both quantitative and

qualitative data were selected to provide a better understanding of the problem; the development and delivery of appropriate career workshops for international students. Triangulation was used to ensure validity. Triangulation is the strategy of bringing together data from different sources, using more than one method and reflecting different perspectives. The utilization of various data collection techniques is recommended to ensure validity and strengthen the reliability (Burton, Brundrett & Jones, 2008). Please refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1 Data Matrix

Research Questions	Data Sources	
1. to determine if by incorporating career search activities and opportunities to practice interpersonal communication participants would feel more confident and knowledgeable regarding conducting a job search in Canada.	Survey questionnaire	Observations Process notes Emails
2. to determine participants' level of acculturation and whether their level of acculturation had an effect on their job search confidence and knowledge.	VIA Questionnaire	
3. to determine if the creation of a program tailored to the career development needs of international students wishing to obtain employment in Canada would be well received by participants.	Questionnaire	Participant feedback Emails from participants

An example illustrating how the theme of student confidence and knowledge utilized the triangulation of data is presented below.

Table 2 - Triangulation

Research Question	Theme	Data Source quantitative	Emails	Process Notes
1. determine if incorporating career search activities and opportunities to practice interpersonal communication participants would feel more confident and knowledgeable	Confidence and knowledge	Post-test Questionnaire results mean increased from 2.92 to 3.31 Correlations confidence post test r = .64; p =.019	*I am more confident right now.*	Participants appeared more confident at the end of program and were able to state skills in front of group.
			I did feel more confident about looking for a job in Canada...	Participants participated in a mock interview and were able to talk about themselves in a positive manner.

Clearly the issues are multi-faceted including language facility, self-confidence, intercultural competencies, which would require the employment of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. While it is a research study, the study is firmly rooted in improvement of practice.

Participants in the Study

Participants in this study were international students enrolled in degree program courses at the University of Manitoba who voluntarily signed up for the Career Seminar for International Students in the winter of 2008. The participants were a convenience sample as they were purposely chosen based on their participation in the international career program. The program was advertised through the Student Counselling and Career Centre and through the International Centre for Students via posters, webpage announcements and weekly emails. There was a $10.00 fee to sign up for this course, with the money allocated to cover the cost of snacks and drinks. The nature of the study was explained to all participants and written informed consent was obtained prior to participants agreeing to participate in the study. Participants were informed that there would be no consequence for declining to participate in the study and that they would still be able to participate in the program should they refuse.

There were 14 participants in the study, 7 males and 7 females with a mean age of 27.4. Eleven were from Mainland China, one from India, one from Taiwan and one from Hong Kong. Four students were studying Science, three Arts, three Commerce, one Engineering, one Human Ecology and one

Architecture. Participants length of time in Canada ranged from 2 – 7 years, mean of 5 years. Twelve participants were undergraduate students and two were graduate students. Seven students were in their final year, five in their third year, one in second year, and one in the final year of a PhD.

Position of the Researcher

My role as researcher was a participant- as-observer, as I was in direct contact with the participants every session for the entire eight week period as a co-facilitator and the participants were aware of my role as a researcher, yet I maintained a neutral, objective relationship with the participants (Bryman & Teevan, 2005). As a researcher taking on the multiple roles of researcher, educator and employee I considered potential conflicts of interest and the ethical implications prior to beginning this study. My most important goal was assure participants that their participation was voluntary and purposely asked my co-facilitator to read over the consent form to ensure participants did not feel coerced (Creswell, 2009). The multiple role of facilitator/researcher/observer was difficult at times as often when I was involved in a discussion I was unable to jot down observations and participants' reactions. It may have been beneficial to assume the sole role of a researcher and an observer as while participating in the role of facilitator important information may have been missed (or to hire a recorder).

This research study developed through my professional role as an employment counsellor at the University of Manitoba Career Services. In my work at the University of Manitoba I encountered many international students who were struggling to find employment in Canada within the 90 days timeline

established by the Government of Canada. The study was an intersection of my professional wish to improve practice, my educational research interests and a personal interest that grew out of ten years of professional experience working with international students.

Rationale for a group approach to address the career concerns of international students

The rationale for developing the career program for international students was grounded in the principles of adult education and development. Factors that must be considered when program planning are power, ethics and the background and culture of the participants. Program planners must be culturally sensitive when working with participants from backgrounds and cultures that differ from their own (Caffarella, 2002; Cervero & Wilson, 1994). Several researchers stress the importance of establishing a working alliance with international students by sharing with them in their heritage and cultural values (Yang et al, 2002).

The facilitators of this study used the principles of shared learning and the role of the facilitator to assist in the learning process rather than simply providing information (Amundson, 2005). As well, the creation of an informal, comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere where all participants have an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas may enhance learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Knowles, 1990). One of the objectives of this program was to develop participants' self-efficacy and confidence regarding their ability to obtain employment in Canada therefore participants were encouraged to interact and

collaborate with others as part of the learning process. A study conducted by Singaravelu, White & Bringaze, (2005) recommends the use of a group format for international students as a reliable alternative to individual sessions as the group format provides a social support network. As well group work is recommended for Hong Kong Chinese as it encourages interaction and peer support and may provide a deeper level of learning (Kennedy, 2002).

The facilitators of the original program at the University of Manitoba and I noted that many of the participants had difficulty with Basic English communication. Based on facilitator observations of both the previous and current programs a need to continue to increase the amount of exercises that allowed participants to strengthen interpersonal communication skills was determined. In order to assist international students in the development of their communication skills more opportunities were created to talk about themselves and their abilities; recognizing that communication can become a barrier to understanding and can cause increased anxiety and lack of confidence. By conducting informal interviews with students the facilitators determined that the students who were experiencing the most difficulty with mastery of English were also using very little English outside of the university environment. At home and in social situations they spoke in their native language and at times in class would use their native language to communicate with each other. From a linguistic perspective this is indicative of a limited level of English comprehension. Participants were encouraged to practice communicating and interacting with others as much as possible within the course and were also

assigned weekly tasks to help improve their communication outside the course. Chang (2004) used this technique in a study by encouraging practice in the classroom and in the learners' lives to initiate change. Through such activities, the learners adopted behaviours with which they were unfamiliar and that allowed them to explore unfamiliar aspects of themselves. By encouraging our program participants to engage in conversation and activities related to improving their employability they allowed themselves to grow and learn. The facilitators recognized that for many this was a difficult task and we allowed them to establish their own comfort level. For example, the participants were encouraged to practice talking about themselves by sharing one skill or positive attribute but they were allowed to practice individually, and in pairs, before sharing with the larger group. Participants had the option to "pass" anytime if they did not want to participate but interestingly no one chose this option.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through multiple sources including using survey questionnaires, field notes during the program, field notes from memory, flipchart papers of student activities, transcripts of conversations with participants, feedback from participants during the program, review of emails received by participants upon completion of the program and the examination of an unpublished manuscript written by Geller & Mandrusiak (2008). Often the data was collected using jotted notes which were later rewritten in more detail.

Process notes were used throughout the study to keep track of the research process. Process notes were taken during group sessions, after group

sessions and during individual meetings with students. These included personal notes relating to intentions and reactions, experiences with participants, and interaction and observations of participants. Throughout the research process information was revised to ensure the success of the program based on participant feedback and researcher observations.

Pre and post test surveys were administered and the results were tabulated using SPSS software. During the study participants participated in group activities and data was collected on flipchart paper, these charts were analyzed by the researcher.

Several students emailed the researcher after the program to comment on their job search success; these emails were analyzed for salient themes. Permission was sought and given by The Education Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba to allow these emails to be used in the study. Please refer to Appendix E.

An unpublished departmental manuscript written by Geller and Mandrusiak (2008) was used as a resource to compare results of their study to this current study.

Data was analyzed and key themes were identified. Salient themes that developed from the data were; language fluency, confidence, cultural competency and interaction with English speaking students.

Ethics

The principal researcher sought and received ethical approval by The Education Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba to administer the

questionnaires and collect feedback from participants. The study was conducted over an eight week period in the winter of 2008. The principal researcher also sought and received ethical approval to use emails sent by participants as part of the research data. See Appendix C.

Informed Consent

In order to respect the rights of those participating in this study, the purpose and objectives of the study were explained by the co-facilitator prior to the participants signing the consent form. Refer to Appendix D. She read through the consent form and explained the process to the participants. Participants were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. Lastly, participants were asked to read through and then sign the Research Participant Information and Consent Form. By signing the form participants declared their consent to participate in the study with the acknowledgement that they could discontinue participation at any time.

Research Instruments

Changes in student confidence and job search knowledge level were measured using a pre and post test questionnaire. As there were no published measures regarding job search confidence the researcher used a measure created by Geller & Mandrusiak (2008) that contained two separate items measuring participants' knowledge and confidence about finding work in Canada. Participants were asked, "How confident are you in finding a job in Canada?" and "How knowledgeable are you about finding a job in Canada?" and were to rate

themselves on a 4-point scale from 1= "Not at all" to 4= "Very". There is no data on reliability or validity for this measure. Refer to Appendix A.

Acculturation:

An acculturation measure was used in this study. The rational for using this measure was to determine if the program would benefit participants who had a strong connection to their heritage culture. The Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) was used to measure students' level of acculturation (Ryder, Alden, & Palhous, 2000). The VIA is a 20-item general acculturation measure that was developed in response to the need for a measure bidimensional acculturation that allows for the concept of integration (retaining one's own culture and participation on the new culture). Traditional unidimensioanl models of acculturation do not allow for this (Ryder et al, 2000; Geller, 2004).

The bidimentional model is reflected in the VIA's subscales of Heritage Culture (10 items; e.g., "I would be willing to marry a person from my heritage culture") and Western Culture

(10 items; e.g., " I would be willing to marry a North American person"). Participants were asked to respond to these statements on a 9 point Likert scale from 1="Disagree" to 9= "Agree". The mean of the odd numbered items is the Heritage culture score and the mean of the even numbered items is the Western culture score, higher scores reflect more retention/acquisition of the culture.

The two measurements of Heritage and Western culture have been shown to be independent and related to self-identity. This measure has been studied with Canadian East Asian and South Asian groups (Ryder et al, 2000;

Geller, 2004). The internal reliabilities of the subscales are good (average alpha = .90), and the subscales correlate in the expected directions with many other indicators of acculturation. Factor analyses yielded support for the two subscales and factor loadings are high (Geller, 2004). Refer to Appendix B.

Feedback was collected from participants upon completion of the "Finding a job in Canada – Career seminar for International Students" to determine their satisfaction with the seminar. Participants were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with the course on a 4-point scale from 1= "Not at all" to 4= "Very." Participants were asked to respond to three items.

1. I found this career planning seminar met my career needs.

2. I thought this career planning seminar was a good use of my time.

3. I enjoyed this career seminar.

Participants were also asked to provide written feedback on likes and dislikes and suggestions for improvement.

Copies of the survey forms are included in this submission. Please refer to Appendix A & B.

Students were also asked to provide qualitative feedback at the beginning of the program by listing their expectations of the program and at the end stating whether the program meet their expectations and their suggestions for future programs.

Demographic

Demographic data was collected using a questionnaire that was developed by G. Geller & M. Mandrusiak (2008) see Appendix A. This was a

blind survey as student identities were concealed. Participants were asked to submit demographic information; age, gender, country of origin, faculty, graduate or undergraduate status, year of study, program of study, and number of years in Canada. This information was used solely for statistical analysis.

Description of the Program

This study looks at a career program for international students that used a problem-based teaching and learning format. This study was conducted from January 29, 2008 – March 25, 2008. The program was eight weeks in duration, offered once a week for two hours. The program was a closed group with attendance ranging from 15 – 25 participants. Each week had a different topic, although topics were rearranged depending on participant needs. A sense of community was created by addressing each student by name as often as possible; nametags were used to help remember students' and facilitators' names. The facilitators brought food and beverages to each session and incorporated a break to allow for informal conversation and socializing. An outline of the program follows.

Week One, Session One:

The facilitators recognized the importance of creating an environment that was respectful and trusting from the beginning. English was the language of instruction and in order for all participants to feel welcome and part of the group participants were encouraged to use only English while in the sessions. This

session was an opportunity to explain the program and obtain feedback from participants regarding their needs. Participants were greeted at the door by both facilitators and asked to create a nametag and find a seat. The tables and chairs in the room were organized in a half circle to ensure everyone could see each other. The first session opened with a welcome and introduction of the two facilitators. This was followed by an introduction and description of the program and the rationale for its creation. Food and drinks were provided. At this point the study was explained and participants were asked if they would like to participate in the study. Those who wished to participate were given a consent form, and the pre-test questionnaire and acculturation measure were explained. All the participants present agreed to participate. Participants were given time to complete the surveys. Next an icebreaker activity was conducted, "Find Someone Who". The activity involved introducing yourself to others and asking a question. This provided a chance for participants to get to know each other and the facilitators. Upon completion of the icebreaker activity students returned to their seats and took turns introducing themselves, where they were from and their reasons for attending the seminar in the larger group. The next activity was a survey of the group, where they were asked what they hoped to learn from the program. Student responses were collected on a flipchart to be used both to help tailor the program to the needs of the students and as an evaluation tool. The next activity was "Worries and Challenges'.

Students were given a paper that asked them to list their main worries and challenges regarding in job searching in Canada. Participants worked on this

exercise individually. Upon completion they were asked if they would like to share with the person beside them. After a brief discussion, participants were asked to hand their papers in to the facilitators, no names were listed on the papers and participants were assured the results would remain anonymous. The worries and challenges participants listed, in order of importance, are as follows:

1.   Language and cultural issues

- Communication, vocabulary, slang, and "looking stupid if I ask"

- English writing skills, fluency in English

- Career and employment skills

- Making the first impression, appearing calm and confident

- How to keep the conversation going

- How to start a conversation/socialize with co-workers

- Racism, discrimination

- Lack of Canadian work experience

- Cultural differences, taboos in Canadian culture

- Interpersonal skills in terms of a culture

- Loneliness

2.   How to develop career and employment skills

- Finding the right career/job

- Resume writing

- How to present our professional ability at the interview

- Interviewing in Canadian culture, clothing, dressing attire

- Cracking interviews both personal and phone

- Networking/self-marketing

- Previous work experience outside Canada

- Knowledge of the employer (labour market information)

- Understanding the offer clearly

3. Regulations and paperwork

- Work permits

- 90 day limit (e.g. looking for work in the winter and employees willingness to wait for me to begin work)

4. Where to find resources for support

5. Motivation and confidence in finding a career

6. What are appropriate behaviours and roles once in work environment

7. Whether to return to country of origin or find work in Canada

Upon completion of these forms participants were divided into groups of 2-3 and given the career word game activity. Please see Appendix D.

Participants worked in small groups for approximately 10 minutes and then returned to the larger group for discussion. The evening ended with a question and answer session and a preview of expectations for the next meeting.

Session Two, What Kind of Careers are There?

This session was focused on learning about the Canadian labour market and was facilitated by a career information specialist employed by the Student Counselling and Career Centre. Participants were greeted by the facilitators and asked to create a name tag, again food and drinks were provided. Students were

asked to introduce themselves and state their program of study. The facilitator

shared information about different career resources such as the National

Occupational Classification system, Manitoba Job Futures and Labour Market

Information websites. There was a discussion regarding high demand occupations

in Manitoba and how to find information about job vacancies, qualifications and

create a list of potential employers. Participants were then given an opportunity to

use the internet and print resources available and to work individually with the

facilitators.

Session Three, Finding and Securing Employment, Part 1:

This session was the start of the practical problem solving portion of the

program. The focus of this session was on resume and cover letter writing. The

foundation of resume and cover letter writing is the ability to demonstrate skills.

To begin the session the facilitators explained to importance of knowing what

skills individuals possess and the ability to articulate these skills. Participants were

provided with examples of skills that can be developed through academic,

employment or volunteer experience. Next participants were given a skills

assessment activity. Participants were asked to think of one thing they were good

at; e.g. an academic skill, a sport, being a good friend and then share it with the

group. We recognized that this was a difficult task for some and the facilitators

shared that for many job seekers articulating skills was a difficult task. As

mentioned earlier, in Chinese culture humility is a value of tremendous

importance. The facilitators offered their own examples to start off the activity and

to provide illustration. After each student had a chance to share one skill within a

small group they returned to the larger group where discussion occurred regarding how it felt to talk about one's skills. The next topic of discussion was Canadian resumes and cover letters. Participants were asked to share how resumes were used in their countries, for some resumes were a new job search tool. Participants received an invitation to attend an employer event being held the following week and an explanation of the event.

For homework participants were given a job advertisement and asked to write a cover letter and resume due in two weeks.

Week Four, Finding and Securing Employment Part 2:

The focus of this session was communicating with employers and networking. The first hour of the session was a discussion of how to talk to employers, and the importance of handshakes, eye contact, and body language. The facilitator used a role play to demonstrate "bad" handshakes and inappropriate eye contact. Then the facilitator went around the room and shook hands with each participant. Afterward discussion occurred regarding the importance of handshakes in Canadian workplace culture as well as small talk and appropriate topics of conversation, for example, weather. In the second hour the Student Counselling and Career Centre staff was holding a career information session with employers which was an excellent opportunity for the group participants to gain practical experience in a real life setting therefore participants were invited to attend with the facilitators attending to provide support. The event was an employer panel where employers presented information about their individual organizations and provided job search advice. Pizza and drinks were served and

students were invited to ask questions and interact with the employers. Canadian students were also in attendance.

Week Five, Communicating with Employers

This session began with a discussion of the previous week's career information session. Participants felt this was an excellent opportunity to practice communicating with employers in a non-threatening way. Discussion took place concerning what went well and what they would do differently in the future. This session included a role play between the facilitators and another staff member to demonstrate communication blunders. The facilitators of the study were both female and had invited a male colleague to assist in the explanation of male-female interaction. A role play was conducted for the group demonstrating inappropriate conversation topics, invasion of personal space and lack of understanding of physical cues. Participants were asked to provide feedback on what they noticed during the role play and a discussion of Canadian norms was conducted. Next the facilitators and the guest conducted a more appropriate role play and again students were asked to comment. This provided the opportunity to discuss cultural conflicts such as personal space, inappropriate questions (salary, age, marital status), and visual/body language clues. The remainder of the session was spent talking about job search techniques such as networking, developing contacts and the introduction of the "30 Second Commercial". The "30 Second Commercial" is an exercise designed to help job seekers prepare a short introduction for use when meeting potential employers. The concept of the "30 Second Commercial" was explained to the participants and one of the facilitators

provided an example. Next participants were divided into pairs to practice.

Participants were informed that one of the goals of the program facilitators' was to

have each of the participants articulate their "30 Second Commercial" to the larger

group at the last session. This announcement was met with anticipation and

trepidation.

Week Six, Interview Skills

This was a highly anticipated session. Based on feedback from the

participants, job interviews appeared to be a topic of extreme significance and

anxiety for international students. The main objective of this session was to teach

participants how to identify and articulate their skills. We began with a short

lecture outlining the basic components of a Canadian interview. Students were not

required to take notes as they were provided with a handout. Participants were

encouraged to ask questions throughout, surprisingly many of the questions

focused around Canadian dress, especially appropriate interview attire. The female

participants were concerned about attire, make-up and hairstyle. Photographs were

brought in and the facilitators modeled appropriate interview attire. Popular

Canadian interview techniques such as Behaviour Descriptive Interviews were

discussed and examples were provided. The majority of the session focused on

answering interview questions. Specific questions such as; **What is your**

weakness? and **Why should I hire you?** were discussed. The group was asked

what they felt their weakness was and they all stated English fluency. The

facilitators took this opportunity to discuss confidence using spoken English

compared to English fluency and the potential danger of stressing this perceived

weakness in an interview. It was also an opportunity to discuss ways to increase their spoken English and participants were encouraged to use spoken English as often as possible. The question, **"Why should I hire you?"** was also discussed and the expectation of Canadian employers that applicants are confident and demonstrate good communication and interpersonal skills. After the lecture, time was allotted for practice and discussion. Participants were divided into pairs and given a sheet of interview questions to role play and provide feedback to each other. After 10-15 minutes participants returned to the larger group for discussion. During the discussion amongst the larger group participants were invited to share any additional thoughts, reflections or worries. Participants were invited to participate in a one-one mock interview with the researcher or another member of Career Services staff they had not yet met. All the participants chose to meet with the researcher rather than a stranger.

Week Seven, Work Permits

This session was facilitated by staff members from The International Centre for Students on-campus. The seminar provided information regarding work permit rules and regulations and was presented in a lecture format. Participants received extensive handouts that included copies of the Power Point presentation and information from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada regarding work permits. Participants were able to ask questions throughout and invited to visit the International Centre for Students on campus if they had further questions.

Week Eight, Culmination and Reflection, Potluck

This was our final session. Participants were encouraged to ask questions that had not been answered, received their resumes and cover letters back with feedback and suggestions for improvement and were given an appointment for a mock interview if they hadn't already completed one. A guest speaker who was a recent university graduate of Chinese decent presented to the group on her experience finding work in Canada. After she left we conducted a small group activity where the participants were divided into groups of 3-4 and asked the question **"What does Canadian culture mean to you?"** Participants were given a piece of flip chart paper 10 minutes to discuss and create a list and then returned to the larger group for presentation and discussion. As promised students also presented their "30 Second Commercial" to the larger group. Each participant was given the option to pass if they chose but all the students participated in the exercise. The last portion was spent obtaining feedback from the group regarding their likes and dislikes, and what they learned from the program. The session ended with participants receiving certificates of completion as well as the completion of the post-test measure and questionnaire designed for evaluation and research purposes. The facilitators invited the participants to seek on-going assistance from if they wished. Participants and the facilitators ended the evening by sharing a potluck meal.

Although the exercise "What does Canadian culture mean to you?" was originally an activity planned to allow participants time to interact and work as part of a team it became an interesting discussion of Eastern and Western culture. Participants shared their perspectives of Canadian culture as compared to Chinese

and Indian culture. The most significant differences were related to values. The participants felt Canadians were much more focused on recreation and work life balance as evidenced by the focus on the outdoors, big vehicles, travel, weekends, and family.

The results of the study will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of completing a career seminar on international students' confidence levels reading job searching in Canada as well as their knowledge of the Canadian job search, their acculturation level and enjoyment and value of the program.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS

This chapter outlines the preliminary findings from each quantitative measure (questionnaires) as well as the qualitative observations of the researcher, process notes and participant feedback. Three key components guided the development of the program and the study:

1. to determine if by incorporating activities and opportunities to practice interpersonal communication participants would feel more confident and knowledgeable regarding conducting a job search in Canada.

2. to determine participants' level of acculturation and whether their level of acculturation had an effect on their job search confidence and knowledge.

3. to determine if the creation of a program tailored to the career development needs of international students wishing to obtain employment in Canada would be well received by participants.

Results based on survey data for career program serving international students

The first goal of this study was to determine if by incorporating activities and opportunities to practice interpersonal communication participants would feel more confident and knowledgeable regarding conducting a job search in Canada. A pre and post test survey was used to determine if participants showed an increase in confidence and knowledge upon completion of the program. Paired

sample t tests were used to compare participants' levels of job search confidence and knowledge prior to and after participation in the program. Results indicated significant increases in both job search confidence, $t(12) = 2.13$, $p = .054$, and job search knowledge, $t(12) = 2.5$, $p = .028$, following participation. Results of the pre and post test survey showed participants demonstrated increased confidence and knowledge. Even though overall results were positive and showed participants felt more knowledgeable upon completion of the program, three students stated they felt they needed more English practice to feel confident in an interview. For this reason on-going support was offered to those who chose to participate (Table 3).

The second goal of the study was to determine participants' level of acculturation and whether their level of acculturation had an effect on their job search confidence and knowledge. Pearson correlations were conducted between pairs of variables. Significant correlations were found between participants' job search knowledge and confidence levels at both pre-test, $r = .72$, $p = .005$, and post-test $r = .64$; $p = .019$, indicating that an increase in job search knowledge is related to an increase in confidence. Those participants who felt more confident at the beginning also felt more knowledgable. A significant relationship was also found between participants' level of job search confidence at pre-test and their level of identification with Canadian culture, $r = .63$, $p = .021$, suggesting that those who reported they had the most confidence appeared to have strong cultural identification to Canadian culture. In line with this, post-test job search knowledge was negatively correlated with Canadian acculturation, $r = .-58$, $p = .039$,

indicating that those participants who identified more strongly with their home culture perceived they had gained less knowledge upon completion of the program (Table 4).

The third goal of this study was to determine if the creation of a program tailored to the career development needs of international students wishing to obtain employment in Canada would be well received by participants. Based on participant feedback on average most participants rated the program favorably at meeting their career needs, being enjoyable and that it was a good use of their time. On a 4 point scale, participants gave a mean score of 3.2 (SD = 0.799) for how well the program met their career planning needs, a score of 3.3 (SD = 0.821) for how good a use of time the program was, and participants gave the highest rating 3.4 (SD = 0.836) for how well they enjoyed this career program. However, one questionnaire contained interesting responses. The participant answered "Not at all" for all of the questions but in the space provided for comments they wrote, "everything was perfect." This would appear to be evidence of English comprehension difficulty . Refer to Table 3.

Table 3   **Descriptive Statistics and Dependent and Independent Variables**

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Pre-test Confidence	2.92	0.75955	13
Post-test Confidence	3.31	0.48038	13
Pre-test Knowledge	2.77	0.72501	13
Post-test Knowledge	3.31	0.48038	13
Acculturation Heritage	7.5	.86757	13
Acculturation Canadian	5.4	.108125	13
Met career needs	3.2	0.799	13
Good use of time	3.3	0.821	13
Enjoyed seminar	3.4	0.836	13

Table 4.   **Correlation Table**

	Pre know	Post conf	Post know	Accul Her	Accul Cdn
Pre-conf	.72**	.53	.30	-.31	.63*
Preknowledge		.22	.22	-.25	.36
Post conf			.64*	-.04	.36
Post know				-.58*	.-07
Accultur. Her					.23

Note: **Correlation is significant at the.01 level *Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Written feedback showed participants appreciated the practical real life application of the program, they reported the aspects of the program that were most helpful were the mock interviews, resume and cover letter information and the work permit presentation. The main comments related to the value of practical career search skills, such as

" Every class is so helpful. The mock interview is so good." Participants also commented positively on the group format, "I felt you guys did a great job making the students feel like they're in their comfort zone, keep up the good work!" Overall feedback was positive the main suggestion was more time, i.e. more sessions and more occasions for interaction and hands on practice of skills learnt.

Observations

Week 1:

Students appeared to respond well to the session. Some students appeared uncomfortable with some of the activities especially those involving sharing information with the larger group. There was a range of levels proficiency with the use of English as the language of communication. One student depended on the use of a pocket translator especially during the explanation of the pre-test and the acculturation measure. Some students also relied on others to translate at times. Female Chinese students seemed especially shy and had a habit of covering their mouths when they talked. Participants came from various academic backgrounds some students were enrolled in a bachelor program others were enrolled in a graduate program. A number of students were preparing to graduate in the near future others had several years of study to complete. The majority of the participants were of Chinese descent, one student was from India.

The participants stressed the importance of developing job search skills rather than career planning assistance. This may be due to the Citizenship and Immigration legislation in place at the time and the cultural values of preferring an educational pragmatic focus rather than a counselling. Career Services at the University of Manitoba initially planned to incorporate both career and employment counseling in the program but based on feedback from participants the focus became employment related.

Week 2:

This session was very well received by the participants. Many of the participants had limited knowledge of the Manitoba and Canadian labour market and were unaware of the existence of the resources provided. Some participants were able to identify potential employers with ease while others appeared to have difficulty determining the type of employment they were qualified for and identifying potential employers. This was especially significant for students with an Economics background where there may be more than one potential career option.

Week 3:

Some participants appeared uncomfortable discussing their own strengths and skills. This discomfort may represent a cultural difference related to the Confucianist values of humility prevalent in Chinese culture. Overall participants seemed to benefit from the experience. In general most participants appear uncomfortable speaking in front of a group. Small group discussions appear to be successful with most participants interacting well in the group.

Week 4:

Many participants were unaware of the meaning of small talk. The participants seemed unfamiliar with appropriate topics of conversation in Canada such as the weather, current events, movies and sports. The topic of handshakes and eye contact was one of great interest. There appeared to be some confusion regarding grip, many students especially females have a very soft grip. Some participants indicated that in their culture direct eye contact with an older person is

considered disrespectful. Discussion occurred about the value of eye contact in Canada as a way to demonstrate confidence and respect. Role plays of appropriate and inappropriate handshakes were met with interest and humour.

Participants appeared to benefit tremendously from the chance to attend the employer information session and talk to employers. It appeared beneficial to have the program facilitators present to provide additional support and encouragement and when necessary introduce students to employers and assist with conversation development.

Week 5:

Some participants expressed difficulty articulating themselves clearly during interpersonal communication. (e.g. The previous week meeting with employers). This communication difficulty was attributed not only to language barriers but also to cultural issues and personality. Participants agreed that the previous week's employer presentation was a good chance to practice in a risk free setting, (i.e. non-interview) and the participants stated they felt the experience was positive. Participants clearly enjoyed the role play and again humour was appreciated. They appeared to grasp an understanding of the importance of communication both verbal and non-verbal in Canadian culture. The importance of developing confidence and increased exposure to English were discussed as ways to improve one's English language fluency. Students appeared to enjoy the small group and interactive activities as well as the large group discussion.

Week 6:

The participants seemed very interested in this session's topic 'interviews" and quite anxious about interviewing in Canada and articulating their skills to potential employers. The participants seemed to appreciate the chance to ask questions especially about attire and their interview concerns. Students appeared to enjoy the practice interview questions and the opportunity to provide feedback to each other. Participants appeared quite anxious about interviews this was evident by their reluctance to meet with an employment advisor they didn't know.

Week 7:

The topic of work permits appeared to be of great importance and participants seemed to appreciate this information. Many of the questions related to the criteria required and guidelines relating to obtaining a work permit. There appeared to be some confusion related to timelines as the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada considers the 90 days to start once a student's final marks are posted, many students assumed the 90 days started once they had convocated and received their degree. The facilitators were able to clarify the time deadlines. The participants asked many questions and stayed behind to ask more questions of the facilitators.

Week 8:

This session opened with a presentation by a recent graduate, a female international student from China who was successful at obtaining career related employment in Canada. Discussion occurred after the guest speaker left where

participants stated they enjoyed the presentation although they felt she had become very Canadian. The guest speaker had shared that she married a Canadian man and now went by a Canadian name. However, they did appreciate her sharing her experience with them. The discussion regarding Canadian culture was very interesting. Participants were all able to recite their skills statement in front of the larger group and appeared confident and comfortable. The participants appeared to enjoy the program and expressed appreciation. Many students stayed behind to enjoy the potluck and small talk with the group members and facilitators.

Key Themes

Survey results and participant feedback confirm the Career Program for International Students was an effective intervention for building confidence and job search knowledge. Key themes that emerged were the need to increase the number of sessions offered to allow for more practical exercises and practice with interviewing and job searching skills to help increase confidence and knowledge. These results were similar to studies conducted by Spencer-Rogers (2000) and Yang et al (2002) who found that international students requested more emphasis on practical skill development in the areas of resume, interview and job search.

A second theme that emerged was the importance of tailoring the program to meet the learning styles of the participants and the importance of small group work. These results are indicative of the original theory that participants' poor English language skills impacts their ability to feel confident conducting a job search in Canada. By providing opportunities to interact with native English

speakers and to practice interpersonal communication international students can increase their confidence regarding conducting a job search in Canada.

Another theme that emerged was participants' demonstrated lack of integration in Canadian society. Participants reported limited interaction with native English speakers such as Canadian classmates and professors due to fear of looking stupid. Participants reported a lack of confidence communicating with classmates even when approached by them.

The most important theme that the results of the study and professional literature support is the value of career development programs and the need to offer career programs to support international students who wish to secure employment in Canada.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides an overview of the findings of this study, the limitations, and conclusions along with recommendations for future research. This study differed from other studies since it was multifaceted and looked at a number of factors related to international students' career development as well as the inclusion of a practical component and an acculturation measure.

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of the program was to help international students develop the knowledge and skills to be more confident job searching in Canada. The program referred to in this study had several goals:

1. to determine if by incorporating activities and opportunities to practice interpersonal communication participants would feel more confident and knowledgeable regarding conducting a job search in Canada.

2. to determine participants' level of acculturation and whether their level of acculturation had an effect on their job search confidence and knowledge.

3. to determine if the creation of a program tailored to the career development needs of international students wishing to obtain employment in Canada would be well received by participants.

Implications of results based on survey data for career program serving international students (Question #1)

According to the study outcomes, the participants in this study demonstrated individual change in confidence and increased knowledge and skill development related to job searching in Canada. The findings reveal that career programs are clearly an effective intervention for assisting international students develop self-confidence and knowledge of job searching in Canada.

The participants overall response and feedback was very positive, the results of the questionnaire indicates participants felt more confident and more knowledgeable of Canadian job search techniques. Participants demonstrated increased confidence upon completion of the program and their knowledge of job searching in Canada showed an increase as well. This implies evidence of transfer of learning.

Similar results were found by Heim Bilkos & Smith Furry (1999) who used a questionnaire to measure increases in confidence and knowledge upon completion of a seven session job finding club. Their results showed participants felt more confident and the program received positive feedback from participants.

In this study participants stated in their feedback that they found the small group discussions, role plays, practice interviews, discussions about various job search components such as skill assessment, resume and interview information most helpful. Participants also stated they enjoyed the interactive style of the course especially the opportunity to interact with other participants and the facilitators. These results correlate to the existing literature (Spencer-Rodgers,

2000; Yang et al, 2002) that found participants want more opportunities to practice English, appreciate practical exercises such as resume and interview skills, and appreciate small group work. A crucial component of allowing change to occur was the opportunity for participants to apply what they learned in the program with the support both of the facilitators as well as the other members of the group.

Acculturation (Question #2)

Acculturation scores showed a high result on the Heritage score which indicates high retention of their own culture. Those participants who expressed an interest and involvement in Canadian culture seemed more confident overall. In this study the facilitators acknowledged different levels of English fluency and acculturation impacted on the participants' confidence and participation levels. It appeared that students who were exposed to English early in their education and had occasion to obtain basic conversational fluency before coming to Canada had higher levels of both English fluency and seemed more integrated in Canadian culture. In informal conversations the student from India and the student from Hong Kong seemed to demonstrate higher levels of English fluency and appeared more assimilated than those from mainland China. This may be since they were from a colonized nation with a significant English influence and they have received more exposure to English language and culture.

Implications of results based on group sessions for career program serving international students (Question #3)

The facilitators of the program referred to in this study recognized that Chinese students were used to a more passive learning style as this became evident in the first session when questions were asked of the larger group and none of the students would answer. The facilitators decided to change the learning activities to acknowledge the participants comfort level by allowing time for participants to interact in small groups while at the same time recognizing the need for continued skill development knowing that Canadian employers require communication, teamwork and problem solving skills. The goal of the program was to increase opportunities for interaction and therefore a learner centered, interactive methodology was implemented to encourage interaction between participants and facilitators (Kelly, 2009). In the first session of the career program a step by step planning process was implemented. However, the facilitators quickly realized this linear process was inappropriate as the anticipated needs were not actual needs. The facilitators moved away from the original linear model of planning because it was inappropriate after the first session. The facilitators had assumed that a passive, lecture style would be most effective based on their knowledge of preferred learning styles however, when they saw that participants were reluctant to interact and seemed uncomfortable with large group discussion they implemented a social learning orientation. The program used a social learning orientation as the facilitators valued the opportunity to learn from each other both as facilitators and as participants (Bandura, 1986).

This program was learner centered and the facilitators viewed student participants as partners in the learning process. Several behavioural techniques were used in this study: positive reinforcement, the use of role models, and role playing. In this study many of the students had similar backgrounds and experiences and by sharing stories an atmosphere of camaraderie was created. The enrollment was limited to 25 participants in order to maintain an environment where everyone had an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas.

When program planning, the facilitators realized lack of understanding of new concepts and difficulty with English language fluency was causing anxiety for participants and accommodated this need by creating a program that was learner focused and encouraging participants to provide input and suggestions regarding learning content. This was most evident during role plays where the facilitators would demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate communication/conversation and ask participants to provide feedback regarding their behaviour. This was an excellent learning opportunity as participants were able to observe different methods of conversation and interaction (small talk) and determine cultural appropriateness. The program facilitators wanted to provide opportunities for the participants to increase their confidence through interacting with others. A social learning model was implemented as this model relates to a learning experience which is connected to emotions and social interaction and the opinions and perspectives of others (Bandura, 1986). This is an aspect of learning that may be absent with international students studying in Canada, since they appear less confident with their English competency they often have less

interaction with native English speakers and are therefore seem more anxious regarding communication. By conducting an informal survey of the participants it was discovered that very few participants interact with their Canadian peers due to low self-efficacy regarding language fluency. This belief was a key component in course planning.

The facilitators felt interpersonal communication skills was an area that needed emphasis and recommended that participants attempt to interact with their Canadian peers as much as possible. Participants were encouraged to practice communicating and interacting with others regularly during the course and were also assigned weekly tasks to help improve their communication outside of the course. Through such activities, the learners adopted behaviours with which they were unfamiliar and that allowed them to explore unfamiliar aspects of themselves. By encouraging program participants to engage in conversation and activities related to improving their employability they allowed themselves to grow and learn. The facilitators recognized that for many this was a difficult task and allowed them to establish their own comfort level. For example, the participants were encouraged to practice talking about themselves by sharing one skill or positive attribute but they were allowed to practice individually, and in pairs, before sharing with the larger group and always had the option to "pass". The instructors recognized the importance of normalizing their anxiety and shared their own experiences and examples of successes and failures in their own job search. They strived to create an atmosphere that was welcoming and safe so that

the participants were willing to extend out of their comfort zone knowing that they would be supported and provided with positive feedback throughout the course.

A number of international students appear to have not achieved fluency in conversational English despite completing post-secondary education in English speaking institutions. Several students stated they had learnt sufficient grammar, but they felt they did not have enough vocabulary knowledge to be proficient in conversational English. Numerous international students stated they had acquired basic competency in English but struggle with cultural nuances, use of slang, euphemisms, idioms and grammar. This may be due to lack of exposure to conversational English. A recent study of international students in their first year at a Canadian university showed 42% were struggling academically by the end of their first year, one of the factors being lack of academic English fluency (Blais, 2006).

The participants reported that at home and in social situations they spoke in their native language and often in their academic program would use their native language to communicate with each other. From a linguistic perspective this is indicative of a basic level of English comprehension. This behaviour is not uncommon amongst international students. Olivas and Li (refer to a study by Chen that states, "lack of English language proficiency may limit a student's desire to seek out social interactions and thus create negative feelings about their ability to be successful in their new environment." (2000). Based on these observations of the participants in the program a need to increase the amount of exercises that allowed participants to strengthen interpersonal communication

skills was determined. In order to assist international students in the development of their communication skills more opportunities were created for them to talk about themselves and their abilities; recognizing that communication can become a barrier to understanding and can cause increased anxiety and lack of confidence.

To address the issue of lack of communication with Canadian peers the program used lecture, small group work, exercises, presentations, role plays and written handouts and assignments to engage participants and ensure understanding. The use of a variety of teaching methods provided the participants with exposure to different methods that potentially could be used in the workplace, e.g., small group work.

Another important component of the program was the facilitators' flexibility and willingness to engage in impromptu discussion about cultural differences and Canadian culture in general. In the program planning the facilitators recognized that the participants' culture and language development would impact their learning and prepared to accommodate this need.

The biggest change implemented was increased opportunities for small group participation as opposed to lecture style format. In our program planning we created opportunities for program participants to learn from us and to learn from each other by reinforcing what they had learned through role plays.

Implications of results based on written feedback for career program servicing international students

Participants reported that they enjoyed and benefited from the small group discussion and small group format. The participants indicated that they

benefited from the sense of community and opportunities to interact with other participants and facilitators. Participants' feedback stated they felt the sessions related to employment were most beneficial e.g., resume, interview, and work permit regulations. The interview practice received the most positive feedback from participants. Similar findings were reported by Spencer-Rodgers (2000), participants in her study placed the highest importance on pragmatic exercises such as resume and interview skill development. This study found international students place less importance on career planning versus other career preparation needs, including the need for job search skills and work experience these results are similar to those found by Spencer-Rodgers (2000), Yang et al (2004) and Heim Bilkos & Smith Furry (1999). The results of this study and previous studies clearly indicate that international students value practical career skill development and are concerned about language and cultural barriers to employment.

Overall the feedback from program participants was positive and most reported an increase in confidence and job search knowledge. Participants reported feeling more confident in their ability to conduct a job search in Canada and several participants reported securing employment following completion of the course. This feedback from students indicates program content that was most effective was small group work, interactive activities, interview preparation, role plays, resume and job search information and labour market information. Upon completion of the program participants had a professional resume and cover letter and had participated in a mock employment interview and received feedback on their presentation.

Participants stated they received significant benefit from informal discussions about Canadian culture and subsequent role plays and discussion that followed. Participants responded well to small group interaction rather than large group work and seemed to derive most benefit from practical activities such as the mock interview and resume and cover letter writing rather than career planning as their career planning is often pre-determined by family members.

Student Feedback received via unsolicited email 6 months after completion of the course, no changes were made to spelling and grammar

I found the workshops were great. It does help our international students a lot. As you know, it is not easy for international students to get a job. Sometimes we try to work hard, but we just do not know where to start. The workshops are designed to help international students to get through the whole process to get a job. I have learned a lot of things from the workshops. I am more confident right now. I really appreciate what you have done for us. Today I have done my interview practice with you. Thank you for your time and suggestions. I think I am well prepared for my future career. Thank you. (Chinese female).

i am doing well so far:) thank you. i found my job last April(before i granduated) after i attended your classes. i always want to say Thanks to you for your help:). i am working in a garment company as a manager assistant in winnipeg. i have been working here for more than one year now. everthing is excellent. if you ask me whether the course was helpful, i will defintelly say yes. without your classes' help, i even don't know how to do any interview. (Chinese male).

Sorry I didn't write to you earlier. I am working for an Architecture Design firm in Edmonton now. After graduated from university, I moved to Edmonton. From last May to November, I worked in an architecture model making firm. After that, I moved to this Architecture firm.Thanks for your Career Course. I did feel more confident about looking for a job in Canada, and it helped me to create the smooth transition from school to society. (Chinese female).

I got a job in a company located in Lethbridge, Alberta. I attended all the workshops conducted by Career services and I found them really helpful in getting the job.I would like to thank you very much for the efforts.The most important thing and highly appreciable aspect is having a mock interview because that showed my weakness and areas to be improved.

You won't believe me, it was for the same company I was conducted mock interview. Good luck with your work and kindly pass on my regards to all the people in career services. (Indian male).

*The international group program is very
very beneficial mainly because as an international student, we have limited resource and
network, poor understanding of the employment system and culture in Canada, also less
working experience which causes less confidence in job search process. Here are some
major benifits that I can think of,*

*- it helps the participants to boost their confidence in job searching and interviews
- it helps them to open their minds and learn that there is tons of opportunity out there
for them
- it provides them a guideline for them to start to prepare job searching and interview
- it is also a way for them to network with you and other staff at career centre and other students*

*Also, I would think the first workshop that helps to learn "who are you" is the most beneficial one. I don't know if it changed other participants view towards work and
career. (Chinese female).*

*That program was very helpful. I like many aspects of it, but the most beneficial part
would be that it encouraged me to go out there to the companies that I liked and express
my interest. It also reassured me that it was normal that new graduates can be rejected
many times before they get accept by companies, so we just need to keep trying and not
give up. Otherwise, I would just stay at home and get disappointed. I got my job offer
before I even graduated thanks to the program. I feel very proud of it as an international student. I appreciate all the helps that I got from this program.
(Chinese female)*

The whole series of workshops left me an impression that I was not alone. There were
many graduating students like me and more importantly I feel all the staff members in
Career Service really wanted to help me to get a job. The program provided me with
information on the resource and service that I could get, and I used all those later upon
my graduation. All these helped me along the way of gaining confidence in job search and
interview, and eventually getting a job. A lot of thanks to this program and all the staff who helped me. (Chinese, male).

These findings are consistent with findings from other research (Yang, et al, 2002; Heim Bilkos & Smith Furry, 1999) that suggest career programs tailored to the specific needs of international students have a positive impact on job search confidence.

As research shows and the results of this program clearly indicate there is a need for career programming to meet the unique requirements of international students who wish to stay in Canada. Providing opportunities to learn about and gain understanding of Canadian workplace expectations as well as practice interpersonal communication in a supportive environment may alleviate the anxiety international students experience regarding career development and enable them to be more competitive in the job search. An important component of any job search is the ability to use tools such as employer contacts, references, and related experience to obtain employment. Most international students are limited in this component of their job search due to their lack of knowledge of these tools. It is very difficult to establish employer contacts when you are new to a country,

are not fluent in the language and are unable to understand the cultural norms and expectations of that country.

In the course the facilitators strived to create an atmosphere that was welcoming and safe so that the participants were willing to stretch out of their comfort zone knowing that they would be supported and provided with positive feedback throughout the course (Sork & Caffarella, 1998). When planning a career program for international students many factors were considered. The facilitators provided food and drinks and opened each session with food and small talk as a way of creating a welcoming, social environment. This provided an opportunity for participants to practice the communication skills they had learned in an informal safe environment. It was also a safe place to voice questions and concerns regarding Canadian culture. We used name tags as a way for participants and facilitators to become familiar with each other and learn each other's names. This also provided an opportunity to discuss names and how North American culture differs from other cultures in name usage.

Often the facilitators had to make last-minute changes when a planned activity did not receive positive response or they observed discomfort in the participants (e.g. speaking in front of a large group). The facilitators were very cognizant and respectful of the diversity and cultural differences within the group. When program planning the facilitators realized lack of understanding of new concepts and difficulty with English language fluency was causing anxiety for participants and accommodated this need by making the program learner focused and encouraging participants to provide input and suggestions regarding

learning content. We were flexible and willing to change the program content with the aim of meeting the needs of the stakeholders.

This concept was a key component in course planning. Again in an informal survey of the participants we discovered that very few participants interact with their Canadian peers due to low self-efficacy regarding language fluency. The facilitators felt this was an area that needed emphasis and recommended that participants attempt to interact with their Canadian peers as much as possible.

The program reached a new target population as many participants indicated they had neither received career development assistance and nor attended international student activities on campus as they tend to focus primarily on academics.

Limitations

The first limitation was the small group size, thus generalizations cannot be made regarding the larger population. Additionally there was no control group making it impossible to compare the effectiveness of the intervention and participants self-selected by signing up to participate in the program. Another limitation was the sample may also be biased due to attrition between initial and final measurements. As well the measure created by Geller and Mandrusiak is not an established measure of confidence and knowledge. Finally, language fluency and understanding of the scale of responses by the participants may have resulted in inaccurate data.

Recommendations from the Study

Program Value

Feedback from participants indicated that the program should be increased beyond the current eight week time frame to allow for more practical exercises. This study was extended to eight weeks based feedback from the initial unpublished study conducted in 2007 by Mandrusiak and Geller that indicated six weeks was insufficient. It may be advisable for future programs to run for the duration of the academic term.

Following up with students six months after completion of the program and reevaluating their knowledge of conducting a job search and Canada and their confidence level would be beneficial to determine the effectiveness of the program. It would be beneficial for future programs to offer on-going advice and support upon completion of the program. Many of the participants in this program made follow up appointments with the researcher to obtain continued job search support.

International students should be strategic with their career planning therefore early intervention is recommended. Most participants in this study were at the end of their university studies. Ideally international students should begin thinking about their career development earlier in their studies to obtain Canadian work or volunteer experience and build references. Therefore it would be beneficial to encourage international students to enroll in the course earlier in

order to provide students with more time to gain Canadian work experience. Attracting international students earlier in their students would be beneficial in order to help them obtain Canadian work experience along with their university degree.

Cultural Relevance

Preferably participants should be screened prior to participation in the program regarding level of acculturation to Canadian culture and level of English language fluency, so that individual data could be collected along with the group data. A pre and post program interview with each participant individually would have been beneficial to determine individual career development needs and informally assess English language fluency and perceived acculturation level. It would be useful to determine participants' language fluency. At the beginning of this study the researcher had discussed evaluating the English language fluency of the participants, but due to resource and time constraints this was not implemented. Those students who feel less confident regarding their English language fluency should be encouraged to interact with native English speakers more often during and outside of class. Future programs may wish to incorporate a session that involves interaction between native English speakers and international students. Pre-screening interviews would also have perhaps provided increased insight as to participants self-efficacy related to job searching in Canada and communicating with native English speakers. For future studies this would be a valuable component.

This particular group was homogeneous as participants were primarily Chinese which had positive and negative implications. The participants had a similar frame of reference and experience which allowed for cohesiveness in the group. However it may be beneficial to mix the ethnic diversity of the group in future sessions if possible.

The facilitators of the group were both Caucasian females with extensive cross cultural knowledge. It may also be beneficial to have variety in gender and ethnicity as participants had questions regarding male-female interaction and handshakes. The short-term solution offered in this program was the assistance by male staff members in the role plays to demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate male female interaction. The study conducted by Yang et al (2002) addressed this issue by having graduate students who were international students facilitate the program.

This study stressed the importance of having facilitators who are familiar and knowledgeable of cross cultural issues so they could identify cultural conflicts and provide valuable support. Research emphasizes the importance of having facilitators who have cross-cultural knowledge and are culturally sensitive (Arthur, 2005). The facilitators of this program performed considerable outreach to the international student population on their campus and have dedicated a significant amount of time learning about cross cultural issues. Future programs should continue to rely on facilitators with cross cultural knowledge and experience and who are empathetic and respectful. The facilitators' willingness to

share their own experiences both positive and negative with a sense of humour added honesty and authenticity to the program that was well received.

Both the literature and the experience of participants and program facilitators highlights the importance of a developing a group that encourages supportive relationships and community. It is critical to incorporate cultural sharing activities that communicate both a respect for the heritage and values of the students, as well as expose the participants to Canadian culture and values. Flexibility by facilitators and willingness to address students concerns and interests as they arise was necessary in order to address the true needs of international students.

Institutional Support

Although the federal government implemented changes to the work permit program in April 2008 which are positive the issue of international students' low confidence and knowledge of job searching in Canada still exists. Career development programs such as this one need to be incorporated into programming for international students to support them in their Canadian job search. The support and cooperation of other departments on campus is critical to the success of this type of program in the form of promotion and advertising. This study had the support and participation of staff from the International Centre for Students who assisted with advertising and presented on work permit regulations in Canada which was extremely beneficial.

As the competition for international students increases post secondary institutions must have criteria in place to ensure standards are met regarding

language test scores. A potential solution may be instituting a two tier process where international students who have not met minimum standards regarding English language fluency receive conditional acceptance and are placed in a modified academic program.

Lastly, early and strategic career planning is part of the job search process for example, resume writing is a job search skill that necessitates career planning to determine the type of job to apply for, and the skills and abilities required along with potential employers to apply to. The value of continuing to offer this type of program is supported by the literature and the results of the study. In order to further improve career development services for international students it may be beneficial to offer a second program that provides job search support for students who have graduated and to ensure that all international students have the opportunity to participate in this type of programming.

Conclusions

As an educator, this program has taught me a great deal about learning styles and teaching methodology specifically the importance of accommodating different learning styles inter-cultural communication. As program planner working as part of a team, I learned to accept different presentation styles and different personalities as well as the different world views of the participants.

In conclusion, this career program for international students was a multifaceted undertaking which required collaboration between Career Services staff and staff from the International Centre for Students. Through careful planning, the program achieved several goals; the opportunity for international

students to practice interpersonal communication and develop confidence and knowledge regarding job searching in Canada, the opportunity to practice and develop interview, job search and resume skills and the support and encouragement to conduct a job search in Canada.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Pre-test Questionnaire Package & Post-test Questionnaire package

Appendix B: Vancouver Index of Acculturation

Appendix C: Ethical Approval

Appendix D: Informed Consent

Appendix E: Email Consent

Appendix F: North American Culture

Appendix F

What Canadian Culture means to me.

- Opinion (individual's)

- Competition

- Smile

- To keep private space

- Respect for elders (more important in Asian cultures)

- Teamwork

- Laws and taxes (prices)

- Equality

- Leadership

- Relationship

- Airplane and trains, convenient travel

- Food

- Environment

- Insurance

- Coffee (awake)

- Friendly

- Individualism (sell yourself), self-value

- Christmas

- Labour law, 9:00-5:00

- Overtime payment, holiday pay

- Family, weekend

- Work vs life

- Human rights

- High tax

- Expensive labour

- Imported goods from the rest of the world

- Woman = man jobs

- Diversity

- Burger & fries

- Trucks (big vehicles)

- Capitalism

- Outdoor activities

- Rich natural resources

- Good pension

- Relaxed working environment

- Multi-cultural

- Rocky mountain

APPENDIX A: Questionnaire Package (Pre-Test)

1. Age _____   2. Gender: _____

3. a) Where were you born? _____(State/province; Country)

b) Where did you grow up? _____(State/province; Country)

4. How long have you been in Canada? _____

5. Do you plan on:

Eventually returning to your home country? ( )

Staying permanently in Canada? ( )

Undecided ( )

6. What is the first language you spoke at home? _____

7. Please complete the following:

Faculty _____

Undergraduate ( ) or Graduate ( )

Year of Study _____

8. How confident are you in finding a job in Canada?

Very confident ( )

A little confident ( )

Not confident ( )

Not confident at all ( )

Questionnaire Package (Post Test)

1. Age _____   2. Gender: _____

3. a) Where were you born? _____(State/province; Country)

b) Where did you grow up? _____(State/province; Country)

4. How long have you been in Canada? _____

5. Do you plan on:

Eventually returning to your home country? ( )

Staying permanently in Canada? ( )

Undecided ( )

6. What is the first language you spoke at home? _____

7. Please complete the following:

Faculty _____

Undergraduate ( ) or Graduate ( )

Year of Study _____

Please respond to the following items:

8. I found this career planning seminar met my career needs:

Strongly Disagree ( )   Disagree ( )   Unsure ( )   Agree ( )   Strongly Agree ( )

9. I thought that this career planning seminar was a good use of my time:

Strongly Disagree ( )   Disagree ( )   Unsure ( )   Agree ( )   Strongly Agree ( )

10. I enjoyed this career seminar:

Strongly Disagree ( )   Disagree ( )   Unsure ( )   Agree ( )   Strongly Agree ( )

9. How confident are you in finding a job in Canada?

Very confident ( )

A little confident ( )

Not confident ( )

Not confident at all ( )

10. How knowledgeable are you about finding a job in Canada?

Very knowledgeable ( )

A little Knowledgeable ( )

Not Knowledgeable ( )

No knowledge at all ( )

11. What parts of the seminar did you enjoy or find especially helpful?

12. What suggestions do you have for ways to make this seminar more helpful?

Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)

Please answer each question as carefully as possible by circling one of the numbers to the right of each question to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement.

Many of these questions will refer to your heritage culture, meaning the culture that has influenced you most (other than North American culture). This may be the culture of your birth, the culture in which you have been raised, or another culture that forms part of your background. If there are several such cultures, pick the one that has influenced you most (e.g., Irish, Chinese, Mexican). If you do not feel that you have been influenced by any other culture, please try to identify a culture that may have had an impact on previous generations of your family.

Please write your heritage culture in the space provided: _____

1. I often participate in my heritage cultural traditions.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. I often participate in mainstream North American cultural traditions.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

3. I would be willing to marry a person from my heritage culture.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

4. I would be willing to marry a North American person.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

5. I enjoy social activities with people from the same heritage culture as myself.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

6. I enjoy social activities with typical North American people.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

7. I am comfortable interacting with people of the same heritage culture as myself.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

8. I am comfortable interacting with typical North American people.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

9. I enjoy entertainment (e.g., movies, music) from my heritage culture.   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

	Disagree	Agree

10. I enjoy North American entertainment (e.g., movies, music).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

11. I often behave in ways that are typical of my heritage culture.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

12. I often behave in ways that are "typically North American".

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

13. It is important for me to maintain or
develop the practices of my heritage culture.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

14. It is important for me to maintain or
develop North American cultural practices.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

15. I believe in the values of my heritage culture.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

16. I believe in mainstream North American values.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

17. I enjoy the jokes and humor of my heritage culture.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

18. I enjoy typical North American jokes and humor.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

19. I am interested in having friends from my heritage culture.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

20. I am interested in having North American friends.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

14 February 2008

TO: **Angela Bohonos**   (Advisor K. Matheos)
            Principal Investigator

FROM: **Stan Straw, Chair**
            Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: **Protocol #E2008:013**
            "Evaluating the Impact of a Career Course for International
            Students"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- if you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to Kathryn Bartmanovich, Research Grants & Contract Services (fax 261-0325), including the Sponsor name, before your account can be opened.

- if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.

Bringing Research to Life

UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA | Student Counselling and Career Centre

474 University Centre
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada   R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-8592
Fax (204) 474-7558

An Assessment of International Students' Experiences

Angela Bohonos, (474-6580) employment advisor and M.Ed. student, Student Counselling and Career Centre

University Consent Form (please keep one for your records)

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve.   If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of this career preparation program, as well as to identify ways to improve it. This data will be used for a master's thesis in the Faculty of Education for Angela Bohonos. If you decide to take part in this study it will take approximately 15 minutes. You will be asked to fill out a questionnaire, including a background information sheet, and questions regarding perceptions of your career needs, confidence about finding employment and general feedback.   By answering these questions some people may find that they have concerns about themselves or others they care about. If you find yourself in this situation please contact one of the agencies listed at the bottom of this page or contact Angela Bohonos 474-6580.

Your answers to these questions will be anonymous and will only be presented in summary form. While there is a possible risk that any demographic data given could be used to identify individual participants, every effort will be taken to ensure confidentiality of responses. The questionnaires will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office for 5 years at which point they will be shredded. Only the above researcher will have access to this information. Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities.

This is **voluntary,** which means you do not have to take part in this study if you do not want to. If you decide to participate **you are free to withdraw from the study at any time,** and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, **without any negative consequences (e.g., your grades will not be affected).** Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Below, you may indicate your preference to receive a summary of the results of the study. If you should have any questions or concerns at anytime please feel free to contact Angela Bohonos at 474-6580.

[   ] YES, I WOULD LIKE THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY E-MAILED TO ME

Email Address: _____

Phone Numbers you can call if you are concerned for yourself or someone you care about:

Student Counselling and Career Centre   474-8592

University Health Service   474-8411

Klinic 24 hours phone line   786-8686

Mobile Crisis Unit   946-9109

If you have any questions please contact Angela Bohonos at 474-6580 or by e-mail at angela_bohonos@umanitoba.ca. The Education Research Ethics Board has approved this research. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature   Date

AMENDMENT APPROVAL

08 May 2009

TO: **Angela Bohonos**
            Principal Investigator

FROM: **Stan Straw, Chair**
            Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: **Protocol #E2008:013**
            "Evaluating the Impact of a Career Course for International Students"

This will acknowledge your e-mail dated May 4, 2009 requesting amendment to your above-noted protocol.

Approval is given for this amendment. Any further changes to the protocol must be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation.

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