DOING WELL IN CANADA: A CRITICAL INCIDENT STUDY OF IMMIGRANTS’ EXPERIENCES

by

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Abstract

In response to Canada’s shrinking labour force, experts are calling for a more diverse, flexible, adaptable workforce. Many recommend that employers hire immigrants. However, employers may not recognize immigrants’ qualifications or experience. Well educated, experienced immigrants often resort to low paying, unskilled jobs. Guided by a positive psychology perspective, the main focus of this qualitative study was to 1) explore the changes inherent in immigration and challenges to employment that immigrants may face within the first year of their arrival, 2) investigate the strategies, incidents and factors that helped and hindered immigrants who self identified as doing well with these changes and challenges and 3) determine whether participants have always handled change well.

Open-ended interviews were conducted with 17 new immigrants to Canada. Conventional content analysis was employed to develop themes from the context data collected. The Enhanced Critical Incident Technique was used to collect, identify, extract and analyze helping and hindering incidents, as well as a list of what participants wished they had or could have in the future in order to do well.

A total of 273 helping incidents, 54 hindering incidents and 59 wish list items were extracted. Ten helping, hindering and wish list categories emerged: 1) Taking Action, 2) Personal Qualities, 3) Life in Canada, 4) Work and Life Experience, Skills and Knowledge, 5) Social Support, 6) Beliefs and Perspectives, 7) Preparation and Research, 8) Government/Agency Support, 9) Plans and Goals, and 10) Financial Support. These results suggest it is possible for new immigrants to do well with the significant life and work related changes and challenges that are embedded in the Canadian immigration experience.

Discussion includes participants’ stories as living exemplars of a positive, proactive approach to acculturation, the roles that values and Canadian society played in participants’
doing well, and what coping and doing well may mean to newcomers. Study limitations are discussed along with implications for future research. Implications and recommendations for counselling practice are presented. Finally, policy recommendations are made concerning new immigrants’ employment situation.
Preface

The research for this dissertation was conducted with the approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia, Approval Certificate Number B06-0332 granted May 3, 2006 and renewed March 10, 2011.
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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my participants. Your stories of inspiration, courage, hope and perseverance will remain with me for the rest of my life. They will help guide me in my work with those who are struggling.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Guided by a positive psychology approach to human functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), I am a member of a group of researchers who is interested in generating knowledge we hope will lead to a preventive, developmental counselling approach that is more in line with today’s fast-paced, unpredictable work environments -one that would help people to be flexible, adaptable and resilient. We are currently investigating how some people manage to do well with the unstable, often chaotic world of work.

The current study was conceived from a former study conducted with 45 adult workers who identified themselves as doing well with changes that affected their work (Butterfield, 2006; Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson & Erlebach, 2010). Among the participants were several immigrants who were new to Canada. My work on this project alerted me to questions about the experiences of some participants who had recently immigrated to Canada, how they dealt with Canada’s current labour situation, and the multiple barriers they faced. One participant, whom I interviewed about six months after he arrived here with his family, particularly inspired me with his story. Despite having worked as a scientist, professor, and chief academician in Europe, this participant had not been able to find employment here, other than delivering newspapers. He volunteered for the study because he believed he was doing well in spite of his work situation. He shared some helping strategies that spoke to the uniqueness of an immigrant’s story of coming here and doing well with not only changes in life, place and culture, but with the myriad of challenges to finding employment. Inspired by this individual, I chose to investigate what helps and what hinders new immigrants who self report that they are doing well here.
Statement of the Problem

Canada is an immigrant nation. Historically immigrants have been at the center of nation building, population growth, and economic and social development (Li, 2006). Recent analyses of Canada’s demographic trends revealed declining birth rates and an aging workforce resulting is a steady decline in human capital (McMullin & Cooke, 2004; Robson, 2001, Schellenberg & Maheux, 2008). In fact, a skilled labour crisis has already begun across the trades and professional sectors (Olijnyk, 2007). Therefore Canada, like many other western industrialized nations, has been competing for talent from abroad. The Canadian government published the following statement in 2001 to justify the legislation of its latest immigration policy designed to address the labour shortage (Li, 2006, p.26):

Canada needs young, dynamic, well educated, skilled people. It needs innovation, ideas and talents. Canadian employers want to take advantage of opportunities offered by the fast-moving pool of skilled workers. The global labour force can benefit Canadians through job creation and the transfer of skills.

Many experts are recommending that employers hire immigrants (Merette, 2002; Robson, 2001; Olijnyk, 2007), however, employers often do not recognize immigrants’ qualifications, training or experience, (Grant & Sweetman, 2004; Li, 2006; McMullin & Cooke, 2004; Picot, 2004; ). There is ample evidence that immigrants have been experiencing hiring discrimination, (Austin, 2007; Bauder, 2003; Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Man, 2004; Oreopoulous, 2009; Tran, 2004;). Institutional policies and practice, professional accreditation policies, and employers’ desire for Canadian experience appear to be marginalizing new Canadians, (Beynon et al., 2004; Man, 2004).
A Statistics Canada survey conducted with immigrants in 2001 shows the most common problems reported by immigrants were lack of Canadian work experience, qualifications are not recognized (including post-secondary education, degrees, certifications, work experience) and a lack of language skills. A more recent longitudinal survey with immigrants by Statistics Canada (Schellenberg & Maheux, 2008) shows that the work situation has not improved for new immigrants – the most difficult problems stated were a lack of Canadian work experience and a lack of recognition of one’s credentials (see Appendices A and B respectively).

The relative value of immigrants’ education continues to decrease so that highly educated immigrants must resort to low paying, unskilled jobs (Bauder, 2003; Li, 2006; Man, 2004; Nakhaie, 2006; Reitz, 2001). Disturbing correlates are the decline in Canadian immigrants’ economic and career status (Frenette & Morissette, 2005, Grant & Sweetman, 2004; Hum & Simpson, 2004; Picot, 2004).

The 2003 Ottawa Standing Committee on Immigration made recommendations to address immigrants’ employability issues. The following three are the most relevant to the current discussion. Recommendation number 16 was that “the federal – provincial – territorial working group established to address the recognition of foreign credentials should move as quickly as possible in this endeavour”. Recommendation number 17 was that “Citizenship and Immigration Canada immediately establish an office to facilitate professional and trade assessment and accreditation for immigrants”. Recommendation number 18 was that “the government of Canada should provide greater support and assistance to foreign trained workers through loan and internship programs as well as other means” (Fontana, 2003, p. 13).
In 2007, the federal government added $20 million to that part of the budget devoted to immigrant pilot projects. Up to that point, funding was targeted for immigrant services agencies. Since then governments, employers and educators have been talking about ways to help immigrants through mentoring programs, internships, bridging programs and financial assistance for training and re-credentialing (Janigan, 2007), but the problem still exists.

Given the impact immigrants continue to have on Western societies, it is not surprising that there is an extensive body of work on the topic, spanning the globe and involving a wide variety disciplines. Within psychology, cross-cultural psychology research dominates the field. However researchers use primarily quantitative approaches that focus on specific stressors and/or personality traits (Berry, Poortinga, Segall & Dasen., 2002; Koegel, Donin, Ponterotto, & Spitz, 1995; Sam & Berry, 2006). The vast majority of cross-cultural research has suffered from a range of quantitative methodological problems, including methodological cultural insensitivity (Rogler, 1999) which ignores context and subjectivity (Rogler, 1999; Norenzayan & Heine, 2005). Some researchers have argued that only a qualitative approach is suitable for studies with a culturally diverse sample (Ratner & Hui, 2003). Notwithstanding the plethora of research, based on her meta-review Hernandez wrote “despite the importance of the issue of immigration and its global relevance, researchers find that immigration remains an under-researched area within psychology” (2009, p. 714).

Rudmin (2003; 2005a) argued that our understanding of immigration is misguided and incomplete because of faulty assumptions about immigration processes and strategies, a fundamental lack of scientific rigor, the absence of studies of a host culture acculturation model, and most relevant to this current study, an absence of a positive psychology perspective on the topic of immigration. The latter is based on Rudmin’s observations that 1)
acculturation research has been informed by a bias that assumes that the process of acculturation is problematic for newcomers and 2) acculturation research is grounded in the assumption that an absence of acculturative stress is the desired outcome for successful adaptation.

Although vocational psychology scholars have begun to address the need for culturally sensitive career models (e.g. Leong & Hartung, 2000), Goza and De Maris (2003) stated that studies of the employment transitions of immigrants are still scarce and consequently not well understood. Ebberwein, Krieshok, Ulven and Prosser (2004) suggested that a study on immigrant career adaptation and cultural diversity would provide a valuable perspective to vocational psychology.

Canada was built on the hard work, aspirations and creative energies of immigrants. In fact our major cities boast of having a significant portion of their diverse population being born abroad. However, it appears that counselling practice researchers thus far have responded primarily to the problems experienced by the few largest immigrating cultural groups (e.g. Sue, Ivey & Pederson, 1996), which has resulted in a myriad of culture-specific remedial recommendations that would difficult to implement through public policy and programs aimed at helping diverse groups of immigrants acculturate and adapt.

In addition, multicultural counselling theorists not only appear to have failed to recognize those immigrants who succeed here, they do not differentiate immigrants from non immigrant minority groups. Mahalingam (2006) argued that immigrants form a distinct culture that deserves its own location in psychology. What is missing from the research is a qualitative look at the positive resources, strategies, attitudes, characteristics and behaviours of these people who are brave enough to try for a new life in a foreign land. We need to ask what works to help immigrants succeed, because some of them clearly do.
Study Rationale and Purpose

In light of Canada’s current and projected labour climates and the gaps in contemporary literature, it was hoped that talking to new immigrants who do well would provide much needed insight into the unique stressors and barriers they encounter as well as develop a detailed picture of this topic from a positive, qualitative perspective.

The main purpose of the study was to discover from a culturally diverse group of new immigrants who are doing well with changes that affected their work and career development, the factors and strategies that help and hinder them, and to gather important background and contextual information in order to provide a comprehensive description of their experiences. The ultimate aim of the study was to gather knowledge that would stimulate more preventive, strength based practice approaches to counselling, in order to help other new immigrants who come to Canada, do well in their new home.

Research Questions

What are the changes that affect new immigrants’ work and/or careers and what are the impacts of those changes on those who self identify as doing well with them? How do new immigrants who do well define their doing well? Have those who do well with change always done so, and if not, what happened that helps them do well now? What helps new immigrants who do well with changes that have affected their work/careers? What hinders them? What do they wish they had or could have in the future to continue to do well with the changes, or do better?

Assumptions

The following assumptions support the research questions:

- Immigrants who self identify as doing well are doing better than those who struggle with settlement, acculturation and job or career related issues.
• Participants are able to describe their own experiences in ways that I, as the interviewer, could understand.

• Experts agree that the world of work is no longer stable (Butterfield, 2006). The activity or state of being of doing well with change has significance and knowing about it has utility for the counselling and vocational psychology communities, government and immigrant services agencies.

• For the purposes of this study an essentialist ontology was adopted: it was assumed that there will be some experiences of doing well that are common across participants. Three constructs were assumed to be experienced by all participants: doing well, factors that helped and factors that hindered within the context of immigrating to Canada.

Definitions

Each participant was asked to define what doing well means to him or her. Helping and hindering were defined by the data that emerged from the primary research questions of what helped and what hindered and supported by how those factors did so. A number of other terms are used in various parts of this dissertation that warrant defining or clarifying. They are newcomer, homeland and home country, survival job, employability and career.

Newcomer is used synonymously with immigrant. Homeland or home country refers to the country that participants left to immigrate to Canada, and are used synonymously with the phrase “country of origin”. The term survival job was used by participants to describe work that is done primarily to pay the bills. Survival jobs typically require little or no work experience, do not necessarily require fluent English and usually pay minimum wage.
Employability is defined as the extent to which a person is capable of being employed (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, retrieved August 16, 2010).

**Definition of career.**

According to a review of the vocational and career counselling literature, it appears that there is no one agreed upon definition of career (Butterfield, 2006). Patton and McMahon described career as:

> the variety of occupational roles which individuals will undertake throughout life. It includes paid and self employment; the different occupations which a person may have over the years and periods of unemployment; and unpaid occupations such as that of student, voluntary worker, or parent. (1999, p. 3).

Their definition is reminiscent of Super’s (1980) career/life roles that include homemaker, leisurite, citizen, worker, student, and parent. Keeping the latter definition in mind, the current study required the broadest definition in order to support the complexity of immigration. Therefore I decided to follow the lead of Amundson, Borgen, Iaquinta, Butterfield, and Koert (2010), who broadened and simplified the definition of career to mean “activities done over time, including work and other life activities” (p.338). Career development in this context then means the ongoing process one engages in to develop and manage one’s career in relation to other life roles.

**Theoretical Orientation**

Immigration is a highly complex topic that has been studied across a wide variety of disciplines: psychology (e.g. social, clinical, counselling), social work, anthropology, health geography, urban and migration studies, education, political science and health care. Therefore it was impossible to include a survey of all the literature pertaining to the topic. Two theoretical perspectives were deemed the most relevant and useful in terms of
understanding existing theory and research on immigrants’ experiences, as well as in service of framing the results: The psychology of acculturation (Berry, 2001; Ward, 2001) and Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi’s positive psychology (2000).

**Methods**

Conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used to organize and analyze the results from the context questions (regarding changes experienced, impacts of those changes and what doing well means to participants). Conventional content analysis is advantageous when the data have been collected directly from participants without imposing pre-conceived categories or theories and it is philosophically consistent with the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) (Butterfield, 2006; Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005; Flanagan, 1955; Woolsey, 1986). The ECIT was employed to collect the data, organize, analyze and categorize data pursuant to the main research questions of what helped and what hindered participants doing well with changes that affected their work. This qualitative approach makes use of semi-structured, open-ended interviews to elicit incidents or factors in a way that provides a comprehensive picture of the topic being explored.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

This design of this research is consistent with cross-cultural studies that look for common aspects or factors in people’s experiences across cultural boundaries (Norenzayan & Heine, 2005). The first step in reviewing existing research and literature was to ascertain if and where cross-cultural research with immigrants might be found.

The research on immigration emanates from four broad overlapping fields of inquiry: immigrant acculturation and adaptation, immigrant health, immigrant services delivery and education, and statistics on immigrants in the labour force. Research and theories of immigration psychology were found across numerous disciplines: psychology (social, clinical, counselling, vocational), as well as social work, anthropology, health geography, urban and migration studies, education, government studies and health care. It was impossible to devote time here to all the areas in which research with immigrants can be found so the focus was on dominant scholarly works on recent immigrants’ experiences, including theories and research that illuminated gaps in the literature and provided various locales for some of the results. Acculturation theory and research were chosen as the best perspective to adequately inform and locate the current study. Because the main focus of the study was to explore what helps people deal with change, I chose positive psychology as the general framework for understanding doing well with change and challenges.

The general topics of the literature review that follows are: theories and research on acculturation, immigrant characteristics, immigrant experiences in Canada, counselling immigrants (personal and career development) and the theory of positive psychology. The theory of planned happenstance and the philosophy of positive uncertainty were included as germane to the topic of career and life changes.
Theories of Acculturation

The extensive literature on theories of immigration offers various theoretical models of immigration processes at individual, group and societal levels. Dominating the field are those found in social psychology. Two philosophical orientations within that discipline have guided much of the research on the immigration experience: cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology.

Cultural psychologists propose that all experiences are constructed and modified by specific cultures, and can therefore have no truly universal constructs or themes (a relativist approach). This branch of research approaches the topic of culture, one culture at a time. (see Mahalingam, 2006). In fact, researchers from many disciplines tend to work with participants from a specific cultural group. (e.g. education, nursing, social work). Cultural psychology research is a major contributor to disciplines such as cognitive and developmental psychologies, among others.

Cross-cultural psychologists assume that there are some universally constant human experiences that provide frameworks or themes within which to study culture and intercultural experiences (a universalist approach). Participants in the current study were a culturally diverse group of immigrants, so this review will begin with a focus on work done by cross-cultural scholars.

Two conceptual frameworks dominate current literature: John Berry’s acculturation paradigm (2001) and the work that emerged out of the notion of culture shock (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). What follows is an overview of these two approaches, as they pertain to early immigrant-host country contact, and a summary of some of the main findings upon which these theories rely.
Acculturation and adaptation.

The term acculturation originated in anthropology and is most often defined as the changes a person goes through as a result of being in contact with another culture (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). This broadest of definitions captures whatever changes immigrants may face when they settle in Canada. By far, the most widely used theory and models of acculturation are from the work of John Berry and his colleagues. Models were constructed with data from ethnographic studies that they conducted in Canada, Australia and Africa (Berry, 2003). The models have been used extensively to isolate acculturation variables in an effort to predict acculturation outcomes, in other words positive/successful or negative/unsuccessful adaptation. Adaptation means something different depending on the source, but most relevant here are the three facets of adaptation that emerged out of social psychology research on acculturation: psychological adaptation refers to the psychological well-being and satisfaction experienced in the new cultural context; sociocultural adaptation is the acquisition of the necessary skills and knowledge to interact with the host culture and to deal successfully with daily problems of living (Ward, 1996). Aycan and Berry (1996) introduced a third construct, economic adaptation which they defined as a sense of accomplishment and full participation in the economic life of Canada.

The acculturation literature informing this study is organized further under three general headings: acculturative stress, intercultural communications and criticisms of acculturation research.

Acculturative stress.

The construct of acculturative stress is defined as an individual’s response to events that are situated in inter-cultural contact during acculturation processes, when the individual lacks the capacity to deal adaptively with those events (Berry & Ataca, 2000). It can result in
a decline in the individual’s physical and psychological health. Reactions to it include depression, (associated with culture loss) and anxiety, (associated with uncertainty of how to live in the new society) (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002), psychosomatic symptoms, identity confusion, and feelings of marginality and alienation (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987).

Berry’s original 1989 model of acculturative stress was relatively simple: The amount of acculturation (i.e. intercultural contact) an individual experiences influences the stressors encountered in the environment which results in a corresponding increase in acculturative stress. A general set of moderating variables were found to influence the acculturation process, however since its inception the model has been used extensively and expanded to include a complex interaction of variables at both group and individual levels. The factors before and during acculturation are the most relevant here.

Pre-acculturation factors are those that the individual brings to the host culture such as age, gender, education, religion, health, language, income, pre-acculturation familiarity with the new host culture, expectations, migration motivation, social support and cultural distance have all been shown to affect the degree of acculturative stress (Berry et al. 2002). What follows is a brief summary of existing research on each of these factors.

Age and gender.

Research on age shows that older adults (e.g. whose children are grown) are at the highest risk for acculturative stress (Beiser, Barwick, & Berry, 1988), possibly due to the length of their enculturation (living in their home culture). Females have been shown to be at greater risk for stress than males, especially when there are status differences between their origin and host cultures (Beiser, et al.). Reasons cited are that women are often more isolated from the host culture, choosing to confine themselves to their own cultural
community especially if they arrive with multiple barriers such as a lack of skills, education or host culture language (Ward, 2001). Women have also been shown to retain a stronger home culture identity (Harris & Verven, 1996), which may be in part a result of the expectation that women be the cultural gatekeepers, responsible for teaching cultural traditions to children (Yee, 1992). The traditional roles women bring to the new culture may be in conflict with newly available roles (Moghaddam, Ditto, & Taylor, 1990). To conclude, age and gender appear to affect the acculturation experience.

_Education and income status._

The research on the effect of the education and pre-acculturation economic status of immigrants is particularly relevant here. Beiser et al. (1988) found that higher education levels predict lower stress for the several reasons. Immigrants with a higher level of education may be more likely to choose a new host culture with which they have some familiarity. Higher education also may be linked to better problem analysis and solving abilities. Levels of education have been shown to all correlate positively with career opportunities, support networks and income status in the host culture (Aycan & Berry 1996). However, in apparent contradiction, economic status and mobility were shown by Frenette and Morrisette (2005), Grant and Sweetman (2004), Man (2004), Picot (2004) and Tran, (2004), to decline in Canada because immigrants’ work and educational credentials were often devalued by employers and credentialing bodies. Economic loss and limited career mobility have been positively correlated with a loss in cultural status (Aycan & Berry, 1996). Sadly, a common reason for migrating is to improve one’s life and economic opportunities and the opportunities available to one’s children (Austin, 2007).
Cultural distance.

Cultural distance, that is the collection of individually perceived social and physical discrepancies between one’s homeland and the new home can be determined by comparing host culture to an individual’s society of origin via political, economic and demographic factors. In general the research has shown that the greater the cultural distance perceived by an individual, for example differences in language, religion, customs, and values, the more difficult the acculturation process, however pre-acculturation, i.e. exposure to the host culture, may to some extent ameliorate the effects of cultural distance (Ward, 1996). Nesdale and Mak proposed that the influence of cultural distance is not well understood. (2003). Based on their studies with a large culturally diverse sample, they suggested that increased cultural distance may cause some immigrants to be more “psychologically located” within their home cultural group, at the expense of seeking contact and connection with members of the host community (p. 34). However, they also found that some respondents retained their pride in their home culture without it being a dominating influence in their lives.

Migration motivation and expectations.

Migration motivation, which is linked to the degree of voluntariness, is affected by factors that “push” people to migrate, such as seeking asylum, or “pull” them towards a new society, such as seeking a better life (Richmond, 1993). Richmond proposed that migrants can be viewed on a continuum of reactive to proactive which according to Berry et al. (2002) corresponds well with being motivated by these push/pull factors that are negative or positive in character respectively. Voluntariness, because it is associated with being proactive, predicts less acculturative stress and better acculturation outcomes. However, it has also been shown that those with a high “pull” motivation, who were seen to be highly proactive,
may be at as great a risk for acculturative stress again because of their high expectations for a
better life not being met (Berry, Kim, & Boski, 1988). One might expect people who
migrate voluntarily to Canada to experience some dissonance with respect to their decision to
do so, if their expectations are not realized.

**Appraisal and coping styles.**

Individuals cope with their experiences of coming into contact with cultural
differences and having to participate in both cultures in individual ways that are a result in
part, of particular personality traits and childhood learning experience (Kosic, 2006).
Generally speaking however, individuals may appraise the demands of dealing with two
cultures as opportunities or as problems to be solved (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Berry et al.,
2002). Berry et al. say that the former positive appraisal style correlates negatively with
acculturative stress and positively with better long term outcomes.

With respect to the latter more negative approach to problem appraisal, Lazarus and
Folkman (1984) identified two styles of coping: problem focused – taking a pro-active
approach to problem-solve, and emotion focused - attempting to regulate one’s emotions
with respect to the problem. Emotion-focused coping is defined as engaging in a self
regulating internal dialogue. It has been associated with more acculturative stress and less
positive outcomes than problem focused coping (Berry et al., 2002).

Research has begun to emerge around new coping concepts such as spiritual and
religious coping (Klassen, McDonald & James, 2006) and some of this research has come
from research involving immigrants (James, Navara, Clarke, & Lomotey, 2005). Klassen et
al. wrote that there are a number of methodological problems with the spiritual coping
research because of the variety of theological philosophies and assumptions that need to be
considered.
Lazarus (1991) suggested that there are likely cross-cultural variations in these conceptualizations of coping styles, such as the passive coping style suggested by Diaz-Guerrero (1979) which consists of self-modification and patience. More recently, Donnelly (2002) used examples from a group of Vietnamese immigrants to show that coping theories often ignore context thereby missing the different social, cultural and economic conditions that affect coping.

To conclude, it appears that the research on the coping styles of newcomers is at best inconclusive. Indeed Berry (2006a) wrote “these analyses of coping may or may not be valid cross-culturally” (p. 47). Overall, I believe it is fair to say the definitions and mechanisms proposed in the more traditional views of coping suggest that it is mostly a negative and reactive process. In order to develop a more positive, pro-active approach to helping newcomers, this study explored what naturally occurring strategies (Butterfield, et al, 2009) helped a group of newcomers do well with acculturation.

**Acculturation attitudes/strategies.**

Studies of acculturation strategies, which are informed by acculturation attitudes, have shown them to be strongly related to the amount of acculturative stress experienced (Berry, 2001). Note that Berry’s acculturation model uses the same fourfold typology for both attitudes towards acculturation and the behavioural strategies used: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization. At the individual level, the two main questions that influence an individual’s acculturation orientation are how much of my/our own cultural identity do I/we want to maintain and how much of a relationship do I/we want with the host culture? Individual attitudes are revealed answering the questions, are my cultural identity and characteristics of value, and are my relationships with the host culture of value? The combinations of positive and negative answers yield a possible four
acculturation attitudes/strategies. If an individual answers yes to both questions, she/he is likely to use an integration strategy by forming a comfortable relationship with the host culture while maintaining her/his own original cultural identity; if an individual rejects his own cultural identity but believes there is important value in being part of the host culture, she/he will likely adopt an assimilation strategy forming a new identity via interacting with the host culture daily; if the person decides that her/his culture of origin is of value but rejects or is rejected by the host culture, she/he will likely use a separation strategy by avoiding any meaningful contact with the host culture in an effort to retain an identity of origin; and lastly, if the individual sheds her/his own culture, and rejects or is rejected by the host culture, that person feels marginalized. The latter situation often happens if the person is forced to leave their homeland and experiences exclusion or discrimination in the host culture.

In his 2003 review of acculturation theories, Berry wrote that both problem focused and emotion focused coping styles (as described above) are likely to be employed in either integration or assimilation acculturation strategies. He also suggested that avoidance coping may be evidence of the separation and marginalization acculturation strategies. There is empirical support that integration is the strategy that results in a smoother, less stressful acculturation process (Berry et al., 1987; Berry & Sam, 1997). A marginalization strategy is correlated with the least positive adaptations outcomes and higher levels of acculturative stress. Assimilation and separation strategies seem to indicate moderately successful adaptation and a moderate amount of stress.

The acculturation experience has also been shown to depend on the ideological nature of the host culture (Krishnan & Berry, 1992): Does the host society value pluralism i.e. a respect for the right of persons to maintain cultural autonomy within a larger system, or does
it prefer assimilation which is evidenced by pressuring newcomers to conform to the host culture’s standards? Pluralistic societies, such as the United States and Canada are less likely to enforce cultural change, or exclude newcomers via *segregation* or *marginalization* (also referred to as *exclusion*) and are more likely to provide cultural and immigration support, which may result in more positive immigration experiences. However, Berry suggested that Canada is very different than the United States in its philosophy towards multiculturalism (1999; 2011; Noels & Berry, 2006). The United States has been described as a “melting pot” - a single, dominant mainstream society whose guiding philosophy is “one people, one culture, one nation” which beliefs correspond with being *assimilationist*. Canada, on the other hand, is thought to value *multiculturalism*; that is to say as a nation we encourage a mosaic of ethnocultural groups to participate in and share norms around how to live together. Due to this difference in ideology, Canada is viewed by researchers as *integrationist* (Berry, 2011).

Studies suggest that an individual will be more likely to choose integration in societies that also have an orientation towards integration (Berry et al., 2002). Said societies would display certain attitudes towards multiple cultures as the norm: a valuing of diversity, minimal levels of prejudice and ethnocentrism, positive feelings towards and beliefs about other ethnocultural groups and a general identification across groups with the host culture, (Berry & Kalin, 1995). One interesting result in this area is that Ward and Rana-Deuba found that having a preference for integration predicted better psychological outcomes (which was indicated by ratings of less acculturative stress) and that a preference for assimilation predicted better sociocultural outcomes (i.e. successful daily living and contact with the host culture) (1999).
Specific behavioural strategies.

An individual’s acculturation strategies must include changes in behaviours in response to the requirements of successful adaptation to living in the host culture (Masgoret & Ward, 2006). Examples are learning a new language, finding social support, and soliciting resources in the community. Berry and Sam (1997) refer to these and other activities as *behavioural shifts* which involve host culture learning (e.g. language, food, dress, behavioural norms), native culture shedding, (e.g. gender attitudes), and culture conflict (e.g. inter-group conflict and religious, philosophical, political incompatibilities). Culture learning will be explained in more detail in the sections on Intercultural Communication and Culture Shock. One of the goals of the current study was to illuminate which of these behaviours participants engaged in, if any, to help them do well and which may hinder newcomers.

Criticisms of acculturative stress research.

Models of acculturation have been criticized as having several conceptual problems. (Rudmin, 2003). The fourfold typology is said to have encouraged researchers to categorize immigrants to the exclusion of important interactions and contextual factors (Rudmin & Admadzadeh, 2001). In response to this criticism, Berry and Sam (2003) wrote that mere categorization was not their intent and that “acculturation involves complexity, uncertainty, ambivalence, and many other psychological qualities that make a Cartesian view of human behaviour too simplistic for its proper study” (p. 66). Rudmin suggested that “researchers use qualitative methods to understand the motivations and emic perspectives of minority…groups” (2003, p.30).

A second observation by Rudmin (2005a) is that most studies are based on the assumption that an absence or minimal amount of acculturative stress is the desired outcome
for successful adaptation. He argued that there is no good evidence that an absence of stress leads to better outcomes. The current study was designed to reveal both positive and negative aspects of acculturation and adaptation processes informed by the contexts in which they occur.

**Culture shock.**

Another stream of research that developed alongside that of Berry and colleagues, came from observations of initial reactions of individual contact with a radically different culture. Culture shock was first considered a disease and was observed as a collection of symptoms of disorientation, confusion and disheartenment (Oberg, 1960). Research expanded on these to include the psychological and emotional strain one may suffer due to the work it takes to acculturate; a sense of loss and deprivation due to a change in status and/or finances; feelings of rejection; confusion about feelings, roles, values, identity; anger and anxiety after becoming aware of the differences between host and home cultures and; feelings of powerlessness and less internal locus of control (Austin, 2007).

After years of extensive variations on and challenges to Oberg’s model (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima 1998), Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) observed that the culture shock research evolved along two paths: Culture learning (also described in Berry’s paradigm) and stress-coping. The culture learning path focuses on the significance of learning language, social cues, new customs and social conventions of the host culture. On the other hand stress-coping focuses mainly on specific situations of a life stressor that requires some sort of psychological adjustment, such as altering cultural beliefs, behaviours or identity (Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

Austin recently investigated the experiences of immigrant pharmacists in Canada and concluded that culture shock did indeed have an influence on the re-formation of the
sociocultural identity (2007). As a result of the shock of encountering professional licensing barriers, participants idealized the professional practice environment in their home culture and reported a diminishing social identification as pharmacists in Canada. Social identification theorists, such as Tajfel and Turner attempted to explain the relationships between self image and self esteem, social categorization and social comparison via within and between group differences, group pressures and group status (1986). They proposed that people’s self image is informed by the group or groups to which they belong. Questions at the core of their research are: Who am I, and how do members of my group relate to members of other groups? It was hoped that group affiliation would emerge as part of participants’ stories of what helps and hinders their doing well.

This brings this literature review to the topic of social support. A multitude of studies of acculturation found that social support from friends and/or families lessens acculturative stress. Several scholars have gone so far as to assert that social support is the most significant factor in successful adaptation (see Hernandez, 2009). Cultural institutions such as ethnic associations and host culture representatives such as agencies designed to provide support for newcomers have also been shown to reduce the amount of acculturative stress experienced (Williams & Berry, 1991). However aside from knowing that acculturative stress may decrease, there were no Canadian studies found that described the actual psychological benefits of the various types of social support.

**Intercultural communications.**

Berry (2006c) described this aspect of acculturation in Canada as primarily about official language acquisition. Several researchers, for example Clement (1980), have suggested that the acculturation experience and quality of outcomes are related to a newcomer’s confidence in communicating. Ward’s culture learning approach to
acculturation went further than Clement. Her work is based on the premise that “communication is at the heart of intercultural contact” (Masgoret & Ward, 2006, p.62), and by extension has significant influence on the acculturation experience. Culture learning stresses the importance of social interaction and therefore the acquisition of the requisite social skills. It illuminates cultural differences in verbal and non-verbal ways of communicating, social conventions and practices, and rules that contribute to misunderstandings thereby suggesting ways in which we can improve intercultural communications. Cultural learning and intercultural communication are clearly important aspects of settling in a foreign land.

**Criticisms of culture shock research.**

There are overlaps in acculturation and culture shock research. For example behavioral shifts fit with the culture learning model, acculturation strategies are informed in part by sociocultural identity reformation, and stress-coping research mirrors what is found in the acculturative stress literature. Berry and colleagues distinguish acculturative stress from the term culture shock because they believe that the latter term implies that the dominant host culture is at the heart of the individual’s difficulties thereby ignoring factors that the individual brings with him/her (such as age, gender, status, education etc.) (Berry et al., 2002). Berry also argues that the term “shock” is too negative; it implies that only problems will result from contact with another culture. My review indicated that much of culture shock research is with refugees. They appear to concentrate on the more traumatic aspects of immigrating, however if acculturative stress research is based on an absence of same, then it could be said that both approaches are similar in their negative, reactive approach to acculturation.
Citing literature from social cognition theory, Leong and Hartung (2000) wrote that because people tend to use available heuristics when making judgments and decisions, much of the research on culture has been developed from a “monocultural” mindset. Acculturation and culture shock theories drive research that often focuses on the individual as discrete and separate from cultural contexts and processes. Some preeminent scholars on the topic acknowledge that acculturation is a multi-dimensional, multi-factorial phenomenon which is not well understood (e.g. Berry, 2001; 2006b; Sam & Berry, 2006).

What became obvious from the review is that overall, theorists and researchers have neglected the positive side of the immigration experience. Immigrants are portrayed as mainly bringing or encountering problems to be fixed, thereby generally ignoring what is good in their experiences. To echo Rudmin (2005a), it is time for a positive psychology approach to acculturation. Immigrants do succeed in Canada. The current study appears to be unique in its orientation towards the positive aspects of that process.

**Immigrants’ Characteristics**

In addition to strategies and external factors, this population of individuals brings certain characteristics, attitudes and beliefs that influence how they experience acculturation and settlement. Below is a review of the personal qualities and attitudes that immigrants are purported to have based on studies on personality, attitudes and values, self efficacy, health, help-seeking behaviours, resilience, and spirituality.

**Research on personality.**

The research base on immigrant traits is immense and the results are mixed with respect to the universality of traits. For example, Narayanan, Menon, and Levine (1995) found that the five factor model of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1985) was supported by their study with Indian university students, but with some cultural variations in participants’
interpretations of the traits, so a noteworthy amount of variance was unexplained. Kosic believes that at least some extraversion is a necessary trait to survive acculturation, but says that extraversion-introversion evidence is also inconclusive (2006).

Similarly, the findings on locus of control (a personal theory of causation) are far from conclusive with respect to immigrants. People with externalized loci of control attribute what happens to them as controlled by others or by fate. People with internalized loci of control are said to believe that outcomes are a result of one’s own behaviours/traits/abilities. Research with immigrants is said to have “consistently demonstrated that an external locus of control is associated with symptoms of psychological distress” (Kosic, 2006, p. 119.). However, Heine (2001) found that North Americans believe that the world is theirs to change or fit for their purposes (malleability) and that one must shape the world to fit one’s desires; one can change others’ behaviours, hence society at large. This North American perspective (Canada and the United States) suggests that people here value an internal locus of control. By way of comparison, East Asians (China, Korea and Japan) are said to view the world as enduring and permanent, and that the fates will act at will. In order to have a good life, they may believe it is important to be flexible, responsive to others’ needs, and to societal roles, all of which may suggest that East Asians value a more external locus.

The construct of self esteem is general viewed in Western societies as having a sense of personal worth along with a belief that one is a competent person, in other words having self efficacy. Self esteem has been found to predicted immigrants’ positive psychological health (Kosic, 2006; Nesdale & Mak, 2003). However the meaning of self esteem has been challenged by scholars as culturally biased. For example Heine (2001) proposed that North Americans believe that the self is fixed and separate from others, that failure suggests some internal flaw, and that maintenance of a positive view of the self is important, all of which
informs the North American notion of self esteem. East Asians are said to believe that the self should be flexible. They may view it in relation to others. Failure may be seen as a signal to continue to work and improve.

The foregoing have helped highlight how limited the research on immigrants seems to be in terms of advancing our knowledge of what characteristics and qualities may inform and influence immigration and adaptation experiences.

**Attitudes and values.**

Gardner and colleagues conducted studies in order to isolate attitudes specifically towards the host community. They developed the construct of *integrativeness* which they say indicates being open to other cultural groups, positive attitudes towards the host culture’s official language, and valuing social contact with host group members (Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Clement, 1990). The idea is supported by studies that relate *integrativeness* with motivation to become proficient in the host language. For example, one particular study conducted in Canada showed that positive attitudes towards host culture and official language, contributed not only to language proficiency but to the frequency and quality of contact with host members (Masgoret & Gardner, 1999). These results support both Berry’s construct of integration as the most promising attitude/strategy for successful adaptation (Berry et al., 2002) as well as the importance of culture learning and intercultural communication (Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

Nesdale and Mak (2000) surveyed a large sample representing a diverse set of cultures and found that all groups acknowledged the importance of living according to the host country’s standards and values. They suggested that host countries need to be cognizant, however, of the importance of newcomers’ ability to maintain their home culture.
Notwithstanding the foregoing, a review of relevant databases for cross-cultural research on immigrant values in Canada led to the conclusion that, aside from valuing social contact with host members, there are no cross-cultural qualitative studies that describe what other values immigrants may actually hold or what the impact might be of said values. There are several culture specific studies that explored values in conflict with the host culture, however, they focused primarily on families, parents, children and adolescents in relation to autonomy, child rearing practices and traditional gender roles.

Some of the immigrant self monitoring research yielded similar results to that on integrativeness. Lennox and Wolfe (1984) propose two types of self monitoring: getting ahead and getting along. Getting ahead is characterized in part by being flexible and adapting to novel situations whereas getting along is characterized by being guided by avoidance of society’s disapproval. The latter has been shown to be related to shyness and low self esteem. Kosic (2002) suggested that immigrants who are oriented towards getting ahead have more positive relationships with and more contact with the host culture.

Kosic (2006) reviewed the studies that measured immigrants’ need for closure/aversion to uncertainty and found that those with a higher need for closure suffered more stress and psychosomatic problems than those that scored lower on the need for closure measures. She went further to say that the latter group would be at risk for a difficult acculturation process, because they would be more likely to avoid contact with the host society.

In sum, positive attitudes towards and valuing aspects of the host culture and accepting uncertainty have been reported as positively affecting acculturation. A next step in this line of inquiry would be to describe how these and other attitudes and values help immigrants’ do well with acculturation.
**Cross-cultural self efficacy.**

There is a fair amount of research about cross-cultural self efficacy. This specific type of efficacy includes valuing knowledge about a host culture, and having the confidence to make contact and learn about it. Researchers generally agree that this quality/attitude predicts more positive acculturation outcomes (Li & Gasser, 2005).

**Help seeking.**

The literature on immigrants help seeking attitudes and behaviours in Canada was reviewed. Only five relevant studies were found, three of which were conducted prior to 1990. There is general agreement by researchers that attitudes towards illness, mental health and help-seeking are largely influenced by cultural specific norms and expectations around coping (Ehrensaft & Tousignant, 2006). Accordingly, this small group of studies is about the lack of help seeking behaviours of particular cultural groups. It was hoped that newcomers who do well might shed some light on what help-seeking behaviours they might entertain in service of their acculturation, employment and settlement needs.

**Resilience.**

Resilience has been defined as the phenomenon of an enduring factor that, in response to aversive events, pulls from various coping strategies and results in the positive development of an individual, who might otherwise have been negatively affected (Rutter, 1993). One could argue that immigration to Canada likely involves at least one adverse event – that of having one’s credentials devalued. As noted in the Introduction, employment discrimination is well documented and it was hoped that the current study would provide insight into how new immigrants who self identify as doing well, deal with hiring discrimination. The negative psychological impacts of employment discrimination have been researched to some extent with professional and specific cultural groups in Canada, but
since 1990 only ten records were located. Only two of those were in psychology journals: one focused on Latin American immigrant professionals who had earned their MBA in Canada (Hakak & Holzinger, 2010) and the other focused on Jewish immigrants living in Quebec for at least 2 years (Sinacore, Mikhail, Kassan, & Lerner, 2009). Neither appeared relevant to the current study. One working paper was found based on a large field study by Oreopoulous (2009) which found that some employers in Canada engaged in name discrimination, that is interviewing applicants only if their names seemed “Canadian”.

Rutter suggested that resilience should be considered a process as opposed to a personal quality, and that it can take time to be realized. He stated that for many individuals a transformation is involved for example, when a person not only survives an ordeal but emerges feeling stronger. He also suggested that it is the result of internal positive resources in combination with supporting factors in one’s social network and community. It is important to note that the notion of resilience emerged from the western notion of autonomy, however Rutter observed that researchers now recognize that cultural contexts will affect how resilience is manifested (1993).

Although most of the research on resilience and immigration has been explored with refugees, Ehrensaft and Tousignant (2006) proposed that others who migrate are sustained by the belief that their children will have a better chance at education and security in Canada. Another factor they suggest may contribute to resilience may be a belief in the fairness of the justice system and Canada’s democratic ideology.

In conclusion, the majority of the research on immigrant characteristics and behaviours appears to be limited to North American perspectives on personality. Very little has been done with Canada's newcomers. It is important to also observe that all these different aspects of the immigration experience have been studied in isolation from each
other. It was hoped that the current study would begin to integrate some of these aspects of the immigration experience using the lens of positive psychology.

**Immigrants’ Experiences in Canada**

A search of the relevant databases using the key words “immigrant/migrant”, “qualitative” and “Canada” produced 92 records. Other key words were substituted such as “interviews”, “exploratory” and “descriptive” and nothing new was added. A review of the abstracts yielded eleven articles relevant to the current study. The rest of the articles were about immigrant women’s issues in particular marriage and parenting, physical health, and feminist writings about gendered oppression in Canada or singular articles that focused on child, youth and adolescent immigrants; refugees; service providers’ perspectives; language and literacy; political analyses, migrating from Canada, and intergroup conflict.

Ten of the eleven relevant studies produced similar narratives about the emotional toll the current employment climate takes on immigrants here. Results are what one might expect: grief (loss of status, homesickness), declining self worth, unhappiness, emotional strain, depression, loneliness, frustration and anger, feeling betrayed, anxiety, and psychosomatic problems (Ahmad et al., 2004; Austin, 2007; Beynon et al., 2004; Bhandari, Horvath & To, 2006; Gastaldo, Andrews, & Khanlou, 2004; Khan & Watson, 2005; Man, 2004; Ng, 1998; Simich, Hamilton, & Baya, 2006; Sakamoto, 2007). Some of these studies also included negative responses to cultural distance items such as work schedules, food, lifestyle pace, climate and health care access (long waiting lists). This quote from a participant in Man captures the essence of these immigrant narratives: “I think Canada needs laborers, but not professionals…Now they use professional people to do menial labor. How do you expect us to function well psychologically?” (p. 145).
Two of these studies qualitatively explored how highly educated and skilled professionals navigated the barriers associated with their re-professionalization and re-licensure. Firstly, Austin’s 2007 study of pharmacists in Ontario found that participants experienced their relationships with co-professionals who were native-born and their professional governing bodies as cold, distant and punitive in contrast to their own cultural social networks which were nurturing and helpful. One outcome was a resistance to networking within the pharmacy profession.

Beynon et al. (2004) conducted a cross-cultural study with B.C. immigrant teachers. While the theme of agency was threaded throughout the results (for example, some participants appealed the judgment of the teachers’ college), but engaging the authorities often resulted in substantial personal and financial costs. Of particular interest here is that not all immigrants in that study viewed the re-credentialing process as demeaning or marginalizing. Some reported that they were pleased to assume the position of learner, (which the authors point out is consistent with many teacher’s professional identities) in order to learn about how things are done in Canadian classrooms. They believed it also gave them valuable Canadian experience.

To date the current study appears to be the only qualitative study of the story of immigration from the perspective of a diverse group of Canadian newcomers. Therefore, in order to help locate the current study, I decided that the previously cited longitudinal survey study conducted on behalf of Statistics Canada (Schellenberg & Maheux, 2008) was worth reviewing in a little more detail. Respondents were asked semi-structured questions at six months, two and four years after arrival what they liked about Canada, the difficulties they encountered including the greatest difficulty, if their expectations had been met, if they thought they had made a good decision, and questions about housing, healthcare and
citizenship. The researchers began with over 12,000 new immigrants but they reported experiencing difficulties tracking the respondents over time so the attrition was quite high. The final survey results, from year 4, consisted of data from 7,700 respondents from all three immigration admission categories. (family connections in Canada, refugees, and skilled workers) Only statistics from year 4 were published in that report with the exception of comparisons of expectations across time, ratings of economic wellbeing and quality of life at year 2.

Types of difficulties reported by respondents were mostly about the Canadian labour market. In order of percentage responding they included: not enough Canadian job experience, foreign work experience not accepted, no connections in the job market, foreign education and certifications not accepted, lack of employment opportunities, not enough Canadian job references, language problems, not being able to find a job in one’s field, not knowing enough people working, not having friends or family who could help, discrimination and not knowing how to apply for a job.

Most of the respondents reported feeling happy to be here, in spite of 73% of them having difficulties finding employment. The single most often reason for choosing Canada was to live a better quality of life and have a better life for their children. The social environment, valuing human rights and freedoms, and political stability were also noted. Two thirds of respondents reported that their expectations for life in Canada had been met or exceeded. Eighty-one percent of those respondents said they had made the right decision by choosing Canada.

To conclude, the above noted studies say something about immigrant experiences in Canada but the research is very sparse with the exception of particular groups. The orientation of existing research is largely towards the negative, especially those that explore
narratives of immigrant women and immigrant families. The current study is timely because it is an exploration of the other side of the immigrant story. It is about what works, what helps, and what positive strategies new immigrants bring to Canada.

**Counselling Immigrants**

Immigrants’ expectations for career opportunities may not be met in Canada (Austin, 2007; Bauder, 2003; Beynon, Ilieva & Dichupa, 2004; Man, 2004; Oreopoulous, 2009; Tran, 2004). Many immigrants had fairly high career status in their homeland only to find their credentials are devalued here. The psychological strain increases as savings dwindle. They may also encounter discrimination, even racism. Feelings of loss of power, lifestyle and status may compound the problem (Aycan & Berry, 1996). Families and home culture communities may suffer vicariously (Westwood & Ishiyama, 1991).

Cultural distance has been shown to increase the impact of bumping up against unfamiliar language, social norms, rules and conventions which is manifested in acculturative stress and anxiety. Westwood and Ishiyama (1991) suggested that acculturative stress in of itself would likely impede an individual’s abilities to get much needed information and make career decisions or plans. Immigrants may not be prepared or able to deal with the host culture’s norms around job searches (Rubrecht & Gilles, 1993) or North American work values and styles (Amundson, Firbank, Klein & Poehnell, 1991; Mak, 1991; Mak, Westwood, & Ishiyama, 1994; Westwood, & Ishiyama, 1991). This complex combination of acculturation stressors and the reality of the labour market climate clearly indicate that immigrants bring a special set of issues, ones that are profound and pervasive in many areas of their lives, threatening their psychological and physical well-being and the well-being of their families and communities.
Counselling psychology.

As I searched through the *Handbook of Multicultural Counseling* (Ponterotto, Casas, Suzuki & Alexander, 2001), I was very surprised to find no references to counselling with immigrants. After a review of numerous other sources, it appears that the major counselling theorists do not distinguish immigrants from non-immigrant cultural groups. There is mention by some scholars of working with refugees and international students (e.g. Pederson, 2007), but nothing found that addresses the population that is the subject of this study. In contrast to the dearth of counselling theory on this topic, there is a significant amount of counselling practice literature that recommends various counselling techniques or programs for the more dominant (population-wise) culturally specific immigrant groups (e.g. Sue, Ivey, & Pederson, 1996; Sue & Sue, 2003). As one might expect, their ideas come from the remedial perspective of figuring out how to fix what is not working.

It is expected that counselling models today will take diversity into account. They are therefore designed to be applied across cultures. These models have utility in a multicultural society such as Canada where counselling practice is rarely confined to one specific cultural group. The models appear to only focus however on essentials of a successful one-on-one cross-cultural counsellor-client relationship and the requisite attitudes, knowledge and cultural self awareness of the counsellor.

A brief review of the type of counselling available to newcomers through the various immigrant service agencies in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia revealed that counselling was available for practical matters such as settlement and a range of career services including career assessment, how to gain Canadian work experience and a Canadian education. Only one personal support group for immigrant women was located. Practitioners and vocational scholars agree that effective career counselling does not preclude personal
counselling, but it is not known if or how personal counselling is made available to new immigrants, or if it is part of career counselling programs.

Regardless of the type of counselling offered, cross-cultural counselling competency should be requisite for professional, ethical practice (Smith, 2004), especially in a culturally diverse society. Lopez et al. wrote that both researchers and clinicians should “display a positive presentation of values, potentials, and lifestyle of the culturally different” and "acknowledge that cultural behaviours are adaptive and have withstood the test of time" (2005, p. 702). There are numerous resources available that discuss the qualities, attitudes and skills needed for cross-cultural counselling (e.g. Arthur & Januszkowski, 2001; Leong, 1996; Smith, 2004). These will not be discussed here in any detail except where needed to support the implications for counselling presented in Chapter 5.

Some counselling psychology scholars have suggested that a group format for counselling has several advantages for immigrants who have need of validation, affiliation and social connection (Ishiyama & Westwood, 1992; Westwood, Mak, Barker, & Ishiyama, 2000). Three cross-cultural group based models for practice that were advanced in the 1990’s, are relevant to the current study results in terms of recommendations/implications for a cross-cultural group of new immigrants.

Firstly, Amundson, Firbank, Klein and Poehnell (1991) for example, tested the efficacy of their group model with immigrants who were on social assistance. This comprehensive program addressed a number of issues that immigrants continue to face today (language barriers, lack of knowledge of the labour market, learning of the similarities and differences regarding job searches here and abroad, navigating institutional barriers, career assessment, networking, marketing oneself, etc.) in a respectful, supportive, encouraging
environment. While the authors achieved positive results, one particularly interesting finding was that the program was more effective with more recent immigrants.

Another approach (Mak, Westwood, Ishiyama, & Barker, 1999) hones in specifically on sociocultural adaptation. Recall that sociocultural adaptation is how well an individual manages daily life in the new host culture context. The authors integrated theories of learning to inform an instructional model for role-based learning with a multicultural training group. The model has several advantages. Firstly it encourages clients to bring cross-cultural social situations into the group for learning purposes, thereby validating and empowering clients as active agents in the creation of their own cultural adjustment (Anderson, 1994). Secondly the use of role-based learning capitalizes on our tendency to acquire social and skills and cultural competencies through modeling. Thirdly, role plays can illustrate a variety of ways to tackle cross-cultural problems, e.g. learning colloquial and idiomatic communication, misunderstandings and norms of behaviour, while still respecting cultural differences.

During the interview that inspired this study, I observed that the participant would sometimes rely upon a metaphor to convey his intended meaning. A metaphor is essentially a word or phrase that is normally used to convey one thing but is used to convey another in order to clarify and/or enrich its meaning. English was a new skill that the participant was learning via ESL classes. In my opinion, it was a very effective method for him to communicate with me. A review of the literature revealed that since the turn of the century, the use of metaphor in counselling has gained significant attention. It is particularly recommended by counselling scholars who espouse narrative, existential and psychodynamic approaches to counselling. Metaphor is gaining recognition as an important vehicle for understanding and working on career development (Amundson, 1997; 2001; 2003; Bright &
Pryor, 2008; Inkson & Amundson, 2002). Therefore it was somewhat surprising that a search of the education and psychology literature using the key words “metaphor” and “immigrant”, “cross-cultural”, “multicultural” or “diversity” yielded only four articles, two of which were critical discourses on how English metaphors marginalize certain groups. One was a paper on using narrative to work with Asian Americans. Henderson and Chan suggest “Counselors are encouraged to reflect cultural sensitivity and understanding through collectivist interpretations of mythological archetypes and metaphors” (2005, p. 33). The other was an article by Amundson (2006) in which he describes how a well known North American metaphorical narrative may be less applicable in cultures unfamiliar with the story. Amundson recommends that counsellors consider culture specific stories as well as client generated stories and metaphors based on their own life experiences.

Finally, Ishiyama and Westwood developed a self-validation model (1992) that facilitates immigrant clients’ experiencing of much needed validation for who they are and what benefits they bring to the host culture. The model facilitates validation of feelings of uncertainty, fears, grief and loss, confusion anger, etc. in “an emotional sanctuary” (p. 54), as well as illuminating and celebrating client strengths and resources. It helps discouraged clients discover what they have and what they can do to move towards a positive acculturation outcome. This is achieved by therapist-client exploration of the various components in the model: security, comfort and support; identity and belonging; competence and autonomy; self-worth and self acceptance; and love, fulfillment and meaning in life.

Self worth, identity and belonging may be particularly affected when newcomers experience discrimination and marginalization as a result of their employment situation. Put simply, newcomers may feel invisible and that they do not matter to the host society or its
members. The notion of mattering has seen a resurgence of attention from scholars particularly as it relates to identity, the counselling relationship, and career theory and counselling (Bright & Pryor, 2008; Corbiere & Amundson, 2007; Rayle, 2006; Elliott, Kao & Grant, 2004).

Mattering is not simply about others caring about us. It is more complex. It involves a set of beliefs about how we integrate into the various social contexts of our lives. It constitutes and sustains one's meaning to others, and one's importance in the interpersonal world (Schultheiss, 2007). Schlossberg, Lynch and Chickering (1989) proposed four levels of mattering can be used as a guide to research and counselling practice. The first level is Attention or visibility which pertains to being noticed and acknowledged by others. The second, Importance, is knowing that one is important to others. In other words others communicate that they are interested in what that person is thinking, feeling and doing (Corbiere & Amundson, 2007). The third level of mattering, Dependence, is when others value and depend on the person’s help, knowledge and skills. The fourth level, Ego-extension is when the person feels that others are interested in one’s progress both professionally and personally and cares about him/her. Understanding the essentials of mattering may be a relevant perspective from which to view current study results.

**Vocational psychology.**

In the *Handbook of Vocational Psychology* (Walsh & Savickas, 2005), there is one small paragraph devoted to immigrant students, that described a transition support group model aimed at helping international students stay in school. A search in the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* for the words “immigrant” or “migrant” yielded one article that was too general to be relevant here. Nothing relevant was found in the *Career Development Quarterly*. A search of the *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*
produced four articles, that latest of which was published in 1984. More global searches (that captured other counselling and career development journals) failed to yield anything relevant.

There has been an effort of late towards researching the efficacy of culturally sensitive career counselling models (Koegel, Donin, Ponterotto & Spitz, 1995) but similar to many of their counselling psychology colleagues, career and vocational theorists apparently view immigrants as no different from non immigrant minorities in terms of their counselling needs. This finding seems inconsistent with recent calls within the discipline for theory and practice research that responds to the globalization of the working world (Van Esbroeck, Herr, & Savickas, 2005).

**Career adaptation.**

Career adaptability has been defined as a “readiness to cope with changing work and work conditions (Savickas, 1994, p.58). Two types of career adaptation have been observed recently in immigrant employment transitions: transnationalism and entrepreneurship. Although there is some research with immigrant entrepreneurs in Canada, the research conducted comes mainly from social work studies, business journals, urban and migration studies and political science papers, none of which seemed relevant to this project. This result is indeed surprising in light of the success of many immigrants who have adapted to the labour climate in Canada by starting their own businesses (Jones, 2004).

Transnationalism on the other hand, has started to attract the attention of cultural psychologists (Mahalingam, 2006). Transnationalism is defined as the maintenance of careers other activities that necessarily require regular social contacts over time across national borders and/or across cultures (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt, 1999). While the literature reviewed was from a small number and narrow range of specific cultural groups,
benefits of transnationalism could be linked to common themes across cultures: familial and other social and emotional support, home cultural identity and financial security (Murphy, 2006). Murphy pointed out however there are “few, if any” studies that tie transnational activities to mental health outcomes of immigrants (p. 82.). One aim of the current study was to explore the role of transnational activities, if any, in new immigrants’ transitions.

**Planned Happenstance theory.**

The observation that the work world has changed from relative stability to an unpredictable, seemingly chaotic place (consider the recent financial crisis), has become the impetus for vocational psychology and career development scholars to develop theories that include the influence of unexpected events (e.g. Bright & Pryor, 2005; Gelatt & Gelatt, 2003, Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999).

Mitchell et al. claimed that traditional career counselling processes were designed to try to eliminate chance, and that these are no longer viable in today’s world of work (1999). Their theory of planned happenstance posits that chance plays an important role in people’s careers. It is defined as the cultivation and taking advantage of unforeseen opportunities. Informed by a social learning theory of careers (Krumboltz, 1994), planned happenstance is based on the following assumptions: that people need to prepare for changing tasks and careers, people should not assume that careers will remain stable, exploration and learning will generate chance opportunities for a better life, diversity of skills enable people to seize opportunities, and people can learn to develop attributes and skills that lead to planned happenstance. The authors suggest that five planned happenstance internal attributes are necessary for recognizing, creating and using chance events as opportunities: *curiosity* towards exploring new learning opportunities, *persistence* in exerting effort despite setbacks, *flexibility* regarding changing attitudes and changing circumstances, *optimism* which involves
viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable, and *risk taking* which involves taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes.

**A philosophy of Positive Uncertainty.**

Gelatt takes a similar approach to career decision making (Gelatt & Gelatt, 2003) with his philosophy of positive uncertainty, but he also suggested that a positive uncertainty perspective could be applied to personal counselling (Gelatt, 1992). The philosophy suggests not only how to cope with uncertainty but challenges people to be pro-active and creative in order to take advantage of and create change: 1) Be focused and flexible about your goals; 2) Be objective and optimistic about what you believe; 3) Treat beliefs as prophecy; 4) Balance reality testing with wishful thinking; 5) Learn to plan and plan to learn; 6) Respond to change and create change. Positive uncertainty provides another perspective on change that may help locate study results.

**Flexibility.**

Flexibility has particular import for those seeking employment. Traditionally, flexibility has not been prized in Western cultures (Heine, 2001) but things are changing (Gelatt & Gelatt, 2003; Neault, 2005). The ability to be flexible in response to workplace change is a desirable quality sought by 21st century employers. For example, employers often assess applicants on their soft skills which includes common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible, attitude. One way to help newcomers who harbour perfectionistic or rigid expectations and attitudes may be to introduce them to the notion of satificing which is defined as striking a balance between what is satisfactory and satisfying, in other words what is good enough (Linley & Joseph, 2004).

To sum up, one of the aims of the current study was to elicit the naturally occurring strategies that help new immigrants do well with unforeseen events such as the devaluing of
their credentials and work experiences in Canada, and it was anticipated that the foregoing would help locate the findings.

**Positive Psychology**

In their seminal article, Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) provided a brief history of psychology that traced the evolution of the discipline away from its original mission. Before World War II psychology was intended to not only cure mental illness but to help people live more fulfilling lives. Shortly after the war there was a dire need for treatments for mental illness which these authors suggested, took the research focus away from learning about health, wellness, happiness and fulfillment, and towards disease and pathologies. Gillham and Seligman (1999) contended that adopting a negative psychology has biased and limited how theories have been developed and therefore we know very little about life’s positive side. Unfortunately psychologists were captured along with the medical community by the disease model of human functioning. This model of disease promotes reactivity over pro-activity with a focus on remedial interventions over preventive strategies. The rationale for positive psychology comes in part from the realization that positive aspects of being human are largely ignored by researchers or are explained as transmutations of negative emotions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). These authors argued that prevention, not remediation should be in the foreground of research approaches. Research in prevention of mental illness has shown several human capacities may act as buffers to mental illness: courage, optimism, faith, hope, perseverance, work ethic, and future mindedness (Gillham & Seligman, 1999; Uskul & Greenglass, 2005).

**Positive affect.**

Since the term “positive psychology” was introduced in 2000, scholars have gathered and organized what is known thus far about positive human functioning (see Folkman &
Moskowitz, 2003; Linley & Joseph, 2004; Peterson, 2006; Snyder & Lopez, 2005). Of particular interest is positive affectivity or mood which is characterized by positive emotionality, such as joy, a keen interest and zest for life, and a positive self concept (Meehl, 1975; Peterson, 2006). Positive affect is considered to be independent from negative emotions or mood. Positive affectivity is thought to be influenced by genetics heritability which is said to explain approximately 40% of its variability, therefore similar to learned optimism, positive affectivity can be increased (Peterson, 2006). For example, working towards goals has been shown to create more positive affect than achieving them which finding has important implications for counselling newcomers who may feel overwhelmed by all the changes and challenges (Watson, 2005).

**Values.**

As previously noted, acculturation research suggests that integration is more easily achieved if one finds value in both home and host cultures. The bulk of the research on values and acculturation has been conducted in the United States, and as previously mentioned Canada’s multicultural, an integrationist approach to immigration predicts that newcomers would experience host culture attitudes like those of Canadian society. Therefore the review that follows begins with acculturation research in Canada, and then moves on to positive psychology, which boasts ubiquitous applications.

A search across databases, using the terms “value”, “immigrant “and “Canada” yielded ten records. All but one either focused on populations such as children or families of a single cultural group, or the topic was outside of the helping professions. The one relevant study was a qualitative cross-cultural study of seven immigrant social work students who encountered a conflict between the value of a strong family system and upholding freedom of choice, (a guiding principle in the Social Work Code of Ethics), (Calderwood, Harper, Ball,
& Liang, 2009). The main finding was how participants experienced an incongruence between home and host culture values. Participants disclosed poignant examples of their discomfort and emotional distress when asked to uphold clients’ freedom of choice versus their personal belief in commitment to a strong traditional extended family. Calderwood, et al., identified this type of situation as a conflict of values. The authors said that other values reported were compatible with Canadian values but unfortunately they did not publish them.

In his chapter on values in positive psychology (2006) Peterson presented a list of values that he argues are ubiquitous around the world. The following is a summary of those considered relevant here. *Achievement* is reaching success or competence in accordance with society’s standards. *Benevolence* is enhancing the welfare of others. *Conformity* is adhering to society’s standards of behaviour. *Hedonism* is enjoyment, leisure and personal gratification. *Power* relates to status, prestige and control over others. *Security* concerns safety, harmony and a societal stability. *Stimulation* is about novelty, challenges, openness to change and self direction. *Tradition* consists of respect for cultural and spiritual customs. *Universalism* is the most complex of these value constructs and includes understanding and protecting people and nature, and believing in social justice and equality.

Peterson wrote that our values can communicate things about who we are and what is important to us. However, despite the large body of work on this topic, what is known about the congruence between values and behaviours is quite limited (1997; 2006). Of possible relevance to the topic under study is that values are more likely to be enacted if 1) the circumstances in which a person acquired the value was direct experience, and 2) the value helps define a person’s identity.

In their section on immigrant values in *Positive Psychology in Practice*, Sagiv, Roccas and Hazan wrote that people who value openness to change in general, “emphasize
autonomy, self direction and independence of thought and action” (2004, p.79). With the exception of self direction, this seemingly Western perspective is reminiscent of those criticized in Heine, (2001). Sagiv et al. then proposed that helping immigrants be open to changing their values (referred to as the Healthy Values Perspective) would likely “facilitate immigrants’ adaptation and enhance their well-being,” (p. 79). One might conclude that their recommendation reflects an assimilationist approach to acculturation. Unfortunately, there was no research cited by Sagiv et al. to support their statements.

To conclude, the role of values in immigrant transitions is clearly under researched. Given that values compatibility is at the nexus of Berry’s model of acculturation, it was anticipated that the current study would illuminate at least to some extent the role and context of values in the well doing of a cross-cultural group of newcomers.

**Signature strengths.**

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi conceived of positive psychology as a scientific endeavour that would ultimately bring people to “live the good life” by helping them develop positive traits and emotions. To that end they developed a list of “signature strengths” that can be researched and cultivated (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). To be included, a strength needed to be ubiquitously recognized across many cultures, is valued in its own right, contributes to life satisfaction or fulfillment. Of interest here are: optimism, hope, love of learning, curiosity, open-mindedness, perspective, spirituality appreciation of beauty, bravery, persistence, energy/zeal, and social intelligence. The following review of these strengths may help locate study results and inform the discussion.

*Optimism* has been approached from a variety of perspectives such as a general inherited disposition, an explanatory style, and the default mood of human nature. Of all the strengths it has been researched the most. Peterson recommended a definition that helps to
inform our understanding of optimism in the context of the current study: it can be viewed as an attitude associated with an expectation that is socially desirable, to one’s advantage, or for one’s pleasure. It is a positive belief about the future, and it often includes a sense of agency (2006). In her review of the research, Aspinwall wrote that optimism has been found to “promote careful, realistic thinking and behaviour” and should not to be confused with denial (2005, p. 754).

Seligman’s “learned optimism” enjoys considerable empirical support (1991; 2005) and is of particular interest here. Learned optimism has a strong link to counselling practice, for example the construct informed classical cognitive therapy techniques such as teaching people how to dispute pessimistic/catastrophic thinking. It was believed that learned optimism might help inform implications for counselling practice.

*Hope* is defined as expecting good things in the future, accompanied by a belief that those things can be achieved. Snyder’s studies of expectation and agency led to a formulation of *hope* as a type of optimism. *Hope* has been found to be beneficial in terms of goal expectancies, perceived control, self-esteem, positive emotions, coping and achievement (2002; Seligman et al. 2005).

*Loving to learn* is defined as acquisition and use of information in the service of the good life (Seligman et al., 2005) and *curiosity* is “taking an interest in all of an ongoing experience” (p. 412). These two qualities have relevance to understanding how some newcomers do better than others with cultural distance factors.

*Open-mindedness* (Seligman et al., 2005) means being able to change one's mind in light of evidence. It also involves thinking things through from all sides and being open to different points of view.
**Perspective** was also considered a strength of interest. It is defined as looking at the world in a way that makes sense to oneself and to others (Seligman et al., 2005). Somewhat similarly, *spirituality* is defined as having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life and the universe, knowing where one fits into the larger scheme.

*Appreciation of beauty and excellence*, like spirituality, provides people with a sense of meaning and wonder.

It is my opinion that immigrating to another country involves risk taking and bravery in the face of considerable change and unforeseen obstacles. *Bravery* is a signature strength that is defined as persisting in working towards goals in spite of challenges. It requires the emotional will to prevail (Peterson, 2006; Seligman et al., 2005). *Persistence* and *zest* or *energy* are related strengths that include taking pleasure in completing tasks, especially when challenging, and approaching obstacles (and life in general) with energy and enthusiasm.

The last strength of relevance is *social intelligence*. It includes understanding social and cultural norms of behaviour, having the ability to handle different social situations well and being able to fit in.

All of the above constructs provide a framework for discussion of what qualities and beliefs might help newcomers do well with all the changes they face in the early days of immigrating to Canada.

**Conclusions**

The following is a summary of the gaps that emerged from the literature review. There is a dearth of research on new immigrants’ personal resources, positive behavioural strategies, previous work and life experiences, attitudes, values, beliefs and expectations about immigration, Canada or her government. The research is inconclusive and incomplete with respect to immigrant coping, for example there is very little on spiritual/religious coping.
in the context of acculturation. Vocational scholars have done little in terms of this population, as have counselling theorists. Counselling practice researchers have begun to work with immigrants but primarily from a remedial, rather than strength based perspective and apparently with one cultural group at a time.

**Gaps in the positive psychology literature.**

Positive psychology scholars have admitted that they have yet to define or operationalize “the good life” (Peterson, 2006). Wierzbicka (2009) wrote that one difficulty is that a good life is culturally construed. She suggested researchers use the less culturally dependent “how can one live well?” (p. 269) rather than how can one live “the good life”. Asking a diverse group of new immigrants how they do well with all the changes that affect their work and lives is similar to Wierzbicka’s question. The current study was an attempt at starting a scholarly conversation about positive human functioning from a cross-cultural perspective.

There are a number of fundamental questions that have yet to be considered in cross-cultural terms from a positive psychology perspective, such as what is the role of culture in healthy functioning, what are the benefits of human diversity, what are the roles of self-esteem, happiness, subjective well-being and resilience in a multi-cultural context, and how does interpersonal connection translate into health and well-being across cultures (Lopez et al., 2005).

It also appears that some of what is theorized thus far about positive human functioning was influenced by a Western worldview. Given the chaotic, unpredictable nature of the 21st century, immigrants may teach us about living the good life in the new context of the global community.
Scholars in counselling and vocational psychology agreed that theories and practice need to incorporate the unique issues inherent in globalization which of course includes the phenomenon of immigration. Rudmin, in his critiques of the research on acculturation, suggested that not only would qualitative research provide much needed context to the topic, but that a positive psychology of acculturation would complement the traditionally negative focus (2005a; 2005b; Vali-Nouri, 2002). In their introduction to the 2005 special issue of the International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, Van Esbroeck, Herr and Savickas noted that the contributors recognized that “solving problems are no longer the only strategies in career guidance” (p. 90) which implies an endorsement of a more positive perspective in vocational research. The injection of positive psychology into multicultural counselling and career guidance may shift our thinking away from problems and toward helping immigrants tackle acculturation head on with all the resources that likely brought them here in the first place.

Immigrants make up much of the fabric of Canadian society, yet we know so little about their first experiences here. The above noted review clearly indicates that it is time for a cross-cultural study that listens to newcomers with a view to furthering our understanding of the unique complexities of the new immigrant experience. It was hoped current study results would contribute to a more integrative, positive approach to counselling this population. In addition, it appears that a study that can inform personal counselling as well as career in a cross-cultural setting is greatly needed, especially given the new 21st Century world of work.

Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and others are calling for a “redirecting of scientific energy” towards the apprehension of what works, of what helps people do well in an ever changing, challenging world. Given the ample evidence that people can and do
survive, even thrive after the worst of circumstances, this study of recent immigrants who are doing well with their transition to Canada is a beginning look at positive functioning, cross-culturally. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi wrote “In human behaviour, what is intriguing is not the average, but the improbable” (2000, p.7). It is in the spirit of this simple quote that this study was launched. It is an exploration of experiences of new immigrants who are doing the improbable - doing well in Canada.
Chapter 3

Methodology

This is a qualitative study in which 17 adult new immigrant participants with a wide variety of work and cultural backgrounds were interviewed according to a semi-structured, open-ended format. The context questions asked were what changes affecting their work and impacts of same did participants experience, how did participants define their doing well, and if they had always done well with change. The context data collected was analyzed using conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The main research questions were what helped and what hindered participants doing well with the changes affecting their work, and what they wished they’d had or wanted for the future to continue doing well or to do better. This data was collected, analyzed and categorized pursuant to the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) (Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, & Amundson, 2009).

Assumptions

This study is of cross-cultural design, in other words the participants came from many different cultural groups. Therefore it is important to declare that consistent with cross-cultural research epistemology, it was assumed there would be commonalities across individual immigration experiences. By way of example, consider research that suggests that people are born with primary emotions (surprise, happiness, anger, sadness, fear and disgust); many scholars agree that certain emotions are found across cultures, (Izard, 1977; Lang, 1984; Panksepp, 1989; Seligman, 2000). This study was designed to elicit descriptions of how seventeen participants experience three constructs, doing well, hindering and helping. Each of these has a psychological valence that can be linked to emotions. Therefore it was assumed that participants’ essential experiencing of these three constructs would help anchor their meanings to common themes across participants.
Conventional Context Analysis

Conventional Content Analysis (CCA) was utilized to analyze and understand data elicited by the preliminary research questions, i.e. “what does doing well mean to you?”, “what are the changes that have affected your work?”, and “what are the impact of those changes?” that oriented the participants to the topic, and provided context to the main questions of what helped and what hindered. CCA was chosen because it is considered appropriate when research and theory on a topic under study is limited (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Consistent with the inductive process of the CCA method, I immersed myself in the data by reading and re-reading the interviews, then coded, clustered and organized the data into themes for reporting and discussion.

Enhanced Critical Incident Technique

The Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) is the enhanced version of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) developed by Flanagan in 1954 with enhancements (Butterfield et al., 2009). The CIT requires five major steps be followed: (1) deciding on the general aims of the activity to be studied; (2) making plans and specifications to set criteria for the information sought (3) collecting data; (4) analyzing and interpreting the data and (5) reporting the findings (Flanagan, 1954; Woolsey, 1986). The enhancements include nine credibility checks which help ensure credibility, trustworthiness, fidelity to the method, and reliability or consistency, a context question to help situate and enrich the critical incidents and a wish list question to access what participants would have wanted or want in the future (Butterfield et al., 2009) These will be individually expanded upon later on in this chapter.

The ECIT offers several advantages to the study of a culturally diverse sample of people. Firstly, by use of open-ended, semi-structured interviews, the ECIT offers a way for the researcher to enter the subjective world of participants, to ponder the meanings they
describe, to try to understand the significance of same through interpretation and reflection, and to ultimately derive common meanings that have value and significance across participants. Secondly, John Flanagan (1954) developed the critical incident technique (CIT) as a technique rather than a method in that it “does not consist of a single rigid set of rules governing data collection. Rather it should be thought of as a flexible set of principles that must be modified and adapted to meet the specific situation at hand” (p. 335). His intent for the technique is consistent with the view of qualitative researchers as “bricoleurs” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) in other words people who make creative use of the materials at hand. The original CIT has indeed been modified over time as required, to investigate a broad range of topics in, for example, communication, job analysis, counselling, education, medicine, marketing, organizational psychology, performance appraisal, psychology and social work. It provides researchers with the tools to explore complex issues such as acculturation and new immigrant career transitions.

**Recruitment**

In a critical incident study, the number of incidents or items, rather than the number of people determines the size of one’s “sample”. Flanagan (1954) suggests a minimum number of 100 incidents to ensure adequate coverage of the topic under study. However the current common practice is to start with a set number of participants that has a likelihood of reaching category exhaustiveness (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson & Maglio, 2005), (which will be explained shortly in the Data Analysis section). Based on previous studies that used the CIT and ECIT, my goal was to interview from 15 to 20 participants. According to Woolsey (1986), the main purpose of using the CIT is to “provide complete coverage of the content domain” (p.245). Therefore recruitment efforts began with posters placed at a various locations, across the Lower Mainland, such as libraries, community centers, and community
halls. I also placed the poster on two internet sites: Craigslist and Immigrant Networks (with webmaster permission). Posters included a brief summary of the purpose of the research, the participant criterion, an estimate of how much time was involved, and information pertaining to tape recording and confidentiality (see Appendix C).

I met with several gatekeepers of institutions and service agencies that assist new immigrants: SUCCESS, DiverseCity, the Ministry of Children and Families, and the editor of Canadian Immigrant Magazine. They generously offered to let clients and coworkers know about my research. Another recruiting method included “word of mouth” in which participants suggested participation to friends and acquaintances.

Participants met the inclusion criteria if they 1) have been living in Canada for up to 1 year, 2) could converse in and read English, 3) had experienced changes that affected their work and/or career development within the last 6 months, and 4) believed they were doing well with those changes. A screening questionnaire was created based on the one created by Butterfield (2006). The questionnaire is attached as Appendix D.

**Participant demographics.**

Twenty-four people showed an interest in participating in the study, however five of them had been in Canada for over five years and two said they were not doing well with the changes they faced here. Therefore seventeen who met the inclusion criteria were asked to participate. The data that follows is summarized in Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. Table 1.1. is a summary of all the demographic information. Tables 1.2 and 1.3 contain personal information and education and career information, respectively.
## Table 1. Summary of Demographics

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Table 2. Personal Demographics

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<td>Career Field</td>
<td>Time in Career (years)</td>
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<td>Volunteer, Photographer</td>
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<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>International Develop.</td>
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<td>Volunteer, Student</td>
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</table>
My goal was to interview a culturally heterogeneous group. People who responded to the recruitment materials and met the inclusion criteria came from a wide variety of countries. Four participants arrived from India. Two each arrived from Malaysia, from Vietnam, and from Indonesia. One each arrived from Mexico, Brazil, Mongolia, Croatia, Russia, Germany, and Brunei.

**Gender, age and family status.**

The participants ranged from 22 to 53 years of age. The mean age was 42.8 years. One participant was below the age of 30. Five participants were between 30 and 39 years of age, seven were between the ages of 40 and 49, and four participants were between the age of 50 and 54. There were 11 males and 6 females. Fourteen participants were married, two were single and one was engaged to be married. Fifteen of the participants had children. Personal data is summarized in Table 1.2.

**Education and language.**

All participants but one reported that they had earned at least one university degree: Five participants reported having earned a Master of Science degree, three reported having earned a Master of Business Administration, three reported having earned a Master of Arts degree, three reported having earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. One participant reported earning a Bachelor of Social Work degree, one reported having earned a Ph.D. in computer science and one reported having earned technical certification as a Marine Master (captain of a container ship).

All participants appeared comfortable and confident in expressing what they wanted to say in English. Although there were varying levels of fluency we had no difficulty understanding each other. All participants could read and write English.
Length of time in Canada.

Three participants had been in Canada for about 3 months, seven for 4 to 6 months, two for 7 to 9 months, and five for 10 to 11 months. The average length of time in Canada was 6.2 months.

Careers and career fields.

Participants came from the following diverse set of career fields: banking and finance, public service and immigration, information technology, telecommunications, social services, engineering, shipping, construction, transportation and logistics, computer science, and education. All but one reported established careers in their countries of origin. The youngest of the participants had earned her bachelor’s degree and was planning on attending graduate school here to study history. Before they arrived eight participants were working in either senior or middle management, in charge of logistics, customs, construction projects, international programs, banking, marketing and product development, human resources, and information technology training. The other eight said they had considerable experience and seniority in their fields as well. Two were psychologists, and the others were a public servant, a social worker, a scientist/academician, an engineer, a tax auditor, and a marine ship captain.

The length of time participants worked in their chosen fields varied from 5 to 30 years. Four worked between 5 and 8 years, six worked between 14 and 20 years, and the remaining six worked between 22 and 30 years. The average time spent working in their fields was 16.8 years.

Current employment, volunteer and student activities.

What follows is a summary of the work activities of the participants, which includes student and volunteer activities. Participant-specific details can be found in Table: 1.3
Four of the 17 participants were working for pay full-time. Of those, two were working in their career field, albeit at a much lower level of expertise. Of the other two, one had taken a full-time position in sales, which was well outside his work life experience of 30 years. The other participant was working at what some immigrants would refer to as a “survival job”, that is one that requires little training, education or experience. Three participants had obtained part-time paid work, two in a “survival” job. The third had volunteered to work for the Olympics using his expertise which turned into a paid position.

Eight of the 17 participants were volunteering either to assist other immigrants in one of the agencies that provide immigrant services or within their particular ethnic and/or spiritual communities. Two participants volunteered their career expertise to help a non-profit organization. One participant had found volunteer work in social services which was somewhat related to her professional designation.

Twelve participants said they were taking courses or workshops that would help them meet their career goals. Nine participants reported taking advantage of the job search programs offered by agencies such as SUCCESS, Immigrant Services Society of B.C. or SkillsConnect BC. Six participants mentioned that they were enrolled in English classes. Four participants advised that they were taking courses in order to earn local certifications and/or admission to professional affiliations. Three participants were registered as full time students and only one of those was not working part time at the time of the interview.

**Data Collection**

I personally interviewed all participants in person in a variety of confidential spaces, such as community centres, libraries and meeting rooms. At their request, I interviewed the female participants in their homes.
No remuneration was offered but all participants expressed their gratitude at having the chance to share their story with me, as researcher and native-born Canadian. Many also thanked me for the opportunity to contribute to research for the host society.

**Orientation and informed consent procedures.**

Before starting the 1st interview, I reviewed the purpose of the study and each of the steps involved, how long we anticipate each interview will take, and reminded participants that it would be tape recorded. I told each participant that I will reflect what I hear back to them and will ask questions for more information, to make sure I understand what they have told me. Based on previous experience, I like to tell participants that the interview is about their story and therefore it doesn’t have the feel of a conversation. It is critical that participants understand that if at any time they are uncomfortable with where the interview is leading us, they are free to confine their remarks or to withdraw. After my explanation, and when all questions had been answered, I reviewed each item aloud on the informed consent form (see Appendix E) to ensure that the person understood the contents (e.g. anonymity, who will see the data, where it will be kept, withdrawal, contacts, etc.). Participants were provided with a copy of their signed consent forms for their records.

The data was collected in two interviews. The first was to answer the primary and secondary research questions about doing well with changes. The second interview was designed to bring participants into the research process and ask them to review and validate my interpretation and organization of their individual results. It also gave them an opportunity to add anything not captured in the first interview.

**First interview.**

The qualitative data was gathered via open-ended, semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 1998). Empathic reflection was used to communicate my understanding of each
participant’s words and probes to clarify or facilitate elaboration throughout the interviews. Consistent with the post-positivist perspective on interviewer bias leading questions were avoided, especially because of the possibility of misunderstanding participants who may attribute different cultural meanings to words. Participants were invited to respond to each question until they could not think of anything else to add.

The interview consisted of three parts. The first part of the interview posed questions that were intended to establish rapport with participants, to orient the interviewer to their stories and to provide a context for the primary research questions about what helps and what hinders new immigrants who do well. These questions also clearly set the aim of the study (Woolsey, 1986) for both interviewer and participant towards exploring doing well in times of change:

1. Participants were asked to talk about changes that affected their work or careers since arriving here.

2. Participants were asked to describe what doing well means to them. This question was particularly important to understanding the meaning and context that informs each participant’s experience of doing well.

3. Participants were then asked to describe the impacts of the changes.

Next the critical incident part of the interview commenced. The questions below were designed to elicit the helpful or hindering incident or factor, why or how it was helpful or hindering and the outcome of the incident (the “helping incidents” and the “hindering incidents”):

4. What has helped you do well with these changes?
   How did that help?
   Can you please give me an example?
5. What has hindered you doing well with these changes?
   How did that hinder?
   Can you please give me an example?

Next, I was interested in knowing what would have helped participants that they did not have access to or what they would like in the future (their “wish list”).

6. What things would you like to have to help you continue to do well, or do better?
   How would that help?
   Can you please give me an example?

Similar to the context portion of the interview, participants were asked for another incident, factor or wish list item, until they could not recall anything further. The final question was designed to find out if participants’ ability to handle change was consistent across time or if at some point in their lives they did not do well with change.

7. Have you always done well with change?

If participants answered “no”, they were asked what changed for them or happened that helped them to begin to do well.

In addition to taping the interview, notes were taken to aid understanding, help track the participants’ stories, assist with follow-up questions, and to provide back-up should something go wrong with the audio recording. An interview guide was created accordingly, following the guidelines suggested by Butterfield (2006). It can be viewed at Appendix F.

At the end of the first interview the tape recorder was turned off and participants were asked for their demographic information that included education, age, family status, country of birth, length of time in Canada, industry in which the person works and their career field and current career-related activities or job.

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1 It should be noted that participants were asked a Likert type rating question to determine if the interview itself had any effect on their self perception of doing well. The result contributes to a larger set of studies but it was deemed not germane to this dissertation.
Audio tapes were employed to record the interviews, which were then transcribed. A professional transcriber was hired to transform the audio recordings into the written word. Instructions were provided to the transcriber to ensure accuracy and confidentiality. Said instructions can be found in Appendix G.

Data Analysis

Firstly transcripts were each read through carefully to get a sense of each participant’s experience in its entirety. As a qualitative researcher, I felt I needed to be reflexive throughout the analysis and interpretation process. While it is impossible for one to remain completely outside of the subject matter, I bracketed my views about immigration in Canada (Fischer, 2009) and focused my attention on each participant’s story with care and empathy.

Next transcripts were loaded into Atlas/ti, a scientific software program designed for qualitative data analyses. Atlas/ti facilitates coding that can be linked directly to quotations, field notes and themes. Rather than coding text according to pre-conceived code schemes (as one might do at some point with a grounded theory project), or numbers or code words, I find it useful to use participants’ own words as the codes. The codes need to be easily recognized and understood by participants because an important credibility check is to have the coding and meanings confirmed by each participant. None of the participants knew English as their first language, so this method ensured that the codes and categories remained clear and unambiguous. Each code included the participant number (D01, D02, etc.), one of the changes, an impact of a change, an aspect of doing well, a helping or hindering critical incident, or a wish list item. Each code was linked to the text that supported it.

Code lists were created for each participant which formed the basis for the second interview or members’ check (Butterfield et al., 2005) which will be discussed shortly. With
the aid of Atlas/ti’s “code families” function, themes and categories were created based on aspects of participants’ experiencing in common. The approach is inductive. It involves moving back and forth between codes and possible themes or categories, pondering and allowing common meanings and themes to emerge from the raw data. Field notes and thoughts occurring during the coding and analysis were also entered into the hermeneutic unit using Atlas/ti’s memo function. It links the memo to a specific piece of text or the memo can be “free floating” pursuant to more general observations and considerations.

**Context data analysis.**

As noted earlier in this chapter and in the introduction, participants were asked context-related questions to establish rapport, explore the subject domain thoroughly, and help locate the critical incidents and wish list in their various contexts. The questions asked were “what are the changes you experienced”, “what are the impacts of those changes” and “what does doing well mean to you”. The data collected was analyzed using a conventional context analysis method or CCA. Participant-specific codes are created, words or phrases are linked to supporting text, and then themes were created using the Atlas/ti code families function using an inductive “back and forth” process for each research question.

**Critical incident and wish list analyses.**

After six transcripts were coded, tentative categories (or “code families”) were created began by grouping incidents and wish list items under common meanings which then led to the development of working category titles and rudimentary operational definitions. Placement of incidents and items into categories continued and categories were added and/or modified as required. No more categories or modifications were needed after the 10th transcript was coded, analyzed and the codes were placed which indicated that category exhaustiveness had been reached. Ten percent of the coded transcripts were held back until
the end of the coding and analysis pursuant to the recommendation of Butterfield et al. (2005). Placement of the last incidents was accomplished easily. This process confirms the thorough or exhaustive exploration of the topic under study.

**Credibility/Trustworthiness Procedures**

**Interview fidelity.**

The first and then every 4th interview thereafter was listened to by another person who is familiar with the ECIT against the interview protocol, to ensure that the procedure is being followed and there were no leading questions, sufficient probing, checking and reflecting understanding, and following-up on possible incidents and those requiring an example or outcome. This procedure helped to ensure interview fidelity (Bedi, Davis & Williams, 2005). The pilot interview recording was reviewed by a doctoral colleague, two audio recordings were reviewed by my advisor who is considered by many as an expert on the method, and two were reviewed by another colleague who used the method for her thesis. All feedback was positive and no changes were recommended.

**Inter-coder reliability (trustworthiness).**

Four transcripts (25%) were provided to a colleague who was familiar with both the interview protocol and the scientific software program used to code and analyze the data. We compared codes, and supporting data were compared for the changes participants experienced, the impacts of those changes, how each participant defined doing well, the helping and hindering critical incidents and the wish list items. An acceptable rate of agreement is 75% (Bedi, et al. 2005). Because this is a cross-cultural study, I believe a high rate of agreement is important, so I set the level of agreement at 90%. After our first comparison we reached 88% agreement on the changes, impacts and doing well data. We reached 86% agreement on the critical incidents and wish list items. We exchanged our
thoughts and rationale regarding the data that did not match and reached consensus on many of the items. As a result, the final rates of agreement were 97% for the changes, impacts and doing well definitions. The overall rate of agreement for the incidents and wish list items was 96%. Table 2 shows the rates of agreement per research question at each stage of comparison.
Table 4. Independent Coding (Trustworthiness) Check Record

1st pass

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<th>Impacts agree</th>
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88% Agreement

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86% Agreement

2nd Pass

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<th>Impacts agree</th>
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97% agreement
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<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>98</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

96% agreement
After the last transcript was coded and codes placed into categories, 25% of the codes of incidents and wish list items were randomly selected and given to a person who is familiar with the ECIT to place in the categories, along with the category definitions (category trustworthiness). The person who worked with me on this aspect of validating the analysis is a Master’s level counsellor at a Lower Mainland college who works with new immigrants. She placed 94 items into categories and matched my placement on 86 of them which is a 91% agreement rate. No further validation was deemed necessary.

**Expert opinion: ecological credibility.**

I met with two experts in the field of immigrant transitions and acculturation to solicit their opinion of the categories and the definitions that reflected the incidents and wish list items therein. Both individuals were at one time, new immigrants to Canada. One expert, is a successful entrepreneur who had immigrated in Canada about 12 years ago. Among his many accomplishments (too many to list here), he successfully published a Canadian bestseller written to help new immigrants, founded Canadian Immigrant Magazine, and an on-line networking site for newcomers. He sat on the board of the Vancouver Multicultural Society and was advisor on Social Inclusion and Diversity for the 2010 Olympic Games. A copy of the abstract, introduction, statement of the problem, purpose, rationale, research questions and a very brief description of the method for the current study were provided to him as background information, as well as the categories and their definitions.

The second expert is a colleague who has conducted research using the ECIT, has a Master’s degree in Counselling Psychology, is a member of our research team, and counsels new immigrants at a local college. She is familiar with both method and topic so only the categories and their operational definitions were provided to her.
Each expert was asked to review the categories and their definitions and answer the following questions:

1. Do you believe the categories are useful?
2. Are you surprised by any of the categories, and if so, why?
3. Do you find anything missing based on your experience and what you know about the new immigrant experience in Canada?

I met with the first expert in person and as he was naïve to the counselling psychology discipline, and the various rationale behind conducting the study. We then reviewed each category, their definitions and where needed some of the results that informed the categories. To the first question, he replied that yes, he believed the categories were very useful. To the second question, he replied that he was surprised about a number of things. Firstly, he was surprised how much his own personal experience was reflected in the categories and results. Secondly, he was surprised that there were so few hindering incidents. To the third question, he replied that no, he could not think of anything that was missing from the results are presented. Anecdotally, we talked about values, and how they were represented across many of the categories. The expert urged me to consider highlighting the importance of values in successful integration. He felt that the write up should show what is of value to new immigrants in the context of their new host culture. I agreed.

Because the values described transcended the category groupings, I decided to create two “super-categories”. Each of the critical incidents/wish list item (and the supporting quotations) was reviewed through the lens of the following two definitions of values to determine if the incident or item contained a value statement. The first definition is phenomenological. It was used to determine that which participants experienced subjectively
to be good. The second, a sociological definition, was a statement of principles or standards of behaviours of the participant and/or Canadian society. Applying these simple definitions to the critical incidents allowed values to emerge more clearly.

The two definitions of values were submitted to the same colleague who independently placed 25% of the incidents and wish list items. She was asked to consider each incident using just the two definitions and note which of them she felt related to a value. On the first pass we had 95% agreement so no further validation was deemed necessary.

The second expert provided her answers to the questions via email. She said that yes the categories were useful, no, she was not surprised at the findings, and no, she did not find anything missing based on her knowledge and experience.

**Participant cross-checking.**

It is integral to most qualitative research methods to validate the researcher’s understanding of participants` data by inviting participants to share in the analytic process (*descriptive and interpretive credibility*), and the ECIT is no exception (Alfonso, 1997; Butterfield et al. 2009). A second interview provided an opportunity for each participant to review, add to, clarify or modify their coded critical incidents and wish list items, and then do the same for the categories in which each was placed. A sample questionnaire is attached as Appendix H (adapted from Butterfield, 2006).

Each participant was contacted by email with a word document attachment that contained his or her results in two sections: the Critical Incidents section and the Categories section. The Critical Incident section began by re-acquainting the participant to the primary research questions i.e. “what helped”, “what hindered”, or “what would you wish for to help with changes”. Then each participant was asked to answer the four questions below regarding their individual incidents and wish list items:
1. Are the Helping, Hindering and Wish List items correct?
2. Is there anything missing?
3. Is there anything that needs revising?
   Do you have any comments you’d like to add?

Next, the category headings were listed and each incident and item was placed for their review accordingly.

1. Do the category headings make sense to you?
2. Do the category headings capture your experience and the meaning that the incident or factor has for you?
3. Are there any incidents that don’t belong in the category in which they were placed? If so, where do you think they belong?

Lastly, I asked for written permission to quote the participant in the final write-up at the end of this questionnaire. All but one of the participants provided their answers and comments via an email attachment. One participant preferred to do the second interview on the phone. At the participant’s convenience, questions from the second interview questionnaire were verbally communicated and notes of the participant’s responses were recorded by hand.

All participants agreed that their incidents and items captured their experiences. All said they understood the categories, what they represented and that the categories made sense to them. Many remarked that they were pleased that their results as presented were so thorough, understood and well represented.

Each participant agreed that their items had been correctly placed in their respective categories, with the minor exception of one participant who added to one hindering item. Consequently it was moved to a different category. Six participants responded with new information they had thought of since the first interview. The new information was loaded into the individual transcripts and coded, which yielded nine helping incidents, five hindering incidents and two wish list items. These were analyzed, placed in categories accordingly and
integrated into the final results, thereby completing participants’ validation of the analysis and interpretation of their stories.

**Theoretical agreement.**

Lastly, to be trustworthy, results should have a relationship to existing literature (theoretical agreement) (Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, & Amundson, 2009). This process has two steps (Alfonso, 1997; Maxwell, 1992). The first is to make explicit the assumptions that underlie the research; these were outlined in Chapter 1. The second process is to compare study results to existing literature which discussion is presented in Chapter 5.

**Anecdotal Observations**

Similar to the participant who inspired this study, a number of participants in the current study used metaphors to describe and convey important meaning to me during their interviews. This was an important aspect of our intercultural communications, so the word cruncher function of Atlas/ti was employed to retrieve, organize and analyze this data. All the words spoken were saved to an Excel spread sheet making it possible to review and locate metaphorical speech in the transcriptions.

**Data Storage**

Documents and recordings will remain for five years in a locked cabinet in a research lab in the Scarfe Library Block, Faculty of Education, and at the end of that time they will be destroyed. The data analysis on the lab computer is password protected and will be deleted at the end of five years.

**Reporting of Results**

Results presented in Chapter 4 are as follows: 1) results of the context analysis pursuant to the three context questions about changes experienced, impacts of those changes, participants’ definitions of doing well, 2) the critical incident and wish list item results via
the categories that emerged from them, and 3) results regarding participants’ handling of change in the past. Categories’ of incidents and items descriptive content are reported if they met a minimum participation rate of 25%. Representative quotations are used to illustrate meanings and outcomes of the incidents and items.
Chapter 4

Results

Changes Experienced

In order to orient participants to the interview process and questions, and provide the context for the primary research question of what factors help and what hinder their doing well, participants were first asked to describe the changes that have affected their work life.

All participants in this study reported that they had immigrated to Canada to begin new lives. None of the participants had a work position waiting for them when they arrived. All had been in Canada for less than one year and some had found paid work at the time of the interview. One of the participants was just starting on her career path when she arrived in Canada but the other sixteen participants had left established careers in their countries of origin. At the time of the interview none were working at the same level of career development that they had achieved back home. Analysis of participants’ descriptions of changes yielded 149 items. Finding work in their field and developing their careers here was of paramount importance to all, however participants also described a variety of changes in other areas of their lives. Changes were therefore grouped under three general domains: Work Life (100% participation, 80 items), Personal Life (82% participation, 38 items) and Societal Life (76% participation, 31 items). Each domain was subdivided into themes and where needed for further clarification, sub-themes. Themes are presented within the domains in order of their rates of participation, beginning with the largest theme. Table 3 provides the participation rates and number of items contributing to each section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domains of Change</th>
<th>Themes &amp; Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Participation Rate (N=17)</th>
<th>Number of Items (N=149)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Life</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Work Culture Changes</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Applying for Work</td>
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<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How Work is Done</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Market</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Employability</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job Climate (e.g. Recession)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Life</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Social Connections &amp; Support</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting people</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing people</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relocation &amp; Settlement</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural World</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Work life.

Work Life domain items were organized under two themes: Work Culture (94% participation, 57 items) and Labour Market (76% participation, 23 items).

Work culture changes.

The 57 changes described by this theme were provided by 16 participants. Items were divided into two subthemes; leaving one’s job in one’s country of origin and applying for work here (88% participation, 24 items), and noting the differences in how work is done here when compared with work cultures in their countries of origin (76% participation, 33 items).

Applying for work.

The unfamiliar processes of applying for work were described by 15 participants. They included networking (which includes a lack contacts here), volunteering, how to present oneself at an interview and the importance of soft skills. More specific changes were differences in the way resumes should be written & having to start over to build new references. The government job search and career counselling programs that were made available to immigrants as well as the numerous resources at libraries and on the internet were also noted as a change for three participants. Competing for work was a change for two participants.

How work is done.

The second subtheme includes changes experienced by 13 participants regarding how work is done here. The most common change observed was how working hours here are more conducive to having family and personal time. Many participants observed the differences in how particular industries worked, for example the different approaches to standards, rules and regulations in electrical engineering or logistics and transportation.
Organization of social services was noted as different by one participant. One participant found that her profession is much more specialized here than in her country of origin. Two participants observed that the same quality of work is expected here as in their homeland, but in a shorter amount of time. Differences in payment methods or wages, work breaks and punctuality were also mentioned.

**Labour market.**

The changes contributing to this theme are divided into two sub-themes: employability (76% participation, 23 items), and *job climate* (29% participation, 5 items).

*Employability.*

Several participants said that they were given permanent resident status based on their employability which was determined by criteria set out by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. All 12 participants contributing to the employability sub-theme found that their work experience and credentials were not recognized by employers, professional associations and/or educational institutions here: “...suddenly when I come over here I realize something that affects almost all immigrants. No matter whatever education you have, no matter whatever experience you have, uh, it doesn’t matter at all.”(Participant D18)

*Job climate.*

One change affecting the job climate mentioned by three participants was the recession and two participants said the free market (as opposed to a government regulated market) was a change for them.

**Personal life.**

This domain of participants’ lives reflect changes that contributed to two themes: Social Connections and Support (70% participation, 21 items), and Relocation and Settlement (53% participation, 17 items).
Social connections and support.

The 21 changes contributing this theme were provided by 12 participants. The theme Social Connections and Support was divided into two subthemes: meeting people (41% participation, 13 items), and missing people (41% participation, 8 items).

Meeting people.

Seven participants used several descriptors for the differences they noted about the local people they met here, such as “friendly”, “caring”, “helpful”, “courteous”, “respectful” and “patient” which was a surprise to them. A few participants also described Canadians as socially reserved or “closed”, and generally “different” from people in their homeland. Two participants said communication norms were different in terms of how much information one should disclose in both work and social situations; it seemed to take longer to build relationships.

Missing people.

The sub-theme of missing people is about how seven participants experienced changes in their lives in terms of social support. Six said they had little or no social connections here and six noted that they had left behind a lot of family and friends.

Relocation and settlement.

This theme captured the changes described by nine participants that were associated with moving to Canada. The act of moving itself was the most common. More specific changes noted were transportation access and efficiency, the relative ease of access to information, the different ways one applies for services such as schooling for the children, drivers’ licenses, phone service, bank accounts, or medical help, and how one purchases items for living such as supplies and groceries. A few participants observed that the cost of living is higher here.
**Societal life.**

This domain reflects those changes observed by 13 participants more generally across personal and work life domains. There are three themes that comprise this area: Societal Values and Customs (59% participation, 15 items), Language (41% participation, 8 items), and the Natural World (41% participation, 8 items).

**Social norms.**

This largest theme in the domain of living in Canadian society consists of changes noted by 10 participants with respect to general values held by Canadians when compared to those of their respective homelands. For example, four participants noted that Canada is a safe place to live. Another was the perception that people are treated fairly or with less discrimination than in their countries of origin. One person observed that Canadians value their fun and recreation.

In a somewhat different vein, a few participants mentioned how different it was for their children to be educated through play as well as studying. Traditions and customs were either mentioned as non-specific changes to be learned and understood or specific traditions were cited such as Hallowe’en, the Pride Parade and the Lighting of the Tree.

**Language.**

Almost half of all the participants mentioned that learning English as a second language was a change. Three participants had been taught English as the second official language in their countries of origin however they noted the unfamiliar aspects of Canadian English, such as accents and colloquialisms. For example, one participant had written and published in English but he observed how different it is to converse in Canadian English.
Natural world.

The changes described in this theme were about the natural world here being different than to what participants were accustomed. Three of the seven contributing participants noted that the weather was colder, and the seasons more varied or distinct. Two mentioned that the natural environment was overall very different to them (both emigrated from tropical climes). One participant said Vancouver’s beauty was a change for him. Another said he noticed there were a lot less people here than in his homeland.

Impacts of Changes Experienced

Participants were asked to describe the impacts of the changes experienced. Content analysis yielded 121 items which were organized under three domains: Psychological Impacts (100% participation, 54 items), Work Life Impacts, (100% participation, 51 items) and Personal Life Impacts, (70% participation, 16 items). Similar to the section on Changes Experienced, themes and sub-themes were created to further organize the items and reveal meanings in common. Themes are presented here in order of their rates of participation, beginning with the largest domain. Table 4 provides the participation rates and number of items contributing to each section.
Table 6. Impacts of Changes Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact Domain</th>
<th>Impacts Themes &amp; Sub-Themes</th>
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<th>Number of Items (N= 121)</th>
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<td><strong>Negative</strong></td>
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<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reactions to Work Life Changes</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generalized Reactions</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication &amp; Social Norms</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive</strong></td>
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<td>Positive Feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Thinking</td>
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<td><strong>Work Life Impacts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Impacts on Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of Opportunities</td>
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<td>Starting Over</td>
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<td>Maximizing Work Opportunities</td>
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<td>Adjusting Plans &amp; Goals</td>
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<td><strong>Personal Life Impacts</strong></td>
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<td>Making Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Financial Impacts</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Psychological impacts.

The themes that contributed to Psychological Impacts (100% participation, 54 items) are negative psychological impacts (76% participation, 21 items) and positive psychological impacts (70% participation, 33 items).

**Negative psychological impacts.**

The largest theme was negative psychological impacts which consists of items that reflect 13 participants’ negative psychological experiences as a result of the changes. Items were deemed appropriate for this theme if they contained an expression of a negative emotion or a reference to a difficulty or struggle dealing with some of the changes. Items were organized into three sub-themes: reactions to work life changes (41% participation, 8 items), generalized reactions (35% participation, 7 items), and communication and social norms (29% participation, 6 items).

**Reactions to work life changes.**

The psychological challenges of some of the changes to their working lives were described by seven participants. The following quotes illustrate how daunting it would be to start over in one’s field of expertise within a very different workplace system and culture: “the social service or house care service is totally different organized so it’s, this will be a very difficult process for me to come to [understand].” (Participant D16)

Other participants expressed being puzzled and frustrated by the fact that the government recognized their credentials and education, but employers did not, for example:

I don’t know what makes it different, uh, you know? Oh you [have to] have local studies or local certification, I don’t know what’s the importance of that because probably you have done the same thing from a different place. But you know you have to re-do it all, you know? (Participant D07)
General reactions.

This sub-theme was created to capture the negative psychological impacts that were general and permeated both work and personal lives of six participants. They described cultural and environmental changes that left them feeling overwhelmed and uncertain as illustrated in the following quote: “seeing new things here, it’s tough for me, tough to know new environment, new country, it seems that this is very different” (Participant D4)

A few of these participants also described the anxiety and loneliness that accompanied letting go of one’s past life as the following quote illustrates: "I was the leader in the company, I manage almost hundred people, so left that behind. When I arrive here it's kind of, feeling lonely, changing situations, companies, changing the job. So that's a very big change for me” (Participant D04).

Communication and social norms.

Consistent with the changes to their everyday language and other ways of communicating, four participants contributing to this sub-theme described the negative psychological impact of learning colloquial English. To understand locals in conversation here was challenging as illustrated in the following quote:

For me the difficulty first is language, because… even though I can communicate, I can listen to the local people, but still I don’t have any specific concept…. So it require a lot of effort for me to get to know this. (Participant D11)

As previously noted, some participants found Canadians to be “closed” or reserved compared to people in their homelands and this caused some participants confusion and anxiety. In the example that follows the participant recalls his embarrassment as he struggles to understand:
A: when you start telling [your personal stories] you expect the same kind of response, or an acknowledgement from the other side, [and] you get a feeling of, ah, probably they are not interested to know [about you] because you are not a personal friend.

Q: ...so that’s an odd feeling

A: yeah, (pause) I don’t know maybe it’s been because we are new to this country, or maybe it’s trouble because you need to build lots of trust. (Participant D7)

**Positive psychological impacts.**

The next largest theme was Positive Psychological Impacts. It was informed by items that described a positive emotion and/or indicated a positive psychological valence. The positive psychological impacts were further organized into two sub-themes which are positive feelings (59% participation, 21 items) and positive thinking (47% participation, 12 items). The latter items were based on participants’ vocalizing their internal dialogue in response to some of the changes.

**Positive feelings.**

Ten participants expressed positive feelings in reaction to some of the changes they found here. They expressed feeling good, happy, appreciated or valued, welcome, and grateful. Many of these impacts were a direct result of participants’ early interactions with Canadians: “People here [are] very friendly, they just say ‘hey, hello’, even though we do not know each other. So we just feel very welcome, or just people accepted us” (Participant D11).

Participants said they liked that the local people respect and are patient with each other and that one can find the help one needs, sometimes without having to ask. Others expressed gratitude for the services provided to them to help them with settlement. A number
of participants commented that they enjoyed the community and family events each weekend, for example: “we often go out or often get involved in something just to meet people. And we enjoy doing that.” (Participant D11).

*Positive thinking.*

Many of the positive thinking items described those experiences of changes that confirmed 10 participants’ decision to move to Canada as the right choice, for example. “every day like here, like the quality of food, quality of water, quality of breeze in air (chuckle)...I can [be] thinking of this... here my understanding of this moving is,... that it was ah making the best decision...” (Participant P59).

Three participants indicated that they were pleased and impressed with the way their children are being educated here. Three other participants liked the free market system here because it afforded them more ways to seize work opportunities and develop their ideas.

Rationalizing and acceptance of work culture changes were included here as positive ways of thinking. Five participants described how they accepted through understanding, the demand for Canadian work experience, the consequences of leaving one’s former success behind, and accepting volunteering as a common way for new immigrants to get into the Canadian workforce. The following quote is representative and it illustrates the logic behind acceptance:

the only thing... I can do at this moment is adapt to the changes. I cannot do anything, you know? I have no other options than to adapt to these changes. It’s about choice again, do you want to adapt to this change or go back to the same old silos? (Participant D07)
Work life impacts.

The impacts that informed this domain were those pertaining to work and career development (100% participation, 50 items). Two themes emerged: Negative Impacts on Work Life (70% participation, 23 items) and Problem Solving (65% participation, 27 items).

Negative impacts on work life.

The theme of Negative Impacts on Work Life consists of 23 items described by 12 participants as a lack of success in finding work and/or experiencing more delay in the development of their career than they expected. Two sub-themes, lack of opportunities (47% participation, 12 items) and starting over (41% participation, 11 items) were created to further delineate these impacts.

Lack of opportunities.

Eight of the 12 participants contributing recounted their lack of job search success or a lack of job opportunities as a result of the changes they faced regarding employers’ response to their work experience, credentials and/or education: “I expected having this certification would help me find a job easily but, you know, that is not really the case.” Participant D4.

Three participants believed that their lack of proficiency in spoken English negatively impacted their chances of getting work. Two participants said they were impacted by the recession because they would have to compete with more people for less jobs. One participant said he felt unprepared to compete for work in an open market society.

Starting over.

Seven participants described having to start their careers over, the negative psychological impact of which was presented above: “the impact for me is I have to start
over again, and for me it is not easy, especially in my line of work.” (Participant D20). This sub-theme also included having to make new contacts, build new references, and establish a work record “from scratch”. In order to get hired, two participants said that they had to revise and shorten their resumes considerably, and to remove any references to their senior level experience when they applied for lower level or jobs outside their field.

**Problem solving.**

The theme of Problem Solving was created from descriptions of 12 participants doing something in response to the work culture and job climate changes. These were adjustments or action-based responses to the problem of getting work and beginning to develop their careers in Canada. Two sub-themes were created to further organize these impacts: *maximizing work opportunities* (65% participation, 20 items), and *adjusting plans and goals* (47% participation, 8 items).

**Maximizing work opportunities.**

Recall that government assistance, in particular employment counselling and job search resources were noted as changes by several participants. At the time of the interview many were enrolled in or had finished the various job search and employment counselling programs made available to them. Participants also talked about taking advantage of access to networking and researching work opportunities through Canadian immigrant support websites, as well as with the help of public libraries – these were new resources to them. As a result of taking advantage of these resources, participants changed their approach to finding work: “and [the course] made me to think, okay, hey, what I have been doing is probably not correct.” (Participant D07)
Adjusting plans and goals.

Participants talked about adjusting their short and long term career goals to fit their new work situation. The following quote is typical of this response: “[because of the recession], … I might need to re-correct where I want to be in a year or two’s time, just because I’m going to have to re-invent myself and re-position myself”. (Participant D01) Other examples include changing their career direction, upgrading their training to Canadian standards, and looking for work outside their field.

Personal life impacts.

Under the Personal Life Impacts domain (70% participation, 16 items), two themes emerged: Making Plans (47% participation, 9 items), and Negative Financial Impacts (29% participation, 7 items).

Making plans.

Similar to the participants who contributed to the theme of Problem Solving presented under the Work Life Impacts domain, the eight participants who contributed to this theme made plans to adapt. Most notably, four participants talked about increasing their social network as exemplified in the following quote “In my country I have a lot of friends, but coming here I have to build up all my social relationships again…” (Participant D11). Three participants talked about taking on extra volunteer work to stay busy while they looked for work. One participant mentioned her plan to wear warmer clothing when the season changed.

Negative financial impacts.

Five participants mentioned the negative financial impact of moving and settling in Canada. Some remarked that their wages had decreased or the cost of living was higher.
Others noted their savings dwindling or noted that they would have to forgo spending until they were more settled and/or working full-time.

**Summary of changes and impacts.**

All participants mentioned at least one work life change, however there were more items about work culture than changes to participants’ employability. Personal life changes were mostly about changing social support and meeting new people. Some changes were more global such as new customs, Canadian values, language and the environment.

Impacts included negative and positive psychological reactions to changes. Some were in response to work life changes, some to the general impact of moving to Canada, and some in response to the new language/communication norms. Positive reactions were mostly emotional, including satisfaction in choosing Canada. The work life impacts were more concrete. For example participants observed a loss of opportunities and the daunting task of starting over. Taking steps to solve these problems were also included as to impacts of the changes. Similarly, the personal life impacts were mainly making plans to increase social support and community involvement. Finally, negative financial impacts were mainly a result of changes to employability.

Overall the interviews yielded a detailed picture of the changes and impacts participants experienced within the first year of their time in Canada.

**Doing Well Defined**

Participants who volunteered for this study self identified as doing well with the changes that affected their working lives. It was therefore important to understand what doing well signifies for each participant. The question “What does doing well mean to you?” produced 53 items which were analyzed and organized under two general domains: Doing Well Personally (82% participation, 43 items), and Doing Well in Work Life (53%
participation, 18 items). Items were organized under Work Life if they reflected doing well with respect to working or career development. All other items were placed in the Personal Life domain. Themes are presented below in order of their rates of participation, beginning with the largest theme within each domain. Numbers of items and participation rates are presented in Table 5.

Experiencing positive emotions told participants they were doing well psychologically. The absence of negative feelings also indicated that participants were doing well. Doing well meant adapting in the various aspects of Canadian life or knowing that they were making an effort to do their best. Coping with all the changes and meeting one’s survival needs also defined doing well. Another doing well indicator was problem-solving and accomplishing tasks in terms of settlement. Doing well socially meant fitting in, taking risks in terms of connecting with new people, being understood in English and making friends. Participants also felt they were doing well, if their children were doing well. Work life well-being was indicated by working or volunteering, or experiencing success in that regard. Working in one's field of expertise, communicating well with co-workers, and fitting into the work culture were measures of doing well. Lastly, having plans and goals pertaining to working and careers provided some participants with a sense of making progress, which contributed to their doing well.
Table 7. Themes of Doing Well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas and Themes of Doing Well</th>
<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doing Well Personally</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doing Well Psychologically</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling happy, feeling good, feeling confident, feeling accepted, belonging; feeling hopeful, able to cope or survive changes &amp; challenges, &amp; feeling useful</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not afraid, anxious or confused, keeping worries at bay, bad mood is temporary, not depressed, not worrying about basic needs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doing Well Socially</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing well means fitting into or being part of Canadian society; making new friends and social connections.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Well Being</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing well because our families are doing well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Towards Settlement</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success with the practical aspects of settlement; getting things accomplished, financially okay.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doing Well in Work Life</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working/Volunteering</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succeeding at work, working in one’s field, working every day, fitting in to the workforce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals and Plans</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having back-up plans, having clear goals, having confidence in goals, seeing daily progress towards goals, knowing where resources are or having knowledge of how to proceed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Doing well personally.

The following themes were developed under the domain of Doing Well Personally: Doing Well Psychologically, (59% participation, 17 items). Doing Well Socially, (41% participation, 14 items), Family Wellbeing, (29% participation, 5 items) and Towards Settlement (24% participation, 7 items).

Doing well psychologically.

The largest of the themes is Doing Well Psychologically which consists of 10 participants’ descriptions of positive states of being. Participants used descriptors such as feeling comfortable or calm or at peace, feeling accepted, feeling happy to be here, feeling confident, feeling good, and feeling like one belongs in the new society. The following quote describes a feeling of comfort that is linked to belonging: “For me, doing well would mean feeling comfortable when I step out my home. I feel more comfortable walking on street, and I feel I belong here.” (Participant D12). Several participants said feeling hopeful about the future was a gauge of their doing well, for example: “… of course I miss things from (laughter) my home country. But I still feel happy and full of hope. I hope to have a better life for my family and for me” (Participant D13).

Another indicator of doing well was believing that one is successfully adapting to changes and meeting challenges, as illustrated by this next quote: “doing well means to say we are able to actually settle very well or adapt very well in all aspects of life, you know?” (Participant 20) Doing well also meant knowing they were making an effort to cope with new situations. There was an element of effort involved - as long as they were trying their best to adapt or cope, they were doing well: “doing well here means, uh, we can cope with the new situation, although it’s very difficult… we feel sometimes [it is] overwhelming. But we
still understand that we need to get along, and ... we try” (Participant D11). It is important to note that doing well included meeting basic survival needs:

A: So I feel myself that it, because ah, because I, even now I have sufficient income to go with my hygenetical (sic) demands, it's like house, food and so on.

Q: Your basic needs?

A: Yes, yes. Yes. And ah this is ah very important towards psychology goal [of] feeling good. I can exist as human being (Participant P59)

Finally, a few participants also said it was important to stay busy to continue doing well, and two said that helping others was important for them to feel that they are doing well.

Some participants defined doing well as the absence of negative feelings, such as worrying about their progress. One participant said she knew she was doing well, because she was not confused or frightened when she began her first job here. Another said that she knew she would experience “depressed feelings” but that these were only temporary and would likely disappear. Lastly, one participant gauged how well he was doing by how his stomach felt, which implied an absence of anxiety.

Doing well socially.

This theme is the first of two second largest themes. It consisted of 14 items contributed by seven participants. Of these, five described doing well in terms of how successful they are at fitting in to the social aspect of Canadian culture. Fitting in was indicated by socializing with locals outside one’s cultural group. This involved taking risks such out of going out to meet new people, and emulating locals in terms of dress, behaviours and/or accent, for example:
I think success is determined with just being able to fit in, and I think we fit in well…, because if I just found work, and I didn’t really fit in, then I wouldn’t be a Roman in Rome, right? … success is not just finding great working and making a lot of money, but being a part of the community. (Participant D01).

Taking risks was seen as a necessary part of fitting in: “Well, doing well to me is, uh, I move from my comfort place, and, you know, my ethno-side and gelling with society. (Participant D18)

Communicating well in English was another measure of fitting in and therefore doing well. The quote that follows captures the importance of not only being understood but being valued for what one has to say:

because the more I, talk and communicate, ... I see, how well I fit into society. That’s the first thing I would see as a success point…. It just gives you a satisfaction that, you know, someone from another society has listened to you, and gone by your advice… (Participant D18).

Making social connections, particularly local friendships and with neighbours were described as indicators of doing well by four participants: “so you need some new friends. ...[to] go out, have some fun. I think that you are doing well if you have such friends.” (Participant D03)

Family well being.

Five participants said that doing well was contingent to a certain extent on their families doing well. All but one provided examples of their children doing very well in school and socially. This not only confirmed participants’ decision to choose Canada but they said it made them feel good to see their children adapting so quickly: “It’s a first for why we are doing well” (Participant D19)
Towards settlement.

The last theme in the domain of Personal Well Being contains seven items that convey four participants’ progress in the practical matters of settlement. One participant listed his progress in matters of finding a home, commuting, getting the children enrolled in school, etc. Another defined his doing well in part, as being able to “fend off the immediate problems, financial or otherwise” and he provided an example of his success “getting my [driver’s] license is doing well, I got my license, first shot!” (Participant D28). Two participants mentioned financial matters, for example: “Doing well means that, uh, I feel I am fit on the financial side.” (Participant D10)

Doing well in work life.

Two relatively distinct themes emerged from 18 items that nine participants described as doing well in one’s work life: Working/Volunteering (41% participation, 11 items), and Plans and Goals (35% participation, 7 items).

Working/Volunteering.

This doing well theme consists of 11 items contributed by seven participants. At the time of their interviews, all 17 participants in this study were working in some capacity, that is working for pay, volunteering and/or taking courses: however only seven referred to working, either now or in the future, in response to the question “what does doing well mean to you?” Four of these said that doing well meant experiencing success at one’s workplace or volunteering for example, “when you get the recognition from your superiors, because for me I have started to volunteer recently, that you get a feeling that oh yes you are doing a good job..., it is wonderful.” (Participant D07)
Working or volunteering in one’s area of expertise or career field signified to three participants that they were doing well, even if at a less senior position. For example one participant is a highly qualified engineer but he was working as an electronics technician. Three participants talked about fitting into the world of work as an indicator of doing well. This involved being able to communicate with coworkers, fitting in socially and having a general understanding of Canadian work culture.

**Goals and plans.**

Definitions of doing well also pertained to having plans in place and realistic goals to work towards. These were a way of gauging progress. “[Every day] I see the progress, I don’t expect I can get everything instant.” (Participant D06). Having back-up plans, and confidence in one’s goals as attainable as well as knowing how to get proceed were also indicators of doing well.

**Always Handled Change Well Results**

The purpose of this research question was to find out if participants felt they had always managed change well or if not, to determine when and how participants came to be able to do well with change.

Fourteen of the 17 participants said they have always handled change well and several commented that others have noted that about them. Three participants also answered in the affirmative but with qualifications. One person said that although she always approached change with optimism, sometimes the outcomes were not positive. To her, doing well with changes is based in part on the results of her handling of same. The second participant said she had always handled changes well in her professional life, but had only somewhat in her personal life. Lastly, one participant said he handles change well, if he knows change is coming and he can prepare for it.
Critical Incidents and Wish List Results

After gathering the contextual data and doing well definitions, participants were asked what helped, then what hindered their doing well with the changes that affected their work, and what they would wish for to continue to do well, or do better. The data collected yielded ten categories. The lowest participation rate in the helping categories that emerged from this data set was 29% which exceeded the accepted minimum for reporting (e.g. 25%; Borgen & Amundson, 1984) so all helping category results are reported. The absence of hindering incidents in some categories is considered germane to the discussion, so all hindering sides of the categories are reported. Wish lists are reported if the participation rates met the minimum.

Participants provided a total of 386 items, which consists of 273 helping incidents, 54 hindering incidents and 59 wish list items. Ten categories are shown in Table 6 based on descending participation rates in the helping side of each, and where rates equal, the larger number of category items is reported first: Taking Action -100% (64 items); Personal Qualities - 94% (39 items), Work and Life Experiences, Skills and Knowledge - 94% (70 items), Life in Canada - 76% (63 items); Preparations and Research -76% (17 items); Social Support - 76% (53 items), Government/Agency Support - 71% (27 items); Beliefs and Perspectives - 65% (32 items); Plans and Goals - 47% (12 items); and Financial Security - 41% (9 items). The helping participation rates were higher in every category than in the hindering incident or wish list components of the categories.
Table 8. Critical Incidents and Wish List Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (% total participation)</th>
<th>Helping Incidents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Hindering Incidents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Wish List Items</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Incidents</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Incidents</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taking Action (100%)</strong></td>
<td>N=17</td>
<td>N=273</td>
<td>N=17</td>
<td>N=54</td>
<td>N=17</td>
<td>N=59</td>
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<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Qualities (94%)</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Life In Canada (76%)</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Work &amp; Life Experiences (94%)</strong></td>
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<td>76%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Support (76%)</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs &amp; Perspectives (65%)</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation, &amp; Research (76%)</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Government Programs &amp; Support (71%)</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plans &amp; Goals (47%)</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Security (41%)</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers in **bold** indicate participation rates of 25% or higher*
Taking Action.

Taking Action is the largest helping category and although tied in participation rate with Personal Qualities, it has many more items. The helping side of Taking Action is defined by those incidents that pertain to participants taking some sort of action to help them do well with the changes since they arrived in Canada, both work and settlement related. It consists of 48 helping incidents contributed by 16 participants, (94% participation). There were no hindering incidents but there were 16 wish list items that described what actions nine participants wished to do in the future.

Taking Action helping incidents.

Helping incidents were organized into themes and are presented from largest participation to smallest: networking, volunteering, courses and workshops, social integration, and working.

Networking.

The most common activity described was networking (contributed by 11 participants). Outcomes were getting work and volunteer opportunities, learning soft skills, learning local work culture, gaining confidence and remaining optimistic. The activity was new to most participants, many of whom showed considerable enthusiasm as they described their positive networking experiences:

It’s like dominoes, just kind of crashing and going beautiful. So let’s say I’ve invested in breaking the ice with twenty different people, ... if I’ve made a positive impact on them, they go on to mention it to other people…And it seems to be opening doors I did not know existed! (Participant D01)

It may not be big managers working in other companies, it could be some of your peers. and you never know when you could get a call. I feel that, ...the more you
network, the more leads they provide you. So what a networking experience I am learning! (Participant D18)

Some participants went directly to potential employers to do informational interviews. This method of learning by doing or by “trial and error” (Participant D10) included asking their contacts for feedback. Participants considered this approach worthwhile because they learned something of value that in turn increased their confidence:

So I see myself, you know, strengthening at every stride... I get back to the recruiter and say ‘hey, I would like a frank and honest assessment about where I stand. Can you tell me all of the things I need to improve on...?’ (Participant D18)

There were many instances where networking and work opportunities came from unexpected sources, such as volunteering. For example one participant volunteered for the Olympics. Not only did he make significant work-related connections, he was excited to meet immigrants from around the world and he later reported that he was paid for his work.

Networking had a number of positive psychological benefits in addition to learning and gaining confidence. It afforded participants a way to connect with other immigrants, which contributed social and practical support. Networking was viewed by many of these participants as a way to integrate into Canadian mainstream society. Details of that type of incident will be revisited in the last section of Taking Action along with other social integration strategies.

Volunteering.

Volunteering was another strategy that six participants described as helping them do well and there was a wide range of benefits realized. Positive outcomes included gaining Canadian work experience and much needed local references, learning about workplace behaviours and cultures, finding paid work or business opportunities, networking and
improving one’s English, making new friends, learning Canadian culture in general, and contributing to society. Four participants also took to volunteering to keep busy “because an empty mind is the devil’s workshop” (Participant D01, Participant D12). Participants said volunteering helped them feel productive and to move forward in the process of settlement. One participant said her volunteer work helped her to formulate long term career plans. Another said it helped her to eliminate a number of career path options, and focus on her passion.

Volunteering as a route to working was a new concept to at least four participants. Some were initially resistant to the idea, but once they started they realized the benefits, for example:

We don’t have volunteer job there,.. when I came I just refuse to work as a volunteer because I just think that’s not fair with my background and my experience, but now I realize, it’s... part of culture here,.... because if you work in the volunteer you improve your skills as a professional and also improve your language, so it’s very good. (Participant D25)

Several of the participants volunteered at more than one place and each position provided them with a piece of much needed work experience related to career development. As noted above, volunteering had positive outcomes unrelated to working or career development such as learning about Canadian culture. This next quote is from a participant who was working well outside his career field:

There was a program held in Stanley Park and I was working there as a security personnel, just manning the entire place...that’s a great opportunity, to meet people, to understand people... it helped me to understand, ... you know culture. (Participant D18)
Five participants were able to find volunteer positions in which they could contribute their career expertise to help others in their community, for example one participant was a translator. She said she loved that she could help people in Canada from her home culture, while keeping her language skills sharp. Somewhat similarly, four participants felt it was important to volunteer to share what they had learned with other new immigrants to help ease their transitions, and thereby contribute to Canadian society.

Two of these participants also talked about how important using their expertise was to preserving their work identity and ultimately their psychological wellbeing: “I can, contribute my expertise ...in volunteering jobs, so I have not lose my identity, it’s one of the most important things to me, so that I can keep optimism in my career” (Participant D04)

Courses and workshops.

All participants mentioned that they were taking (or planning on taking) some sort of course, or workshop, or attending ESL classes, and many of them talked about how doing so helped them do well, especially with respect to knowing how to apply for work, and increasing their employability. Here is a typical example: “I took a lot of courses about the labour market in Canada, to try all the resource, to do research about all that government give for the immigrants. These ... help me a lot.” (Participant D25) Other helping outcomes were increased confidence and optimism about getting work, staying motivated, feeling that one is making progress and again keeping busy.

Taking ESL classes was mentioned by six of these participants as important in their quest for work in their career field; they felt they could speak enough English to take a survivor job but they were focused on career development. Courses included improving one’s colloquial and idiomatic communication skills. Participants were also taking courses to learn how their particular industry works in Canada for example, earning certification in the
construction trades or in social services. In addition to getting local education, which is preferred in most fields, gaining confidence that one can do the work and integrate in to one’s particular field here was perceived as key to experiencing success: “Well first of all it… give me confidence…. And second is that, one of the very important things is learning to integrate, uh, to improve our weaknesses…” (Participant D10) Additional positive outcomes described were again getting to know other new immigrants, and learning about Canadians and Canadian culture.

**Working.**

Some participants were happy to report that they had obtained work, albeit at a lower level of expertise and responsibility, in their chosen fields. Others took work outside their fields however the ultimate purpose for all was to learn about Canadian workplace culture:

One part of me getting this part-time job is for me to understand how do people work over here? Not in terms of work, but how does a workplace look? Or, how does, you know, the gelling, the bonding between employees with your peers, with your managers, with your supervisors. (Participant D18)

It is perhaps noteworthy that no participants mentioned that earning wages was a positive outcome of working - participants seemed focused on learning.

**Social integration.**

As noted previously going out and making connections to build a social network of friends was seen as just as important as getting work opportunities:

a change is a new way of doing things. So the way networking helps, it’s helping you bridging the gap to those new things …When you’re standing in line for checkout, you never know who you could meet, and that person could be a buddy there. It helps you, it helps others. (Participant D12)
Many of these participants described the value of “moving out of our comfort zone” (Participant D01) which meant they would make an effort get involved in society, community activities and attend events in order to learn about Canadian culture. A common helping activity was making a point of meeting and interacting with Canadians outside one’s cultural group as illustrated in the following quote:

I like to be with people, um, from my country where I was born. That’s a part [of doing well]. But, I cannot rely, all my life, on my, friends from my country that live here in Canada. I respect that way of living, but, for me I don’t wish that.

( Participant D10)

The next quote aptly illustrates two important outcomes of participating in Canadian culture: learning how to participate and ultimately enjoying that participation.

So that’s how we are managing the change, we are trying to learn how people enjoy here, how they joke, how do they behave, and how do they manage themselves. One thing was clear to us, if we do not become a part of Canadian community, we are not going to enjoy it. (Participant D12)

_Taking Action wish list items._

It was clear from this category that learning whatever one could about Canadian culture was important to participants in this study and the wish list side takes this approach into the future. There were 16 wish list items contributed by nine participants in the Taking Action category, which was the second largest Wish List.

Six participants wished to volunteer or do more volunteering in order to learn more about Canadian culture, practice their English, and meet new people. Others wanted to contribute more to Canadian society by teaching and mentoring others who struggle: “I think I can give more to, give more to others... I have more time for me to give, to help actually,
psychologically, [as a] teacher.” (Participant D13) Three participants wanted to share their experiences in Canada with other newcomers to help them with their transitions. Anticipated outcomes included contributing to their communities, feeling good and “giving back” (Participant D01) in gratitude.

Some participants wished to take more courses and network more which again included a sociocultural component: “to meet people, doing activities and learning, learning new things and then you’ll do better.” (Participant D07). Two participants wished for time to exercise more and one wanted to have more fun in Canada.

**Summary of Taking Action.**

Helping incidents in this category were generally organized under networking, volunteering, courses and workshops, working and social integration. Specific incidents included activities such as contacting perspective employers, attending interviews, asking for feedback, seizing networking, volunteering and work opportunities as they appeared, practicing their expertise, and sharing with and helping other newcomers, learning as much as they could about applying for work, learning and practicing colloquial English, participating in various community events and social activities, learning by doing, leaving their comfort zones, learning about their industry here or Canadian workplace culture, and continuing to try.

Outcomes included getting Canadian work experience, expanding one’s network, finding new work and volunteer opportunities, getting local education, learning about workplace cultures, learning soft skills, improving one’s English, making social connections and new friends, observing and learning about Canadian cultures in general, participating in and contributing to society. Positive intrinsic outcomes were feeling confident and prepared, feeling optimistic about succeeding, staying motivated and/or focused on goals, feeling good
about contributing and helping, feeling like one is making progress, feeling enthusiasm about learning about their new home and meeting different kinds of people.

There were no hindering items in this category, but the Wish List was the second largest. It included hoping to learn more, and volunteer, network and participate/help others in their communities more to further their career and socio-cultural development.

**Personal Qualities.**

The second, but also largest category in terms of participation, is the Personal Qualities category, with 16 participants (94% participation) contributing 38 items. The helping side of this category is defined by those incidents that reflect participants’ self descriptions of characteristics or qualities and attitudes that they feel help or hinder their doing well with challenges and change. Hindering incidents were included if a quality or characteristic was believed to be a hindrance to doing well, and there was only one incident that met the criteria. Wish List items conceivably would have been those personal attitudes or qualities that participants might wish to change or improve upon, but there were no wish list items.

**Personal Qualities helping incidents.**

Helping incidents were organized further under the following themes: positive affect, flexibility, learning, socially outgoing, and positive self talk.

*Positive affect.*

Eleven of the 16 participants contributing to this category said being a positive or optimistic person or having a positive/optimistic attitude was very important to doing well. Outcomes included staying focused and motivated towards planning and goals, for example:

> We’re very positive people. This is a mental mindset, when you are so positive, there’s always encouragement for you to move forward. ... you know next time I’m
doing this, and you know how you’re going to proceed from subsequently.

(Participant D20)

Being positive or optimistic meant seeing negatives as opportunities and chances to learn. Most participants understood that learning would take time, that “errors” would be made, but a positive perspective meant that one will learn from those experiences and continue to move forward:

Many things I have to do in uh, trial and error. Well, [it] is helping. When, this trial works, this helps to prove me. If it fails, not,... so good, but you need to keep positive. And you prove for the next time. So, I try different ways and modify.

(Participant D10)

Evident in this quotation as well as many others, was that a positive, adaptive orientation fostered hope for the future.

Another beneficial outcome of optimism was how it affected the people around participants, which of course reinforced their positive outlook: “It helps my family who relied on me to believe in our bright future in Canada.” (Participant D19). Two participants believed that their positive energy not only helped them move forward but that it would attract positive energy and positive people. Finally, some participants said that staying positive helped to lessen negative feelings such as frustration or disappointment.

Flexibility.

Over half of the participants either described themselves as adaptive or “flexible” in response to change. Outcomes were accepting changes and unexpected turns of events, maintaining their optimism about the future, and focusing on what they could do, rather than expending energy worrying about what they could not control:
You have to keep changing, you have to be adaptive. You just have to be flexible and adaptive to you know, welcome and appreciate.” (Participant D18)

“I’m flexible in such a way that I have my goal and I’m working on getting [it], … [but] if I don’t get that goal, life will go on. (Participant D10).

Learning.

Understanding the benefits of learning was clearly demonstrated in the Taking Action category, however five participants said the ability to learn and wanting to experience new things helped them do well. For example, this participant described his ability to learn with a metaphor: “Because whatever I have gone through, I’ve absorbed. People normally call me a sponge. So if I have to do something, I will do it. I’m keen observer.”(Participant D12)

The two main outcomes of loving to learn and experience were learning as much as one could about the new culture and enjoyment of learning for its own sake: “an exchange of knowledge will help you grow each time, you know?” (Participant D07). Along with a love of learning was a general appreciation for cultural diversity.

Socially outgoing.

Some participants described themselves as socially outgoing, proactive people whose social confidence had several advantages, such as asking for help and accessing important information: “And proactive, I’m not shy to ask for things, have some help.” (Participant D25). Outcomes of being a social and/ or pro-active person included not only being comfortable with starting new social and work related or networking relationships but enjoying the process. These participants were able to meet their need to have a strong network of friends and social support which many of them described as very important to their overall well being.
Positive self talk.

Included in the helping category of Personal Qualities are incidents that described self talk strategies which demonstrated self awareness and ability to self soothe. Many examples were about self efficacy and self encouragement:

the first few weeks it’s very difficult for me, it’s very hard... to deal with. But I always think okay, I’ll be able to do this. ...if I think oh I can’t do that then I think I will give up. But I think I can do it.” (Participant D11)

But for some reason I cannot get [that] objective, I won’t be frustrated because I’m trying. (Participant D10)

I do analyze this by myself and think ‘calm down (name),... I try to see the things I really want, and then I’m keeping talk to me, like, ‘oh you’re getting there, just have patience... (Participant D25)

Another strategy was to re-direct one’s focus away from the negative:

when you go through a tough time there are a lot of negative feelings that you have, negative voices, negative people around you saying ‘hey, you might not get a job, you might not be successful’, etc. I like to fill myself with a lot of positive things...I read lot of inspiring stories. (Participant D18)

Knowing one’s capabilities as well as limitations confirmed participants’ self efficacy and guided their choices about how to proceed when confronted with a challenge. The key was to focus on what they could do, rather than what they felt they couldn’t: “I know myself well enough to know what kind of challenges I’m able to deal with and ...where to focus my energy”. (Participant D16)
**Personal Qualities hindering incidents and wish list items.**

The hindering side of this category consisted of only one incident that was too singular to report. There were no wish list items.

**Summary of Personal Qualities.**

The most often described personal quality was being a positive and/or optimistic person. Others common descriptors included being flexible, liking to learn or experience new things, and being pro-active and a social person. Also included in this category are incidents indicating self awareness and self talk strategies.

Outcomes included seeing negatives as positives or opportunities to learn, staying focused and motivated towards goals, helping one adapt, feeling hopeful, helping others be positive, and attracting positive energy or friends. It also lessened negative feelings. Being flexible in reaction to changes resulted in participants accepting negative events and being willing to make changes to fit the situation. Valuing learning and experiencing new things helped participants “embrace change”, access and utilize important information, and integrate. Being socially outgoing had the advantage of feeling at ease when asking for help or information, and at building social support. Self talk included self encouragement, remembering past successes and knowing what one could or could not do. As a result participants felt more confident in their approach to settlement and employment.

**Life In Canada.**

This category is defined by those incidents that participants described that are specific to three general areas of Canadian life: Culture and Customs, Freedoms and Rights, and the Natural Environment. It is the fourth largest category consisting of 50 helping incidents contributed by 13 participants (76% participation). The hindering side of the category, which consisted of 9 incidents reported by seven participants (41% participation) reflected
aspects of Canadian life that sometimes made it difficult for participants to feel they were doing well. The wish list side of this category consisted of aspects of Canadian living that participants would like changed or to continue. It consisted of seven items contributed by five participants (29% participation).

**Life In Canada helping incidents.**

*Culture and customs.*

Eight of the 13 participants contributing to the Life in Canada helping category attributed enjoying a better quality of life to their doing well with changes and challenges. Canada was chosen because it offered a better quality of life, for which many participants sacrificed successful and well paid careers. Quality of life related to cultural norms of working and living such as a better work/life balance, a better education for their children and the enjoyment of community activities and cultural events.

Work/life balance meant having a calmer, less busy life-space. Work schedules were predictable or hours limited which provided some participants with more leisure time and freedom than they had in their homelands. One participant expressed surprise that he was “expected” to spend weekends with his family. His quote illustrates two important outcomes which are spending time with family and having time to “de-stress” from work:

> they want, uh, you to spend time with family. You know, this isn’t important in the other Asian countries… the time you get to spend with family is negligible…when you work, work, work, work you know, you stressed so much. You live with lot of pressure right? So here you work for eight hours, go back to your home and spend some time with family then come back next day fresh. (Participant D07)

Enjoying cultural and community activities as a family helped a significant number of participants for example: “Then we as a family have managed change, we enjoy small things,
what we can do as a family in Canada. We go to small places, parks, we go library…”

(Participant D12)

Eight of the participants who contributed to this category said the customary helpful, friendly, and courteous nature of local people helped them do well. This helped participants feel that they mattered to Canadians. Aside from helping new immigrants get the information they needed, and saving time, local people helped participants feel that they are accepted, can belong and can succeed here. This next quote is representative particularly in terms of the common positive outcomes for these participants:

...and you get the feeling that you are part of the society because, you don’t feel that you are unknown to the people. When you try to adapt this culture, it is very important that you get a response from the people, right? So they get you to be involved which is very good. … it gives you comfort feeling. You know it give you confidence that ‘yes’, you know, ‘I can live here. (Participant D07)

One outcome of the local people helping and caring about newcomers was that many participants felt motivated to ‘pay it forward’. This next quote includes a metaphor that illustrates how these experiences go beyond gratitude towards how one can matter in one’s community: “being helpful to each other, give you feeling of belongingness, so then it gives you further motivation to getting into that society. I now want to contribute to the circle...”

(Participant D12)

In a somewhat similar vein, another factor described as helpful, was people’s attitudes towards those who worked in “survival jobs”. The common outcome was feeling valued or that they mattered to others. The illustrative quote that follows reveals how feeling respected and valued eased some of the pressure to fit in. “if you’re working at a store, people don’t want to look down on you. People value your work. That’s a helping factor
because again, it doesn’t give you pressure on your brain, on your mind. And then you can make your way forward.” (Participant D12)

Some participants reported that they had come to Canada to provide a better future for their children. Six of the 13 participants in this category said they were doing well because their children were adapting quickly, doing very well in school and, socially: “they like the life here, [so] we also like.” (Participant D11). Participants commonly attributed their children’s successful adaptation to the value Canadian society places on learning from play as well as from study. Several expressed relief and happiness that their children are doing well, and their children’s success validated their decision to move to Canada: “the [learning] style suits him… his result actually shows. I think the happiest things for us here were actually we got our children education. … I think we have made the right choice.” (Participant D20)

Being part of a culturally diverse society helped participants and their children adapt. “It’s a multi-cultural society, and that makes it even easier for me to adjust to this culture.” (Participant D02) Again, participants were happy with their decision to move here. Another outcome was that because many others here had faced similar challenges, participants did not feel isolated in their struggles. Cultural diversity helped them feel they belonged:

it’s so nice when almost everybody that you talk to they have gone through this same kind of difficulty, that gives you the feeling of being in the society. That’s give you that kind of feeling of happiness. I feel like I'm home. (Participant D07).

Rights and freedoms.

The most oft reported helping incident in this section of the Life in Canada category pertained to Canada’s position on human rights. Several participants noted this as one reason to move here, and similar to the being respected in a “survivor job”, being respected
generally as a human being was very important: “we know that Canada is… a country that emphasize a lot on human rights. So that is one of the reason I think when you’re here you feel that you’re actually a human, people respect your right.” (Participant D20)

Six of the nine participants contributing to this category felt they and their families were much safer here compared to their countries of origin. The following quote illustrates some of the positive outcomes such as enjoying a less stressful life, worrying less about loved ones and friends, and having the confidence to leave family on their own, all of which freed participants’ energy to focus on employment and settlement:

You feel more comfortable to be here, you are leading a more quiet life, and peaceful and calm in your daily living.. (Participant D20).

I don’t have to worry about, uh, the safety of [my] family, [my] children and other people, … some of the countries where I used to live… Anything can happen like… there’s threats to your life, but here I would say there are no such threats, …that gives you more confidence, is very, very good that way (Participant D07)

Religious freedom was described as a helping incident by one participant because it afforded he and his family the freedom and confidence to express and practice their spiritual beliefs without fear of sanction. Although this is only one participant, it is mentioned here because a noteworthy number of other participants described spirituality or their religion as helping them do well. Those incidents are presented in the category of Beliefs and Perspectives.

*Natural environment.*

Six participants described how the beauty and relative lack of pollution of the natural environment helped them do well with settlement and work related changes. Outcomes included feeling refreshed, positive, comfortable, and motivated to do things: “Vancouver is a
real beautiful city. because you know, I wake up everyday and I see a beautiful sun and mountains. It, it just feels so fresh for me…And clean air. “(Participant D18). Another participant said how Canadian society cares for the environment helps him do well because he sees it as an opportunity to learn and apply that knowledge to address the pollution problem in his country of origin. Finally, one of these participants was happy to report that her health is better: “Environment is a kind of medication, my blood pressure is back to normal without medication” (Participant D20).

**Life In Canada hindering incidents.**

As previously noted seven participants (41% participation) contributed 9 hindering incidents associated with their new life in Canada. The incidents are somewhat singular in their content however each is an example of cultural distance. The first four incidents are related in some way to employment, the next two relate to settlement, two to the local weather and one to a behavioural norm.

A number of participants reported spending considerable time applying for work the way they had done in their countries of origin. They sent out numerous resumes and applied to a lot of advertised positions with no success. However, only one participant described this as a hindering factor. She felt she had wasted valuable time and expressed her frustration and discouragement in that regard. Another participant described trying to adjust to shift work which complicated the matter of childcare. A third participant worried about his wife working on her feet which dampened his overall sense of doing well. One participant expressed frustration as he described how difficult it was to meet colleagues and network in his discipline: “people at the higher level are delegated just redirect me to people at lower level and people at lower level just don't get, they are not interested.” (Participant P59)
Two participants described problems with settlement. One related to not having local credit references. The other was having to rent a home and living at the mercy of a landlord.

One participant struggled to understand some behavioural norms: “the social laws are different here so I have to learn all of these. …compared to what I’m used to, I’m feeling over-protected. I’m able to take care of myself.” (Participant D16)

Although these items appear to be quite singular, each of these incidents demonstrates a type of cultural distance that participants experienced as worrisome, frustrating or discouraging.

Lastly, although eight people mentioned the winters here, only two participants found the rainy, colder weather sometimes depressing, and this temporarily affected their mood.

Life in Canada wish list items.

There were five participants (29% participation) contributing six items that pertained to living in Canadian society. Four of them wished that their children would continue to do well in Canada and to “be a part of society,… get a good education” (Participant D02), “have lots of friends” (Participant D11) and “have a better life here,” (compared to her homeland).” (Participant D13) One participant wished to continue enjoying his time with his family, and that they would all continue to enjoy the various resources they had available to them here. One participant said he wished that all Canadians “accepted change as well as we need to accept it” (Participant D01). His hope was that employers would then more readily accept immigrants and develop a more global mindset.

Summary of Life in Canada.

The helping incidents that comprised the culture and customs section of the Life in Canada category included a better quality of life, for example a better work/life balance and enjoying various facets of the local culture. The customary helping and caring nature of the
locals was described as very important to participants. Another significant factor was that participants’ children were integrating easily and doing well and this was attributed to the educational system. Participants also mentioned the multicultural aspects of this society as helpful. Outcomes included more leisure time, more family time, feeling accepted and a sense of belonging, feeling at home, feeling generally comfortable in the new society, feeling valued by the locals, feeling confident that one can succeed here, feeling one’s decision to move here was a good one, feeling motivated to help others and participate in/contribute to society, feeling pride, gratitude and happy that their children are doing well, and feeling positive about the futures of their children.

Participants appreciated Canada’s attention to human rights and freedoms and the value of multiculturalism. Freedom of expression and religion were described by a few as helping but personal and family safety were the most important for two-thirds of these participants. Outcomes of incidents in this aspect of the category included peace of mind, feeling calm, feeling safe, feeling confident that their families were safe and had access to resources, believing that one made the right decision to move here, feeling comfortable in the new surroundings, feeling respected, and many participants said they felt like they belonged here or that they were “home”. Participants also reported having more capacity to focus on work.

The natural environment was praised for its beauty and cleanliness. Participants clearly admired and enjoyed these particular changes. Outcomes included feeling refreshed, energized, motivated and very happy to be here and one participant saw a possible career opportunity.

Hindering incidents included struggling with specific aspects of workplace culture is, wasting time applying for work, lack of references, renting, adapting to behavioural norms,
and the weather. Outcomes described were getting work took longer than one had hoped, feeling frustrated with systemic barriers, or cultural norms and feeling worried, or temporarily depressed.

The wish list items included that participants’ children would continue to do well, to continue enjoying their quality of life, and that employers would more readily accept immigrants and think globally. Outcomes included hope for their children, future enjoyment and appreciation of the resources here, and a better relationship between employers and immigrants.

**Work and Life Experience, Skills and Knowledge.**

Work and Life Experience, Skills and Knowledge is the third largest of the ten categories, with 16 participants (94% participation) contributing a total of 66 items. The helping side of the category is defined by what participants bring to Canada in the way of work and life experiences, training, skills and knowledge that they described as helping them do well. It consists of 27 helping incidents contributed by 13 participants (76% participation).

Hindering incidents were included here when participants’ education, or work experience, skills and knowledge were not recognized in Canada or deemed of value. This is the largest hindering category. There are 23 hindering incidents which were contributed by nine participants (53% participation).

The wish list addresses the desire to work in one’s career field and to contribute one’s expertise, and/or for recognition of one’s credentials and work experience. This is also the largest wish list category. There are 20 wish list items contributed by 12 participants (71% participation).
**Work and Life Experience, Skills and Knowledge helping incidents.**

Living and working in different places was the most often described helping factor in this category and was contributed by eight participants. Much of this experience was in European countries believed by some to be culturally similar to Canada. The general outcome was knowing how to integrate in a different, albeit Western cultural environment.

Previous experience travelling and/or immigrating resulted in participants being familiar with some of the challenges therein, for example, knowing strategies for adapting to local customs (e.g. emulating dress, accents) and feeling comfortable with the newness of the culture:

“...that entire experience was a really good life experience to be able to apply again. Here... I’m able to use all of that. So the learning was, in terms of becoming a Roman in Rome.”

(Participant D01) As a result of this kind of life experience participants said they felt confident and optimistic about their ability to successfully integrate here.

Some participants were confident that their years of education and work experience in their particular fields would provide more opportunities, connections or work options which in turn helped them stay optimistic. One of the more common examples was global working experience: “because my company was multi-national, we have many... connection Europe, Asia, Thailand, so I have lot of experience working with.”

(Participant D19) Working with multinational companies required a number of participants to work in English. Being fluent in conversational English and having experience with western style work cultures were perceived as advantages over those who may not have this type of experience. Two participants had been trained previously in “change management” which they both described as very important to the ease with which they faced all the changes here, for example: “If someone had to classify me [as] successful in my job, [it] is how well I dealt with changes.”

(Participant D18).
Some participants described how adversity or enduring difficult life or work situations helped them do well with change. As a result of these experiences, participants said they feel confident that they are resilient, in other words “strong” or “tough” enough to handle any setbacks here. The outcomes of these experiences were that participants learned to be pro-active, and were determined and confident that they would succeed here. Particularly poignant were participants’ stories of survival. This first quote illustrates how difficult life was for her and her family:

just imagine, the government is trying to suppress you, but you are still able to make money. We don’t really live, actually we struggle a lot. There are a lot of risks, a lot of uncertainty that we actually facing every day.. (Participant D20)

This second quote speaks to participants’ determination and confidence: “I have to be proactive in order for me to survive. I think I definitely can survive Canadian job market.” (Participant D06)

**Work and Life Experience, Skills and Knowledge hindering incidents.**

**The English language.**

The most common hindering factor was described by six of the nine participants contributing to this category as grappling with the English language. Several mentioned how difficult English was to learn, for example:“A: even in my country I work in an English environment, still coming here I have some difficulties, a lot of difficult. Because the accent, and also people here speak very fast.” (Participant D19)

Equally significant was participants’ loss of communication efficacy, and hence a loss of confidence which is reflected in this participant’s words: “I believe I’m not good enough in this. that’s a barrier of language. So I am feeling handicapped, I’m probably not handicapped, but I’m feeling handicapped.” (Participant D16)
Participants expressed concern that difficulties speaking English might be a hindrance to working in their field and furthermore that working in a survival job, (which may not require fluent English), would negatively impact their resume: “I can maybe get a job in a shop. …it’s not very good for my resume in history.” (Participant D03)

*Canadian work experience.*

The next most common type of incident described by five participants was the lack of the Canadian work experience required to get a job in their respective fields. This next quote aptly illustrates the negative emotional impact of hearing that one’s experience working in one’s chosen field, is not good enough here. Participants expressed puzzlement and frustration as they struggled to understand the employer’s point of view:

> when you apply to jobs, when they require only Canadian experience and that is too limited and …that was also make me feel very bad about when I was applying, and when it was hard time, why, why they don’t recognize, for example I was working with international, and then I was thinking why Canada think Canadian is best and not British, not international, … they didn’t even give any opportunity to interview.

(Participant D02)

Although the following participant accepted that she would need to learn the Canadian way of working in her field, she expressed the apparent paradox in the Canadian experience challenge: “as a new immigrant you will never get experience without an opportunity [to be] employed.” (Participant D20)

*Academic and training credentials.*

All 17 participants had advanced degrees/training, but only one of the participants in this study reported that her degree had been accepted here. Five participants said that a lack of recognition by credentialing bodies of one’s academic or training certification was a
hindrance to their doing well. These participants felt frustrated and discouraged, and two of them expressed concerns about their wage earning capacity. The last quote in this section also illustrates how some participants struggled with the reasons for the bias towards local education:

A: …compared to the person who had exactly the same way of education, the only difference that this person made every degree in Canada, is, it’s kind of, (sighs), it’s hindering. You can call it unfair. You need well educated and well experienced people in this field to provide a really good service… and high quality standards, but these points are hindering influence because they keep me away. I’m not able to work as a registered social worker right now.

Q: Ok so, the feeling that I’m getting from you is that this is very frustrating.

A: It is. (Participant D16)

Most of these participants expressed surprise at finding their education would not be accepted on par with Canadians. Note that they had all worked in their respective fields a minimum of eight years. Even though they were all determined and capable professionals, to find out that they could not work in their chosen fields was a difficult reality to manage. The next quote succinctly illustrates how this factor can affect one’s identity, efficacy and self esteem.

Without work, it’s challenging because you feel that you are… nobody. So, this is for me is big, big, big challenge because you have to believe in your own strength, to know who you are…[at first] I don’t’ have patience, I don’t have energy to keeping going, and to show the people that I’m someone, I came from there (Participant D25)

One unfortunate outcome is that participants felt that if they were not invited to compete for positions in their fields, they might face the possibility of starting over which
was to say the least a discouraging proposition: “A: I feel here a little bit more frustrate, because if I want to do the same thing I did in (country), I have to (pause), would take me all these years just to study.” (Participant D25).

**Work and Life Experience, Skills and Knowledge wish list items.**

The 20 wish list items included wishing for a good work position, or work more in line with participant’s expertise, wishing that professional bodies or educational institutions would accept one’s credentials, wishing to be valued by employers, and wishing for things that may also help other new immigrants such as volunteering opportunities and internship programs with employers of interest.

Many participants took this opportunity to offer suggestions about how to improve the current employment climate. Six of the 12 participants contributing to this category wished for work in their field of expertise. The next quote illustrates the willingness of some participants to work for less income, in order to get started in their field here:

maybe if I can find a company, …that they can open that door for me to give me opportunity to same world, maybe they don’t need to pay me in full maybe just half of my salary. I think that, that could be something helpful for me in setting, my future. Yeah. (Participant D04)

Interestingly, five participants expressed a general wish for all newcomers: that employers would be more flexible or more open or global-minded about what new immigrants could bring to their businesses and to the Canadian economy, for example: “All these people have different experiences from different lives, …they can bring so many innovative ideas, they can bring changes and if they only use Canadian experience, something also limited I think” (Participant D02)
Several participants had ideas about how to get newcomers working more quickly which they believe would be helpful for all of Canadian society, which included creating more internships or bridging programs. In a similar vein, participants wished to “give back” to Canadian society both generally and specifically using their work and life experiences, skills and knowledge. Several wished to do this by helping other newcomers. This last quote illustrates anticipated outcomes such as feeling good about helping and contributing:

…I’ve seen so many people go into the negative circle when come to Canada... But if [they get] in to the positive circle, they contribute. The way it’s going to help me is first it’s going to be a satisfaction, happiness, and then, again, I am contributing.

(Participant D12)

**Summary of Work and Life Experience, Skills and Knowledge.**

The helping incidents in this category included working globally, working in Western countries, having immigrated before, working in English before, strong work credentials, working in immigration, change management training, and living through difficult work and life transitions. Outcomes included knowing what to expect in terms of settlement and integration, in particular knowing how to adjust, knowing how to accept change, and knowing what to expect emotionally and how to deal with one’s feelings. Participants also felt confident about getting work, had hope for the future, and believed in their ability to deal with challenges. They also expressed confidence in their career plans and goals, in their understanding of Canadian work culture, and in their command of English.

Hindering incidents were factors such as concerns about English speaking skills, lack of Canadian work experience and non-recognition of education. Outcomes included having to take a “survival job”, struggling with English, worrying about one’s resume, feeling bad about oneself, feeling frustrated, puzzled, discouraged and discriminated against.
Wish list items included wishing for a good position in their field, wishing for acceptance of education and experience by institutions and employers, and for things that may help other new immigrants such as internships or work-bridge programs. Some anticipated outcomes were participants giving back to society, that society would benefit from immigrants’ talents, innovative ideas and experience, and that a more global mindset would help Canada do better on the international stage.

**Social Support.**

This category is defined by incident or factors and items describing social support by family and friends. Social Support is the third largest of the 10 categories (but the smallest by a margin of one participant, after Work and Life Experiences, and Life In Canada), with 12 participants (71% participation) contributing a total of 35 helping incidents. The hindering side of the category consists of 12 items contributed by five participants (29% participation) which is the second largest hindering category after the Work and Life Experiences hindering category. The wish list contains six items contributed by five participants (29% participation).

**Social Support helping incidents.**

Helping incidents included unconditional psychological support but also instances of practical support from relatives and friends they knew from their countries of origin, that helped participants settle and integrate more quickly and/or smoothly.

Almost half of the 12 participants contributing described how their spouses helped them do well with encouragement, ideas and emotional support. For example, discussing problems and finding solutions together helped some feel more confident in their decisions: “one thing I think it helps me a lot, that’s because me and my husband, we always discuss things together,...And it also, um, give us some confidence that we do together things
This next quote highlights the general benefits of unconditional support and caring: “It would be a big, big difference to be here by myself but that is not the case, so my partner is a big, big help, there is somebody who takes care of you, who loves you, It’s more of an emotional way of supporting you.” (Participant D16)

Family members provided support in a variety of ways such as encouragement and understanding in the context of adapting to the new work culture: “My children, to help me to understand about this new situation.... they support me. They say, ‘its okay mom’. Sometimes, ‘mom, you can do this’ or ‘ you can aspire to this’. (Participant D13). Family working together was very important to a number of participants. They often solved problems and learned and adapted as a team.

As we saw in the section on defining doing well, children adapting and doing well was described as a helping factor for parents, because it eased parents’ concerns, validated their decision and gave them hope. “I feel good, ...because my son, my daughter could face any difficulties, and they surprised me….So that gives me ah, optimistic in seeing the future.” (Participant D04). Parents often expressed their pride as they talked about their children’s successes both academically and socially which were conveyed as equally important.

In addition to immediate family support, participants talked about the connection to their extended families in their homeland. It was important that their loved ones supported their decision to immigrate. Descriptions indicated unconditional support and an implied faith that participants could handle the challenges: “My mom is always positive...encourages me, it gives me a feeling that it’s okay that I’m here, I don’t have to be there physically… psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually we still together, it’s very special.” (Participant D13)
Access to friends and family via the various communication technologies available was another common helping factor. The positive outcomes of maintaining these important social bonds were feeling happy, less isolated, encouraged, hopeful and reassured that one is still loved and still socially connected. This next quote highlights some of these:

Twenty first century helps us to communicate, like with our old friends. It is really important when they help you, to push you. …when they say ‘oh you can do this, you are the best’, …but sometimes it is to just speak with people. Just to know how they are, and it will be okay. So you understand I didn’t lose… these connections with my old friends…. it’s an influence on my mood. I know that I have such good friends, it’s encouraging. (Participant D03)

Six participants had left elderly parents behind and therefore doing well depended in part on how their parents were managing without them. It helped that participants could talk to their parents and other family members frequently “because [telling them how we are doing every day] will get them more happy there, then we will be happy here.” (Participant D11). A few participants used these technologies to maintain close relationships with former managers or coworkers which helped in terms of keeping work contacts open as well as extending that social support.

Eight participants said moving and beginning to settle here was much easier because they had friends and/or family here who made arrangements in advance, answered questions, provided important contact information and were generally helpful with the myriad of details to be dealt with. Participants were able to get things done more quickly, and felt comforted in knowing someone was here to help them.

Other sources of support were new friends or mentors. Again the outcomes were staying positive, feeling supported and encouraged: “I have new friends who are
They have lots of things to offer, they support me to just continue with the situation and don’t be stressful and, and, yeah, they say all those positive things (laughter).” (Participant D13). Formal and informal mentors were mentioned by three participants. These were people who were willing to offer information, suggestions or share their experiences of working and building a career here in the participant’s field of interest. One participant observed that as a result of having established several mentors, he did not have to “try so hard to network.” (Participant D01) At the time of the first interview, he was enthusiastic and hopeful that these connections would help him find work in his chosen field. As of the second interview they had done just that.

Some participants specifically described the value of socializing with local people from their homeland. Participants felt more familiar with their new surroundings or less culturally isolated, compared experiences, shared ideas on how to adapt or cope, and felt generally supported.

Well first of all because … when you meet somebody you identify with him very easy. You communicate, you share ideas, you share experience. Uh, share food, share many things that we like. Being able to identify more easily with the people here. (Participant D10)

The immigrant community was also described as an important source of encouragement and information that participants would not necessarily find elsewhere: “The sharing among the community is very helpful in uh, facing any problem. So, of course I, ask another friend’s experience who came here earlier so I can learn from their experience. … it’s very helpful… Learning fast from others.” (Participant D04) In addition to face to face contact, there are several websites that helped participants connect across the country with others who were at various stages of acculturation.
Social Support hindering incidents.

The hindering side of the category reflects the absence of important social connections with family and/or friends and in a few cases a lack of practical support. It consists of 12 items contributed by five participants (29% participation) which is the second largest hindering category.

The most common hindering incident was missing families and friends in participants’ countries of origin. Common outcomes of missing important social connections were missing face to face contact, and feeling isolated from people they shared their lives with:

Because they always encouraging me, always, of course I miss some fun or relax, I can call them and say oh let’s go, I have such good news. Now I can’t. (Participant D03)

You do feel a sense of alienation uh, because everybody is far away, so I’m sure my wife misses my mom, and my mom misses me… (Participant D01)

Two participants described the pressure they felt from people back home who were worried or who were asking why the participants were not settled yet. This incident negatively affected these relationships and added more stress to an already stressful acculturation experience:

There is that pressure in the back of your head, so you want to start slowly avoiding calls to family maybe, you want to, uh, keep telling them oh no, this might be happening, that might be happening just to keep them quiet and not get tense. So, that effects you negatively… (Participant D01)

Although several participants in this study mentioned that the local people were not as open to developing friendships as easily as they were accustomed to in their homelands,
only one participant described it as a hindering factor. He experienced his neighbours as socially distant and expressed some disappointment that he had not yet developed more friendships here.

**Social Support wish list items.**

The wish list contains six items contributed by five participants (29% participation). This side of the category is defined mostly by incidents indicating a desire for a more social connections here: “so now it’s a little bit a gap, because here I have no one to socialize, I have to get new friends, make new friends, not have to, but want to…” (Participant D11). Others were wishes that friends or family would come to visit them in their new homes.

**Summary of Social Support.**

The helping from Social Support category includes receiving encouragement, caring, help with problems, practical help, ideas and advice, from, spouses, family, friends and people from their cultural communities, and their extended families in their countries of origin. Other more experienced immigrants and mentors were also described as very helpful. Participants knew they were not alone in what they were experiencing. Mentors and other immigrants also provided information and advice that participants would not usually find via the government services and programs. The category includes having access to those technologies (e.g. Skype, MSN, email) that allow participants frequent, often daily communications with family, friends and colleagues in their countries of origin.

Knowing that their decision to move to Canada was supported by others resulted in participants feeling more confident about their choice and their ability to succeed. Being able to stay closely connected to people in their homeland reinforced the social bonds in those relationships. It helped participants feel positive, cared for, and for some have peace of mind because they were reassured that their families back home were managing without them.
Encouragement from others, including new friends, mentors and other immigrants also helped them believe they can do well here. Other immigrants, friends here and people from one’s culture of origin facilitated a sense of familiarity, reinforced one’s cultural identity, and acted as models of how to settle and integrate.

Spouses, family members and friends here helped by encouraging and unconditional caring, but also participants felt that their concerns were understood. Solving problems with others’ input resulted in Other outcomes included feeling less overwhelmed upon arrival, getting important information easily, making effective use of their time, and not having to try so hard to network.

The hindering side of this category was informed by participants’ descriptions of the lack of social support which included both missing people and feeling pressured to either return home or settle more quickly. Outcomes included missing families’ and friends’ love and encouragement, missing having fun with friends, feeling isolated, occasionally questioning one’s decision to come here, feeling pressured to succeed, avoiding having to explain to relatives and worrying about them worrying, facing the challenge of settlement and integration on one’s own, and disappointment that friendships are not made as easily here.

The wish list described how three participants wished to have more friends here or that friends/fiancé from home would visit, one wished for work for her husband (to help him do well), and one missed the practical support she had access to back home.

**Beliefs and Perspectives.**

This category is defined by general beliefs and perspectives on dealing with any changes, as well as those pertaining to employment, career development, settlement and integration. It includes spiritual perspectives that helped participants do well. The category
consists of 45 helping incidents contributed by 12 participants (71% participation). There were no hindering incidents or wish list items that fit this category.

Beliefs and Perspectives helping incidents.

Regarding successful integration.

All 12 of the participants who contributed believed that successful settlement and integration into Canadian society requires commitment, hard work and perseverance. The following quotes are typical:

any challenges… depends on you. If you do try hard, if you do right things, then, uh, every challenge could be overcome.” (Participant D02)

…nobody will stop you doing well in Canada, you have to work hard. (Participant D06)

Persistence and perseverance are very important to succeed in this country.

( Participant D07)

Only two participants indicated that they knew before arrival that they would need to acquire Canadian work experience before getting hired in their field of expertise. Seven of the participants contributing to this category accepted this challenge. They believe Canadian work experience is essential to immigrants who want to integrate into society and/or who are seeking to develop a career here. “It’s not discrimination. It’s just that nobody knows you. You have to try to prove who you are.” (Participant D10)

One participant believes it is critical for new immigrants to be able to let go temporarily of their current work identity, which he described as one’s “paradigm”. He maintained that if one cannot do this, one will not be able to progress towards one’s career goals:
We need to eliminate paradigms. For example, from my country where I was a manager. I control everyone who works there, and [here] I'm selling phone books, that’s really frustrating, because of the paradigm. Trying to move to a new place and trying to be the same as before. ... some people takes a long time to get a job because they have the paradigm, to continue as a manager, a director, engineer.” (Participant D10)

Regarding the nature of change and challenges.

Six participants described positive perspectives or beliefs about change in general, that help them do well with settlement, integration and work related challenges, for example: “…there will be new things, difficult things sometimes, but you have to accept that change. Change is the only constant thing in life, change will always happen.” (Participant D12)

The quotes that follow illustrate these participants’ philosophies of the nature of change as well as outcomes such as learning, growing and adapting positively from their experiences:

But I believe success is a journey…. I believe that all these changes that’s affecting my life are some way or the other, …trying to build something which I did not have. It could be a weakness and work into a strength. (Participant D18)

There are some challenges whenever there is a change, and sometimes we think oh, why do we need to see a change, we were so good without a change. But …whenever you go through a change, it makes you a better person. You are so much new. (Participant D12)

Other outcomes of this positive perspective helped these participants remain focused and optimistic, for example: “I think that helps me because I am really focused and um, I am sure that ah, it is going to happen,…success is only a matter of time.” (Participant D07)
Another general helping perspective was that “no place in the world is perfect” (Participant D20) which helped her “appreciate the positive side of Canada” and be prepared “to face the negative side of it.”

_Spiritual beliefs._

This category also includes the spiritual beliefs that help eight participants face the challenges of change. Outcomes included hope, positive affect, gratitude, strength and perseverance, faith that things will work out, clarity and faith when making decisions, and feeling calm, for example:

So being (religious affiliation), we keep drawing from strength from there”

( Participant D01)

If He can keep your mind calm, …it can automatically give you clarity of thought, that would automatically give you positive, or the right decisions, and your spirituality has helped you. ( Participant D28)

At the end of the storm there is a bright sunshine waiting for you…positivity comes in your heart. It’s faith, hope and loving others. So you just have to trust and believe.

( Participant D18)

Another significant finding is that five of these participants included their commitment to hard work, making an effort or being proactive in tandem with their higher power. It was important to them to say that they do not rely solely on their higher power to provide what they need. The following quote illustrates the idea of being in a working relationship with their creator or higher power:

I say, ‘by the grace of God’, and then I always say ‘and with my efforts’. My faith in God – not in a passive, withdrawn, reclusive sort of way but as something which is positive, uplifting, evolving and perpetually dynamic... (Participant D28)
Another important outcome of spiritual beliefs was that participants could let go of worrying about the future, or about circumstances beyond their control:

The day I sit down and try to control the results, I’m in pain. So I do my part and leave it to someone else. Because I believe that power has a role to play, let that power do it’s job. (Participant D12)

Beliefs and Perspectives hindering incidents and wish list.

There were no hindering or wish list items for this category.

Summary of Beliefs and Perspectives.

All who contributed to this category believed in effort as a vehicle to success in one’s work life as well as in integration. Participants described the value of a strong, positive work ethic. Getting Canadian work experience was believed to be not only understandable but essential to one’s success here, Participants talked of accepting of or “embracing change” (Participant D18). Outcomes of these perspectives were motivation to work hard, focusing on what one could control, doing one’s best, and being flexible regarding employment. Many saw changes as opportunities for learning and personal growth: “if you’re open to learning the results will come automatically. Forget about the results, give your hundred percent.” (Participant D12)

Spiritual beliefs and perspectives incorporated the notion of agency and a strong work ethic. Outcomes from spiritual beliefs included gratitude, perseverance, hope, peace of mind, clarity with respect to decisions and faith that things will unfold as they should.

There were no hindering or wish list items to include in this category.

Preparations and Research.

This category is defined by participants’ descriptions of how they prepared for immigration and settlement. There were a total of 19 incidents contributed by 10 participants
(59% participation). The hindering incident mentioned by two of the participants was the recession. No wish list items emerged for this category.

**Preparation and Research helping incidents.**

All 10 of these participants arrived in Canada with knowledge of some of the challenges that lay ahead. Seven of them described conducting extensive research to learn about living and working in Canada prior to immigrating which helped them do well with all the changes. The following quotes are typical descriptions of some of the things participants learned about Canada and Canadian culture, prior to arrival:

We did a lot of research, uh, before we moved here, where we wanted to live, where the schools were good, the places we wanted to avoid… we traveled across the country, we just wanted to see the places as reality. We spent about three weeks doing that. (D01 Participant)

I have gone to the website, get all of research in terms of how Canada is going to be like, what’s the climate like, what is the city there like, what are the people there like, the way these aspects affect people. (Participant D18)

As illustrated in the next quote knowing what to expect and having a “feel” for what it would be like to live here was an important positive outcome of learning about Canada in advance:

So I guess research was a big part of getting familiar, and that probably helped, knowing the reality of moving here. It would have been a long winter, if you want to look at it that way, before we really got a feeling, so that really helped (Participant D01)

Knowing about Canada and preparing as much as possible gave participants confidence that they and their families would be able to accept and adapt to the changes.
Being psychologically prepared for challenges helped participants remain positive but also to cultivate realistic expectations which in turn helped them continue to tackle challenges: “I think to set a very realistic expectation is very important. I knew that it’s a great place for future, for my daughters and maybe for me too, but I also wanted to be on the ground.” (Participant D02)

Some participants prepared psychologically for delays in getting work and developing their careers. “so we prepared ourselves financially to take that strain, and emotionally and mentally just to know that it’s going to be awhile before we get employed.” (Participant D01). Lowering or eliminating their expectations resulted in participants accepting work at a lower level of expertise, or outside one’s field. Letting go of expectations helped them to stay positive and some said they adapted more quickly. The following is also another example, of how being able to let go of one’s work identity can be a helpful factor:

when I came here, I had my expectations to the ground. I come as assistant vice president from my country, so the one thing I did was remove that. So I think that was the reason I have been able to adjust with my family very quickly, or more quickly than people would normally say. When you keep your expectations low and work hard, I feel you are happy. (Participant D12)

Preparations and Research hindering incidents and wish list items.

The recession as described as an unforeseen factor that hindered two participants from doing as well as they believed they would have done otherwise, specifically in terms of finding work. Both reported feeling concerned and pressured because there would likely be more Canadians competing for work. There were no wish list items in this category.
Summary of Preparation and Research.

At least seven participants in this study described devoting a good deal of time and energy researching Canada from many vantage points prior to immigrating. Thorough research and preparation helped them make important decisions and plans before they arrived. Having some familiarity with the new society and new environment also helped ease some of the stresses and uncertainties of settlement. Realistic expectations about the difficulties they might face helped participants prepare themselves emotionally and psychologically for the challenges. They were confident that they could accept changes and adapt as needed. Although only two said they knew about the employment situation here, many in this category were prepared to lower their expectations with respect to finding work or working in their field at the same level. Letting go of expectations helped some adapt more quickly.

Government/Agency Support.

This category is defined by incidents that describe government or agency support, or the absence of support or negative interactions with these institutions. The wish list is about wanting more information or better assistance from them as well as what participants would like to see made available to help newcomers in the future. The helping side of the category consists of nine participants’ descriptions of 12 incidents. The hindering side contains five items contributed by five participants (29% participation). and there are nine wish list items contributed by six participants (35% participation).

Government/Agency Support helping incidents.

Nine participants said they were struck by the organization and efficiency with which services were administered and information disseminated by the federal government and local agencies. Four said that as soon as they landed, they were given handouts and
information about the various programs available, to help them get settled and find employment:

“It’s very efficient, it’s very organized. Now that helps me doing well not directly but indirectly, because when you are trying to establish yourselves as a family...So when it is being done for you, and then you’re not burdened with it, …” (Participant D12)

Some talked to people they knew here or searched the internet for the government resources and services that were available. No matter how they found what they needed or wanted, participants were surprised and enthusiastic about the quality and amount of help they received. In addition to getting basic information about settlement issues, for example where to find things such as accommodations, transportation, applying for a telephone or applying to get one’s drivers license, they reported access to job search skills, ESL classes and access to a career counsellors. Outcomes were feeling grateful, feeling less overwhelmed and feeling welcome. Aside from finding information quickly and getting the practical help they needed, some participants applied for and received services and benefits very quickly. The outcome was surprise, gratitude, and feeling appreciated or valued by Canadian society:

I feel that both of us, our whole family have been appreciated here…. So all these things, I feel we are valued on that. We were overwhelmed with what had been given to us. Yeah, very grateful. I always tell people… (Participant D20)

**Government/Agency Support hindering incidents.**

There were five participants contributing 5 hindering incidents to the hindering side of this category. Three participants expressed their frustration that in all of their research about working and living in Canada, the government did not advise, nor did they find it posted anywhere, that immigrants typically experience difficulties having their work
experience or credentials recognized by employers and professional organizations. While a few participants found out that they could not expect to get work for at least six months, most others did not know this. As a result these participants felt frustrated, puzzled, discouraged and disappointed:

Because they talk about like …the best part of Canada, the best things about Canada….but at the same time they should also, you know, tell all, okay you are bringing so much money to the country when you come in, and how long it will take to settle down, and how long it will take to get the right job. You know, that is something that is not there in… any of the information given actually… I knew it’s going to be hard but... I never knew that it is this hard. (Participant D07)

Two participants described the experience of being told by a settlement agency worker that they should change their name “to be more Canadian”, otherwise they would not get any interviews. One participant expressed her feelings about the incident as follows: “another thing that was frustrating was …my career consultant from (agency) was suggesting why don’t you change your name? I didn’t want to change my name and I was really frustrated with that.” (Participant D02). The other participant became confused and dismayed when he followed his employment counsellor’s advice:

I was advised by employment counsellor to not use my first name but use my second name because I will get a job faster. The person said research showed that people with English sounding names have a 70% better chance of getting hired. Recruiters won’t call if they can’t pronounce my name, so I went to my middle name {his middle and last name were common English names}, and at my first job, it was really confusing for me. I felt as if I was losing who I am. It is a hindering for me to do
this. At my next job, I used my first name and it was not a problem, much better.

(Participant D18)

**Government/Agency Support wish list items.**

This is the third largest wish list after Work and Life Experiences, and Taking Action with six participants contributing nine items. Several participants wished that the government had provided them with advance notice about the issues concerning their employability here. In addition four participants had suggestions for helping newcomers gain employment faster. These are creating a work bridge program for immigrant volunteers in their fields of interest, working with employers to create more internship programs and allowing immigrants to qualify for entrepreneurial training programs without having received 6 months unemployment benefits as currently stipulated. Lastly, one participant wished that Ottawa would address the apparent discrimination being perpetuated by immigrant settlement services agency workers (referring to being told no one would call her for an interview unless she changed her name to something more “Canadian”).

**Summary of Government /Agency Support.**

Participants expressed their surprise and appreciation for the government sponsored resources and information made available to them in terms of both quality and timeliness. As a result, participants felt less overwhelmed or worried about basic settlement processes, and some felt they settled more quickly than they would have done otherwise. The government’s attention to helping new immigrants get started resulted in participants feeling grateful but also feeling welcome and appreciated by Canadian society.

The hindering side of this category was primarily informed by the apparent lack of information available regarding acceptance of the participants’ credentials. Participants said they were not advised prior to arrival how long it would likely take to find work or
meaningful work and what might be involved. They expressed feeling angry or frustrated, puzzled and discouraged as a result. The issue of name discrimination was also raised by two participants in terms of how government employees helped them deal with employability concerns. These two participants reacted with anger and confusion.

The wish list included having advance notice of the incidents described above. Notice might have helped participants to make a more informed decision or to prepare prior to arrival. Several participants wished for work and internship programs that would help newcomers integrate more easily and begin their career development sooner. Lastly, it was hoped that the discrimination issue regarding names be addressed.

**Plans and Goals.**

The category of Plans and Goals is defined by incidents that describe the benefits of participants having goals to work towards and the plans to help them achieve those goals. The category consists of 11 helping factors or incidents or factors contributed by eight participants (47% participation). There were no hindering plans or goals or other incidents that pertained to same that hindered participants. There was one wish list item by one participant which will not be reported.

**Plans and Goals helping incidents.**

Helping plans and goals were with respect to work and/or participants’ career development. All eight participants reported that it was very important to them to have plans in place. Many of them stated that planning was necessary to experiencing success. This next quote typifies this belief in the need for planning: “Because if you plan, inevitably you will succeed, if you don’t plan you will fail.” (Participant D18)

It was also important that in order for plans to help, one must have the knowledge to implement them, remain flexible and have a realistic goal to work towards. This next quote
is a metaphor that illustrates how planning and having realistic goals helped participants maintain some control in the process of dealing with change:

if you had a good goal, or realistic goal, and if you know step by step how to approach to that, things could be managed. If you don’t do that, just like,… uh small piece of wood on the water, [it] will flow, and your life will be over, yes? (Participant D02)

As might be expected, plans and goals helped them move forward, focus their energy on their objectives and remain confident that they could handle whatever challenges came their way.

Most of these participants described their goals and plans as works in progress to be evaluated and modified as needed and so another commonly described benefit was the knowledge of how things were progressing. Combined with a positive attitude, for example recognizing one’s successes, provided one with a sense of accomplishment: “because you know when I measure every month I see a lot of progress, and I would think about the day after I landed here, and two months, four months, I look and I say yes, I have grown…” (Participant D07). In fact, several participants anticipated as many challenges as they could and accordingly developed a number of contingency plans:

So if plan A doesn’t work then I have to go to plan B, and if that doesn’t work then I have to develop, scenario options of what should I do. And I evaluate the plans based on the new information, new environment, new situation. (Participant D04)

Ultimately plans, back-up plans and ongoing goals helped participants feel more secure in their belief that they will succeed here: “Even though maybe there are obstacles, I still keep the plan in place then I have back-up option. So that gives me optimistic ah in
seeing the future.” (Participant D04) As participant D07 remarked “success is only a matter of time.”

Lastly, staying future focused helped to distract participants from some of the more negative aspects of immigrating, such as worrying about obstacles to employment or missing home:

A: I thought that it would be something like home sickness, but actually this wasn’t, because I was so focused on dealing with the situation, and the family we were talking about how strange that was that we were not missing, yeah, even the kids thought that. You know, I think the reason was I was so focused on my job searching and looking forward things, not looking back things, yeah? And I think that was not hindering but it was supportive actually.

Q: Yes, yeah. I’ve put that down under a helping factor

A: Exactly. It is helping.” (Participant D02)

**Summary of Plans and Goals.**

The eight participants contributing to this category believed that plans and goals were very important to helping them deal with change and to succeed as new Canadians. Many talked about having more than one back-up plan in case the current goal appeared to be no longer practicable. Outcomes of planning and having flexible goals helped participants feel that they had control over their destiny, which in term gave them confidence about succeeding. They also helped them maintain a forward focus on what they could do and for some distracted them from the more negative aspects of settling in Canada.

**Financial Security.**

This category is defined by incidents that describe financial security that helped participants do well or on the hindering side, a lack of financial support or a wish for better
financial security. The helping component consists of seven incidents contributed by six participants (29% participation). The hindering component consists of two incidents contributed by two participants, and there were no wish list items that fit this category.

**Financial security helping incidents.**

Two participants had bought a house and property prior to landing which eased some of the stress of settlement and provided a back-up resource if savings became scarce. Three participants had spouses or family who worked which allowed them to pursue their academic and/or career goals. Two participants also mentioned that they could rely on their savings that allowed them to not work so hard and take time to adapt.

**Financial security hindering incidents.**

Only two participants described two incidents relating to money or finances. The first participant found it discouraging when he compared his earnings here to compensation he had received back home. The second participant said that she worried about their savings dwindling. She said “I worry about the children and their dreams” (Participant D13), which occasionally affected her normally optimistic outlook.

**Summary of Financial security.**

The helping portion of this category contained descriptions of financial security that lessened participants’ worries about surviving once they arrived, as well as allowing them to adapt at their pace and enjoy a less hectic quality of life. While a family member was working, some took the opportunity to pursue academic goals and/or develop their careers. The few hindering incidents were worrying about savings dwindling and expressing dismay that the wages here are lower than back home.
Values Results

When it became apparent that values transcended most categories, all the critical incidents and wish list items were revisited using two simple definitions to determine if they could be considered statements about values: 1) the phenomenological experience of what is good in the immigration processes in Canada (V1) and 2) sociologically desired standards of behaviours valued by participants and/or Canadians (V2). Table 7 summarizes the distribution of values statements across categories and their participation rates. Tables 8 and 9 summarize the number of statements and the themes derived according to V1 and V2 definitions, respectively. Wish list items were not included because definitions called for what participants had experienced, principles they hold or standards of behaviours they value. As might be expected, there were no value statements that fit “that which is experienced as good” under any of the hindering categories, however hindering incidents revealed when participants’ principles or standards of behaviours were challenged.
Results Table 9. Distribution of Value Related Incidents/Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Value Related Helping Items Participation 100%, N=17</th>
<th>Value Related Hindering Items Participation 53%, N = 9</th>
<th>Total Items #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V1</td>
<td>V2</td>
<td>V1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life In Canada</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs, Perspectives &amp; Personal Qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government/Agency Support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work &amp; Life Experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation, Plans &amp; Goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values 1 (V1): that which we experience subjectively to be good (phenomenological definition)
Values 2 (V2): a person’s principles or standards of behaviour (sociological definition)
### Table 10. Values 1 Statement Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values 1 Definition: that which participants experience subjectively to be good (<em>phenomenological definition</em>)</th>
<th>Number of Statements</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada’s Culture &amp; Environment</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interactions with locals-mattering; educational system; quality of life: work/life balance, community activities, natural environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Support (Friends and Family)</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>71 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unconditional support, encouragement, mattering, staying socially connected, receiving guidance &amp; help with problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>59 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Intrinsic value in doing and learning; moving forward and positive about future</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs, Attitudes &amp; Perspectives</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>approaches to challenges, novelty &amp; diversity; spirituality</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Support</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>53 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government and agencies-mattering, communications technologies, libraries &amp; community centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work/Life Experiences &amp; Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience living in different cultures, difficult life experiences; Work experience, training and education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>137</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition: a person’s principles or standards of behaviour (sociological definition)</td>
<td>Number of Statements</td>
<td>Participation 100% (N=17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values 2 Positive</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>82 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethic: working hard, being prepared, being proactive, resolve &amp; determination, contributing to society, helping others</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>76 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Philosophy of Living: being positive, flexibility, adaptive, open to learning</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Standards and Principles human rights e.g. right to security, freedom of religion and speech, dignity, equality, democratic rule, respect for diversity &amp; the value of multiculturalism</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values 2 Negative</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devaluing of Education/Training &amp; Work Experience</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of advanced notice of employability issues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phenomenological values (V1).

All 17 of the participants contributed a total of 137 value statements that indicated a good or beneficial experience or factor. These were grouped under Canadian Culture, Systems and Environment (38 statements, 76% participation, 13 participants), Social Support From Friends and Family (34 statements, 71% participation, 12 participants), Activities (20 statements, 59% participation, 10 participants), Beliefs and Perspectives (19 statements, 53% participation, 9 participants), Government/Agency Support, (14 statements, 53% participation, 9 participants), and Work/Life Experiences and Knowledge (12 statements, 53% participation, 9 participants) (see Table 8, p. 155 for a listing). The description that follows is in the same order.

Canadian culture and environment.

Firstly, interactions with local Canadians was experienced as very positive. The result was that participants felt that they belonged and mattered in the new society. Finding one’s own culture represented was also valued because participants could identify with others from their homeland. They were also able to enjoy familiar food, speak their first language, and partake in other customs they had known back home.

The Canadian approach to education was praised by several participants and its value was evident in their gratitude and relief that their children were doing well. They particularly appreciated that children were encouraged to play and socialize, in addition to studying. One benefit described was that their children were integrating quickly and smoothly. Some said their children had already made many friends. Some said they were pleased that their children had joined in extracurricular activities. These comments were further evidence that several participants value the host culture’s educational system.
Quality of life was one of the reasons many participants came to Canada and in that regard, they found a number of things to value. The more balanced approach to work and time off was the most commonly described.

Participants valued the lifestyle on the West Coast, saying that there are a lot of enjoyable things to do for the whole family, such as events, outings and community activities. They also expressed wonder and appreciation for the beauty of the natural environment. As a result participants described their lives as more balanced, more fulfilling, less stressful and more healthful.

**Social support.**

Needless, to say there were numerous social support value statements (about family and friends) that described the benefits in various ways, i.e. mattering, feeling encouraged, unconditionally supported, staying socially connected, getting valuable advice and help solving problems. Communication technologies were valued for helping participants stay connected with the people back home. Participants valued social support from people from their home culture who lived in Canada, as well as the larger immigrant community.

**Activities.**

Participants’ descriptions of their activities that would aid them in their pursuit of their career goals were evidence of confidence that such pursuits would be worthwhile, but it is also noteworthy that many enjoyed the activities. In other words there appeared to be an intrinsic value associated with networking, volunteering, getting involved in the community, taking courses, getting out and meeting Canadians and learning about Canadian culture. The value in doing and learning also provided them with a sense of progress, control and helped them to remain optimistic.
Beliefs and perspectives.

A significant number of participants said they valued diversity, variety, new activities and meeting new people. Many valued challenges perceiving them as opportunities to learn or experience new things. A number of participants valued their spirituality as a source of strength, guidance, hope and faith that things will work out.

Institutional support.

Participants valued highly the assistance they received from the Canadian government and the various settlement agencies. They expressed surprise as well as gratitude. This reception by the people who helped them imparted the message that participants mattered to the government of Canada. In addition, some participants said they liked how the social systems were organized, (e.g. transportation, libraries, community centres, access to technology, and to further education, student loans and childcare benefits).

Work /Life experiences, skills and knowledge.

Most participants indicated that they valued their previous experience and education. In fact, they spoke with confidence and pride as they talked about their career accomplishments and/or the life experiences that gave them important skills, wisdom, strength and adaptive abilities.

Sociological values (V2).

Sociological value statements were those that suggested a principle important to participants, or valued standards of behaviour. A total of 66 statements were gathered and all 17 participants contributed. The statements were divided into positive and negative. The positive statements (51 statements, 82% participation, 14 participants) were grouped under the following three themes: Work Ethic (26 statements, 76% participation, 13 participants), General Philosophy of Living (13 statements, 41% participation, 7 participants), and
Canadian Standards and Principles (12 statements, 29% participation, 5 participants). The negative statements (15 statements, 53% participation, 9 participants) were grouped into two themes: Devaluing of Credentials and Experience (10 statements, 47% participation, 8 participants), and Lack of Advance Notice of Employability Issues (5 statements, 29% participation, 5 participants). See Table 9, page 156 for a listing.

**Work ethic.**

Participants described the value of a strong work ethic which meant several things: working hard, being prepared, being self reliant (for example not relying on the government) being pro-active, being focused, determined and persevering in the face of setbacks. Somewhat related to work ethic, many participants expressed how important it is to contribute to society, to help others and to “give back”

**General philosophy of successful living.**

General principles for living were revealed in participants’ value statements of personal characteristics or qualities that they value in themselves and in others. Characteristics included being positive, flexible and having a willingness to learn. Many expressed pride in their ability to adapt. A particularly strong example is from one participant who explained that she and her husband were committed to model for their children how to be flexible and adapt and rise to all the challenges. Participants believe that these qualities are critical to successful adaptation, and successful living.

**Canadian standards and principles.**

The values upheld by Canada as a country were some of the reasons why participants chose to settle here. These were the right to safety and security (the most often reported), equality (for example the freedom to compete for work), freedom of expression and of religion, and democratic rule.
Multiculturalism is an ideology promoted by the Canadian government. A few participants expressed their belief in this ideology. For example, treating all people with respect was described as an important standard of behaviour. Learning from different cultures was valued as a vehicle for personal growth. Some valued the notion of the global village, for example: “People are people everywhere.” (Participant D02)

**Values that were challenged.**

Hindering incidents provided some insight into instances when participants’ values were not in concert with the host society. The first type of value challenged was participants’ was that placed on their credentials and work experience. Simply put, it appeared to them that the host culture did not value their credentials or experience at all. Aside from facing having to build their careers from the beginning here, participants experienced a blow to their self worth, for example: “[it] make me feel very bad, it was hard time,… why they don’t recognize maybe working culture is different… I know, but, they didn’t even give any opportunity to interview…” (Participant D02)

Finding that one’s work experience and education is of little value here resulted in participants’ feeling frustrated at requirements that made little sense to them. Some said they felt discouraged to be facing “starting over” after years of building careers. Some participants were confused and worried as they tried to figure out how they were going to get Canadian work experience if no one would hire them without it.

The second value challenge emerged via some participants’ reactions when they were caught off guard by their immediate loss of value as workers. A significant number of felt it was not right that the Canada immigration had failed to post or advise how employers and professional associations will likely respond to new immigrants who are applying for work, for example:
So, the reason why the change is more dramatic on, newcomers, is because, uh, we are not informed about that before coming.... But I think from the immigration department there should do some [thing]. And there’s some information, but it’s, uh, hidden. (Participant D10)

The foregoing quote appears to suggest that the Canadian government is not being forthright about the immigrant employability issue. Anecdotal evidence can be found on websites such as Immigrant Networks.Com which indicates this is not an uncommon suspicion among immigrants who are struggling with the problem.

**Anecdotal Observations Results**

As noted at the end of Chapter 3, the word cruncher function of Atlas/ti, made it possible to document a number of the metaphors participants used to help them communicate important meaning to me. Analysis revealed that ten participants used metaphors during the interview. Here are some examples:

- your work ... it’s kind of [a] mirror, you go to work which is a big part of your mirror. So you get feedback [about] who you are. (Participant D25)
- Because whatever I have gone through, I’ve absorbed. People normally call me a sponge. (Participant D12)
- So I’m not sitting at home and slapping my thumb. (D16)
- If you don’t do that, just like,… uh small piece of wood on the water, [it] will flow, and your life will be over, yes? (Participant D02)
- Now believing is a hard thing because, you know, you don’t see a lot of things in the real world... That belief it’s like moving from mountains to mountains, you’re climbing up in your spiritual journey (D18)
Some metaphors were simple while others implied more complex meaning. On some occasions during the interview, I reflected back what I believed the participant meant in order to check that I was indeed hearing what he or she intended. This approach helped to further our rapport and created some wonderful moments of clarity in communication that may not otherwise have been achieved.
Chapter 5

Discussion

The following discussion begins with the contextual data which is compared to existing literature on acculturation. Firstly, certain demographic factors have been related to the literature on acculturative stress as pre-acculturation considerations. Next, some observations about the changes that participants experienced and the impacts of those changes are offered, what doing well meant to participants, and the always handled change well results. The main discussion will be on critical incidents, wish list items and values statements. Wherever possible, results are discussed in relation to existing research and theory. Limitations and suggestions for future research will then be presented followed by implications for counselling practice and policy.

Context Results

Pre-Acculturation considerations.

A number of demographic factors have been quantitatively researched in an attempt to predict who might be at risk for acculturative stress. (Berry, et al., 2002; Berry, et al., 1987; Berry & Ataca, 2000). What follows is a brief comment on age, gender, education level, countries of origin and first language of participants in light of the existing research.

Research on age shows that older adults, i.e. whose children are grown, are at the highest risk for acculturative stress (Beiser et al., 1988), possibly due to the length of their enculturation (living in their home culture). The implication is that older immigrants may have more adapting to do. Eleven of the 17 participants were between 40 and 53 years old, however, eight had children living at home, so Beiser and colleagues’ conclusions are probably not relevant here. Research also suggested that women were considered at greater risk for acculturative stress (Harris & Verven, 1996; Moghaddam, Ditto, & Taylor, 1990;
Six of the participants in the current study were women but their stories did not differ noticeably from the male participants.

Higher education has been linked to less acculturative stress and better problem solving (Beiser et al., 1988; Aycan & Berry, 1996). All the participants in the current study reported having a Bachelor’s degree and 13 of them have advanced degrees, so it may be said that they are a well educated group which may have contributed to their strategies for doing well.

Participants arrived from a wide range of cultures, only three of which are somewhat similar to Canada in that they are European based cultures. In addition, none spoke English as a first language. Research has suggested both these factors contribute to cultural distance which in turn is said to predict difficulties with acculturation and adaptation (Nesdale & Mak, 2003; Ward, 1996). This result appears to contradict existing research but in fact it underscores the need for qualitative research that explores the positive side of immigration with newcomers who do well in spite of cultural distance factors.

**Changes and impacts.**

Types of changes described by participants were across the domains of work life, personal life and life in the new society. Participants clearly felt that the changes across the different life domains were important to their stories about changes that affected their work. This response is consistent with a number of theories of career development that suggest that work and career are integral to functioning in other areas of life and vice versa (e.g. Blustein, 2006; Schultheiss, 2006).

**Work life.**

It was somewhat surprising that changes to participants’ employability concerns did not surpass all other types of work life changes given the well documented obstacles most
immigrants encounter in the Canadian labour market (Schellenberg & Maheux, 2008). More participants reported changes in work culture (e.g. ways to apply for work). This may be explained by the fact that participants focused their attention forward towards what they could do about it. Accordingly, some of the impacts of work life changes were problem solving activities such as volunteering and networking. Problem solving is a well researched coping style that is associated with an integrative acculturation strategy (Berry; 2006a).

Participants also adjusted their career plans and goals accordingly to allow themselves more time to learn workplace culture. This response is consistent with their adaptability and flexibility when dealing with change.

Some of the participants observed the incongruence between the government's acceptance of their credentials and employers’ or professional associations’ and seven participants reported the negative psychological impact of same. Taking action in response combined with an optimistic or positive nature may have ameliorated or even prevented more negative psychological impacts for many participants. In addition, not all of the impacts of the work life changes were perceived as negative; some participants accepted, even rationalized their work situation or they saw the work life changes as opportunities to learn and integrate. These results are consistent with the critical incidents that followed. I believe this finding presents a different picture of the new immigrant work experience in Canada which seems to be largely limited to the reactive and the negative. The one exception found is in the study by Beynon et al., (2004) who found some participants who were accepting and eager to learn Canadian pedagogy in service of their career goals.

**Personal/societal life**

Personal Life changes consisted primarily of statements about missing the social support back home, and meeting new people here. Most participants reported the impact of
leaving their social network behind as doing something about it i.e. going out and building a new social support network locally. Similar to work life impacts, these pro-active responses likely offset some of the negative changes to their social support.

Some participants reported that they felt overwhelmed, uncertain or anxious at first because the host culture was so different from what they knew. Most of these incidents pertained to differences in communication and social norms. Combined with the new language there was a lot to process and learn. These results are consistent with culture learning theory (Masgoret & Ward, 2006) which argues for the importance of social interaction in successful adaptation. In addition, participants’ countries of origin suggest that significant cultural distance may have been experienced by most, if not all.

Recall that acculturative stress symptoms include depression, (associated with culture loss) and anxiety, (associated with uncertainty of how to live in the new society), (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002), psychosomatic symptoms, identity confusion, and feelings of marginality and alienation (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). However, recent criticisms of acculturative stress based studies have challenged the underlying assumption that acculturative stress is a negative experience. Contemporary literature on the topic leads one to expect at least some measure of acculturative stress symptoms to manifest for each newcomer. Although these participants reported negative psychological impacts, i.e. feeling frustrated and puzzled about their work situation, and/or generally confused, overwhelmed, uncertain/anxious and lonely, it was not clear from their descriptions that they experienced acculturative stress. What results clearly do indicate is that they were able to do well in spite of the more negative psychological impacts of the changes.

Positive psychological impacts were reported by participants mainly as a result of their interactions with representatives of the host society. They appreciated services and
resources but personal interactions seemed to have an important positive effect on their view of Canadians, becoming Canadians and their decision to move here. Perhaps more importantly, participants felt they were valued by and therefore mattered and belonged in the host culture. Being positively regarded by the host society is thought to be critical to successful adaptation (Berry, 2006a; Berry et al., 1987).

**Doing Well Defined**

**Coping from positive psychology perspective.**

Scholars of late have criticized coping and stress researchers as remiss in their exclusion of the role of positive emotions (e.g. Folkman & Moskowitz, 2003; Peterson, 2006). Overall positive emotions had two key roles to play in the current study of doing well. Firstly, they were essential components of how participants defined or gauged their doing well, and secondly, as positive outcomes they often supported the assignment of incidents as helping. Participants were able to gauge their doing well by positive states of being, for example feeling happy or “happiness” was mentioned 51 times by participants.

Several participants defined doing well in part as an absence of negative emotions but they also spoke about doing well in the positive for example solving problems and “growing goals.” In addition, participants defined doing well with other positive psychological descriptors such as feeling confident that they will succeed, that they were adapting, meeting challenges, making progress, and perhaps most importantly that they were coping and meeting their basic needs.

What is of particular interest is that participants’ definitions of doing well did not suggest thriving or doing better than the ordinary or average, rather some participants defined it as surviving and meeting their basic needs. They knew they were doing well if they could continue to try and could cope. In addition to adding breadth to what doing well may mean to
people, this finding underscores the importance of asking people the question, “what does doing well mean to you?” These results not only validate the definitions and critical incidents but they have important implications for counselling newcomers who struggle.

**Doing well with acculturation.**

Recall that Ward and her colleagues (1996) proposed that two types of adaptation are necessary for a successful acculturation. *Psychological adaptation* is related to psychological well-being and satisfaction with one’s choice of host country. *Socio-cultural adaptation* is acquiring the skills and knowledge to interact successfully and handle daily living.

Simply put, participants’ definitions of doing well appear to be consistent with the definition of positive psychological adaptation. The positive sociological aspect of adaptation may be implied by the more action oriented descriptions of doing well that were provided by participants, such as success in getting one’s basic needs met, establishing a new social network, working or volunteering to learn about workplace culture, making one understood by the locals, accessing information, and solving the more immediate settlement problems. Participants believe they are doing well because they feel they are fully engaged in the process of sociological adaptation.

Aycan and Berry (1996) introduced a third construct, *economic adaptation* which they defined as a sense of accomplishment and full participation in the economic life of Canada. None of the participants in the current study considered themselves fully settled at the time of the interview, particularly in the work life domain, and it should be noted that participants in Aycan and Berry’s study were in Canada a minimum of 17 months with a mean period of time of over nine years. Only four participants were working for pay full time at the time of the interview so one might surmise that most participants had not yet achieved full economic participation at the time of the interview. They made it clear
however that full participation was one of the goals to be realized, and volunteering helped them feel they were contributing. What is important here is that their doing well was defined by both progress and process of working towards their career development goals.

**Always handled changes well.**

Participants reported that they had always handled change well with the exception of three who described singular and isolated events as qualifications. This result may imply that those who struggle may not be able to learn what these participants seem to do naturally. Based on the literature review, there is no immediate source to turn to that may shed some light on this finding or help locate the findings. Nevertheless, positive psychology scholars propose that people can learn what it takes to live “the good life” and do well (Peterson, 2006; Wierzbicka, 2009), and I concur.

**Critical Incidents and Wish Lists**

After a brief look at overall results, the critical incident findings are discussed pursuant to acculturation psychology research and theory and positive psychology, starting with a look at pre-acculturation factors. Helping and hindering incidents that affect acculturation and settlement experiences will follow. Values will be discussed in light of existing literature. Finally, an examination of what participants would have liked to have had, or want for the future concludes this section.

**Overall results.**

To reiterate, of the 386 incidents and items extracted, 71% were helping incidents. All participants contributed at least one hindering incident, at least one wish list item, but the number of hindering incidents was only 14% and wish list items made up 15%. Participants’ self reporting of doing well and their definitions of same, are clearly supported by both much higher participation in helping categories and much larger number of helping incidents as
compared to the hindering incidents and wish list items. This finding is consistent with other critical incident studies that have employed the technique to investigate what helps and hinders mainstream workers in challenging situations (e.g., Amundson, Borgen, Jordan, & Erlebach, 2004; Borgen, Amundson, & McVicar, 2002).

**Pre-acculturation/settlement critical incidents.**

The Personal Qualities and Beliefs and Perspectives categories represent aspects of participants’ personalities or natures that helped them do well in Canada. These results categories are supported in general by Lazarus and Folkman's work 1984 work and subsequent research on demand appraisal and coping styles, as well as Seligman et al.’s (2005) proposition that certain qualities or signature strengths help people live “the good life”. Other category results that reflect what participants brought to their immigration experiences are Work and Life Experiences, Skills and Knowledge, Preparation and Research, Plans and Goals, and Financial Security.

The discussion is organized generally around the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and theoretical agreement for each of the foregoing categories is integrated accordingly. One category, that is Social Support, is part of both pre-acculturation and acculturation experiences so I decided that Social Support be presented in the second half of the discussion that pertains to incidents arising during acculturation/settlement.

**Demand appraisal and coping styles.**

Recall the best coping strategy for immigrants is thought to be to view obstacles and challenges as opportunities (Berry, 2006a). There were many examples in the current results of participants perceiving changes and challenges as opportunities to learn how to further their career goals and how to integrate into the host culture.
Pro-active problem solving.

Researchers have further distinguished negative appraisal of a situation to be associated with either problem focused or emotion focused coping, where the former has been associated with less acculturative stress, and the latter more stress (Berry, 2002). The relatively few number of hindering incidents suggest that the challenges of getting one’s career started, and of learning English, were indeed perceived negatively by some participants, and the impacts were negative psychologically. However, problem solving coping was utilized by the majority of participants in response to a wide variety of challenges. In addition, participants identified themselves as optimistic/positive, pro-active people who would prefer to initiate changes, rather than wait for change to happen. This finding is consistent with the research that found being pro-active and optimistic positively relates to psychological well being and negatively relates to depression (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005). Participants’ sense of agency and confidence about the future are consistent with Peterson’s definition of optimism which is one of the signature strengths (2006).

Emotional regulation/coping.

An internal dialogue of self encouragement such as reminding oneself of one's strengths and abilities to cope, or analyzing the situation in terms of what one can and cannot control, helped some participants stay positive, optimistic and confident that they could meet challenges. This result fits the definition of emotion-focused coping and although this style of coping was once thought to negatively impact immigrants (Berry, 2002), the current result confirms that it can be a positive coping strategy (Berry, 2006a; Lazarus, 1991).

In sum, participants approached challenges in a number of ways: positive appraisal of the various cross-cultural demands, problem solving and emotion focused coping. Most immigrants are going to experience some acculturative stress during the settlement process.
(Rudmin, 2003), and these findings from those who do well suggest that a variety of coping approaches can help. Consistent with Peterson (2006), these results support his assertion that the mentally healthy person appraises situations in ways that will afford adaptive coping. There was a fourth approach to coping, relying on one’s spiritual beliefs, which also helped a number of these participants. How their spiritual beliefs helped them will be discussed in more detail below.

**Flexibility.**

Recalling that career adaptability can be defined as: "a readiness to cope with changing work and work conditions" (Savickas, 1994, p.58), one could argue that participants demonstrated career adaptability by their demonstration of flexibility in the face of career challenges. However flexibility, combined with a number of other characteristics and attitudes, proved to be of value in dealing with all kinds of challenges across the life domains.

**Attitudes towards change and uncertainty.**

Most participants expressed the general philosophy that one needs to accept change and unexpected events; this attitude helped them do well across work, personal and societal domains. They seemed to take pride in their ability to be flexible and ability to adapt to new situations, people and cultures.

Flexibility was often accompanied by accepting what one could not control. While this result is compatible with Kosic’s 2006 assertion that an aversion to uncertainty and need for closure can result in more acculturative stress, these participants’ attitudes go beyond mere tolerance of change. Acceptance of their work situation often included an understanding of immigration as making a decision to choose change: “It’s about choice
again, do you want to adapt to this change or go back to the same old silos?” (Participant D07).

Participants’ overall approach to change may be viewed as an example of the signature strength of perspective. Their approach is a worldview that makes sense to themselves and others (Seligman, et al., 2005; Heine, 2001; Mitchell et al., 1999; Gelatt, 1992). One of the more striking examples is the belief that changes are an inevitable condition of living, and several participants recommended that others try to accept change (for example Canadian employers), so that they could focus on managing unexpected events. Some participants did not limit their view to acceptance, but suggested that change should be “embraced” rather than resisted. In my opinion, this is a wise, adaptive perspective in the 21st century world of rapidly changing technologies, economies, workplaces, career development and the emergence of the global village.

It is interesting to reflect on Sagiv et al.’s statement (in Positive Psychology in Practice) that people who value openness to change, as seen in the current results, “emphasize autonomy, self direction and independence of thought and action”. (2004, p. 79). To reiterate, these writers did not cite any research in support of the assertion, but this approach might be viewed as assimilationist. While the Taking Action category implies that participants were self motivating, there was no particular evidence of an emphasis on autonomy and independence in thought or in action. The Social Support and Life in Canada categories may suggest otherwise. For example the input, advice and opinions along with love and encouragement from family, friends, mentors, co-workers and people from their home culture who lived here, were important contributors to participants’ doing well with change.
A collateral perspective was that it helps one do well if one takes risks thereby creating new opportunities to experience new things, learn and adapt. Participants seemed to understand that they would need to take risks, to move out of what was comfortable and familiar which is suggestive of bravery - one of the signature strengths. Recall bravery includes not shrinking from challenges but persisting (another signature strength) in spite of them and it requires the emotional will to prevail (Peterson, 2006; Seligman et al., 2005). Participants’ determination was obvious in their stories. They clearly demonstrated emotional will and persistence in pursuit of career goals in the face of opposition: “any challenges, depends on you… every challenge can be overcome.” (Participant D06)

*Immigrant self monitoring.*

Further theoretical support for the emergence of flexibility as a quality or attitude that helps newcomers deal with changes is found in the research on two types of immigrant self monitoring, getting along -acting to avoid the host culture’s disapproval, and getting ahead which is characterized by being flexible and acting to adapt to new situations. The pro-active, flexible approach demonstrated by participants suggests they would likely say they are fully engaged in getting ahead, which is associated with more positive acculturation outcomes (Berry, 2003; Kosic, 2006; Lennox & Wolfe, 1984).

Plans and goals were invaluable in helping participants do well. They emerged as critical incidents as well as being embedded in the outcomes of other incidents, such as social support. As a result of having plans and goals, participants could monitor their progress, focus their energy towards objectives, feel more secure or confident in the face of uncertainty and stay hopeful and optimistic. The latter outcome in particular is consistent with research that suggests that working towards goals creates more positive affect than achieving them (Watson, 2005).
In addition, it may be that the capacity for flexibility with respect to plans and goals was informed in part by their knowledge of the role of change in their lives. The role of flexible plans and goals in immigrants’ experiences was not found anywhere in the literature reviewed but these helping incidents do support recommendations from scholars who address the nature and role of change and uncertainty in our lives (e.g. Bright & Pryor, 2005; Gelatt, 1992; Gelatt & Gelatt, 2003; Mitchell, et al., 1999).

The fact that plans and goals played an important role in participants’ doing well supports the conclusion that participants could be considered to be future minded, a perspective that is said to act as a buffer against depression (Gillham & Seligman, 1999).

**Self esteem.**

Returning to Heine’s proposition that the North American construct of self esteem is essentially about a positive self concept but other cultures may consider self esteem to be defined by flexibility and relationships with others (2001), the current results provide evidence that participants have good self esteem from both the Western and non-Western perspectives. Firstly, participants’ self descriptions were positive - there were no hindering personal qualities or characteristics. Secondly feeling confident in their capabilities to navigate changes and do well in spite of setbacks was a common outcome of a variety of helping factors (in 7 of the 10 categories). These observations also suggest they may have positive self concepts. In addition, participants clearly valued their ability to be flexible and indicated that it was a quality they valued in others. Finally, social connections, helping others and feeling like they were contributing to society were key factors in their doing well. The conclusion that participants likely have good self esteem is consistent with research that found that level of self esteem may predict immigrants’ psychological health (Nesdale & Mak, 2003).
Extraversion.

Some participants talked about being socially outgoing, which made it easier for them to quickly get involved in their community, begin making friends with the locals, and further their career plans by networking. Many participants described themselves as pro-active, preferring to initiate events rather than waiting for things to happen. Being socially outgoing and proactive are considered indicators of extraversion (McCrae & Costa, 1997; Watson, 2005), which is thought by some to be necessary to survive acculturation (Kosic, 2006), however the construct of extraversion is not well understood in culturally diverse contexts (Heine, 2001). That being said, the value of this finding is in understanding the benefits of being pro-active and taking risks to make social and work-related connections, plus the psychological benefits of taking control and making progress.

Locus of control.

Although existing research on this topic appears limited by the Western view that internal locus is the most favourable for a happy and adaptive life (Heine, 2001), an external locus appears to be more consistent with participants’ helping personal qualities, beliefs and perspectives. In addition to expressing the benefits of flexibility and being socially responsive, many participants believed in the notion of one’s destiny being influenced by outside forces. This belief was most often presented in the context of their spiritual beliefs.

Spiritual beliefs.

Participants here described how their spiritual beliefs helped them do well with changes and stressors, and several points can be made with respect to these findings. Firstly, the methodological problems associated with different theologies (Klassen et al., 2006) are not at issue here because this cross-cultural study revealed mainly how spiritual beliefs can help newcomers regardless of what those beliefs are. Secondly, in positive psychology,
Spirituality is considered a signature strength (Seligman et al. 2005), which helps people make sense of the larger scheme of things and know how a person can fit within it. It provides meaning and comfort. It may be argued that this general criteria was met by current results, however in addition to meaning and comfort, participants provided the more specific psychological outcomes of their beliefs. Their beliefs helped participants persevere, find energy, hope, calm or peace of mind, faith that they would receive what they needed, let go of worries, and find clarity in decision making. Another important aspect of this helping factor is that it often involved a partnership with a higher power in that participants combined their faith with their pro-active approach to change, determination and strong work ethic. It appears that these results may be new to our understanding of new immigrants’ experiences.

_Cultural distance, culture shock, preparation and expectations._

All participants came to Canada voluntarily. Voluntariness has been associated with being pro-active which, in light of the dominance of the Taking Action category and self descriptions of being pro-active people, makes sense. However, some research suggests that being proactive may lead to higher expectations, then disappointment (Berry, Kim, & Boski, 1988). There was no indication in current results that participants were disappointed either with their decision to choose Canada or as a result of any of their experiences here. In fact, a common outcome of helping incidents (e.g. their children adapting quickly and doing well) was participants’ belief that their decision was a good one.

Ten participants described how important research and preparation was to their doing well once they were here. This allowed them to prepare psychologically and emotionally for some of the challenges. Knowing what to expect seemed to reduce how much was unknown
which one could argue lessened cultural distance thereby ameliorating some acculturative stress (Berry, 2002; Masgoret & Ward, 2006).

Expectations and the experience of cultural distance were also informed by the work and life experiences, skills and knowledge that participants brought to Canada. Familiarity with Western cultures was one aspect (Berry et al., 2002), however living in diverse cultures and a variety of life experiences also helped participants feel more confident and successful in meeting challenges. Having realistic expectations were thought by participants to be critical to success, but as discussed earlier, part of being realistic was also knowing when one needs to be flexible and let go of expectations that are unmet in order to adapt. As previously noted in Chapter 2, optimism has been found to be positively related to realistic thinking (Aspinwall, 2006), which is also supported by study results.

**Financial security.**

Financial security was the smallest of the helping categories with six of the participants contributing. Items were mainly about having enough financial security to weather a period of unemployment but an anticipated length of time was not included in participants’ stories. Economic hardships are a well known problem for immigrants in Canada (Robson, 2001) and while the Canadian government has posted that newcomers need to be prepared for up to six months of unemployment, only two participants said that worries about their employment and resultant financial situations were hindering. Furthermore, no one wished for better financial security. By the time of the 2nd interview, all had been in Canada over six months and some close to 18 months. One can only conclude that either the vast majority of participants did not find their economic situation hindering, or they chose not to talk about it.
During acculturation, adaptation and settlement.

Taking Action.

Taking Action was one of the two most robust helping categories in the current study with 94% participation. The majority of actions taken were in service of securing work and furthering one’s career development, cultivating social support and learning to integrate into Canadian culture. The many positive psychological benefits as well as practical outcomes are powerful indicators of how taking action towards challenges can positively affect the experience of work and life transitions of newcomers.

This taking action approach to acculturation and settlement is further supported by participants’ self descriptions as pro-active people who love to do and to learn. Actions involved moving beyond the familiar or the comfortable. Their efforts, determination and willingness to tackle the unknown confirm that risk taking is an important part of the immigration success story (Li, 2006), although it was not found in the research reviewed on acculturation.

The evidence in this category also suggests that participants had the energy and requisite enthusiasm to pursue these activities. Energy/zest for life is proposed as a signature strength (Seligman, et al., 2005). In addition to believing in the value of a strong work ethic in themselves and others, participants’ enthusiasm and energy was evident in the way they spoke. Furthermore, being able to focus energy strategically (e.g. on work and family) was an outcome of helping incidents for example, family doing well, optimism, spiritual beliefs and the natural environment.

Culture learning.

Ward maintained that at the heart of cultural learning is intercultural communication (2006). It is worth reiterating that English was the most commonly reported hindrance (by
41% of participants) to doing well which supports research that found the acculturation experience and quality of outcomes related to a newcomer’s confidence in communicating (e.g. Austin, 2007; Clement, 1980). All participants who either struggled with English as a second language, or did not feel confident in their ability to speak Canadian English, had taken steps to improve their English communications skills which helped them feel they were doing well. Austin found that some newcomers resist enrolling in ESL instruction (2007). Some may suffer from second language anxiety (Westwood & Ishiyama, 1991). It cannot be said from the evidence that participants were or were not anxious about learning new ways to communicate, however we can say that their pro-active, risk taking approach to the language issue helped them feel good about dealing with it.

Culture learning theory of course includes attending to and apprehending other behavioural norms and customs, for example making, “behavioural shifts” (Berry & Sam, 1997) and participants in the current study described the different ways they did that. Their strategies were similar to how they addressed the issue of employment, in other words they went out and made the effort to observe and try, thereby actively becoming involved in the fabric of Canadian society: “if I just found work, and I didn’t really fit in, then I wouldn’t be a Roman in Rome, right?” (Participant D01)

What is interesting is that evidence of behavioural shifts here did not include any indication of native culture shedding. The helping incidents had more to do with wanting to learn about, understand and adopt some of the ways of the host culture rather than having to shed one’s native cultural ways. Two possible explanations come to mind regarding the absence of evidence of native culture shedding processes. The first is that the ECIT method combined with the goal of the study to explore what helps and what hinders participants do well, did not tap into culture shedding processes. A second reason may be that any native
culture shedding by participants was either minimal and/or not significant enough to them to mention as part of their story of doing well. The latter suggestion is supported by what has been observed of the positive effects of Canada’s multicultural ideology on acculturation strategies and outcomes (Berry, 2010). Participants reported that connecting with their cultures of origin here helped them in a variety of important social, psychological and practical ways. One key outcome was connecting with what was familiar and comfortable. Another was the freedom to enjoy one’s own traditions and customs.

Curiosity and loving to learn were two of the signature strengths reviewed (Seligman, et al. 2005) that are also supported in the current findings. Loving to learn is about learning in the service of the good life. Many participants described their love of learning for its own sake, providing examples of how learning and experiencing new things and meeting new people helped them do well. As noted previously, paired with a love of learning was an appreciation for the novel. Curiosity includes “taking an interest in all of an ongoing experience” (p. 412), and building a particular area of knowledge. Participants’ eagerness to learn about and experience Canadian culture was obvious in both the way they told their stories as well as in their actions. The high levels of education and specific career foci were reported by all 17 participants which is evidence of their commitment to developing an area of career expertise. These qualities or strengths were not found elsewhere in Canadian research with immigrants.

Social Support.

Some scholars have gone so far as to assert that social support is the most significant factor in successful adaptation (e.g. Hovey, 2000; Thomas & Choi, 2006; Wei et al., 2007 as cited in Hernandez, 2009), and the value of social support is well documented in the current study.
Technology.

One helping factor that emerged that was unavailable when most of the research on immigration was conducted is global communication technologies. These technologies allowed participants to engage in transnational social activities (Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999) which were very important to their doing well. Participants not only felt less isolated and more supported, they worried less about loved ones, which freed their energy to focus on adaptation and important settlement activities. Technology also helped participants connect locally and nationally with other immigrant groups which was as valuable socially as it was to their career development. This finding is important because it links transnational social activities with positive psychological outcomes (Murphy, 2006).

Cultural diversity.

Finding support, advice, comfort and familiarity by connecting with people from their home culture here was an important helping factor in participants’ doing well. In addition to identifying with others from their countries of origin, participants described the importance of feeling support by and belonging to the larger group of people who had immigrated to Canada. The assistance and support provided by veteran immigrants (from any culture) was a particularly significant factor in participants’ ability to do well. These group affiliations may have helped buffer the psychological challenges of coping with the devaluing of their credentials which may negatively affect newcomers’ social and work identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Living in a culturally diverse society helped many feel that they could or do belong here. A host that values cultural diversity is said to attract immigrants who prefer an integration strategy (Berry et al., 2002; Berry & Kalin, 1995) however the link between belonging and cultural diversity may be new to our understanding of the immigration
experience in Canada. In this study, a sense of belonging appears to be the natural outcome of these participants appreciating and feeling comfortable in a culturally diverse society.

Lastly, participants recognized that they would do better here, in all domains, if they could maintain social connections to their homelands and connect with their culture here, but it was also important to create a social support network after they arrived, in the society at large. Many of them described going out and building friendships outside their culture of origins, at work, at school, in places of worship, via their children’s schools, and at community events and celebrations.

_Mattering._

Much of participants’ intercultural contact experiences indicated to them that they mattered to others in this society. Their descriptions were infused with optimism and an eagerness to get to know their Canadian neighbours, and as they had been helped, they were eager to help others:

I’ve seen so many people go into the negative circle when come to Canada... But if [they get] in to the positive circle, they contribute, the way it’s going to help me is first it’s going to be a satisfaction, happiness, and then, again, I am contributing.”

(Participant D12)

The benefits of mattering in a cross-cultural context appear to be new to our understanding of new immigrants’ experiences in Canada.

One of the most striking results to emerge from this study is how influential the reception by the host society was on participants’ well being. Participants felt welcomed, that they belonged and therefore could succeed here. It helped to strengthen participants’ confidence and resolve in the face of an overwhelming number of changes. All four levels of
mattering conceived by Schlossberg, Lynch and Chickering (1989) are supported by the current study results:

Attention pertains to being noticed and acknowledged. Participants described being acknowledged by friendly, polite local people. The second level, Importance, goes beyond friendliness to conveying to newcomers that they are important. Participants said they felt respected even though they were strangers or worked in a “survival job”. Locals were often willing to help them sometimes without being asked. The third level, Dependence, is about how others value our help, our expertise, our caring. Helping others was both a common helping incident and an outcome of receiving help. Participants’ eagerness to contributing to the new society in particular emphasizes the importance of experiencing this level of mattering. The fourth level of mattering, Ego-extension, is often found in a personal relationship that consists of the feeling or belief that one’s progress and well-being matters both professionally and personally to others. Outcomes of social support helping incidents, such as feeling loved, encouraged and emotionally supported met that criteria.

Evidence was also found in the current results for the importance of positive institutional support in the Government/Agency Support category. The assistance provided by the government and various support agencies was not only helpful in many practical ways, but again participants felt that their arrival mattered to the Canadian government, and by extension Canadian society: “I feel that... our whole family of ours have been appreciated here.... I feel we are valued” (Participant D20)’s previously noted research on institutional support has focused only on what institutions do wrong and not on what they do right (e.g. Austin, 2007; Beynon et al., 2004).

As presented in both the Taking Action and Government/Agency Support categories all participants were willing and happy to receive as well as seek out the help they needed
from various service providers. A pro-active approach to acculturation fits well with positive or assertive help seeking behaviours. In addition, participants were surprised by the consideration and caring which infused their first help seeking experiences, which likely gave them further confidence to continue to ask. This contribution by the host culture adds an important dimension to what we know of help seeking behaviours of immigrants.

**Integration.**

Although the fourfold typology of acculturation strategies (Berry, 2006a) has been criticized for limiting the progress and scope of immigration research primarily because the absence of acculturative stress is the conceptual linchpin, (Rudmin, 2003; 2005a; 2005b), the construct of integration may be viewed as supported by current study results. Recall integration is said to occur when newcomer and host society value both cultures, which is thought to result in more positive acculturation outcomes. The current study has uncovered a range of factors or incidents that support integration as a promising doing well strategy. Canada is said to encourage immigrants to continue to value their home cultures, to enrich the host culture with what they bring, and to share ways in which all can live together (Berry, 2001; Li, 2006). In addition, based in the previous sections on support and mattering, there is little doubt that participants’ expressed favourable attitudes towards Canada.

**Resilience.**

Resilience has been described as a process of going through adverse events or crises and emerging feeling stronger as a result or benefitting psychologically as a result (Rutter, 1993). Resilience was implied in the descriptions of some participants who had prior difficult life experiences that helped them do well. Outcomes included self descriptors such as “tough” and “strong”: Resilience can also be the result of internal positive resources in
combination with supporting factors in one’s social network and community, which also fits well with the social support category of helping incidents.

Many participants said their children’s welfare helped define their doing well which is consistent with Ehrensaft and Tousignant’s suggestion that immigrants who encounter setbacks in Canada may be sustained by the belief that their children will live a better life here which helps them to be resilient (2006). Participants were very happy to report that their children had adjusted quickly and were thriving. Furthermore, a noteworthy number of participants were very happy to find the rights and freedoms they had read about were upheld here. These helping incidents support the aforementioned authors’ suggestion that immigrants may be more resilient because of their beliefs in Canada’s fair justice system and democratic ideology. The data suggests that the outcomes of these beliefs, such as determination, perseverance, peace of mind, and energy to focus on the future, may help newcomers remain resilient.

**Life in Canada: The good life?**

It has been suggested that the “good life” is difficult to define, at least as a “universa”l (Wierzbicka, 2009), however looking at current results, it may be defined in part as enjoying a certain quality of life. Support for this assertion is found in both participants’ definitions of doing well and some of the Life in Canada helping incidents. Quality of life was described to include better work/life balance, a rich, diverse, active culture, cleaner natural environment/less pollution, and a comparatively better educational system. In addition, Canada’s offer of certain rights and freedoms gave rise to helping incidents such as safety and security for the self and family, and freedom of religion and expression. The outcomes of said incidents give a fuller picture of a quality of life made manifest: participants had more leisure time; they had a wide variety of activities to enjoy; they felt
comfortable here; they felt respected; they felt more confident; they felt calm/experienced peace of mind, and they could focus their energy on work and family.

One type of helping incident of interest met the definition of the signature strength, *appreciation of beauty* (Seligman et al., 2005). Some of the helping incidents in the category Life in Canada described how the natural beauty of our environment helped participants do well. Participants found that it helped them feel refreshed and motivated, positive, comfortable, happy, gave them energy and confirmed their decision to come here. To my knowledge, this connection between the positive aspects of the physical environment and new immigrants’ well being is new information.

**Hindering Life in Canada.**

The hindering side of this category was small but warranted reporting. Each incident was unique to each of the seven participants in content and pertained to practical matters (e.g. work, housing, services), however all demonstrated how cultural distance factors could be stressful (Berry, et al., 2002; Man, 2004; Ward, 1996).

**Discussion of Values**

As noted in Chapter 2, integration and successful adaptation involves newcomers valuing aspects of the host culture as well as maintaining one’s home culture (Berry, 2002, 2003; Ward, 2006). Also noted was the fact that, with one exception, the values themselves do not appear in the psychological research on immigration in Canada. Both phenomenological and sociological value statements emerged from most critical incident categories, which finding supports the conclusion that values are an important factor in immigrants’ successful adaptation (Sagiv et al., 2004).
**Phenomenological values.**

The various phenomenological values were discussed in the context of critical incidents so will be not repeated in detail here, however overall they were consistent with the ubiquitous values reviewed by Peterson (2006). *Achievement* was reflected in participants’ valuing of their past experience and education, and their stalwart belief that they have something to offer Canada. *Hedonism* was reflected in participants’ descriptions of their new quality of life. The general value of *Stimulation* was found in participants’ descriptions of their eagerness to learn, experience new things, and challenge themselves.

As noted in Chapter 2, phenomenological values are not made explicit in any the existing studies on immigrants in Canada (Calderwood et al., 2009), nor were they apparent in the acculturation literature. What appears to be unique to this study is not only naming the values but discovering how experiencing Canadian customs, systems, things and people of value may help new immigrants do well.

**Sociological values.**

Many immigrants come to Canada because they agree with the sociological values upheld by Canadian society (e.g. Li, 2006; Schellenberg & Maheux, 2008). Participants in the current study talked about human dignity such as being treated with respect, equality such as the right to compete for work, democratic rule, the right to security/safety, and freedom of religion and speech. These values are consistent with those found under Peterson’s constructs of *Security* – safety and social stability, and *Universalism* – protecting people’s rights to equality etc. (2006).

Some of the personal principles or standards of behaviour that participants described as contributing to their doing well can be placed under Peterson’s general headings. A set of fundamental beliefs about the value of community and caring about the welfare of others
were evident in statements about the importance of contributing to society, helping others and wanting to “give back”. These values fit under the heading of Benevolence. Participants’ commitment to learning behavioural norms and standards of behaviour is related to Conformity. Tradition was also reflected in the value participants’ placed on their home cultural and spiritual customs, and their desire to know Canadian customs.

One additional standard or principle for living was observed that did not fit into under the values reviewed by Peterson. Firstly, participants believed in a strong work ethic which meant several things: working hard, being focused, being organized and prepared, staying determined and persevering in the face of setbacks. Recall that perseverance and work ethic are thought to act as buffers against mental illness (Gillham & Seligman, 1999) but to my knowledge work ethic has not been explored from a sociological value perspective in the context of what immigrants bring to Canada.

**When values are challenged.**

Recall that the degree to which something helps define one’s identity is strongly correlated to its value and the likelihood of enacting same (Peterson, 1997; 2006). One of the ubiquitous values reviewed is achievement/success/competence that is in accordance with host society standards. It is worth reiterating that while most participants managed to do well in spite of the devaluing of their credentials, some described the negative psychological impact of this problem, and how it hindered their ability to do well. The results do not suggest an overt conflict in values as that described in the Calderwood, et al. study (2009), wherein participants were required to act differently than what their personal ethics demanded. However, results in the current study suggest that a conflict in values is implied by the difference between participants’ valuation and the host society’s valuation of their education and career experience.
It is understandable, even expected, that newcomers would suffer some identity confusion (Austin, 2007; Tajfel & Turner 1986; Westwood & Ishiyama, 1991.) as a result of the employment difficulties they encounter upon arrival, (not to mention the often overwhelming task of integrating and fitting in). Two participants in the current study talked about their work identity. One felt his identity being compromised when he was told to change his first name in order to find work. The second participant talked about the impact of being deemed unqualified in her field of expertise, even though she had years of graduate school training and experience: “Without work, it’s challenging because you feel that you are… nobody. (Participant D25). However, what is striking about these results is that the vast majority of participants’ did not appear to lose confidence (a commonly cited outcome across categories) in who they are or in what they can offer the new host culture. Descriptions of their personal qualities suggested that their self concepts remained strong and positive.

A corollary hindering factor was that some participants felt blind-sided by this situation. Five of them expressed their frustration with the Canadian government for not warning them about the employment issue, suggesting in essence that the government should have been honest in reporting the true state of affairs here. Two participants indicated their mistrust of the Canadian immigration system as a result.

From a values perspective, it is easy to imagine how psychologically damaging this problem may be for some newcomers. It is surprising that not more participants reported this issue as a hindering factor, which reinforces the importance of the helping incidents revealed here. Knowing that the employability problem can potentially impact newcomers self concept and emotional well being has important implications for helping new those who struggle.
Employers’ hiring practices have been labeled discriminatory (Austin, 2007; Bauder, 2003; Beynon et al., 2004; Man, 2004; Tran, 2004), but it was not clear from their stories that participants felt that this was an issue of discrimination. The exception was when two participants were told by service providers to expect hiring discrimination, if they did not change their names to something more “Canadian”. They reacted with anger, dismay and confusion. Although this apparently happened to just two participants, their stories have implications for counselling practice.

To conclude 17 new immigrants who are doing well provided us with a brief window to their values. These values were found in a variety of helping incidents and were challenged as indicated by some hindering incidents. This simple observation suggests not only how embedded values are in everyday human experiences, but how important they are to doing well, and their possible impact on newcomers who struggle.

**Future life in Canada: hope and wishes.**

The signature strength of *hope* is defined as expecting good things for the future, and a belief that they will happen (Seligman, et al., 2005). Feeling hopeful was one way several participants gauged their doing well. Hope was an outcome of several types of helping incidents: being positive or optimistic, positive interactions with locals, positive self talk, spiritual beliefs, plans and goals, and preparation and research prior to arrival. Feeling hopeful was often accommodated by the confidence that they would succeed. The wish list question provided the vehicle by which participants could express what some of those hopes were.

To my knowledge, asking what new immigrants wish for, or wish they had, that would help them do well (Butterfield, et al., 2009) has never been asked prior to the current
study – therefore there appears to be no place to locate this information within existing literature.

The largest wish list came from the Work and Life Experiences category which was comprised of items relating to knowledge, skills and experiences that participants thought would help them in career development. Considering the fact that some participants felt hindered by the decrease in their employability, it makes sense that many of these same participants wished for work in their fields of interest.

Consistent with the pro-active nature of participants, the second largest group of items were wishes to continue to take action to do well. Participants wished for more networking, working, volunteering and social opportunities. Anticipated outcomes were continuing to learn and adapt, integrate and contribute to society. These items also reflect that which would help participants act out important values such as a strong work ethic, connecting socially and communally, and helping others.

As previously discussed, social support is considered a primary factor in successful adaptation, and these participants found or cultivated social support in a variety of places. Nevertheless, five participants wished for more social support in their lives. Their descriptions spoke to the sense of isolation and loneliness newcomers may feel when they leave their beloved family and friends for a new life in a new land.

A number of participants included the general wish that employers would be more flexible, more open to hiring new immigrants and more open minded about what new ideas and perspectives immigrants could bring to their businesses. Along with wishing for a change in employers’ attitudes, were feasible recommendations to employers and the Canadian government on how to help immigrants find work (e.g. volunteering, work bridging programs and internships). These wishes in particular revealed the fact that
participants gave thought to how the government might help other newcomers, from a well educated, informed perspective (see Fontana, 2003 for a review of Ottawa’s recommendations on the issue).

Finally, the Life in Canada wish list contained the hope that participants and their families would continue to enjoy the aspects of Canada that they valued. All the wish lists add further support to the types of things or factors that may help other new immigrants do better with all the challenges and changes they will encounter in Canada.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Similar studies.

Because it appears that this project was rare in its positive orientation towards the study of new immigrants experiences, I believe that a similar study but with a different group of new immigrants who feel they are doing well would further the cause of this type of scientific inquiry with this population. For example, these participants were from the greater Vancouver region, so similar studies in different regions of the country may yield different results.

A demographic factor that may limit the application of study findings is participants’ overall high level of education. Admission to Canada is granted according to a point system which, for skilled workers, is weighted heavily towards higher, post-secondary education and years of professional work experience. Accordingly, the proportion of less educated, or less experienced new workers who are admitted is small in comparison (Aydemir & Borjas, 2006). Nevertheless, in order to further our understanding of the topic, working with different demographics in that regard is warranted.

Study results are also limited by exploration of how participants are doing within the first year. Qualitative, positively framed research that is aimed at exploring and
documenting the progress of new immigrants after the first year is important to continue this line of inquiry.

Studies of acculturation in Canada have been limited to quantitative methods or to a focus on one cultural group at a time. In addition, there are relatively few of the latter studies – most of these studies are limited to refugees, families, women and children. The government has conducted large longitudinal surveys with hundreds of immigrants but these do not capture the rich data needed to more fully understand the immigrant experience in Canada. A strength of the current study is that it qualitatively explored experiences of a diverse group of newcomers and found commonalities of experience among them. In addition to adding to our knowledge of those who do well with change, it is important to continue this line of inquiry with diverse samples from the immigrant population.

Impacts.

The primary research question was to elicit helping and hindering incidents in the context of new immigrants doing well with changes to their work, and this included follow-up questions such as “can you say more about that?” where required. However, the question asking for the impacts of the changes did not include follow-up questions of that nature. As a result, some answers were limited to descriptions of behaviours such as volunteering and networking in response to work life changes. Similarly, some participants indicated that the impact of missing their friends back home was going out and making new friends. It was noted that in these cases some participants described only their actions in response to the change. Study design was not intended to elicit more in-depth descriptions of impacts. A qualitative study focused on the impacts of the changes inherent in Canadian immigration with a diverse sample would provide a more complete picture of the experience.
Doing well and coping well.

It may be that the central concept around which this study was designed, i.e. “doing well” might have biased participants towards talking about more actions of helping or hindering incidents than others such as attitudes, qualities and external factors such as social support. “Doing well with change” as opposed to “coping well with change” for example, might have been interpreted more literally by some participants and the large number of taking action incidents may be an indication of such a bias. However the same number of participants contributed to the Personal Qualities helping category (94%), for example, participants described themselves as “pro-active people” which is consistent with their tendency to take action and initiate change. Consider that beliefs, perspectives and values revealed a strong work ethic. Doing well definitions included positive emotions and states of being as well as descriptions of progress made from taking action. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a study on coping well might yield some other important aspects of the positive side of acculturation and settlement.

Recall that participants reported that, for the most part, they had always handled change well. A study that investigates the experiences of new immigrants who have not always done well, but are doing well with the changes affecting their work since immigrating, may be another important line of positively focused inquiry with this population.

The role of stress.

So much research on immigration was based on the assumption that less acculturative stress predicts better acculturation outcomes (Rudmin, 2003). This observation begs the question, did participants in the current study experience less acculturative stress as a result of the helping incidents? As noted in Chapter 2, scholars are currently debating the
psychological valence of acculturative stress (Rudmin, 2005a). Participants’ descriptions revealed that these newcomers who do well may have experienced some measure of acculturative stress but it was not clear from the data that acculturative stress was only experienced negatively. Based on the results of the Taking Action category, one could suppose that stress to some extent positively motivated these participants to action. The actual experience of this key aspect of acculturation merits further qualitative exploration, which, to my knowledge, has yet to be attempted.

**An integration strategy.**

All the participants provided evidence of having an integration oriented attitude and behavioural strategies regarding acculturation and settlement. Other strategies, for example one that favours more separation than integration, might deter some people who they feel they are doing well, from participating. It could be said that the study is biased towards newcomers who have an integrationist perspective. A similar study that explores separation as a possible doing well strategy could be initiated with the help of cultural experts, representatives and gatekeepers.

**Flexible goals and plans.**

Flexible plans and goals were important doing well strategies, however some participants did not talk about what those plans and goals were. That type of information was not solicited. However those that did talk about plans talked about short term plans (for example being registered to take a course in idiomatic English). A study exploring the what and the how of working with flexible short and long term goals and plans in the context of acculturation would provide much needed insight into that aspect of the process.
Discrimination.

Two participants provided some insight into the negative psychological impact of being told they may expect hiring discrimination based on their name. To reiterate they were angry, discouraged and confused and one experienced temporary identity confusion. It was surprising to find that although the negative psychological impacts of employment discrimination has been researched to some extent with professional and particular cultural groups in Canada, nothing about name discrimination was located in academic journals. Clearly future research is warranted on the effects of this type of discrimination.

Implications for Counselling Practice

Most Canadian research focuses on newcomers’ specific cultural groups. Very few Canadian studies look at the unique stressors and circumstances facing a diverse group of immigrants. Sue, Ivey and Pedersen (1996) warn that in multicultural counselling, an overemphasis on cultural differences can be as problematic as ignoring them. Understanding both individual and common experiences is especially important in a multicultural society (Arthur, Brodhead, Magnusson, & Redekopp, 2003). The current study has attempted to explore positive and negative aspects of immigration through the stories of a diverse group of newcomers who feel they have done well with changes affecting their working lives. They talked about personal, social, cultural and career changes. Their stories were imbued with their personal strengths, successes, beliefs, hope, goals and dreams – and they had much in common. Consistent with a positive psychology framework, and in response to the results, most of the counselling implications and recommendations that follow are oriented towards the positive. Up to now counselling immigrants has been largely about treating what has gone wrong, therefore the goal here is to introduce the good and the right, and find ways to bring them to new immigrants’ experiences.
**Cross cultural group counselling.**

Consistent with existing research, cross-cultural group affiliations proved to be very important to participants’ doing well (e.g. classmates, community organizations, places of worship, cultural associations, immigrant networking groups, etc.) Participants valued and were helped by the cultural diversity in Canadian culture. As noted several times, the current study showed that it is possible to elicit common as well as unique experiences from a diverse group of new immigrants. Within a culturally diverse support group, experiences in common can serve as a foundation for facilitating a positive and beneficial cross-cultural group counselling experience.

**Mattering.**

In my opinion, mattering was one of the most important outcomes of participants’ interactions with local people and service providers. As previously noted all four levels of mattering (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989) i.e. *visibility, importance, dependence* and *ego-extension* resulted from helping factors such as networking, volunteering, interactions with locals, service providers and the social support category of incidents. These findings have several implications for counselling practice. Creating a “climate of mattering” in the counselling environment (Amundson, Harris-Bowlsbey, & Niles, 2009, p.42) is necessary to helping new immigrants transition to their new life. To begin with Amundson et al. recommend that the clients be noticed individually and welcomed upon their arrival (*visibility*). This important first step may help to ease feelings of alienation, loneliness and unfamiliarity.

Secondly, establishing clients’ *importance* can begin by reception staff taking a positive interest in the client. In the group setting, importance can be reinforced by a “check-in” style opening round of communication in each session. This can foster a cohesive group
experience which in turn may soften and eventually replace some of the negative psychological impacts of acculturation with a sense of purpose, belonging and fitting in.

The third level, *dependence*, is about how others value our help, our knowledge, our caring. Recall that helping others was both a common helping incident, (e.g. volunteering) and an outcome (sharing career or immigration experiences) which conveyed to participants that their help was appreciated and had value. Schultheiss (2007) described how mattering is essential in one’s working life which includes the belief that one’s work and education has worth. In spite of the devaluing of their credentials here, it helped participants to continue to believe in the value of their credentials, work and life experiences. Reconnecting clients with their accomplishments may empower them to make action plans to help them work towards their career development goals, or other goals such as increasing their social support network, or integration into the community at large. It may help them reconnect with who they are.

The fourth level of mattering *ego-extension* is the foundation of the positive client-counsellor working alliance necessary for good counselling practice (Corey, 2010). It manifests through relationships that convey a feeling or belief that one’s progress and well-being matters both professionally and personally to others. In a group setting, it is important that group members feel they can share and compare their worries, stressors and obstacles to career development, settlement and sociocultural adjustment without judgment. Feelings of resentment, frustration, anxiety, loneliness, confusion and grief can be safely expressed and processed in the community of the group. Sharing their stories in a respectful, caring space can legitimize their negative reactions and feelings as natural and understandable. Group bonding can serve to bring the mattering climate to the fourth level.
Validation.

In the context of mattering, counsellors and other group members can help validate immigrants’ work experience, education and life experiences as having worth, purpose and meaning. In addition, clients’ personal strengths as individuals can be explored and honoured. For example, one rather striking result from the current study was that participants’ defined their doing well, as surviving and coping. Newcomers can be lauded for what they have achieved thus far, in the face of very challenging circumstances.

One way to facilitate this process is to ask members to explore the people, places, things and activities that help validate their worth, purpose and the meaning they derive from life (Ishiyama, 1995). It can help clients reconnect with what they value (phenomenologically and sociologically). This process can also illuminate areas of their lives that are lacking support or validation of what they believe is important.

Participants received validation and support from connecting to their ethno-cultural communities. Emotional and practical support (e.g. help with problem solving) were the outcomes of connecting with people from their home culture in Canada. Counsellors can help newcomers explore their home culture, customs and traditions from a positive perspective - as sources of meaning and strength. Asking members’ to explore and share their “family tree of strengths” (Seligman, et al., 2005) may reconnect them with their heritage. Exploring the values and strengths in one’s culture can engender pride and draw attention to the resources inherent therein. Sharing what one loves or admires about one’s culture with other members of the group could be enjoyable for all and could further intragroup understanding and acceptance.

In addition to exploring validation through one’s culture of origin, clients can explore what they find of value in Canada, for example, the beauty and perhaps cleanliness of the
natural environment. They could be encouraged to create ways of incorporating more valued or enjoyable experiences into their lives. This strategy may help ameliorate negative affect and restore some quality of life or balance to the busy, often overwhelming job of adaptation.

Another important finding is that spirituality played a role in participants doing well (at least ten participants). Helping newcomers explore their beliefs about the universe, meaning of life and some of the larger questions, may reconnect them with the benefits described by participants, for example peace of mind, comfort, faith and letting go of worries.

Certain positive psychology scholars suggested immigrants be encouraged to be open to changing their values in order to enhance their well being and ease adaptation, (e.g. away from conservative values) (Sagiv, et al., 2004). I believe that this advice should be considered carefully in light of the relevant context and with caution, for the following reasons. Firstly a major hindering factor arose when there was a conflict about the value of participants’ credentials and work experience. People’s careers inform their identities and self concepts, so to suggest they be encouraged to simply accept the Canadian value of what they have earned and worked for is likely to reinforce the problem. Secondly, speaking more generally, a strength based positive approach to counselling will help newcomers celebrate what they have achieved, which in turn can free up their energy for working towards goals. This approach is consistent with a more integrationist (versus assimilationist) ideology.

The use of metaphor.

Due to the fact that English is their second language, communication may be an issue for some group members. They may suffer from second language anxiety (Westwood & Ishiyama, 1991). Recall that the most often type of hindering incident reported was difficulty with the English language. Second language anxiety can sometimes be
misunderstood as a reluctance to join in the conversation. Accents that are difficult to understand may invoke impatience and unintended misunderstandings. Counsellors need to be sensitive to these potential problems. Westwood and Ishiyama recommend that counsellors avoid correcting group members too frequently. They suggest that counsellors encourage newcomers to use their first language to express feelings and ideas that may be limited by the English language, and also to be aware of non-verbal cues (1992).

As discussed earlier, a significant number of participants in the current study made use of metaphors to more easily convey their intended meaning which suggests another approach to working with this population. The therapist can help clients access or create metaphors translated from their languages of origin to help them convey important, complex or subtle aspects of their stories. The use of metaphor in the practice of counselling is well documented although to date the use of metaphor cross-culturally may not yet have been recommended where language is a potential issue. There are a number of good resources available to help counsellors make use of metaphor in career and narrative based personal counselling (Amundson, 2001; 2003a; 2003b; 2010; Bright & Pryor, 2008; Inkson & Amundson, 2002; Pryor & Bright, 2009). However, current study results suggest that counsellors help newcomers utilize their own culture specific metaphors to enhance communication and intercultural contact and learning.

**Taking action to learn and do.**

As noted in the previous discussion this type of helping incident was of great psychological benefit to participants. New immigrants however may feel inhibited from taking risks and engaging with the new host culture. Mak, Westwood, Ishiyama, & Barker (1999) promoted sociocultural adaptation by using social learning theory as a guide to counselling a group of newcomers. The general objective was to encourage social learning
via group member interactions. For example, role plays were utilized to help them experience and gain confidence in social competencies or social intelligence, a signature strength (Seligman et al., 2005). They were encouraged to bring their acculturation experiences to the group for validation and social support, but also to benefit from the wisdom of others and the group as a whole.

It has been suggested that participants were doing well with the sociocultural adaptation process at the time of the interview, in fact for many their social adaptation defined their doing well. Taking action critical incidents provided evidence (i.e. outcomes) that indicated that social learning was taking place. In order to adapt, participants networked, volunteered, worked, took courses, played, participated, and in general moved among and connected with the locals. Participants learned by meeting people, watching and doing. Results included gaining confidence as well as making progress towards social integration and their career goals. Progress enhanced their self-efficacy. The taking action wish list items showed that participants understood that doing was a good way to learn. It makes sense then that newcomers would benefit from a counselling group format that optimizes social learning within the group, testing that learning outside, then debriefing in the safety of the group in the next session.

Planned Happenstance theory, which was an addendum to the social learning theory of career development (Mitchell, et al., 1999) is an appropriate conceptual framework to help newcomers cope with change, especially as it relates to changes to their work lives. Clients can learn to extend their career development to include creating and transforming unplanned events into opportunities. Mitchell et al encourage the learning of a number of “skills” or attributes in order to do this. These are curiosity - exploring new learning opportunities; persistence- exerting effort despite setbacks; flexibility - changing one’s attitudes due to
circumstances; *optimism* - viewing new opportunities as possible and attainable; and *risk taking* - taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes.

The reader may notice how remarkably similar these skills are to participants’ taking action strategies, qualities and perspectives for doing well with change. The cultivation of planned happenstance skills affords counsellors ways to help themselves and clients understand the role of unforeseen events in life, especially in newcomers’ working lives. Clients can be helped to work with them, rather than struggling to minimize the effects of random events.

The planned happenstance skills happen to be similar to some of the relevant signature strengths reviewed: *curiosity, persistence* and *optimism* (Seligman et al., 2005) are very similar. *Risk taking* is a component of the signature strength of *bravery* and the narrow definition of flexibility fits that of the signature strength of *open-mindedness*. However, as discussed in the other sections, participants’ flexibility included more than the ability to change one’s mind in view of the evidence.

**Flexible plans and goals.**

The benefits of plans and goals are well known to counselling practitioners, but to my knowledge, they have not been researched in the context of immigration and acculturation processes. Recall that flexible plans and goals were integral to participants’ doing well, especially with their employment situation and career development. Consistent with previous research on optimism (Aspinwall, 2005; Watson, 2005), having realistic plans and goals to work towards (versus achieving goals) helped participants’ remain optimistic.

When ready, clients can explore ways to begin to take risks and tackle the job of career development and social integration, and establishing plans and goals is a good way to begin. Clients may experience a sense of control while developing an understanding of what
they cannot change or control, increase their affect, gauge their progress, and look forward to their future. Positive psychotherapy practice suggests that clients be encouraged to consider the notion of satificing which is defined as striking a balance between what is satisfactory and satisfying, in other words what is good enough (Linley & Joseph, 2004). This may be a useful idea to newcomers as long as it does not imply a devaluing of their work and life knowledge and experience.

**Beliefs about change.**

Cultivating a positive attitude towards and comfort with change, ambiguity and chaos has been recommended by a number of vocational psychology scholars (e.g. Bright & Pryor, 2005; Gelatt & Gelatt, 2003; Mitchell et al., 1997) and as stated often in the current study, positive beliefs about change and uncertainty seemed to buffer to the negative aspects of acculturation in Canada, helping participants to remain optimistic and confident.

As noted in Chapter 2, Gelatt in particular provides some ideas that could help new immigrants come to terms with the uncertainty of their work situation and learn creative ways to problem solve and make decisions (1992). Counsellors could explore the following ideas with group members or with individual clients. 1) Be focused and flexible about your goals; 2) Be objective and optimistic about what you believe; 3) Treat beliefs as prophecy; 4) Balance reality testing with wishful thinking; 5) Learn to plan and plan to learn; 6) Respond to change and create change. Similar to planned happenstance theory, there is noticeable similarity between these ideas and participants’ helping incidents and/or the outcomes of same: being flexible and optimistic as well as realistic; staying focused; beliefs that one’s goals are attainable; beliefs in a higher power; remaining hopeful; planning, learning and being pro-active; accepting, even embracing change; and taking action to create opportunities.
In conclusion, participants provided a wealth of information that can help guide counsellors in their work with newcomers. Interventions and counselling goals may address the emotional, spiritual, psychological (e.g. communications, problem solving, self esteem, self efficacy, self concept, mattering, fitting in and belonging), social and career development needs of new immigrants who are may be struggling.

**Implications for policy.**

The results of this study have revealed how a group of newcomers do well here, in spite of barriers and challenges, however their stories also highlighted the negative psychological impacts of what most new immigrants are likely to encounter. It has been argued that social support and affiliation is one of the most important factors in successful integration and adaptation and that a cross-cultural counselling support group could be of benefit to those who struggle. A review of counselling services available in the Greater Vancouver area indicated that there are a variety of career counselling services available to new immigrants but very few personal support groups appear to be offered. Investigating the reasons for this, for example a lack of interest from newcomers, perceived stigma, or lack of funding is beyond the scope of this study, but the topic would be worth addressing to find out if and how counselling support groups for newcomers might be successfully launched.

As noted previously communications technology was an important source of support for participants, helping them stay connected to loved ones, friends and former work colleagues. If not already in place, it is recommended that these technologies be made easily available to newcomers upon arrival.

To honour the contribution participants made to this research I decided that their recommendations for policy should be reiterated here. The wish list question provided them with a voice to express their views on the matter. The first and most commonly mentioned
wish was that notice of the employability problem be posted conspicuously on-line by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. A second wish was that governments provide funding to employers to provide more opportunities to newcomers who don’t meet employment criteria “because people can learn” (Participant D10).

Another wish was that employers would be more flexible in their thinking and look more positively at what hiring immigrants is “going to give back to them in years to come when… most of Canada is retir[ed]” (Participant D01). A fourth wish was for more opportunities for newcomers to learn how to set up their own businesses. Lastly, several participants mentioned the idea of unpaid or partly paid internships to help immigrants get much needed Canadian experience in their chosen fields and to help them contribute to society as soon as possible.

**Concluding Remarks**

The main purpose of the study was to discover from a culturally diverse group of new immigrants who are doing well with changes that affected their work and career development, the factors and strategies that help and hinder them, and to gather important background and contextual information in order to provide a comprehensive description of their experiences. The results were a rich multifaceted description of the challenges and changes newcomers are likely to encounter in Canada. Most importantly, results provide clear evidence that it is possible for new immigrants to do well in Canada – to be happy, to feel confident, to belong, to make progress, and to remain hopeful – in spite of barriers and setbacks.

Because the immigrant story in Canada is thus far under researched, the current research is in many ways a beginning to understanding the various facets and complexity of newcomers’ experiences from a qualitative, cross-cultural perspective. There is so much
more to learn from this inspiring group of people. Framing the study from a positive viewpoint successfully illuminated important aspects of participants’ stories that will hopefully encourage further exploratory research and positive oriented, strength based clinical applications to help those who struggle.
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graduates in Ontario (Canada). *Globalization, Societies and Education, 5* (2), 239-255. DOI: 10.1080/14767720701427145


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DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410


Figure 1. Statistics Canada Longitudinal Survey Graph, 2001: Graph representing percentage of survey responses reported by newcomer respondents regarding the most serious difficulties they faced after arrival in 2001.
Appendix B: Statistics Canada Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, 2005

Figure 2: Statistics Canada Longitudinal Survey Graph, 2005: Graph representing percentage of responses reported by respondents regarding the most serious difficulties they faced after 4 years in Canada

Source: Statistics Canada 11-008
Appendix C: Recruitment Poster

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

A Study About Immigrants Who Are Doing Well With Change

We are seeking immigrant adult volunteers who have experienced changes affecting their work and who feel they are doing well with these changes. The purpose of this research project is to give recent immigrants to Canada who have experienced change(s) that affect their work an opportunity to describe their experiences. It also provides individuals with an opportunity to talk about what has helped or hindered them in doing well when facing these changes.

The principal investigators for this study are Dr. Norm Amundson, 604-822-6757, and Dr. Bill Borgen, 604-822-5261, Professors in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia.

People who meet the following criteria are needed:

- 19 years or older
- immigrated to Canada within the last year
- have worked and have experienced changes that have affected their work and who feel that they are doing well with these changes
- are willing to talk about their experiences in a confidential one- to two-hour interview.

If you would like to participate, or would like further information about this study, please contact Anne Erlebach at xxx-xxxx or xxxxxxx@xxxx.ca
Appendix D: Screening Questionnaire

Screening Questions for CIT Prospective Participants – Immigrants

Prospective Participant’s Name: _______________

Date of Pre-screening Discussion: _______________

Gender: □ Female □ Male

Age: ____ (19 or older)

New to Canada? □ Yes □ No
If yes, length of time in Canada _______________ □ New Immigrant

Changes experienced have affected the person’s work? □ Yes □ No

Changes have been experienced in the past 6 months? □ Yes □ No

Doing well with changes? □ Yes □ No

Willing to talk about their experiences? □ Yes □ No

Willing to spend approximately 2.0 hours for 1st interview □ Yes □ No

Available for a 2nd interview (offered phone, email or in-person, their choice)? □ Yes □ No

Able to converse in English? □ Yes □ No

Advise: The first interview will be tape recorded but will be kept completely confidential. Is it okay for me to tape record our interview? □ Yes □ No
Proceeded to arrange a first interview? □ Yes □ No

Availability:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Participant # __________

Contact Information:

Home Address: _____________________________________________________________

Phone(s):

E-Mail:
CONSENT FORM

Doing Well In Canada: A Critical Incident Study of Immigrants’ Experiences

Principal Investigator: Dr. Norman Amundson, Professor
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Co-Investigator: Dr. William Borgen, Professor
University of British Columbia
Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology,
and Special Education
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Co-Investigator Anne C. Erlebach, doctoral student
University of British Columbia
Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology,
and Special Education
(778) 837-4194

This research is being conducted as part of our work in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. The results of this research will be in a doctoral dissertation that will become public documents in the University library once completed. The results of this research may also be published in appropriate professional and academic journals. This study is funded through a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to give working women and men who have experienced change(s) that affect their work, and who are handling these changes well, an opportunity to describe their experiences. It also provides individuals with an opportunity to discuss what has helped or hindered them in doing well when facing these changes.
Procedures

This study will require two interviews. The first one will be approximately two hours long. During this interview, you will be introduced to the purpose of the study and upon giving your signed consent for participation, you will be asked to describe your experience of change(s) affecting your work and the nature of these changes, using an open-ended question format. You will then be asked to recall specific strategies that helped and hindered you in dealing well with these changes, and whether there were things that might have been helpful to you but were not offered. During the final part of this first interview, you will be asked to provide demographic information about yourself. This interview will be tape recorded, transcribed and given a code number to ensure confidentiality. Upon completion of the study these tapes will be erased.

The second interview will last up to 30 minutes and will consist of a review of your results plus the categories that I discover. Your total time will be approximately three hours within a six to nine month period.

Confidentiality

Any information identifying individuals participating in this study will be kept confidential. Only the principal and co-investigators and/or trained Research Assistants on the research team will have access to the data. Upon signing the informed consent you will be given a code number to ensure the maintenance of confidentiality. Participants will not be identified by the use of names or initials in any reports of the completed study. All research documents will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office at the University of British Columbia. Computer data files will be password protected.

Compensation

There will be no monetary compensation to participants other than appropriate reimbursement for bus fare or parking expenses incurred.

Contact for Information About the Study

If you have any questions or would like more information about this study, you may contact Dr. Norman Amundson (Principal Investigator) at (604) 822-6757 or Dr. William Borgen (Co-investigator) at (604) 822-5261 or Anne Erlebach (doctoral student) at xxx-xxxx.

Contact for Concerns About the Rights of Research Subjects

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at (604) 822-8598.
Consent

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice of any kind.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

__________________________ ___ ___________________
Participant Signature Date

_________________________________________________________________
Printed Name of the Participant signing above

I agree to be contacted in the future for research participation in similar studies by the same researcher.

Initials:_____ Date: ____________/2010

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.
Appendix F: Interview Guide:

“Doing Well in Canada: A Critical Incident Study of Immigrants’ Experiences”

Participant #: ________________________

Date: __________________

Interview Start Time: ________________

1. Contextual Component

Preamble: As you know, I am investigating the ways in which working women and men have successfully handled change(s) that affect their work since coming to Canada. The purpose of this interview is to collect information about the changes you have experienced and the ways in which you are dealing well with them.

a) As a way of getting started, tell me about the changes that have affected your work life or career, or any changes you feel might help me understand your story.

b) You volunteered to participate in this study because you identified yourself as experiencing changes to your work and doing well with them. What does doing well mean to you? (How do you know you are doing well? What does doing well look like?)

* Pre-Critical Incident Scaling Question was asked here. See footnote, page 62.

c) So reflecting on all these changes you described, how have these changes affected your work life? (Are there any other impacts on your work?)
2. **Critical Incident Section**

*Helping Incidents*

You said that even with all these changes, you rated yourself as a 5-6 (or whatever the participant rated him- or herself in question 1 (b) above).

What has helped you in doing well with the changes that have affected your work? (What was the incident/factor/thing that helped? – e.g.: “Networking has helped.” How did networking help you to do well in handling the changes affecting your work? Can you give me an example of where networking helped?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helpful Factor &amp; What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)</th>
<th>Importance (How did it help? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so helpful.)</th>
<th>Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)</th>
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Critical Incident Section continued

**Hindering Incidents**

Are there things that have made it more difficult for you to do well?
(Alternate question: What kinds of things have happened that made it harder for you to do well?)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hindering Factor &amp; What it Means to Participant (What do you mean by ..?)</th>
<th>Importance (How did it hinder? Tell me what it was about .. that you find so unhelpful.)</th>
<th>Example (What led up to it? Incident. Outcome of incident.)</th>
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**Wish List**

Summarizing what has been discussed up to this point with the participant as a transition to the next question:

We’ve talked about what’s helped you to do well, such as …, and some things that have made it more difficult for you to do well, such as …. Are there other things that would help you to continue doing well, or do better? (Probe if needed: What might help you that you have not yet had access to?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wish List Item &amp; What it Means to Participant (tell me more about..?)</th>
<th>Importance (How would it help? Tell me what it is about that you would find helpful.)</th>
<th>Example (Can you give me an example of when might this be helpful?)</th>
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* Post-Critical Incident Scaling Question was asked here. See footnote, page 62.
3. **Always Handled Change Well Question:**

a. Have you always handled change well?

(Circle one) Yes No

b. If not, what happened that helped you to begin to handle change well?
Demographics

Citizenship Status

Career:

Career Field

Time in Career Field

Current Employment (i.e. job title, student, volunteer, looking for work)

Type of job

Length of time in current job

Age

Gender

Country of origin and culture

Length of time in Canada

1st language

Marital status

Family status/parental status

Education level

Interview End Time: _______________ Length of interview: _______________
Appendix G: Instructions to Transcriber:

Transcripts should be in word.doc format, 12 pt font. The heading will need to be "Participant #" only. I need the transcript to be aligned to the left, not justified. In the body of the transcript, note that you will need to replace any proper names, including any mention of the participant's - family, spouse, children, friends, co-workers etc, company names, school names, streets, addresses etc., with words in brackets as shown on the mock sample. I also would appreciate accurate spelling plus accurate punctuation to indicate pauses and natural breaks in the conversation, as well as laughter and pauses noted in brackets. For my purposes an accurate rendering is critical to our analysis of the language and meanings being conveyed. Once transcribed you can save & send me the transcription electronically, again only using Participant # as the file name. Because this is a research study with human participants, all data must be kept strictly confidential, in other words you will need to refrain from talking about or sharing any of the data with anyone. Here is a mock transcript excerpt for your reference:

Participant #XX

Q: What is your experience of making career decisions?

A: Okay, I settled in my career at a fairly young age and I pretty much had my perfect job at the age of 22. I thought it was my career job but it wasn’t quite at the age of 26. I graduated from my cake decorating program at 21, so quite a youngster and I worked for a short time at a patisserie, called (name of shop). It was a good experience for a year but it was not really what I call a professional job. It was not a very high paying job but it gave me, you know, work experience and so at 26 there was a job that came up at (name of employer) for a designer. I remember getting that job and thinking, wow, I'm really using my training and skills and ah sort of paid well. Kind of pretty much everything that I thought would be great, um. After working there for a couple of years I felt that I wasn’t all that satisfied with the actual work in terms of the way that they did it. There was a lot of negativity I felt, in that environment, and that became quite distressing, so that was a problem I guess in terms of making a change, um, I don't know (laughter).

Q: No, that’s great…

A: I actually took a year’s leave of absence and moved back to (city) where I had grown up... should I go on?

Q: Yes, but first I’d like to reflect back what I think I heard you say,...
Hello again and welcome to the second part of the study. Because it has been a few months since our first interview, in order to refresh your memory about what it was about, here are the three main questions I asked you:

(i) What has helped you in doing well with the changes that have affected your work?
(ii) Are there things that have made it more difficult for you to do well?
(iii) Are there other things that would help you to continue doing well or do better?

Critical Incidents/Factors Section
Below are lists of things I extracted to represent what you spoke about in our interview. I used your words wherever possible, but please rest assured that these only represent each idea you spoke about and that the rest of your story, such as how something helped or hindered you, is included in the analysis.

The first set is a list of things that you described as helping you do well with the changes affecting your work or career since you arrived, (HE), & the second is a list of those that hindered your doing well (HI). Lastly are items that you would wish for to help you do well or do better (WL). Kindly review the items below and answer the following questions:

4. Are the Helping, Hindering and Wish List items correct?
5. Is there anything missing?
6. Is there anything that needs revising?
7. Do you have any comments you’d like to add?

Helping Critical Incidents/Factors

HE1: found a lot of good information about Canada on the internet
HE2: people are friendly here and that helps me

Hindering Critical Incidents/Factors

HI1: my work experience is not recognized here

Wish List Items
WL1: I wish the government had told us about the job situation
Categories Section

I have also developed a number of themes, also called categories to represent and describe the common aspects among all the participants’ interviews. This was accomplished by placing each HE, HI and WL incident/factor into an appropriate category.

Please review the categories and where I have placed your incident/factors below and answer the following questions:

4. Do the category headings make sense to you?
5. Do the category headings capture your experience and the meaning that the incident or factor has for you?
6. Are there any incidents that don’t belong in the category in which they were placed? If so, where do you think they belong?

Helping Categories

Beliefs and Perspectives

Government Support and Programs

Financial security

Personal Qualities

Preparation, Plans and Expectations
HE1: found a lot of good information about Canada on the internet

Life in Canada: HE2: locals are friendly here and that helps me

Social Support

Taking Action.

Work & Life Experience, Skills & Knowledge

Hindering Categories:

Beliefs and Perspectives

Government Support and Programs

Financial security

Personal Qualities
Hindering Categories cont’d

Preparation, Plans and Expectations

Life in Canada

Social Support

Taking Action

Work & Life Experience, Skills & Knowledge
HI1: my work experience is not recognized here

Wish List Items

Beliefs and Perspectives

Government Support & Programs
WL1: that the government would better inform us about the job situation

Financial security

Personal Qualities

Preparation, Plans and Expectations

Life in Canada

Social Support

Taking Action

Work & Life Experience, Skills & Knowledge

Quotes

I require your permission to quote you in my thesis. There are several quotes that would help me best illustrate the point I am making. Know that pursuant to our ethical standards, you will still remain anonymous.

Permission to use quotes? Yes No

Please email your answers to me via this address: xxxxx@xxx.ca or if you prefer we can talk about your results on the phone: at xxx-xxx-xxxx or we can talk in person at your convenience.

Thanks very much for your time and effort helping me with this project. Anne