

# **Narrating Futures: Enhancing Career Adaptability in Emerging Adults through Integrated Public Speaking and Career Construction Workshops**

**by**  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis presents a study exploring a novel approach to career interventions by integrating public speaking techniques with career construction theory in a workshop format. It addresses the formidable challenges faced by emerging adults in navigating career decisions amidst today's dynamic job market. With a mixed-method approach, the research investigates the impact of sharing personal career narratives on participants' perceptions of career adaptability competencies, focusing on self-efficacy and confidence levels. Positive outcomes include perceptions of heightened confidence, empowerment, and the recognition of the importance of group dynamics in fostering personal and professional growth. These findings underscore the potential pivotal role of such interventions in equipping students with the resilience and skills needed to navigate evolving career trajectories. Contextualized within the broader landscape of career counseling strategies, the exploratory study emphasizes the critical importance of career adaptability in today's economic, social, and rapidly changing career landscape. The research addresses pressing issues such as premature career decisions, rapid market transformations, and the need for graduates to possess adaptability skills.

**Keywords:** career adaptability; public speaking; career decision making; career construction theory; career interventions

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my mom, Elva June (1936-2024), whose steadfast encouragement, love, and unwavering belief in me cultivated the courage and self-assurance I needed to navigate through every transition to this day. Thanks mom.

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Celebrated writer Tara Westover, in her memoir *Educated*, passes on advice she received, urging one to “First find out what you are capable of, then decide who you are.” Thank you to everyone for helping me find out what I am capable of. To be continued.

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# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

In a world full of people who seem to know everything, passionately, based on little (often slanted) information, where certainty is often mistaken for power, what a relief it is to be in the company of someone confident enough to stay unsure (that is, perpetually curious).

*-George Saunders, A Swim in a Pond in the Rain: In Which Four Russians Give a Master Class on Writing, Reading, and Life, 2021.*

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Not too long ago, when I was bringing my 17-year-old son Griffin to an informational interview with an engineer, a meeting generously arranged by my brother-in-law, Griffin was introduced as a young person trying “figure out what he wanted to do with his life.” An innocent enough statement that most young people have faced for generations, it struck me as an unhelpful way to present this opportunity to a person of my son’s age, or anyone’s age for that matter. What seems out of sync with both the purpose of the meeting and the potential benefit to my son is the notion that there was actually a problem that needed addressing, when this may in fact not be the case. The possibility that the 30-minute discussion with this engineer at this company at this time would have a monumental impact on Griffin’s life was, in my view, placing far too much pressure on both my son and the engineer. Furthermore, given the many unknown factors that will influence my son throughout his life, and the opportunities that will present themselves, turning his next step into a high-stakes decision or a *fait accompli* seemed equally unhelpful. The possibility that the meeting might influence my son’s choice of direction is certainly conceivable, but to expect him to know what he should do with his life and decide at the age of 17 speaks volumes about the amount of research and scholarship around how young people do or do not make career decisions, what contributes to their decisions, and what we are teaching youth about career development. Well into my graduate research project by this point, this seemingly innocuous and ubiquitous, but nonetheless familiar frame of reference resonated strongly to the questions my research project confronts.

It is my intention, in this report on my research, to explore how the traditional conception of career forces youth to make decisions early in life, the impacts this has on youth, alternative conceptions of indecision, and how today's labour market and socio-economic trends make career adaptability the critical skill in coping with the lifelong need to transition and how this has changed the way we should look at decision-making. To explore these areas further, I focus on emerging adults in their early to mid stages of university, and through an intervention on public speaking, seek to learn about their experience with dimensions of career adaptability.

Along with interests, values, and abilities in a particular subject, most higher education students list career opportunities as an important factor when considering an academic major (Shin et al., 2014). Results of a 2019 nationwide survey of over 18,000 first-year students at 46 Canadian universities indicate the top three reasons for going to university include the increased likelihood of getting a job with a degree, to get a more fulfilling job, and to prepare for a specific job (CUSC, 2019). In other words, to prepare for future career paths, students expect to graduate from university with a repertoire of competencies and attitudes that will transform them into employable adults. Despite these expectations, students graduating today face a world of work arguably unlike any other in history. Rapid technological change is a constant, roles of the past are being rapidly discarded, graduates of tomorrow will be expected to fill roles that today don't even exist, and the ways in which we work have forever changed. Often referred to as the fourth industrial revolution (Hirschi, 2018), the current period is comprised of accelerating digitization and automation of work, which cannot help but fundamentally change career opportunities and experiences. The challenge this new paradigm of work poses for young adults in higher education is the need to not only navigate the transition to work, but to also adapt to continual change and uncertainty throughout their careers. If committing to an academic major and long-term career goal was difficult before, the task is an even greater challenge now.

For higher education providers, who play an important role in preparing students for their careers, this scenario represents a critical need to equip graduates with the attitudes, strategies and skills required to effectively navigate the changed nature of work and careers. Complicating the challenges of providing these services and outcomes to students is the fact that significant numbers of first-year students arrive at campus unsure of both what to study and how to begin exploring career options (Barclay

& Stoltz, 2016). By the time students graduated, according to a survey of 2021 Canadian graduating students (CUSC, 2021), one-third of them had changed their major or program of study. Additionally, the survey indicates that merely one-third of graduating students have a definite career path in mind, with only 21% feeling thoroughly acquainted with their career options. Among other factors, these numbers reinforce the growing need for institutions and career practitioners to better understand the factors that contribute to positive career development and student decision-making and, in response, provide programs and interventions that address these needs, respond to deficiencies, and develop respective competencies. Efforts in this direction, Barkley and Stoltz (2016) contend, will clearly serve students, but also the educational institutions that value the goals of improving student retention and degree completion. How students approach decision-making and more importantly how career influencers view indecision seems to be of vital importance to how emerging adults navigate this important developmental stage. Also, the skills required to successfully transition from school to work, namely career adaptability, are undoubtedly more important than ever.

## **1.2. Background & Theoretical Sources**

In the face of today's economic, social, and political context, career counselling strategies must serve the career development needs of individuals at all stages of their careers, but particularly individuals at early stages of their careers. At the top of the list of attitudes, beliefs, competencies, and behaviours believed to be important in today's world of work and the career space graduates will enter over the coming years are those related to career adaptability (Del Corso, 2017; Duffy et al., 2015; Savickas, 2013). Grounded in *Career Construction Theory*, career adaptability positions individuals to prepare for their vocational future, assume the responsibility to shape their careers, engage in self-exploration and choice, and exercise the confidence to overcome vocational barriers (Duffy et al., 2015). While career construction theory is by no means the only theory that seeks to explain occupational choice and work adjustment, it provides a suitable lens through which to address twenty-first century questions about career, particularly how "individuals can negotiate a lifetime of job changes without losing their sense of self and social identity" (Savickas, 2006, p. 85). For university students, developing career adaptability at an early stage no doubt positions them to

better manage instability and uncertainty over the course of work and life (Del Corso, 2017).

On its own, career adaptability clearly serves emerging adults as well as others at later career stages. But what makes this theoretical lens even more powerful and relevant is considering both the *Planned Happenstance Theory* (Mitchell et al., 1999) and *Positive Uncertainty* (Gelatt, 1989), which together are more relevant today than when they were first developed over two and three decades ago, respectively. While I will touch on decision-making and learning theories, it's these two theories and frameworks, along with Career Construction Theory, that are most relevant to both the conception, design and delivery of my career intervention as well as the experiences of the participants and the outcomes of the research.

### **1.3. Research Problem**

Within this context, the research problem can be summarized as follows:

1. Many students feel pressured to commit to both a major and a career path.
2. The world of work is changing at an unprecedented pace, resulting in an uncertain, unstable, unpredictable, and rapidly changing path forward for graduates.
3. While post-secondary institutions recognize their role in supporting students, questions remain as to whether emerging adults graduate with the requisite adaptability skills to succeed in life and work.
4. To better prepare students for the world of work, new ways of engaging students, developing adaptability, and lowering the stakes of career-related decisions may be warranted and helpful.

### **1.4. Research Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to explore whether an innovative intervention, in the form of a public speaking workshop series integrating elements of career construction theory, will help address the research problems mentioned above and to better understand whether and how the experience of narrating career stories, life roles, life themes, personal career identities, and coping behaviours to an audience of peers benefits the career adaptability, self-efficacy and confidence levels of participants.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1. A New Paradigm of Work**

To better understand today's dynamics of decision-making facing emerging adults, people from their late teens to their mid- to late 20s in industrial societies (Arnett, 2000), it is important to appreciate the context of the world today in which they are expected to be making occupational choices and challenges around this that they will likely face throughout their lives. Referred to by some as a new paradigm of work, we now live in an unstable, unpredictable, and precarious world of work, ushered in by globalization, growing economic disparities, accelerated levels of social change, rapid advances in technology, and a mobile workforce, among other things (Clark et al., 2004; Glavin et al., 2017; Kenny & Di Fabio, 2018). With multiple job changes throughout their lives, navigating more frequent, unexpected and complex career transitions and adapting to these changes becomes the norm (Maree et al., 2018). Clearly, the days of spending a work life with one employer are gone, as Savickas (2019) points out. As a result of this transformation, many trends in the nature of work are unfolding, including a move to non-standard employment and rapidly changing jobs brought on by artificial intelligence. Interestingly, the traditional reliance on organizations to provide a "holding" environment for individuals in an established "social arrangement of work," comprising daily structure, steady income, social connection, and meaning and fulfillment no longer exists for the majority of workers (Savickas et al., 2009). Occupations and career paths that were once safe and secure, consistent, definable and predictable, organized and structured, and predetermined by the social order are largely a thing of the past as Savickas (2007) elaborates. Beginning at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and accelerating today is a new social order of work that poses more questions and challenges than answers (Savickas et al., 2009). The problem this poses for career professionals is that the theories once relied upon to match people to work, from Parsons (1909) to Holland (1997) and Super (Super, 1990), could not have anticipated or taken into account this new paradigm of work.



As is usually the case, a paradigm change means other changes will be needed in response. For workers, these changes revolve around the skills and competencies required to navigate this new world of work, including managing transitions, becoming lifelong learners, being technologically savvy, embracing flexibility rather than stability, creating opportunities, actively managing one's career, and being highly adaptable (Johnston, 2018; Savickas et al., 2009). To this, I would add the ability to identify opportunities, embrace happenstance events, and conceive of indecision in entirely different ways, which will be discussed further below. For those folks who support and guide individuals and groups entering the world of work, the new paradigm has introduced the task of conceiving of and transitioning to new models and approaches to fit the postmodern economy. In a way, one has to ask how the career development theories and interventions of the past can possibly be applied in the new context of work, as described here? For instance, distinct career stages, that made sense in a stable labour market of linear careers, might now be seen as individual scripts, just one example of the need to adopt a new lens (Savickas et al., 2009). Regardless of whether individuals want to change, the environment has often forced them to. As a result of this new lens and the challenges it presents, new theoretical models have been developed that "emphasize human flexibility, adaptability, and life-long learning" (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 240). From these developments, the researchers add, opportunities for relevant interventions should encourage individuals to integrate themselves into these contexts. For this to fully be realized and for individuals to thrive in this new landscape, however, it would seem the way decision making is theorized, viewed, and applied needs to be re-imagined.

## **2.2. The Wisdom of Indecision**

In the existing scholarship, one doesn't have to look very far to conclude that decision-making, and in particular indecision, has been and continues to be viewed as a problem that needs addressing. Numerous studies have shown that decision-making difficulties are a common problem for adolescents, which extends to significant career decision making challenges among deliberating university students (Creed et al., 2009). Good decision-making means weighing information and alternatives in a manner that yields a satisfying course of action to which the individual can commit (Phillips & Blustein, 1994), and involves personal beliefs, values, and preferences (Gati & Kulcsár,

2021). In their seminal article on difficulties in career decision making, Gati et al. (1996) posit that the primary categories of career indecision include lack of readiness, lack of information about the self and the world of work, and inconsistent information, particularly salient in a world of increasing uncertainty where individuals make more transitions than ever before.

Much later, Gati and Levin (2015) refer to additional difficulties around lack of knowledge about how to make career decisions, negative affectivity, choice or commitment anxiety, internal or external conflicts, lack of resources (e.g., time, access) for locating relevant information, and limited access to professional counseling resources. While not made explicit in naming these factors, embedded within these difficulties are dysfunctional career beliefs that have been found to be one of the most prevalent difficulties in career decision-making (Hechtlinger et al., 2019). Within each one of these categories are a wide range of factors acting on individuals who bring unique stories, which essentially means that career indecision is really a group of problems with different symptoms, but which often lead to the same outcome such as an inability to make a career decision (Gati et al., 1996). The central questions, viewed through this lens, centre around what might contribute to less indecision and how decision-making can be facilitated upon encountering difficulties?

To be transparent, when embarking on my research, the framework and perspective described above initially influenced the direction, shape, and development of my research topic. Like others, I viewed decision-making difficulties and indecision in a negative light and wanted to contribute to developing constructive responses. In the interest of digging a deep enough hole to get to the core of the issue, other perspectives emerged in the research, supported by the interviews with my intervention participants, which will be discussed later. Additionally, it became clear that, in view of the new paradigm of work, other factors that contribute to the decision-making process and that also serve individuals throughout their career development, such as career adaptability, might be more worthy of my time and be of more value to emerging adults and to the field of career education and development. By no means is this to diminish the value of further exploring the challenges and impacts of decision-making or to lessen the importance of the existing research. The beauty of research, in my view, is the value of exploring different perspectives that provide more than one way of looking at things. In my case, I see no alternative, but to lift up the stone to see what's on the other side.

Among the fruits of my labour is the work of John Krumboltz, among which includes the article titled *The Wisdom of Indecision* (1992), which by the title alone stands apart from the pre-existing and subsequent research, as briefly reviewed above. To better appreciate the value of Krumboltz's work, it is worth circling back to the traditional approaches that address career issues by conducting aptitude and interest tests to identify interests and passions to better match individuals to work. To Krumboltz, this trait-and-factor approach and its tools, delivered on their own, fails to recognize the fact that career problems are most often "inextricably intertwined with personal problems" (1993, p. 1). Certainly, as he elaborates, there is much value in matching individuals with work environments; however, instead of treating career counselling as solely an intellectual exercise, he continues, we serve clients better by understanding that career decisions have a lot influencing them and riding on them and impact individuals on many emotional levels. It's typical that university students view a career decision as so important and final, Krumboltz argues, that they delay or foreclose exploring and searching out options. While skills and knowledge certainly play a part in this process, so too does the emotion that accompanies this fear and anxiety. Countless university students, like my son who was introduced earlier, face the daunting task of deciding how to spend the rest of their lives at a young age, pressured by the weight of academic success. Aside from avoiding the decision or making any decision to satisfy a parent or university requirements, individuals have the better option of viewing indecision differently, reframing the problem, and exploring options, Krumboltz (1993) suggests. In this way, asking a young person what they plan to do next as opposed to their plans for their life might actually minimize stress rather than elevating it.

Turning to Krumboltz's treatise on indecision, it is clear that indecision is often accompanied by anxiety, in part due to the word itself, by the pressure that comes with it and the negative connotations (Krumboltz, 1992). It is not surprising that, in view of this framing, that emerging adults feel the social pressure to make a decision as early and quickly as possible. Furthermore, Krumboltz continues, high school and university students rarely receive training in decision-making, yet are pushed to make an ostensibly high-stakes decision they feel unprepared to make and about which they may have inner doubts. An alternative, he argues, is to reframe indecision in a positive light replacing it with terms like openminded, keeping alternatives open, willing to experiment and explore, open to change and the like. Realizing career indecision is not always negative and career decidedness is not always positive shines a very different light on

the entire process of career decision-making and planning. Krumboltz suggests that while replacing the label "undecided" with a declared goal might seem beneficial, it could actually lead one to miss out on more promising, meaningful, and fulfilling opportunities.

### **2.3. The Heart of Invention**

In a time of greater uncertainty and more frequent career transitions, seeing indecision in a different light, as suggested by Krumboltz (1992), will likely serve emerging adults as they enter and navigate the new paradigm of work. Related to this is the work of H.B. Gelatt (1989), in which he proposes a decision strategy called *Positive Uncertainty*, as relevant today as when he first wrote about it over 30 years ago. In it, he emphasizes that rational, objective decision-making may have made sense at a time when the future was predictable, change happened at a slower pace, and linear careers ruled the day, but it makes sense no longer. If, as Gelatt states, career decisions need to be made considering change and ambiguity and accepting uncertainty, changing one's mind and being openminded, may be a useful approach, consistent with Krumboltz's contention that there is a wisdom in indecision.

Gelatt emphasized that first, individuals need to embrace uncertainty and to be engaged in their own exploration. Second, he contends that instead of knowing where you are going, it is perhaps more fruitful to not always know where you are going and perhaps end up somewhere else. From this comes the idea that decision-making be as much about discovering goals as achieving them. Recognized in this perspective is the notion that one sees through one's own spectacles that are in fact one's beliefs, which through discovery, change over time. This, in a certain way, makes room for "the mind's eye to be the heart of invention" (Gelatt, 1989, p. 254). Contrasting this with an older decision model, pretending one knows what one wants, reveals that clear objectives, or decisiveness, may foreclose new experiences and discoveries. As George Bernard Shaw once said: "The only thing worse than not getting what you want, is getting it." The third element of Gelatt's model is the role flexibility plays in the decision process. In this way, it is critical that an individual is able to both respond to change and create change. Gelatt contends that having positive uncertainty makes one fit to do this. In short, Gelatt summarizes his strategy as essentially an attitude of "feeling uncertain about the future and feeling positive about the uncertainty" (Gelatt, 1989, p. 255). If it is true, as Gelatt suggests, that arranging and rearranging possibilities in one's mind contributes to

reflection, imagination and creativity, then both Gelatt and Krumboltz may be right in their contention that indecision may be both wise and positive. For this approach to work in practice, however, there seems to be a need to embrace chance events, which Krumboltz and others thankfully address.

## **2.4. Happenstance Theory**

When it comes to career theories, strategies and models, the driving force is to better understand how to best serve the career development needs of individuals in order to enhance the quality of their lives. In response to the wide variety of career needs, career counsellors have traditionally worked to help eliminate chance from career decision making, presumably because it was theorized to be helpful (Mitchell et al., 1999). In contrast, *Planned Happenstance Theory*, developed by John Krumboltz, acknowledges that chance events exist everywhere and impact everyone's career and may even be an indicator of effective behaviour, Mitchell et al suggest. While Krumboltz's name is synonymous with planned happenstance, he is by no means the first or only theorist or researcher to explore a concept that has been referred to using terms such as nonpredictable, chance, unplanned, happenstance and serendipitous (Betsworth & Hansen, 1996). As far back as 1969, it was reported that individuals often enter a given occupation due to chance (Crites, 1969). Consistent among the research are the issues career counsellors must consider: that chance plays an important role in everyone's career and predicting the future is futile. Instead of not including the real impact of chance events in career development, Mitchell et al highlight the benefits of helping clients to recognize its impact and develop ways of not only coping with it, but actively preparing for unplanned events. While in earlier times of linear, dependable and stable careers, rational planning made sense, in a time of great uncertainty and when many jobs no longer exist by the time students graduate from university, another model may make sense. If nothing else, presenting individuals with a way to combine planfulness and happenstance seems worthy.

Central to the planned happenstance theory is social learning, whereby individuals learn what they are exposed to, including both positive and negative unpredictable events (Mitchell et al., 1999). At the same time, it is theorized that people can also generate their own events, which is where career counsellors come in to facilitate these social learning skills further, much needed in the constantly changing new

paradigm of work. Thus, the formal definition of planned happenstance theory is “a conceptual framework extending career counseling to include the creating and transforming of unplanned events into opportunities for learning” (Mitchell et al., 1999). Done well, the work helps individuals generate, recognize, and anticipate chance events, and most importantly, proactively take action when opportunities unexpectedly present themselves, the researchers say. What’s interesting, for my research, is how this ties directly back to displacing the term *indecision* for *open-mindedness* and also embracing uncertainty as an opportunity rather than a curse. It’s not surprising a career practitioner who sees indecision as a problem would avoid bringing up the potential benefits of happenstance. However, from this transformation to open-mindedness comes a desire to explore openly and non-rigidly throughout life for the purposes of growth, self-definition and exposure to opportunities (Blustein, 1997). Crucial in this approach is distinguishing between passively awaiting luck and actively keeping one’s radar on, open to chance, Mitchell et al suggest. While the authors acknowledge cultural considerations must be taken into account when encouraging clients to be okay with indecision, they also make a convincing case for the futility of committing to long-term plans at times of rapid change.

To genuinely help individuals, emerging adults and others in transition, career practitioners need to fundamentally alter their conception of themselves as not just matchmaking counsellors, but also educators and facilitators (Krumboltz, 1996). In the context of reframing indecision, reconceiving uncertainty and recognizing the value of unplanned events, career counsellors as educators are uniquely positioned to equip their clients with the requisite skills to not only cope with unpredictability, but to thrive. One such skill is career adaptability, which will be introduced in the next section.

## **2.5. Dimensions of Career Adaptability**

In the context of today’s rapidly changing workplace, requiring multiple career transitions, along with economic, social, and technological changes, the competencies of adaptability seem now more important than ever (Johnston, 2018). According to Savickas (2013), the 21st century has brought a transformation in careers, from a story of maturation in a stable context to a story about adapting to a changing landscape, thereby emphasizing the individual responsibility for active career management. Without question, this development has many causal sources along with a long list of

implications on society, the economy, wellness, and careers, many of which continue to be explored. What is of interest in this case is how career adaptability is conceptualized and thus studied and theorized, assessed, and developed. Defined by Super and Knasel, career adaptability was first referred to as one's "readiness to cope with changing work and working conditions" (1981, p. 195) Later, Savickas (1997) proposed that the concept of career maturity be replaced with career adaptability in order to integrate Super's life-span, life-space theory: individual, developmental, identity, and contextual perspectives. By 2005, Savickas expanded the definition of career adaptability, integrated into career construction theory, to "a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's readiness and resources for coping with current and imminent vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas" (2005, p. 51).

Before exploring career adaptability, its dimensions, and impacts on individuals, a brief introduction to its theoretical underpinning is in order. Integrating several existing theoretical perspectives, career construction theory, developed by Mark Savickas, provides practitioners and educators, and thus their clients, a way of thinking about how individuals choose and use work as well as methods and materials through which to make career choices for successful and satisfying lives (Savickas, 2006). In practice, career construction theory is a post-modern narrative framework applied to understanding how individual's move through career transitions, helping people use their own stories, or narratives to shape their careers (Barclay & Stoltz, 2016; Maree, 2019). In addition to identifying work preferences, the model presented by Savickas draws on the process of psychosocial adaptation and the ways this relates to how people cope with vocational development tasks and transitions, such as choosing an academic major and career path at university. In this process, the theory takes a narrative perspective in discovering the ways life themes relate to the meaning people seek through their vocational choices (Savickas, 2006). A critical element of the practice guided by this theory is to enable people to listen to and hear their own stories, thereby connecting to their past as well as identifying life themes (Maree, 2019). In a way, Savickas' contribution provides individuals with an "autobiographical bridge" between their past, present, and future, in this way connecting them to and reconstructing of self and identity and preparing them for future transitions, Maree states. Based on the changing context of work, it only makes sense that new theories respond to the questions the existing environment presents. In the ways that the world of work has been reshaped by

unsettled, post-industrial economies, career construction theory represents a means through which to respond to and comprehend the prospect of careers that emphasize flexibility and mobility rather than commitment and stability of earlier times.

While this summary of career construction theory doesn't come close to doing it justice, my overview would be lacking without mentioning briefly Savickas' description of career constructing related to today's new social contract. While the 20<sup>th</sup> century represented a "path through work life" through a pattern of predictable stages in a linear trajectory, the social contract between workers and organizations today is fundamentally different (Savickas, 2013). This development is so profound that it has altered the meaning of career, Savickas continues, and has dissolved the "predictable scripts and identifiable paths." If the organization owned one's career previously, it is clear that individuals are now the proud owners of their career, as Savickas argues. Regardless of whether it is referred to as boundaryless or protean, or even precarious, the 21<sup>st</sup> century career has transformed the "story from one of maturation in a stable medium to one about adaptation to a changing landscape" (Savickas, 2013, p. 150). Without the career ladder and predictable path of previous times, people literally need to "construct" a career that fits their lives, from which they generate meaning and direction. To realize this task, Savickas suggests that what is required of the individual is to assume agency, in addition to being an actor and author. It is this agency where adaptability really plays a main role, which I will discuss next.

In describing agency, Savickas refers to the idea of movement, in this case through education and vocation, as a way of socially integrating (Savickas, 2013). In this process, Savickas carries on Super's work by describing how through expressing occupational preferences, people describe the kinds of people they are, seek to implement a concept of themselves, and realize potential. What's different today, Savickas (2013) suggests, is the frequency of transitions, which requires a host of adaptive behaviours or constructive activities including orientation, exploration, establishment, management, and engagement. Through the successful application of these behaviours on a repeated basis, people become more aware, make informed decisions, leading to more stable commitment, a greater ability to manage roles, and forward-looking disengagement, Savickas points out. Among its goals, career construction theory provides a way of explaining how individuals manage socially



defined tasks inherent to career development such as managing stress, investing energy, planning and exploring, and self-determination (Barclay & Stoltz, 2016).

In career construction theory, adaptability and the resources that support it is considered psychosocial, in the way they exist and manifest within the person in an environment (Savickas, 2013). To be a resourceful individual in today's world of work, four dimensions of career adaptability need to be fully developed, which comprise concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. In themselves, these constructs may not make a person adaptable; rather, what is important to recognize, the theory suggests, is how the dimensions, together, prepare a person to become *concerned* about their future, increase a sense of personal *control* and responsibility over their career, encourage *curiosity* to explore possible selves and future scenarios, and develop the *confidence*, or self-efficacy, to act on and pursue their aspirations (Savickas, 2013). In terms of attitudes and behaviours that support these dimensions, concern requires planning, control requires decision making, curiosity requires inquisitiveness and exploring and confidence requires efficacious beliefs and problem solving. For undecided students, a delay or disequilibrium in these areas of development often lead to problems deciding on a major and/or a career path, the theory suggests. The process is far from straightforward or linear, and as social cognitive career theory adds, the social, cultural world in which one swims and the career and self-beliefs one holds represent a powerful force that must be considered when diagnosing a person with indifference, indecision, unrealism, and inhibition (Savickas, 2013).

With the development of interventions and cross-culturally valid instruments to assess career adaptability, the construct has received increased attention in recent years (Duffy et al., 2015). What does the evidence say? First, it is clear that those who feel adaptable in their careers are linked to positive vocational and well-being outcomes, Duffy et al suggest. For instance, they point to emerging adults in university who score high on career adaptability having higher levels of job search self-efficacy, career optimism, proactive personality, career decision self-efficacy, meaning in life, and the like. Over time, adults seem more satisfied with their jobs if they are adaptable. In one study, a correlation was found between the four dimensions of adaptability and academic satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2015). Within jobs, those with career adaptability competencies were better able to adjust to work related challenges and obstacles, Duffy (2010) found. Those with adaptability endure changing employment markets and

navigate transitions more successfully, Duffy adds. In a systematic review of career adaptability literature, Johnston (2018) referred to countless findings of positive correlates to career adaptability, including conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, self-esteem, goal pursuit, positive adjustment, coping, hope and optimism, and many career development outcomes. Interestingly, results of a study conducted by Hirschi (2009) on career development in adolescence reinforced the argument that career adaptability contributes to thriving in emerging adults along with greater well-being.

When referring to the individual dimensions of career adaptability, as defined by Savickas, positive outcomes also accompany each competency. For example, when individuals have a greater sense of control over their lives, they often have higher levels of self-esteem, supportive relationships, and positive outlook, Duffy (2010) suggests. A person displaying curiosity is believed to have tolerance for anxiety and uncertainty, unconventional thinking and a non-defensive attitude, all adaptive behaviours (Kashdan et al., 2013). Knowing that change, uncertainty, and barriers are characteristic of today's career paradigm, it is not surprising that both researchers and career practitioners have taken an increasing interest in career adaptability. It is clear that, based on extensive research, the dimensions of career adaptability are worthy skills to instill in emerging adults, likely to serve them throughout their careers. If, as I have explored earlier, indecision is viewed differently, individuals embrace chance events in their careers, and uncertainty can be a positive construct, then career adaptability may be the right tool for the job of preparing for a life of transitions. The question then relates to exactly how and in what way do emerging adults cultivate these traits and how can career practitioners foster this development, which I will explore in the next section.

Prior to moving on, there is one insight worth mentioning. While all three dimensions of career adaptability have an important role to play in navigating the transitions of today's and tomorrow's career landscape, one can't underplay the overriding significance of and developing the *confidence*, or self-efficacy, to act on and pursue one's aspirations. What is interesting to me, in finding novel ways to develop this confidence in individuals, is what is known about the degree to which confidence transfers from one domain to another. In terms of its predictive power, most researchers have viewed self-efficacy beliefs as being domain specific and thus only transferrable within one domain and task (Massar & Malmberg, 2017). However, they continue, a

number of researchers now propose a generalized sense of self-efficacy represented by “a belief in one’s competence to cope with a wide range of demanding or novel tasks, and to deal effectively with stressful situations” (Massar & Malmberg, 2017, p. 109). Furthermore, the researchers add, there are indications this generalized self-efficacy, developed over time through a build-up of experiences, may in fact transfer between domains. As they suggest, this echoes Bandura’s (1986) discussion of transference effects and his contention that self-efficacy in one domain generalizes to other domains. While the variables contributing to this transfer merit further exploration, for the matters of this study, the fact that there is research suggesting that confidence in one’s skill in one domain might produce equally strong beliefs in another domain is an important insight that will be revisited in a later chapter.

## **2.6. From Misery to Meaning: Using Narrative**

Career counselling and related interventions might best facilitate adaptive development by offering practices that, unlike earlier approaches based on stability and fixed sequences of stages, align with the real challenges emerging adults are confronted with in the postmodern world comprising between 10 and 15 job changes in a typical career (Wehmeyer et al., 2019). In advancing Donald Super’s life-span, life-space theory, career construction theory goes further by positing that individuals construct their careers and, in that process, impose meaning on their behavior and express their self-concepts. From this come life themes that “guide, regulate, and sustain occupational choice and career behaviors” (Wehmeyer et al., 2019, p. 182). While an individual as an actor might say what happened, through a resume for example, the person with agency explains why it happened through an occupational plot, while the person as an author uses a career theme as an expression interpreting what it means, Savickas (2013) argues.

Integrating numerous personality theories, career construction theory contains the idea that “people organize their lives around a problem that preoccupies them and a solution that occupies them” (Savickas, 2019, p. 32). Through this theoretical lens and accepting the challenge for fresh approaches that address today’s questions around career adaptability and the role of meaning-making, career construction theory centers around the application of narrative identity processes. According to Savickas, career practitioners who apply a narrative mode of understanding, or paradigm, rely on the

principle “for making connections among the client’s experiences, connections, and explanations” (Savickas, 2019, p. 31). Through the narratives that we each tell ourselves, we direct our behaviour, articulate goals, evaluate opportunities, navigate career barriers, express our identity and its relation to society, author deeper meanings, and write occupational plots and themes (Savickas, 2013). In other words, a character arc reflects the individual’s effort to move toward realizing wholeness, demonstrated by a core theme and preoccupation, Savickas (2019) suggests. Put another way, themes hold the *why* of vocational behaviour, personality tells us *what*, and career adaptability explains the *how* (Savickas, 2006). Whether revealing other ways of seeing or responding to problematic experiences, narrative approaches seek to empower individuals to see themselves as agentic and active protagonists capable of enacting change, notwithstanding real and perceived barriers (Del Corso, 2017). In the process of development, however, and during times of transition, such as school-to-work, individuals often become “dislocated from the current episode in their career stories” and in the case of university students, “lose the plot.” (Savickas, 2013, p. 168). For undecided students, narrative processing has the potential to introduce and develop adaptability resources and responses, or as Savickas puts it, to “instill the will and skill to direct one’s own work life” (Savickas, 2013, p. 179).

As described earlier, workers today can no longer rely on the organization to provide the grand narrative for their lives and thus, are tasked with creating identity and implementing a vocational self-concept (Glavin et al., 2017). As Super (1990) described towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the developmental cycle of a person’s entire career, moving sequentially from growth to exploration to establishment to maintenance to disengagement had been replaced by recurring mini developmental cycles within each of numerous occupational transitions. It is in this context that Savickas (2013) proposed that connection, meaning, and fulfillment is now contained with the career story of the individual. Without this identity narrative about self and work, individuals would not be able to script the next scene in their occupational plot and initiate action to construct the next stage of a more satisfying life, Savickas continues. Amidst recurring transitions in increasing frequency, it is not uncommon for individuals to become “de-storied, or fallen out of story” (Savickas, 2015, p. 13). In this case, individuals often become lost and without direction, owning a narrative that no longer fits. Only with a continuous and coherent narrative, which “holds” the individual through transition and during work trauma, are individuals able to navigate change, Savickas (2015) argues. Through

engaging in activities and in reflection, it is argued, individuals often transform their self-concept and re-interpret their life themes (Savickas et al., 2009). This reuniting of plot and theme, Savickas suggests, brings order to confusion, chaos, or conflict. It is on this point, it is posited, that career construction can play an important role assisting individuals make career transitions. In the words of Savickas (2019, p. 34), “Listening to stories to learn how an individual proposes to turn tension into intention enables practitioners to identify the thematic character arc that reveals how preoccupation becomes occupation.”

## **2.7. The Career Construction Interview: An Adaptability Intervention**

Armed with ample evidence (Duffy et al., 2015; Van Der Horst et al., 2021) that career adaptability and adaptive responses have positive career outcomes among adolescents, students, employees, and job seekers, the career construction interview represents an effective tool in directing individuals toward these goals. Represented by a series of questions around role models, preferred environments, hobbies, interests and goals, scripts, early memories, and adaptability resources and actions, the interview encourages counselling clients to tell micronarratives that allude to their construction of self, identity, and career (Savickas, 2013). By providing a platform for individuals to freely discuss and explore career identity and adaptability in an open and encouraging space, the career construction interview serves as a well-designed narrative tool that is essentially a process of career discovery (Barclay & Stoltz, 2016). Through a collaborative process, participant’s often end up re-authoring their career stories, based on identified goals and trajectories, which involves exploring career adaptabilities through the narrative and revealing career concerns, enhancing control, developing curiosity and building confidence, they add. Like the foundational theory around career construction, the career construction interview has been shown in numerous studies to have utility related to developing higher states of well-being, identifying life themes and career interests, increasing career decision making competencies, self-control and self-understanding, and recognizing adaptabilities, which Barclay and Stoltz refer to. Anchoring these outcomes in career construction theory and narrative, Savickas nicely describes the elements and the sequence that counselling flows under this model:

The goals of counseling are to have clients tell vocational stories about their work lives and their current transitions and troubles, integrate the vocational stories into an identity narrative about self and work, use that narrative to make meaning of the transition and regulate emotions, script the next scene in the occupational plot, and prompt action to construct a more satisfying life. (Savickas, 2013, p. 168)

To illuminate an individual's story, the career construction interview comprises five elements of enquiry or systematic prompts that draw out occupational plots and career themes (Savickas, 2019). These expressions of self-reflection include (a) exploring someone they admired growing up; (b) describing a favourite movie, website or television series; (c) identifying a favourite story; (d) addressing an important motto or saying; and (e) processing an early recollection. Respectively, these prompts enable people to (a) better understand the characteristics they have built or are building into the self they are constructing; (b) identify occupational, manifest, and environmental interests; (c) address a career script that might refer to how they may plot the next scenario in their career; (d) clarify and refine values and advice they give themselves; and (e) identify metaphors to help understand their adaptabilities and how they view their current career concern (Barclay & Stoltz, 2016; Savickas, 2019). In collaboration with a career practitioner during and after the interview, the elements as a whole help the client derive meaning, develop a career narrative, clarify a life theme, re-author a career story, and generate self-knowledge. In line with the interests of my research, this dialog or narrative process kindles career concerns, control, curiosity and confidence, together comprising the dimensions of career adaptability – useful to emerging adults for reasons previously stated.

While previous theories and models centred around vocational guidance and career education or development continue to provide value, Savickas argued that today's needs and concerns of workers require a third major paradigm for career intervention, which move from scores to stages to stories (Savickas, 2015). Within the third paradigm, referred to as Life Design Counselling for Career Construction, interventions such as the career construction interview fit with this transition to stories by helping clients generate rich narratives and uncover patterns and themes through engaging in dialogue. In this way, the life design approach has been shown to enhance career adaptability, address resilience, and engage clients in reflection, as Galvin et al point out (2017). In helping individuals reflect on the relationship between personal agency and social structure, the questions asked when formulating career interventions

have changed over time (Savickas et al., 2009). While the career intervention question of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century centred around matching individuals to occupations, today's question is better framed around helping individuals design their own lives in the society in which they live, the authors suggest. Furthermore, the most efficacious way of answering this question, and thereby constructing oneself, they add, is through engaging in activities that resonate with the self, but also through verbal discourse. Today's postmodern world of work "requires regular reflection on the self and the environment, receptivity to feedback, and the imagination of possible selves" (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 242). Important to note is the role that choice, experience, observing others, and environment play in this process. In narrative approaches, such as the career construction interview within a life design framework, experiences become meaningful resources for further life designing, the authors add.

Representing a shift in paradigm, the life design model demands interventions that address the "permanent co-evolution of individuals, the economy, and society" by producing specific knowledge and skills (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 242). First, practitioners need to go beyond diagnosing person-environment-fit and develop interventions that see individuals interacting with and adapting to their contexts. People don't live in controlled conditions, the authors suggest, so professional identities need to be viewed through client stories and not solely through test scores. In fact, Savickas (2015) suggests that it is only when individuals hear themselves tell their stories that they find real meaning. Second, they emphasize the importance of helping clients cope with rapidly changing work requirements and complex constraints on personal, professional, social, and family levels. This is made more salient by the fact that the average individual up to the age of 56 in 2020-21 changed jobs almost 12.7 times since age 18, according to a longitudinal study by the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (2023). In this context, it becomes more important to emphasize strategies for coping, the "how," rather than mainly providing information, the "what," Savickas et al (2009) argue. Third, because there is little evidence that psychological assessments have much predictive validity or simple and linear explanations for career patterns, career models and interventions that adhere to the diagnosis, indication, and prescription no longer have merit, the researchers say. If most career counsellors didn't take a predictable, linear path, why would they expect their clients to? In designing a life, which is a complex, long-term task, theories such as happenstance and positive uncertainty have a place in the new paradigm. Fourth, individual realities seem to now play a greater role

than the traditional pathways. In this context, scientific discovery of vocational theories and the development of instruments, which developed under controlled conditions, simply don't have the value to individuals as do construction of subjective realities through narrative, Savickas (2005) suggests. In other words, clients need and deserve to have and utilize their own references as opposed to group and abstract societal norms. From engagement and meaning making come new views of the self and adaptation, conditional upon skills and knowledge. Finally, it is argued that the reliance on traditional experimental studies and their outcomes, standardized and not adapted to the numerous individual and interacting variables, demands different approaches (Savickas et al., 2009). Together, these presuppositions should be integrated into interventions, such as the career construction interview, based on the life-design framework. In this way, the authors say, the framework is conceptualized as "life-long, holistic, contextual, and preventative" (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 244). Finally, circling back to the preoccupation with choice and decision-making, life-design, within the social constructionist perspective, flips the model to a process of meaning-making and about "articulating intentions and anticipations regarding possible selves and life in the future" (Savickas et al., 2009, p. 246). If there is one question to ask an individual, or to ask of a career intervention, it might be: What is the meaning of your personal themes, generated from memories, present experiences, and future aspirations, that hold you together and help you cross the bridge from one place to the next?

## **2.8. Group Work in Career Development**

While the career construction interview allows individuals to tell the stories that they need to hear, and in the process make meaning and shape their future, most of the research has studied one-on-one, counsellor-to-client settings with few studies examining group career construction work (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012). The benefits of dialogical group career interventions are numerous, including social support, practicing of social skills, giving and receiving feedback, practicing personal reflection, the opportunity to draw on the comments, opinions and collective wisdom of the group, support with authoring processes, self-discovery, increased insight into the meaning of one's life, decreased decision-making difficulties, enhanced reflexivity, elevated adaptability, and increased career decision self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation (Barclay & Stoltz, 2016; Clark et al., 2004; Di Fabio & Maree, 2012; Kuijpers et al., 2011). In line



with a narrative approach, Mair (2000) found that there is inherent value when individuals share their stories with others in a group-based setting. Despite the growing consensus in these benefits, however, group work in career development is in its infancy represented by a dearth of literature on the topic (McMahon & Watson, 2021). Furthermore, there is a need to develop group modalities that reflect modern approaches. Additionally, few group practices reflect the new work paradigm, represented by an end to the linear career cycle, as reflected in the presented research.

To accomplish the goals set out by career construction theory, and in light of the group intervention benefits listed here and the gap in research of group career interventions, integrating elements of the career construction interview into a group setting represents a worthwhile exploration. In an environment of continual change in the person and in the workplace, as discussed throughout this review, where individuals search for meaning is embedded within an evolving self that constructs reality, the need to find new platforms for telling stories seems salient. As discussed, emerging adults face numerous psychosocial tasks impacting career choices and development around identity, attitudes, values and beliefs, adjustment to college and university, adapting to change and transitions. Since institutions of higher education are charged with the challenging task of equipping students with both academic and workplace skills, group career interventions grounded in active, participatory learning seems well-suited to a narrative approach, which might help address these goals, challenges and outcomes. Also, given the need for institutions to reach more students, due to tightening budgets, increased enrollments, and shrinking resources (Barclay & Stoltz, 2016), finding ways to deliver innovative and impactful career interventions to groups makes sense.

## **2.9. Active and Participatory Approaches to Learning**

As far back as 1984, the imperative for reform in the educational system called for changes in the ways teachers teach so that “students become interested in actively knowing, rather than passively believing” (Volpe, 1984, p. 439). According to Joel Michael, writer of the seminal article “Where’s the evidence that active learning works?” (Michael, 2006), Volpe’s words were as relevant 20 years after they were written and may be as relevant today. While active learning encompasses a broad range of instructional techniques and practices, it generally contrasts with passive instructional conditions in several ways. In a variety of learning contexts, these distinguishing

characteristics might include increased physical activity or interaction, deeper processing, metacognitive monitoring, social collaboration and cooperation, understanding through activity and discussion, higher levels of engagement and inquiry-based learning (Markant et al., 2016; Sugeng & Suryani, 2018). In the spirit of celebrated educational reformer John Dewey, active learning involves learning not so much from the experience, but from reflecting on that experience. Equally important is the requirement that students are proactive in their learning and take responsibility for decisions associated with the learning. It has also been found that actively involving students in the evaluation and assessment process leads to more self-directed and self-regulated learning, as noted by Sugeng and Suryani (2018). Within life-designing, as discussed above, active and collaborative approaches to learning are strongly encouraged along with observational learning and rehearsal, as opposed to passive reception (Savickas et al., 2009).

In his assessment of key findings from research supporting active learning, Michael (2006) reveals several themes, two of which are worth considering in this case. First, in the paradigm of constructivism, active learning “involves the active construction of meaning by the learner” (Michael, 2006, p. 160). In this process, through the mental activity of the learners, meaning is constructed by linking existing, foundational information and models to newly acquired information. A critical consideration of this perspective is that if old knowledge is faulty, meaningful learning will be compromised, resulting in potential misconceptions, he continues. The task of teaching, in this case, is to repair or impact the faulty models. The second theme identified by Michael, which is of relevance to this project, is the notion that “individuals are likely to learn more when they learn with others than when they learn alone”, which is backed up by solid evidence (Michael, 2006, p. 162). Achieving maximum learning by having students work together is by no means without challenges, with many factors contributing to success. In all disciplines, it has been shown that cooperative learning spaces where participants talk to one another, articulate understandings, and answer questions contribute to success of learners (Michael, 2006).

In the spirit of active learning and in response to the need for group approaches to career construction, there is the view that group-based interventions in the life-design framework are uniquely positioned to benefit from the power of the audience (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012). In this way, the researchers expand, it is important and impactful if

individuals are able to listen to their stories and those of others, and through this process reflect upon the collective wisdom of their peers, and allow the experience of active learning to mediate self-discovery, meaning-making, and decision-making. Within the life-design framework, interventions should allow for the rehearsal of telling stories to important audiences, making the story more clear and coherent (Savickas et al., 2009). With interventions that draw on the career construction model where stories are drawn out of individuals, an important element is the reflective audience (Del Corso, 2017). In this way, the narrative process lends itself to a process of co-construction, the authors say, reflecting and reframing the participant's experience. It seems evident that this deeper inquiry into making sense of oneself and the world aligns well with the active approach to learning.

## **2.10. An Untapped Group Modality**

As previously mentioned, there is little research on group career interventions based on career construction theory, seemingly because there have been few developed. In view of this scarcity, the temptation to explore a modality and develop an innovative career intervention that responds to the new paradigm of work and which combines group dynamics and elements of active learning is too hard to resist. One such approach to learning, entirely absent in the career education literature, is presentation-based learning and public speaking skills training. Even beyond applications in career development, there is little research into the role of presentation skills in higher education as a whole, even though oral presentation skills are highly valued as a learning outcome for post-secondary education students (McDougall & Holden, 2017). Further, there is convincing evidence that oral presentation skills are highly prized in both educational and workplace settings (De Grez et al., 2014; McDougall & Holden, 2017; Sander et al., 2002). When it comes to the benefits that students gain from presenting, the list is long, including:

- active engagement with the learning process
- stimulation for the group
- development of team skills, communication skills, and listening skills
- increased presentation skills, confidence, and self-esteem
- testing of knowledge and understanding of material
- assessment of ability to apply and extend previously gained knowledge

- encouragement of critical evaluation
- improvement in participation
- engagement with content of presentation and also with other learners
- promotion of independent learning
- development of life-long learning perspectives
- opportunity for students to teach other students
- development of critical thinking and reflection through peer assessment
- preparation for professional/real life situations
- motivating students to engage in the academic process as active participants
- preparation for employability through the development of transferrable and life skills (Sander et al., 2002; Shaw, 2001; Sugeng & Suryani, 2018; Thalluri & Penman, 2013)

When presentations are used in the classroom, it is mostly as a form of assessment (Thalluri & Penman, 2013). What is of interest in this case is the student-centred application of public speaking as an active form of learning and reflection. While there appears to be no studies on or examples of interventions using career construction theory in a presentation-based learning format, there is research integrating expressive and reflective written work in this framework that might inform the use of public speaking training in a career context. There is in fact compelling evidence of written exercises utilized in career counselling and the effectiveness around engaging individuals in reflecting and processing experiences and also on sharing this written work with others (Barclay, 2019). With the changes in the world of work towards unstable and unpredictable labour markets and unknown future work possibilities and contingent careers, as reviewed earlier, researchers argue for a narrative and dialogical approach to career development which present opportunities for forms of exploration, such as writing, that assist individuals with constructing a career identity and story (Lengelle & Meijers, 2015).

Several points made by Lengelle and Meijers (2015), who call for practical and creative narrative approaches to transformative career journeys, reveal similitude between written and presentation-based learning, particularly given that the benefits of presenting listed above align with the creative, expressive, and reflective qualities of writing. First, each mode represents a narrative approach involving story construction, emerging life themes and the construction of a life-giving second story with meaning and direction, the researchers suggest. Second, through a dialogue with the self and others, each learning context provides the active participant an opportunity to interact between

themselves and an audience, imagined or real, through a story shared. Third, each mode helps individuals gain self-insight through the back door. In other words, parts of the self that are hidden or set aside in the margins are given space for expression to readers or listeners who become witnesses to self-discoveries. Fourth, by emotionally and cognitively processing, learners can alleviate unprocessed feelings and memories and gain a sense of curiosity and control over a boundary situation and uncover new meanings and directions. Fifth, the researchers insist, each form of expression requires a commitment by participants to question existing preoccupations and identifications that might help establish a sense of agency. Sixth, both modes can help participants become the detached observer of their life and how words and expression contribute to constructing a life, enhancing their ability to move towards understanding. Finally, both writing and presenting can be delivered in a group setting, which requires a safe holding space for the expression and sharing of emotions as well as peer support and feedback.

In some cases, responses to the career construction interview have been collected in written format prior to counselling work, such as *My Career Story* (MCS), the life design counseling intervention for individuals or groups (Savickas & Hartung, 2012). With the intention of moving individuals beyond matching themselves to jobs, this written exercise helps individuals tell their life story and in doing this, adds meaning to their career plans and choices and allows clients to formulate and articulate new life narratives and possible selves (Taylor & Savickas, 2016). Also noted, MCS aims to promote key life-design goals of adaptability, narratability, intentionality, and action (Hartung & Santilli, 2018). In a group setting, the written stories from the workbook used in MCS are told, heard, and retold as members of the group engage the entire group as an audience in a reflective and supportive space. Beyond this, other researchers have used the intervention along with other tools, such as pictorial narratives to foster reflection and agency through which individuals explore their inner frame of reference (Taylor & Savickas, 2016). What these researchers demonstrate is the application of written work to reflective career exploration, the flexibility of the career construction interview when applied creatively, and the possibilities of integrating the career construction interview with another modality, such as presentation-based learning or public speaking

## 2.11. Chapter Summary & Research Questions

The primary intention of this chapter was to both explore the paradigm of work that emerging adults find themselves in and to weave the theoretical chain that grounds and prompts the questions I am motivated to address and justifies the potential response I propose. It is not surprising, given the rapidly changing career paths young people face from one moment to the next, that new approaches are required to help them navigate this terrain. It is also not unexpected that well-developed adaptability competencies will separate those who are able to transition adeptly from job to job from those who might struggle. It should also be acknowledged that within the theories cited above, there is a long line of important work that contributes to and informs new approaches. Perhaps the problems addressed in the introduction are not so new, but the way and pace in which they are presenting themselves makes a response so much more critical. It is in this context and with a desire to pilot a novel approach that my research questions emerged and the intervention fit the need.

Notwithstanding the anxiety and stress of public speaking, the potential benefits and use of active learning make the exploration of presentation skills training as a career learning tool, within the framework of career construction theory and life-design, worth the time. Based on the emerging need for interventions that promote career adaptability through narrative approaches to counter the prevailing emphasis and focus on decision-making difficulties, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How might a group career intervention, in the form of a public speaking workshop series, anchored in career construction theory and active learning, contribute to a change in students' perception and experiences of career adaptability (Confidence, Curiosity, Control, Concern)?
2. How might participants view the transferability of the dimensions of career adaptability to other domains, now and into the future?
3. In what ways might the workshop series impact participant's perception of their sense of self-efficacy and confidence to explore themselves and the world of work and their preferred futures?
4. What would the impact be on participants of an active, group-based career intervention relative to other individual-based modalities, such as writing or 1-to-1 counselling?

## **Chapter 3.**

### **Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of an innovative career development intervention that addresses the research problem of post-secondary students pressured to make lifelong career decisions in a rapidly changing and uncertain world of work and that responds to the dearth of research on group career interventions and creative applications of the career construction theory. As an exploratory study, the objective was not to develop findings that would be generalized to a population, but to repurpose and pilot a public speaking workshop around career-related themes and to assess and explore its impact on emerging adults. The previously-mentioned, primary research questions guide the inquiry and outline the rationale for the methods, in particular, the use of post-pre surveys and reflexive thematic analysis (reflexive TA) of participant interviews.

#### **3.2. Intervention Design**

The genesis of the intervention created for and piloted in this study was a micro-credit course, *FASS 205 - Finding voice: Public speaking for Social Change*, delivered in the spring 2020 semester at Simon Fraser University (SFU), in which undergraduate students experienced a skills-based immersion into the art of public speaking (Turner, 2020). In an online workshop, learners developed their own skills in speech, rhetoric, non-verbal communication, and storytelling, applicable in academia and beyond. While not an intended outcome, numerous students experienced a reconnection with discarded or unrealized career and academic interests by deeply assessing passions and speaking about them in front of an audience of peers, but also by listening to others, as supported by reported evaluations (S. L. Turner, personal communication, June 26, 2020). Students talked about how they were able to look back on their lives and see themselves and their experiences more deeply. Reflecting on the process and experience, many students embraced their differences and learned to give greater value

to their voices. Most consistently, students spoke about the confidence they gained and their faith that it would carry forward into other areas of their lives.

With this feedback in mind and using the SFU course as scaffolding and a framework, a series of public speaking workshops were developed with modules adapted and redesigned from the pre-existing SFU micro-credit course and offered to undergraduate university students who were considering their academic major and career possibilities or hadn't yet identified an interest. In consultation with the course designer and workshop facilitator, a pre-existing series of lessons was repurposed as a career intervention, with the research questions as listed above. To help students begin to develop career adaptability skills in support of their decision commitment challenges around choosing a major, a pilot program was offered to SFU undergraduate students during the 2023 spring semester. Based around the outcomes and dimensions of career adaptability including concern, control, curiosity, and confidence within the theoretical framework of career construction theory, a series of three two-hour, in-person workshops were delivered to 18 undergraduate students. Offered as a pilot program by SFU Career and Volunteer Services and facilitated by professional presentation skills instructor and educational developer, Sarah Louise Turner, students had the opportunity to participate with peers in an active, participatory learning context, speak publicly about their personal responses to elements of the career construction interview, and develop their public speaking skills. Based on registrations beyond capacity, which required a wait list, and full retention throughout the workshop series, the inherent benefits and practical skill-building of a public speaking workshop intervention clearly appeals to students, who otherwise might not respond to a career exploration or career advising offering on its own.

The workshop series comprised three in-person sessions in a classroom in the offices of SFU Career and Volunteer Services in Burnaby, B.C. from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on January 17, 24 and 31, 2023. Over the course of the three weeks, participants received instruction on public speaking and were expected to deliver three short speeches to workshop participants and the facilitator about topics that centred around the dimensions of career adaptability, namely curiosity, control, confidence, and concern. Although the idea of career adaptability was not directly presented to the students, the concept was built into the speaking prompts generated by elements of the career construction interview, as described above in the review of literature. Thus, in the



design of the training, each session was intended to stimulate the exploration, indirectly, of one or more dimension of career adaptability (Table 3.1.).

**Table 3.1. Contents of the Training**

Session	Themes	Activity/Presentation Topic	Career Adaptability Dimensions
<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role model</li> <li>• Vocational identity</li> <li>• Construction of self</li> <li>• Preferred Future</li> <li>• Social Actor</li> </ul>	Whom did you admire when you were growing up? Whom would you like to pattern your life after? What do you admire about this person? How are you like this person? How are you different from them?	Curiosity Concern Confidence
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-knowledge</li> <li>• Manifest Interests</li> <li>• Meaning Making</li> <li>• Purpose</li> <li>• Work Settings</li> <li>• Scripts</li> </ul>	What is your current favourite book, magazine, newspaper, website, movie or series? What draws you to it, what do you like about it and why? Is there a specific character you like or admire most? What personal characteristics do you admire most in the character? How might your preferences align with your educational or career aspirations or your career planning challenges? Is there any similarity between the stories you are drawn to and your own current situation?	Curiosity Concern Confidence
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice to Self</li> <li>• Strategies for constructing next episode</li> </ul>	Motto, favourite saying, quotation or words of advice that factor into how you live your life and how you would like to be of service.	Confidence Control

Learning outcomes around the topic of public speaking were in the areas of rhythm and pace, projection, persuasion, storytelling, delivery, non-verbal communication, organizing and outlining, and relaxation techniques. The redesign of the

original course retained the original outcomes related to public speaking, while also resulting in a workshops series with career-related outcomes. (Table 3.2.). By presenting it this way and partnering with SFU Career and Volunteer services in offering a pilot project in their programming, the hope was to attract students who realized the value of presentation-based learning combined with career-related exploration. Moreover, secondary gains, in addition to the many benefits of enhanced public speaking skills reviewed in the literature review, were targeted around career adaptability, specifically self-confidence. While decision making will always be important, heightened adaptability skills, as the theory suggests, might lead to less fixation on each choice, and rather a renewed sense of confidence in adapting to the rapidly changing and uncertain environment. In a way, the outcomes of the workshop are about the processes and competencies of preparing for the future, rather than about a specific decision point. The notion that actively constructing our own identity as we go requires a different skillset than simply linking interests to occupations supports my interest in piloting this workshop series and designing it around career construction. Having this conceptual framework adds a useful lens that endeavours to take participants beyond simple questions of “choice” and instead to a fresh insight on planning a career path and continually adapting to change as a process, rather than an end in itself.

**Table 3.2. Workshop Outline: Weekly Activities**

Session	Outcomes & Activities
<p><b>Week 1</b></p>	<p><i>Learning Outcomes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess personal areas of growth in public speaking/presenting</li> <li>2. Apply Aristotelean elements to a 1-minute presentation</li> <li>3. Create and present a 1-minute presentation</li> <li>4. Give and receive constructive feedback to peers</li> </ol> <p><i>Activities:</i></p> <p>Introduction to the course, course objectives, schedule and instructions on how to contact the facilitator.</p> <p>Instructor outlines intended outcomes around public speaking and also introduces the overarching theme of academic and career decision-making.</p> <p>Students introduce themselves: name, discipline(s) of interest, and share an object representing an interest outside of school.</p> <p>Debrief Introduction: How did that feel? Were you nervous?</p> <p>What do students hope to get out of the workshop series? (Consider topic areas and goals around public speaking &amp; academic/career decision-making).</p> <p><i>Mini Lecture:</i> Framing some goals and skills of presenting (Aristotelean elements: pathos, logos &amp; ethos; Story structure: beginning, middle, end; Performance basics).</p> <p><i>Prompt #1:</i> Choose a real or fictional role model, describe what you admire about them and why, and how that relates to how you wish to be.</p> <p><i>Student Presentations of Prompt #1</i> (1-minute each)</p> <p>Appreciative Inquiry: Strength-based feedback approach</p> <p>Debrief of presentations.</p> <p>Introduction and discussion of prompt #2 for next week: What is your current favourite book, magazine, newspaper, website, movie or series?</p>
<p><b>Week 2</b></p>	<p><i>Learning Outcomes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Experiment with exercises in gesturing and grounding</li> <li>2. Craft and deliver a presentation using a pre-set structure</li> <li>3. Give and receive feedback based on appreciative inquiry.</li> </ol> <p><i>Activities:</i></p> <p>Check-in: how did working on presentations go?</p> <p>Ice Breaker: Gesture metre</p> <p>Activity: Warm-up exercises, power pose &amp; gestures</p> <p><i>Student Presentations of Prompt #2</i> (1 1/2-minutes each): What is your current favourite book, magazine, newspaper, website, movie or series?</p> <p>Appreciative Inquiry: Strength-based feedback approach</p> <p>Debrief of presentations.</p>

	<p>Rehearsal Tips: practice using whole body, targeting beginning/endings, practice focusing techniques (guided breathing, points of concentration, images), scoring a text, group practice.</p> <p>Introduction and discussion of prompt #3 for next week: - Motto, favourite saying, quotation or words of advice that factor into how you live your life and how you would like to be of service.</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b></p>	<p><i>Learning Outcomes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Practice breathing and warm-up exercises</li> <li>2. Reflect on previous experience designing and delivering presentations</li> <li>3. Craft and deliver a presentation using a pre-set structure</li> <li>4. Give and receive feedback based on appreciative inquiry.</li> <li>5. Synthesise workshop series learning experiences verbally and in written text</li> </ol> <p><i>Activities:</i></p> <p>Check-in: how did working on presentations go?  What rehearsal tips were helpful?</p> <p>Ice Breaker: SuperPower (an image that is a symbol for your unique super power/strengths).</p> <p>Activity: Warm-up exercises – breathing &amp; warm-up basics</p> <p><i>Student Presentations of Prompt #2</i> (1 1/2-minutes each): Motto, favourite saying, quotation or words of advice that factor into how you live your life and how you would like to be of service.</p> <p>Appreciative Inquiry: Strength-based feedback approach</p> <p>Debrief of presentations.</p> <p>Main takeaways: One skill to take away, One skill to keep developing, One career belief.</p> <p>Introduce career exploration form?</p>

### 3.3. Rationale for a Mixed-Methods Approach

Prior to describing the details around my data collection and analysis, I will provide the rationale behind my research decisions. In other words, in what ways do my reasons for doing the work drive my choice to do an exploratory, mixed methods study? Also influencing my research method are the research questions I have posed around participant experience of the workshops and perceived impact of the intervention on their career adaptability, along with their perception and experience of a group-based

program compared to individual-based practices. These factors collectively contribute to my reflective process concerning the insights gleaned from the data and my overall interpretations.

Although the conventional quantitative aspect of a mixed-methods approach, in the form of an experimental study, is not represented in this exploratory study, I am nonetheless interested in a quantitative assessment of the processes, change or outcomes represented in knowledge, skills or attitudes, and the usefulness of the workshop activities. It should be noted that the primary purpose of the survey data was to help inform the deeper exploration in the subsequent interviews. The significance of change is not of interest or of value at this point, but may be worth exploring in a later scientific impact study with a hypothesis that measures statistical differences or differential effects of populations, for example. As elaborated in a later section on data collection, surveys were chosen to assess the participants' perceptions of the program guided by the exploratory research questions. To help frame my understanding of the nature of participant experience, there was a need to understand what their perception was of each piece of the intervention, which the surveys would convey. What was of interest was to illuminate movement and perceptions, as compared to actual ability. The way in which post-pre scales are designed to identify perceptions of change and utility according to the weekly intentions of the workshop, outlined in the data collection chapter, made them especially suited to my purposes and a helpful way to explain the data I would collect in the qualitative stage. As a result of the exploratory nature of this study, no standard instrument was used and there was no intention to prove adaptability scores. Details of the survey design are discussed in the data collection section.

Informed by what I learned in the surveys, the qualitative portion of the study comprised individual interviews with the study participants following the workshop series and collection and analysis of the survey data. While the survey responses contribute to the interview design, the individual interviews themselves serve to tease out patterns from the self-assessments, leading to heightened understandings and a richer and deeper appreciation of how participants experienced the workshop series. If the surveys revealed patterns, the interviews go deeper to explore how the patterns came to be and what, in particular, made the workshop element impactful, if this was the case. In doing this, the interviews, more than the surveys, represent the primary research method to determine if the intervention, as conceived, designed, and delivered was a good

response to the research questions. Because I was interested in not only the quantitative assessment of perceived change through the intervention, but also in subjective impressions of experiences of participating in the intervention, the mixed approach seemed well-suited to my research questions. In questions and interviews, I wanted to see what participants thought of the workshop series and the extent to which there was movement towards making connections between their self-efficacy and sense of confidence in future directions.

Essentially, this is a qualitative piece of work that delves into participants' experiences, focusing on how these experiences influence their career self-efficacy, their outlook on the future, and their confidence in charting their own paths. In no way was it my intention to make a causal connection between the variables of the intervention and career adaptability; rather, the goal was to assess movement, and if change occurred, why and how. Because the voice of participants was the most important form of data at this stage of developing and exploring my idea, a narrative enquiry was an effective way to allow participants to reflect on and explore their experiences and to elevate my understanding of the meaning of the participant experience of the workshops and the perceived impact of the workshop on their career adaptability around thematic clusters. In fact, a narrative approach flows throughout the study from the intervention itself to the workshop design and content, as well as through the data collection itself. It might be argued that the interviews themselves represent an intervention in the way they allow participants to deepen their own understanding of the experience, their ability to adapt, and how this might transfer to other domains. In summary, I chose to use story to collect data of participant perceptions to see if there is a connection between what I thought would be helpful and whether they found it to be so. Combining all elements of my methodology, there is rigour in my study represented by a utility scale about each activity linked to an outcome of the activity, a strong theoretical argument for the items on my post-pre surveys, and a qualitative component that addresses the big impact questions around confidence, control, concern, and curiosity.

## 3.4. Recruitment and Consent

### 3.4.1. Recruitment

The recruitment process for this study took place at SFU in Burnaby, B.C. In partnership with SFU Career and Volunteer Services (CVS), the workshop series was offered to undergraduate students through an Eventbrite event page posted January 4, 2023 under the workshop name *Speak Up – A New Workshop Series on Public Speaking & Career Planning*. This promotional listing included dates and times of workshops, location information, information about the workshop series content, a list of benefits of participation, a YouTube greeting from the facilitator, and a registration link. As a presentation of CVS, the workshop series Eventbrite page was promoted on the SFU events webpage and included in the January 10, 2023 issue of the SFU Student Bulletin e-newsletter (Appendix A). The workshop series was also promoted in the SFU Beedie School of Business January 10, 2023 *Career Spotlights* weekly e-newsletter distributed to all undergraduate business students. In the January 13, 2023 weekly SFU Beedie School of Business Co-op newsletter to undergraduate co-op students, the workshop series was featured. Finally, CVS included promotional information about the event in its Workshops and Events webpage leading up to the workshop series.

Eventbrite registrations, capped at 20 students, closed on January 17, 2023 with all 20 spots reserved and a waitlist of 26 students. Those who were registered received an email on January 13, 2023 from Tony Botelho, director of CVS, inviting them to participate in the research study (Appendix B). A second email was sent January 16, 2023 prior to the 11:59pm deadline to indicate interest in participating in the study. In the email, students were informed that study participants would be entered into a draw for one of three Amazon.ca gift cards in the value of \$25. Students willing to participate in the study were asked in the email to click a link to an online SurveyMonkey form to express their interest and grant their consent to participate. In this form, students were also asked if they would be willing to participate in a confidential individual interview with the primary researcher following the final workshop, in addition to sharing weekly survey data. In this online form, participant names, email addresses, and phone numbers were collected. Not participating in the study did not preclude registered students from taking part in the workshop series.

### 3.4.2. Participant Information

Registrations for the workshop series comprised 20 SFU undergraduate students with another 24 students waitlisted. Of the 20 workshop participants, 18 students attended at least one of the three workshops, with 14 students attending the full workshop series.

All 18 attending students were invited to participate in the research study. Nine students, comprising three males and six females, agreed to participate in the surveys and individual interviews. Data from one participant was omitted since the person did not complete the interview stage despite multiple attempts to contact them. Table 3.3 provides an overview of the eight study participants under their pseudonyms, indicating their gender, age, year of undergraduate study, major declaration status, and current faculty.

**Table 3.3. Participant Demographic Information**

<b>Participant (Pseudonyms)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>Declared or undeclared status</b>	<b>Current Faculty</b>
Jay	Male	25	Fourth	Declared	Economics
Nanda	Female	20	Third	Undeclared	Business
Ajay	Male	18	First	Undeclared	Business
Kyla	Female	22	Fourth	Declared	Social Sciences
Chandra	Female	20	Third	Declared	Health Sciences
Hassan	Male	24	Third	Declared	Business
Sarah	Female	20	Third	Undeclared	Business
Alycia	Female	23	Fourth	Declared	Linguistics



### **3.4.3. Consent**

As described in recruitment, all students registered in the workshop series received an email from SFU Career and Volunteer Services asking them to participate in the study. Those interested were asked in the email to click a link to an online SurveyMonkey form to express their interest and grant their consent to participate in the study. In this form, students were also asked if they would be willing to participate in a confidential individual interview with myself, the student researcher, following the final workshop, in addition to sharing weekly survey data. A copy of the online consent form is available in Appendix C.

The consent form explained that the study was deemed by SFU as a minimal risk study, meaning that there might be risks involved for participating in this study, yet the risks were not greater than those the participants may encounter in their everyday life. The potential risks by participating in the study included emotional, social, and psychological risks associated with disclosure of personal information to other participants, the workshop facilitator, and the research team. Participants were informed that steps that would be taken to prevent or to deal with these risks would include agreeing to group confidentiality during the workshops, securing data, and referral of participants to SFU Health and Counselling for support if necessary. Steps were also taken to ensure that participants were aware of their option to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any point.

The participant consent form also informs participants of the study's purpose and objectives, which revolve around a career intervention program featuring a series of public speaking workshops. They were informed that the research aims to contribute to the enhancement of their abilities in exploring careers, adapting to constant change, and flourishing in both academic and professional realms. Participants were also informed about the potential benefits they may derive from the study, including the acquisition of valuable public speaking skills applicable to school and work scenarios, increased confidence, heightened career clarity, and improved decision-making skills. Additionally, the consent form underscores the commitment to safeguarding participant confidentiality and the privacy of collected data, including interview recordings. Participants were assured that their information would not be released without their explicit consent, emphasizing the ethical handling of sensitive information throughout the research process.

To be completely transparent, participants were informed that I, the student researcher, had a personal relationship with the workshop facilitator, who is my spouse. In order to mitigate any real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, the participants were informed that I would not be involved in the delivery of any workshops and the workshop facilitator would not be involved in any aspect of the research project, including collection, access, or analysis of data. This disclosure was made so that participants could decide if this relationship would impact their willingness to participate in the study.

Finally, names, email addresses and phone numbers of those who answered yes to participating in the study were collected. My email address and that of my supervisor was also shared in the consent form for participant questions and/or concerns.

In addition to the consent form, verbal participant consent was obtained at the beginning of each individual interview. At this time, participants were informed their participation was voluntary, that they had the right to refuse to participate in the interview, and that if they decided to participate, they could still choose to withdraw from the interview at any time. They were also reminded that their confidentiality would be respected and that information that discloses their identity would not be released without their consent. Participants were also informed that they would be identified only by a pseudonym and not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

## **3.5. Data Collection**

### **3.5.1. Stage One: Surveys**

As mentioned earlier, there are multiple reasons I chose to survey the study participants prior to individual interviews. First, the hope was to add richness, context, and rigour to the process. By understanding participant perceptions of change, I would be better prepared to develop probes and prompts for the interviews, which would help elaborate on my guiding research questions, indicate themes to explore, and also inform a deeper exploration of how their experiences in the intervention mapped to the literature around career adaptability. Second, the surveys would help me grasp what they learned and how useful or impactful they felt the workshops were. Knowing this, I had hoped to also understand how engaged participants were in the process and explore in the interviews how valuable they thought the learning was for them. Third, learning the

degree to which the speaking topics contributed, in their view, to dimensions of career adaptability would be served well by surveys. Each element of the intervention, based on career construction theory and active learning, was included for a reason, which makes understanding participant perceptions that much more useful to me. Fourth, the surveys represented a worthwhile way to connect the independent variable of public speaking to the dependent variable of career adaptability, from the perspective of the participants. Finally, making stronger connections between the content of the work and what I uncover during interviews represents a primary use of the data.

Having reviewed the reasons to survey the participants, the suitability and use of the post-pre format is a decision that needs defending. While post-pre and pre-post each have their advantages, there are limitations of the latter and features of the former that need to be taken into account. Known as a form of retrospective assessment, the post-pre approach is designed to address the problems arising when individuals self-assess their participation in career interventions not knowing what they don't know (Hiebert et al., 2011). The problem, the researchers argue, is that individuals asked to rate their perception of knowledge, skills, personal attributes, or impact on their future behaviour and aspirations at two separate times, before and then after the intervention, will most likely have more knowledge of what is being asked at the second assessment than at the first. As a result of this inconsistency, comparison of the data points becomes questionable. What is needed, the researchers continue, is a "consistent measuring stick" (Hiebert et al., 2011, p. 9) for both assessments, which the post-pre provides. What is important is the participant's current level of knowledge at the end of the instructional intervention, which enables them to assess where they were before participation and where they are now that they have finished the intervention. Without this safeguard, the researchers suggest that an over-estimation of competence or change is common without an accurate understanding by the participant of the question being asked.

Turning to my survey design, I chose to deliver evaluations after each of the three workshops, with an overall series evaluation following the final workshop in the series. For the weekly surveys, they were mapped to the contents of the training (Table 3.1) in two parts, first comprising multiple choice utility statements or process checks followed by post-pre statements. The first section on utility mapped to the goal of assessing the perceived usefulness of elements of the workshop for development of

presentation skills, but also served to support the use of narrative as a tool to develop confidence, curiosity and concern, the aspects of career adaptability targeted during this week's session. The post-pre section of each week's survey was an attempt to assess participant perception of movement around the speaking topic, which in this case of week one was their role model and how that might connect to a changed sense of confidence, curiosity, and/or concern. While each of the three weekly assessments were designed in this format, the final evaluation at the end of the series was a post-pre survey with nine statements targeting the primary research question around a change in students' perception and experiences of career adaptability, including confidence, curiosity, control, and concern. Together, the weekly and final surveys would inform the direction of the interviews and allow me to explore the core theoretical outcomes I care about, represented in the perceptions of change in the variables of adaptability. Moreover, my interest would be in exploring the participant experience of an active, group-based career intervention compared to other individual-based modalities, such as writing or 1-to-1 counselling, as previously mentioned. To view complete copies of all surveys and to explore weeks two and three, refer to Appendix D.

It should be noted that the post-pre section of the surveys was primarily intended to assess participant change in competence and personal attributes, in line with Hiebert and Magnusson's (Hiebert & Magnusson, 2014) recommendations of the learning outcomes associated with post-pre surveys. Among their assessment recommendations, the researchers suggest the decision-making perspective be applied instead of a judgemental perspective. This is done, they say, by using common language, which is easily understood by participants for increased consistency and reliability between participants. However, because this study is an exploratory study and I am interested more in the how participant responses will inform individual interviews, I decided against using the decision scale of Unacceptable to Acceptable in favour of a Likert-type judgement scale of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. For the purposes of this study, using a scale that students were accustomed to instead of a decision scale that might be ambiguous and cause confusion about what qualified as unacceptable or acceptable made the most sense to me. In the end, I was most interested in the deeper and more personal narratives that would come from individual qualitative interviews around changes in personal attributes and impact outcomes they might describe.

In order to map the process checks to each of the workshop activities, surveys were delivered after each workshop. The benefit of having a series of workshops, rather than a single session, is that each session could build on the previous ones. In this way, I anticipated there might be an accumulated effect on the outcomes and growth that I wanted to explore throughout the series, supporting the decision to do multiple assessments. Also, this approach allowed for more targeted and shorter assessments, requiring less time of the participants while their experience and perception of the experience was still fresh. Moreover, I anticipated that multiple surveys may, in a way, become part of the intervention since answering the questions would require participants to reflect on their experience throughout the series in preparation for more in-depth interviews. As for the design of the survey questions, they were informed by the outline of each workshop, but also by elements of career construction theory and the career construction interview, as outlined in the literature review. Also instrumental in the development of questions was the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), which “consists of four scales, each with six items, which measure concern, control, curiosity, and confidence as psychosocial resources for managing occupational transitions, developmental tasks, and work traumas” (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012, p. 748). While not utilized in this case as an instrument to measure adaptability, the CAAS has good to excellent internal consistency and served as a useful tool for the conversion of core adaptability strengths to statements of agreement targeting the dimensions of career adaptability.

To collect data from the surveys, SurveyMonkey links were emailed to study participants 30 minutes prior to the conclusion of each workshop so the facilitator could provide time at the end of each session for students to complete evaluations. All data was collected in compliance with the ethics agreement as outlined in the data management section of this report.

### **3.5.2. Stage Two: Interviews**

As explained in the methodology section, individual interviews would play a crucial role in extracting patterns from the self-assessment surveys, ultimately fostering enhanced insights and a more profound appreciation for participants' experiences throughout the workshop series. Because I was interested in the individual views and perspectives of my participants as a potentially rich source of knowledge, informed by

survey data, semi-structured interviews, described by Braun and Clarke (2013) as a foundational qualitative research method suited for exploratory work, represented the right match to my needs. The benefits of semi-structured interviews, they elaborate, include the balance between the researcher's and participant's interests, the flexibility they provide the interviewer to respond to what emerges, their adaptability, responsiveness to context, and ability to accommodate individual participant needs and preferences. As Magnusson and Marecek (2015) suggest, the semi-structured format feature open-ended questions designed to elicit informal, free-flowing narratives expressed in the participants' own words. My goal was to create a situation where study participants could not only talk about their experiences, but also for them to make sense of that experience, as Magnusson and Marecek suggest. Because my ability to establish rapport with the participant would be essential to gathering the richness and breadth of perspectives, I was careful in planning the timing (day and time) and duration of the interviews to suit participants. Additionally, I would need to be appropriately prepared to practice the qualities of listening, flexibility, and nonjudgment to develop trust and for the interviews to be successful, in line with recommended practices (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In this regard, I was confident my training in counselling skills would prove valuable in remaining flexible, responsive, and open to unexpected insights from participants and to allow students to move the conversations in directions and around topics of personal interest and significance.

In preparation for the interviews, a comprehensive interview guide was developed, serving multiple purposes of the semi-structured format. As described by Magnusson and Marecek (2015), the interview guide acts as a memory guide so the interviewer stays on topic and captures appropriate detail, helps shed light on the researchable questions, and encourages careful development and clarification of the intent of interview items. For my study, this involved circling back and forth between the research questions and the content of the workshops, as well as using the survey responses to inform deeper exploration, which is discussed further in the data analysis. As an iterative process, developing my interview guide required multiple drafts, refinement of questions, piloting with and feedback from my thesis committee. As the researchers suggest, developing good research questions invite participants to share personalized stories and volunteer reflections on their experience. Also important is that interview items bring out material directly related to the interview topics through different types of questions such as introducing questions, follow-up questions, direct and indirect

questions, interpreting and probing questions, and silence, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2013). This process resulted in the interview guide in Appendix E.

All individual interviews were conducted over Zoom between February 9, 2024 and February 17, 2024, beginning just over a week after the conclusion of the workshop series. Refer to table 3.3 for a list of the eight study participants interviewed. Interviews were recorded on Zoom, and each interview was between 30 min and 40 min. At the start of the interviews, I introduced myself to participants and informed them that the aim of the interview was to learn how they experienced the workshop series and its impact on them. Additionally, they were informed that, along with the survey data they shared, I hoped the interviews would help me understand the impact, effectiveness, and potential for future development of the intervention. Participants were reminded that the interview was voluntary, affording them the right to refuse or withdraw at any time, with a commitment to confidentiality wherein information revealing their identity would not be disclosed without explicit consent, and that all participants would be referenced solely by a unique pseudonym in reports of the completed study. All audio recordings were transcribed using Nvivo, software provided by SFU for qualitative research. Identifiers were removed to ensure anonymization of the data.

## **3.6. Data Management**

### **3.6.1. Recordings, transcriptions, and survey data storage**

All collection of data was handled in accordance with the university's ethics approval, discussed below. For post-workshop surveys, the identity of participants was protected by using SurveyMonkey in accordance with SFU SurveyMonkey Terms of Service and by utilizing the Anonymous Responses collector option in SurveyMonkey settings. Furthermore, to ensure anonymity, no identifiable details were collected during the surveys. Downloaded survey reports and any associated files were stored securely on my personal password-protected laptop computer and backed up on SFU's Microsoft OneDrive service.

All one-on-one interviews were recorded on Zoom and also stored along with transcriptions and related files securely on the lead researcher's personal computer and backed up on SFU's Microsoft OneDrive service, which is protected by enterprise-level security. As previously mentioned, interview transcriptions use pseudonyms to protect

participant identity. Interview transcriptions were created and coded with Nvivo, software provided by SFU for qualitative research, which encrypts data while in storage and in transit. All study data files will be deleted from the lead researcher's personal computer and OneDrive within one year after completion of the study and presentation of the final written thesis report.

### **3.6.2. Participant confidentiality measures**

Ensuring participant safety and confidentiality is paramount to my research project. To this end, participants were informed in the consent form and at the beginning of interviews that their confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data, including interview recordings, will be protected, and not be released without their consent. They were informed that pseudonyms would be used in all instances of data collection and analysis and that they would not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. Since workshops were delivered in a group setting, participants were informed that full confidentiality cannot be maintained in that respect, but that every effort would be made by the research team to protect participant data.

### **3.6.3. Ethical Considerations**

The ethics approval was obtained from the SFU Office of Research Ethics Board on July 29, 2022 prior to the beginning of the research and renewed on July 31, 2023. Dr. Kris Magnusson is listed as the principal investigator for the ethics application at SFU with Dr. Cindy Xin as the SFU collaborator.

## **3.7. Data Analysis**

As discussed at length, this study aims to explore the impact of a public speaking workshop series on career adaptability resources of participating students and how participants qualitatively experienced the intervention. My data analysis combines the use of quantitative surveys followed by qualitative individual interviews. As an initial exploratory study with no intention to generalize findings to a population, the emphasis is squarely on the qualitative interviews with the survey data primarily informing and guiding the interview design. Given my research questions, my small sample size, and exploratory nature of the study, survey analysis is limited to rudimentary descriptive



statistics, while analysis of interviews is much more elaborate, using reflexive thematic analysis (reflexive TA), based on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021, 2022). What follows is a brief overview of the approaches used to analyse the data.

### **3.7.1. Quantitative Data Analysis: Surveys**

The primary method of analysing the data from the three post-workshop surveys and final evaluation is through descriptive statistics, specifically measures of central tendency and variability, with the aim of summarizing the data for patterns to further explore in the individual interviews. Following the format of the surveys, outlined in the data collection section and available in Appendix D, the analysis is broken up into two separate parts: the utility or process checks and the post-pre section. For the post-pre data, it is important to acknowledge that any differences cannot be reported as direct evidence of learning; rather, the data indicates only participants' perceptions of their learning, known as indirect learning (Kanevsky, 2016). For the purposes of this study, this is sufficient, as the data does not need to support broad claims of success or effectiveness. As the reader will see in the next chapter, the survey results are reported first through evaluation of processes using simple percentages from the assessment of usefulness. The post-pre survey results are reported through measures of central tendency and variability comprising mean scores and standard deviations. Without a large enough sample to run a statistical test to determine the probability the variables are related, through a test such as the chi-square analysis, there is no way to know if the observed distribution was due to chance. However, what is most useful, as noted, is the way the post-pre data informs the qualitative data. Based on the results described in chapter 4, it would seem that the surveys provide sufficient data to inform interviews with participants, which was the intention from the start. As the primary researcher designing and conducting interviews, the surveys proved invaluable for the purposes of this study.

### **3.7.2. Reflexive Thematic Analysis of Interviews**

In the study of career development, there has been a significant trend over the last two to three decades towards the use of qualitative research as a major methodological perspective and an emergence of qualitative instruments to detect changes in individual narratives (Blustein et al., 2005; Kenny & Di Fabio, 2018). One of these perspectives is thematic analysis, which simply put, "is a method for identifying,

analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Of the points that Braun and Clarke make throughout their work, none seems more urgent than their insistence that themes do not simply “emerge” during analysis; rather, the researcher plays a highly active, creative, and reflexive role, even an analytic resource for knowledge production, in generating themes, filtering them, and reporting them. Moreover, it is through thinking about the data and creating links that makes one researcher’s interpretation and meaning-making different from another’s. Also, they vehemently suggest that thematic analysis is more of an interpretive process than descriptive, and in no way is the researcher a “passive, disinterested, and decontextualized conduit for the voices of participants” (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Throughout the process of interviewing participants, transcribing the data, and analysing it for themes, I looked through a lens of my particular social, cultural, historical, disciplinary, political, and ideological positioning, as they emphasize throughout these writings. Subjectivity, Braun and Clarke (2022) argue, should not be seen as a weakness or a source of bias, but as an integral part of the process. What is important to know as the reader reviews my results is that the theoretical framework I bring to this study, represented in the theories coalesced in my literature review, along with my decision to do thematic analysis, are decisions that I have consciously made based on what I wish to know. Moreover, it is important the reader knows that the story I tell about the data will evoke participant voices, but the interpretive story is mine.

Prior to an overview of the procedures that I undertook to analyse my interview data through reflexive TA, however, it is important to frame my research and the assumptions that informed my analysis around an epistemological perspective that guides my study. Without going into depth about the various lenses used throughout history to guide the study of human behaviour, such as romanticism, logical positivism, postpositivism, and social constructionism, suffice it to say that research epistemology impacts what I can say about my data and informs how I theorize meaning, as emphasized by Braun and Clarke (2006). Although thematic analysis is known for its flexibility, in terms of the theoretical or epistemological position, my approach sits somewhere between realist/essentialist and constructionist paradigms. What this means is that I view language reflecting meaning, truth, and experience, but also that meaning and experience are socially produced rather than simply inherited, as the two paradigms are described by Braun and Clarke (2006).

In response to problematic assumptions and misunderstandings about thematic analysis made by researchers since Braun and Clarke published their seminal article in 2006, they emphasize later the importance of understanding that the procedures of thematic analysis are simply tools of the process rather than the purpose of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Recognizing that the tools nonetheless play an important role in accessing my data to help answer, or even refine, my research questions, Braun and Clarke emphasize a number of decisions that need to be made before starting. The first decision to make, they say, is what counts as a theme, acknowledging that a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Of relevance, in this case, is prevalence within each data item and across the entire data set. As they suggest, a recurrence is important, but there is no hard-and-fast rule for the proportion of the data required of a theme. As Byrne (2022) suggests, if meaningfulness is important, which it is for this study, it is prudent to remember that recurrence or even a pattern doesn’t always correlate to meaning or importance. Interestingly, he makes a point of indicating the prominence of the constructionist epistemology to the role of meaning and meaningfulness in the coding process. What it really comes down to is researcher judgement and willingness to be flexible and continually refine the analysis, they argue. Quantifiable measures don’t really have a place here, as opposed to the theme’s relation to the overall research questions.

The second decision that I needed to make, as Braun and Clarke (2006) insist, is whether themes would be identified through an inductive, or data driven, lens or by using a deductive or theoretical and pre-specified approach. In other words, is it the data or theory, or a combination of both, that drives the thematic analysis? Typically, they say, linking the themes to the data often means identified themes may not be directly related to questions asked of the participants and are not driven by researcher theoretical interest or topic. However, within an epistemological commitment, they urge, pure induction is not possible and the while themes may be grounded in the data, the line between induction and deduction, in this case, is really a continuum (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Because I bring a theoretical lens based on research, deduction also plays a role in my interpretation of the data. As Braun and Clarke argue passionately, researcher assumptions permeate all aspects of thematic analysis, making subjective reflection on the engagement with theory, data, and interpretation critical, but also the need to

indicate the basis of assumptions, which I have tried to do. Hence, the word “reflexive” in reflexive TA.

Deciding whether codes, which inform themes, will represent descriptive, or surface level meaning, or will move beyond that to the underlying or implicit meaning is the final decision I needed to make. Based on immersing myself in the data, which I describe next, I conclude that both semantic and latent analysis made sense. As the reader will see, my analysis is descriptive, but also theorized. Consistent with the constructionist paradigm, as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest, the latent themes indicate there is more in the data than what is articulated by the participant. In other words, latent coding gives shape to the descriptive data, requiring a more active and creative role on the part of the researcher (Byrne, 2022). Since my intention was to utilize interviews to dig deeper into participant experiences, latent analysis fits well.

### ***The Six-Phase Analytical Process***

The approach I used to code my interview data and develop themes of meaning is the six-phase analytic process of reflexive TA, as outlined by Terry et al. (2017) and others. An iterative and recursive process, reflexive TA involves six non-linear phases, including familiarization with the data, generating codes, constructing themes, revising and defining themes, and producing the report of the analysis. I outline my process for each of these below:

#### **Step 1 – Familiarization with the Data**

The first phase is really about becoming intimately familiar with the data by reading and re-reading the dataset (Byrne, 2022). As Terry et al. (2017) add that familiarization is a way of engaging with the data, emphasizing that if skipped or done lightly, will jeopardize the entire analysis. Even though familiarization represents the first opportunity to get to know the data, it should be an active step, which might reveal initial patterns, provisional ideas or questions.

At this phase, I familiarized myself with the data by first listening to each audio recording once before transcribing. For the purposes of engaging with the participant, I listened actively, but did not take notes or stop and start the recording. Next, I transcribed each recording by generating a Microsoft Word file from the audio, which

produced a file I could import into Nvivo, specialized software for qualitative data analysis. Once in Nvivo, I listened again to the recordings, while reading and making corrections to the written transcript to produce as accurate transcriptions as possible. During this process, I made annotations in Nvivo, potentially interesting passages mostly of a semantic nature, that I could refer to later when coding. These represented things I was curious about, mannerisms or expressions representing emotions of participants, comments that seemed to relate to an aspect of a theory I was exploring, some aspect of the workshop that I wanted to return to, and the like.

## **Step 2 – Generating Initial Codes**

If familiarization was about making casual observational notes, this stage is a systematic process of creating succinct descriptive or interpretive labels attached to specific segments of the dataset (Terry et al., 2017). Where relevant to the research questions, data segments are tagged with a few words that captures meaning as interpreted by the researcher. In this case, codes may refer to both semantic and latent meaning, depending on the reflexive TA decisions mentioned earlier.

My coding process was open and inclusive, as recommended, labelling all segments of interest and relevance and ignoring segments of transcriptions that had no relevance to the research questions. Since researchers insist there are not right or wrong codes, in line with the subjective nature of the researcher's role, I had the liberty of capturing my interpretation through the coding. At this point, I was able to code without restriction and focus on each interview on its own, which meant some data segments were tagged with more than one code and both semantically and latently. While this stage proved fruitful, I was aware of the mantra of reflexive TA, which warns researchers not to get too attached to codes too early on due to the iterative and flexible nature of the work and the likelihood codes will be revised and even discarded over time (Terry et al., 2017). As I went along, I could see how my developing list of codes, reviewed in the results section, would help me make sense of the data and even force a revision of one or more of my research questions. Prior to moving to theme development, I grouped data segments by code using Nvivo to get a sense of what segments worked together and what segments needed to move.

### **Step 3 – Constructing Themes**

When all relevant data items have been coded, the researcher begins the active process of telling a story about the data while staying oriented to the research question(s) (Terry et al., 2017). This contrasts with the notion that themes are waiting in the data to be found, which as mentioned earlier, does not represent good thematic analysis. Armed with a list of codes from the previous stage, the researcher identifies bigger and more meaningful patterns across a range of different codes, combining some codes or collapsing other codes into larger themes, they add. One consistent characteristic of a theme is that it unites around a central idea or organizing concept that reflects the meaning of the theme (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Arriving at this core concept requires the acknowledgement that it is the pattern of codes that helps answer the research question(s), rather than the number of codes or data items (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The idea of a central organizing concept resonated with me as a way to determine what codes fit into what themes as I went through the process. I also found that some codes easily clustered together, while others were no longer needed as they were too similar to others, or they didn't respond to research questions. In some cases, themes were developed that added nuance to my original research question, which I will elaborate on below. As the research suggests, my themes at this stage were really theme candidates, and that through reflection, themes were later combined and even discarded (Terry et al., 2017). By visually mapping the patterns, I was better able to see the boundaries and relationships between themes, which together told an overall story about the dataset. A discussion of specific themes follows in results section.

### **Step 4 & 5 – Revising and Defining Themes**

As Terry et al. (Terry et al., 2017) suggest, the process of revising themes is akin to quality control, whereby the researcher checks that themes work well with the coded data and the research question. As it usually goes, some themes need more shaping, require more clarification, or need to be rejected, the researchers add. In some ways, the way these steps are described, a sharper lens is applied to the codes and themes to ensure there are clear central organizing concepts and that there is diversity of meaning, but also a through line in the story related to the research question(s). By the time

themes are defined and named, the primary focus moves from seeing themes as lists of codes to interpretation in the form of definitions or abstracts that together form a story, as Terry et al. (2017) explain. Even at this point, a theme might be dropped or become a subtheme if it is too thin, in the way a song might be dropped from an album if it doesn't fit.

My experience in these stages of reflexive TA proved to be challenging, but also revealing in the way that developing definitions forced me to determine if themes were in fact unique, were concise enough, demonstrated clarity of meaning, if they fit together as a story, and if they truly answered my research questions or helped refine them. This was done by revisiting data items under each theme and more deeply analysing each data item. Also, by now, a thematic framework was taking shape, with themes fitting under specific research questions, but also informing a deeper engagement with and assessment of my questions. In the process of aligning data items to the theme definitions, it became clear to me which data items to extract for my results, which follows.

## **Step 6 – Producing the Report**

At this stage, as Terry et al. (2017) suggest, the researcher completes the process by combining the data, analysis, connections to scholarly literature and produces output that makes an argument in relation to the research question(s). With a final collection of themes and a narrative, the bigger purpose of the project returns to the picture. An important task at this point, Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 93) say, is to “convince the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis.” Data extracts must provide evidence of the themes and tell the story within and across themes, they add. Byrne (2022) suggests giving thought at this stage to the order in which themes are reported with the objective of building each theme upon the previous theme and easing the reader into a wider analysis. Considering these final tasks, along with the preceding steps, my analysis follows in my results section.

## **3.8. Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlined the rationale for the intervention, backed by the literature review and the design of the workshops. The method selected to fit the research

questions and the exploratory nature of the study comprised a combination of the intervention itself, quantitative surveys, and qualitative interviews. Most importantly, this detailed overview of my method of assessing the impact on participants was meant to illustrate the priority of participant perceptions as opposed to generalizability and tests of significance. With this in mind, the primary purpose of the surveys was to establish an understanding of the participant experience in order to better lay out interviews that would amplify areas of impact to explore further. What follows in the next chapter is a description and assessment of the sequential process of investigation through the voices of participants. Based on my own interest in exploring the impact of the intervention on participants, it was critical to allow participants to reflect on and explore their experiences, which would hopefully elevate my understanding of the meaning they attributed to the workshops and the perceived impact of the workshop on their career adaptability around thematic clusters.



## Chapter 4.

### Results

This chapter outlines the findings of the quantitative segment of the study comprising the post-workshop surveys, the results of the qualitative thematic analysis, and the ways in which the surveys informed the individual interviews. With the research questions in mind, outlined in Chapter Three, this study explores participant experiences in a career intervention, comprising a public speaking workshop series, and its impact on the cornerstones of career adaptability. This chapter begins with a description of participants. Then, survey findings are presented in the form of descriptive statistics. Specific findings for further exploration in individual interviews are also reviewed. Finally, codes and themes developed through reflexive thematic analysis are discussed, and wherever appropriate, participants' direct quotes are featured. The final chapter, Discussion, considers the implications of the findings and makes recommendations to further research and practice.

#### 4.1. Participants

Before delving into the study's findings, it is essential to provide a concise overview of the participants, which provides a range of demographic information including age, gender, year of academic study, academic major declaration status, and current faculty (see Table 3.3). Of the 19 students registered in the workshop, ten students, comprising five males and five females, agreed to participate in the surveys and individual interviews. Two participants did not complete the interview stage despite multiple attempts to contact them, resulting in eight participants in the final qualitative analysis. Females represented 63% of the interview participants, and 50% of the interview participants were between ages 18-20 with the remainder between ages 22-25. The mean age of participants was 21.5 (SD=2.25). In terms of academic level, all participants were undergraduate students with one participant in first year, 50% in third year and 38% in fourth year. Five out of the 8 study participants had declared their academic major when they started the workshop series, with three undeclared. Of the faculties represented at the time of the workshops, 50% of the participants were enrolled

in business, with the other participants in economics, social sciences, health sciences and linguistics.

## **4.2. Workshop Evaluation Surveys**

Post-workshop surveys were each split into two sections, comprising process checks around usefulness of activities and post-pre questions related to the impact on participant knowledge, skills, and attributes.

### **4.2.1. Process & Utility Checks**

#### ***Week 1 Utility Survey Results***

Each post-workshop survey began by asking participants about the perceived usefulness of elements of the workshop for development of presentation skills, but also as a tool to develop confidence, curiosity and concern. For results from week one, see Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1. Week #1: Post-Workshop participant evaluation of processes**

(n=10)			
Question	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful
Q1. Sharing a personal object for the purpose of focusing your attention on an interest outside of school.	0	2	8
Q2. Instruction on modes of persuasion for the purpose of understanding, processing, and creating a speech that is credible, emotionally appealing and logical.	0	0	10
Q3. Instruction on the importance of personal story and structure for the purpose of exploring and conveying your own story.	0	3	7
Q4. Instruction on performance basics for the purpose of crafting speeches that fully convey your messages in clear ways and help audiences and listeners understand your message.	1	1	8
Q5. The 5-minute free writing exercise for the purpose of developing the content of your presentation.	0	1	9
Q6. The 5-minute free writing exercise for the purpose of exploring who you admired growing up.	1	3	6
Q7. Presenting your role model to others for the purpose of deepening your understanding of yourself compared to only writing to yourself about your role model.	1	1	8
Q8. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of building your confidence.	0	4	6
Q9. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of motivating you to further develop your public speaking skills.	1	1	8

In summary, the week one survey results, comprising 10 respondents, reflect a generally positive reception to the various public speaking exercises and instructional methods presented. The overall trend is positive, with participants recognizing the value of a variety of instructional methods and exercises in enhancing public speaking skills, self-reflection, and motivation. While there are subtle differences in individual preferences and perceptions, the survey indicates a generally favorable response to the presented approaches. If there is anything in this section informing further exploration in the interviews, it might be to learn more about their experience and potential relevance of personal narratives to developing adaptability. Given that 80% of respondents found presenting about their role model to be very useful compared to just writing about it, a deeper understanding of the meaning of this would be worthwhile to explore in interviews.

### ***Week 2 Utility Survey Results***

Results for the week two post-workshop survey are presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2. Week #2: Post-Workshop participant evaluation of processes**

(n=5)			
Question	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful
Q1. The power poses and gestures exercise for the purpose of understanding and appreciating how your body language impacts how you think and feel about yourself and how that affects how others perceive you.	0	0	5
Q2. Presenting about the stories you are most drawn to in books, movies, TV series, and websites for the purpose of deepening your understanding of your interests, dilemmas, and behavior.	0	0	5
Q3. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of building your confidence.	0	0	5
Q4. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of motivating you to further develop your public speaking skills.	0	0	5
Q5. The rehearsal tips instruction for the purpose of equipping you with tools to increase your sense of confidence prior to delivering a presentation.	0	0	5

At the outset, it is important to note that one participant withdrew from the study, and four others did not complete the week two survey. This resulted in a total of five participants not providing data for the second week, impacting the overall response rate and potentially influencing this week’s findings. The results of week two could further be weakened because there is a possibility that all of the people who remained gave similar responses after week one. Due to the anonymous nature of the surveys and the small sample size, it is unclear why the response between the weeks was variable and whether the respondents in the second week gave similar responses from week one. Despite the limitations, participants seemed to highly value activities related to body language, presenting about personal interests, and receiving peer feedback for both confidence building and improving public speaking skills. All respondents rated all activities surveyed as “Very Useful,” reflecting a positive attitude towards activities that contribute to personal and professional growth, with a strong emphasis on building confidence and practical skills in communication and presentation. Even with the smaller sample, the results do provide material to further explore in interviews, particularly around confidence and concern about continuing to develop public speaking skills and how these two competencies might transfer to other domains.

***Week 3 Utility Survey Results***

Results for the week three post-workshop survey can be viewed in Table 4.3, as follows:

**Table 4.3. Week #2: Post-Workshop participant evaluation of processes**

(n=8)			
Question	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful
Q1. The superpower icebreaker for the purpose of identifying your unique strengths.	0	1	7
Q2. The superpower icebreaker for the purpose of enhancing your understanding of your own ability to develop those strengths in your favour.	0	0	8
Q3. The breathing and warm-up basics for the purpose of increasing your confidence and preparation for your presentation.	0	0	8
Q4. Presenting about a motto or saying for the purpose of clarifying how you would like to live your life.	0	1	7
Q5. Presenting about a motto or saying for the purpose of clarifying how you would like to be of service.	0	3	5
Q6. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of motivating you to further develop your public speaking skills.	0	0	8
Q7. The discussion about career exploration and goal setting for the purpose of continuing to make plans to take further steps in pursuit of a life you want to live.	0	3	5

For week three, eight respondents completed the survey. In summary, the data suggests a strong positive response to the activities, with most participants finding them very useful. The superpower icebreaker, breathing and warm-up basics, and peer feedback for public speaking skills were particularly well-received, while presenting about a motto or saying for the purpose of clarifying how participants want to be of service (Q5) received a slightly lower average rating compared to other activities, but was still considered useful by the majority of participants. The discussion about career exploration and goal setting was considered useful, with a slightly lower average rating compared to some other activities. To gain a more nuanced understanding of participants' experiences and preferences of the workshop activities, an exploration about how specific elements of these activities contributed to participants' confidence and whether this might have a broader application would be a useful element of interviews. In addition, a deeper exploration of how participants connect their personal mottos to their life goals and values would be worth exploring further.

## **4.2.2. Post-Pre Self-Assessments**

In this post-pre results section, I present a comprehensive descriptive analysis of the responses obtained from participants about their pre- and post-intervention perceptions, retrospectively, at the end of their engagement in each public speaking workshop session and upon completion of the series. My examination is structured around two key aspects. First is a detailed breakdown of responses, shedding light on the participants' retrospective level of agreement with presented statements around impact prior to participation and the evolution of these perceptions post-intervention. Second, I present a comparison between participants' perceptions before and after the workshop by highlighting the percent change in mean scores for each relevant question, as well as the variability or consistency of responses represented by the standard deviations.

Through this examination, my aim was to discern not only the immediate effects of the intervention on participants, but also the subtler nuances in their evolving perceptions. This exploration is crucial in understanding the workshop's impact on my research questions, but more importantly, to guide the design of the individual interviews to more deeply explore experiences. By navigating through the tables presenting responses and the comparison of perceptions, followed by individual interviews, it was hoped that a general sense of perceptions would emerge, offering valuable insights into the transformative power of integrating career construction theory into public speaking workshops.

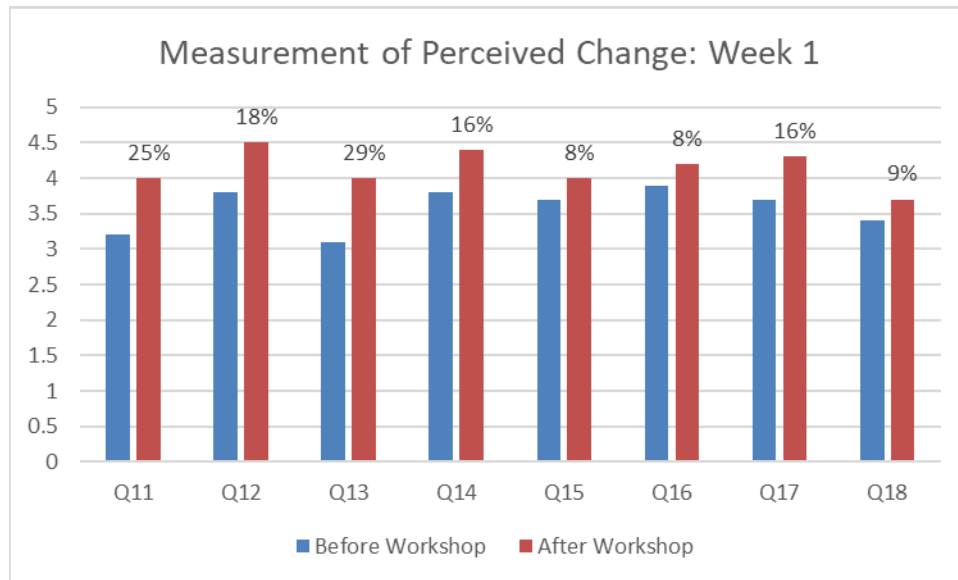
### ***Week 1 Post-Pre Survey Results***

Results for week one post-pre assessment can be viewed in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2, indicating responses and percent change in means per question as follows:

**Table 4.4. Week #1 Responses of Post-Pre Self-Assessments**

Week #1: 10 responses	<u>BEFORE</u> participating in this week's workshop.					Mean	SD	<u>AFTER</u> participating in this week's workshop.					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA			SD	D	N	A	SA		
Q11: I understand how my role models impacted the development of me as a unique person and a social actor.	0	2	5	3	1	3.2	.87	0	1	2	3	4	4	1.0
Q12: I have a clear sense of what I learned from my role models in how they have provided me examples for guiding for my life.	0	2	1	4	3	3.8	1.1	0	0	1	3	6	4.5	.67
Q13: Through imitating my role models, I have developed certain coping attitudes and values and interests in certain activities.	0	3	4	2	1	3.1	.94	0	0	3	4	3	4	.77
Q14: My reason for choosing certain role models helps me understand my ideal self and provides a path to follow in creating my life	0	1	3	3	3	3.8	.98	0	0	1	4	5	4.4	.66
Q15: My ways of adapting to the challenges of living have been influenced by my role models.	0	2	2	3	3	3.7	1.1	0	2	0	4	4	4	1.1
Q16: I have a clear sense of the traits, values, skills, and personal characteristics that are important to me and that help me solve problems.	1	1	0	4	4	3.9	1.3	0	0	2	4	4	4.2	.75
Q17: I understand the resources I have available to me for adapting to the challenges of life.	0	2	3	1	4	3.7	1.2	0	1	0	4	5	4.3	.90
Q18: I have a clear understanding of how to find solutions to problems with decisions around my career plans and that I can overcome hurdles.	0	2	4	2	2	3.4	1.0	0	1	4	2	3	3.7	1.0
<b>Totals</b>	1	15	22	22	21			0	5	13	28	34		
<b>Responses: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neither Agree or Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree</b>														

**Table 4.5. Week #1 Comparison Between Perceptions Before and After Workshop (Percent Change in Mean Per Question)**



Looking at the responses and the percentage change in means together, several observations can be made from the activities of the first week of the program. Notwithstanding the small sample size, on the whole, there is a positive shift in perceived agreement with the statements after the workshop compared to before participating in the workshop. The standard deviations decreased in more sets than they increased after the intervention. This generally suggests that the intervention might have contributed to more consistent responses or reduced variability in participants' answers. Highlights from this week include the following:

- 20% of the before responses were in the “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” categories, compared to 6% after the intervention. The proportion in the “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” categories increased from 53% to 78%.
- 26% of the before responses were in the “Strongly Agree” category, compared to 43% after the intervention was completed.
- The average means for all responses increased by 16% from before to after the workshop. In two instances, the mean increased between by 25% and 29%. Due to the small sample size, no firm conclusion should be made from this increase. More importantly is how this might inform individual interviews and the identification of themes.
- In five out of the eight statements (Q. 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7), the standard deviation was lower after the intervention, suggesting the responses in these sets became less variable and more consistent.

While statistical tests or additional analyses might provide more insights into whether these changes are statistically significant, that was not the purpose of the



exploratory study or this analysis, as described earlier. Additionally, the small sample size and study design do not lend themselves to more sophisticated statistical analysis. In line with the exploratory nature of the study, understanding the reasons for the stated changes requires consideration of the themes generated from the analysis of the individual interviews, which follows in the next section. One way in which these results inform and serve the interview design is in a deeper exploration around the changes in variability of responses and means around the various ways a role model impacted their understanding of themselves, helped guide their lives, impacted their coping attitudes and ways of adapting to change, and contributed to problem solving. Going more deeply into participant experience of this element of the CCI and the remaining questions about adapting and decision-making, it was my hope that participant experience with the dimensions of career adaptability would become clearer.

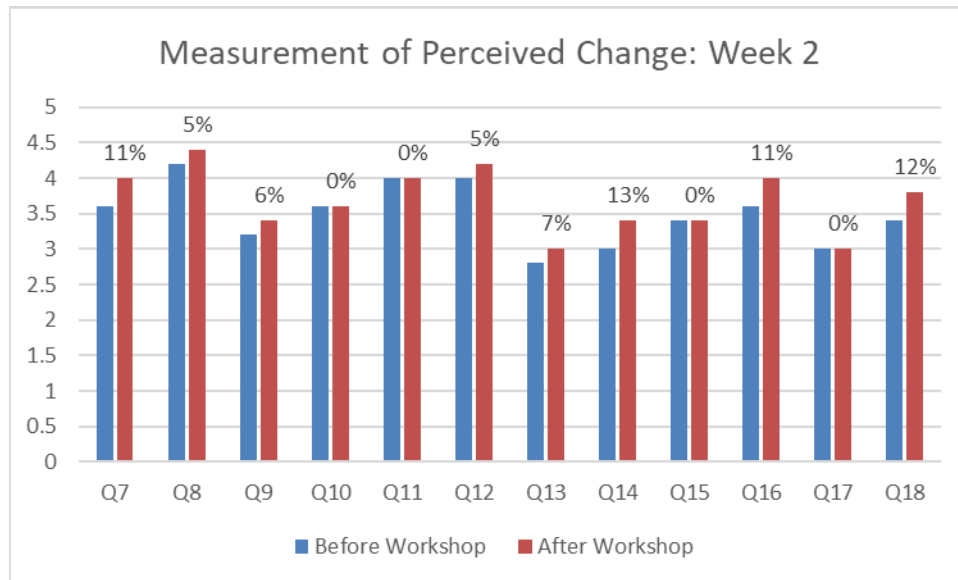
### ***Week 2 Post-Pre Survey Results***

Results for week two post-pre assessment can be viewed in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4, indicating responses and percent change in means per question.

**Table 4.6. Week #2 Responses of Post-Pre Self-Assessments**

Week #2: 5 responses	<u>BEFORE</u> participating in this week's workshop.					Mean	SD	<u>AFTER</u> participating in this week's workshop.					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA			SD	D	N	A	SA		
Q7: My greatest interests are reflected in the material I read or view in my day-to-day life.	0	0	3	1	1	3.6	.80	0	0	2	2	1	4	.75
Q8: The stories contained in what I choose to read or view influence the image I have of myself in my imagined career.	0	0	1	2	2	4.2	.75	0	0	0	3	2	4.4	.49
Q9: My favourite stories contain plots resembling my own preoccupation or life challenge.	1	1	0	2	1	3.2	1.5	1	1	0	1	2	3.4	1.6
Q10: The things I read or view offer a life script for successfully dealing with problems.	0	0	3	1	1	3.6	.80	0	0	3	1	1	3.6	.80
Q11: The things I read or view include characters who represent an ideal self.	0	0	2	1	2	4	.89	0	1	0	2	2	4	1.1
Q12: There is a pattern in my choice of reading material or my viewing habits, which indicate my preferred educational, leisure and future career environments.	0	0	1	3	1	4	.63	0	0	0	4	1	4.2	.40
Q13: The plots in my favourite reading material and movies resemble my own dilemmas.	1	1	1	2	0	2.8	1.2	1	1	1	1	1	3	1.4
Q14: Just like the characters in my favourite books, movies or shows overcome difficulties, I too can overcome difficulties and be an agent of my own career path.	0	2	1	2	0	3	.89	0	1	1	3	0	3.4	.80
Q15: My behaviours, what I say and do, represent clues about my career interests.	0	1	1	3	0	3.4	.80	0	1	2	3	0	3.4	.80
Q16: I pursue what matters to me.	0	1	1	2	1	3.6	1.0	0	1	0	2	2	4.0	1.1
Q17: What I watch or read today predicts my future preferences and behaviour.	0	2	1	2	0	3	.89	0	2	1	2	0	3	.89
Q18: It gives me hope when I see my struggles are reflected in the characters of the storylines I read or watch.	0	1	2	1	1	3.4	1.0	0	1	1	1	2	3.8	1.2
<b>Totals</b>	2	9	17	22	10			2	9	11	25	14		
<b>Responses: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neither Agree or Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree</b>														

**Table 4.7. Week #2 Comparison Between Perceptions Before and After Workshop (Percent Change in Mean Per Question)**



Analyzing the responses and percentage changes in means for week two reveals several key insights, building upon the observations from week one. Overall, there were shifts in perceived agreement with the statements after the workshop, similar to the trends observed in the previous week. Again, the small sample size limits any conclusions from these results other than providing trends to investigate in individual interviews. Moreover, some insights emerge when delving into specific categories and metrics. For this week, a consistent percentage of responses in the "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree" categories was maintained, while there was a substantial increase in the proportion of responses falling into the "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" categories, as represented in the highlights below. Examining individual questions, the increase in the average means indicates a shift in participant agreement with the statements, but beyond that, no firm conclusions should be made. Nonetheless, the intervention appears to have influenced the average responses without significantly impacting the dispersion of data points. As an exploratory endeavour, it is crucial to note that significance was not a predefined measurement, limiting the extent to which conclusive statements can be made regarding the impact of the intervention. More discussion follows in Chapter 5 about whether the results prompt further exploration into the nuanced dynamics between the workshop and participant perceptions. Highlights from this week include the following:

- In this case, the percent of before and after responses in the “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” categories stayed the same. The proportion in the “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” categories increased from 53% to 64% with 35% responses shifting from “Neutral” to “Agree” or “Strongly Agree.”
- 17% of the before responses were in the “Strongly Agree” category, compared to 23% after the intervention was completed.
- The average means for all responses increased by 6% from before to after the workshop. In four instances (Q. 7, 9, 16 and 18), the mean increased by more than 10%.
- In every case, the standard deviation moved very little either way, compared to before and after responses, and in some cases did not move at all. This would suggest the variability or spread of the data points has remained relatively stable across the intervention. Moreover, the intervention may have influenced the average without significantly impacting the spread of data points. Since significance was not an intended measurement, further conclusions cannot be made.

Based on the data provided, there are several interesting points to investigate further in individual interviews. First, around changes in attitudes, it would be helpful to explore why there are shifts in perceptions before and after the workshop. Second, considering that participants might have experienced a change in how the stories they consume influence their self-image and perception of an ideal self, it would be insightful to understand the nature of this impact and the workshop's role in it. Third, asking open-ended questions about the impact of speaking about specific patterns related to career aspirations might be informative. Fourth, exploring similarities revealed between the plots in their favorite material and their own dilemmas might be of value in relation to participant beliefs in overcoming difficulties and taking charge of their career paths. How participants interpret their own actions and whether this self-awareness has practical implications for their career choices represents the fifth possibility of exploration. Finally, digging deeper into how stories gives participants hope and how this hope translates into their motivation and perseverance in pursuing their career goals is of interest.

### ***Week 3 Post-Pre Survey Results***

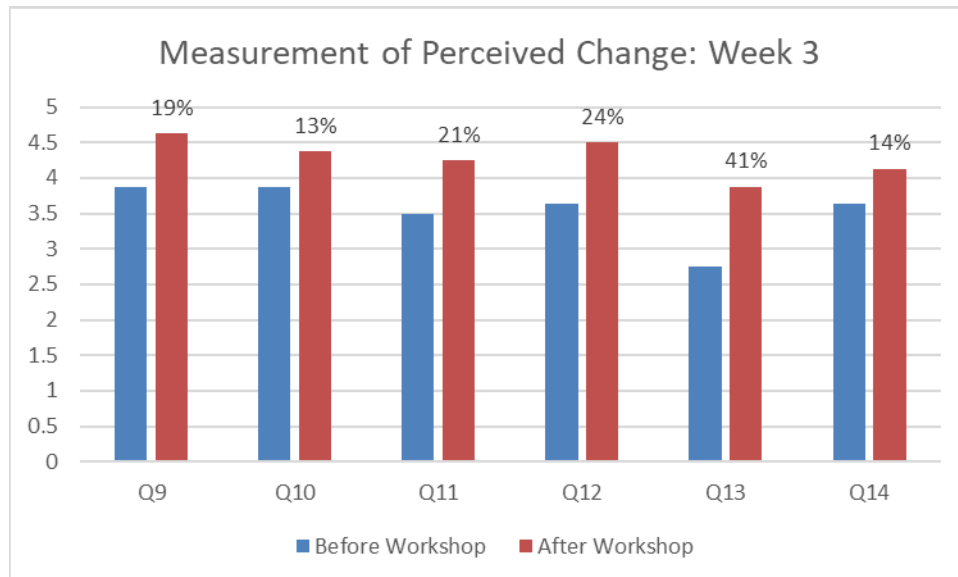
Results for the week three post-pre assessment can be viewed in Table 4.5 and Table 4.6, indicating responses and percent change in means per question.

**Table 4.8. Week #3 Response Frequencies of Post-Pre Self-Assessments**

Week #3: 8 responses	<u>BEFORE</u> participating in this week's workshop.					Mean	SD	<u>AFTER</u> participating in this week's workshop.					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA			SD	D	N	A	SA		
Q9: I have a clear sense of the words I wish to live by.	0	0	3	2	2	3.88	.78	0	0	1	1	6	4.63	.70
Q10: I know what should be done to live a personally satisfying life.	0	1	1	4	2	3.88	.93	0	0	1	3	4	4.38	.70
Q11: My life theme is clear to me.	0	1	2	5	0	3.5	.71	0	0	1	4	3	4.25	.66
Q12: I can translate my experience into a verbal form of practical wisdom that clarifies my world and directs my action.	0	2	0	5	1	3.63	.99	0	0	0	4	4	4.5	.50
Q13: I know how to move to the next episode of my career story.	0	2	6	0	0	2.75	.43	0	1	2	2	3	3.88	1.1
Q14: I have a clear source of advice to myself in propelling me forward in life.	0	1	1	6	0	3.63	.70	0	1	0	4	3	4.13	.93
<b>Totals</b>	0	7	13	22	5			0	2	5	18	23		

**Responses: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neither Agree or Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree**

**Table 4.9. Week #3 Comparison Between Perceptions Before and After Workshop (Percent Change in Mean Per Question)**



Considering the summary and insights of the first two weeks, along with week three data, a comprehensive picture emerges, highlighting the evolving impact of the

intervention on participant responses, bearing in mind a small sample size. Initial observations from week one indicated a positive shift in perceived agreement with statements after the workshop, accompanied by a decrease in standard deviations, suggesting potential contributions to more consistent responses. In week two, this trend persisted, with a notable increase in the proportion of responses falling into the "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" categories and an overall increase in average means. The standard deviations remained relatively stable, pointing toward sustained consistency in participant responses. Week three amplifies these trends, demonstrating the rationale for doing weekly assessments to help reveal the cumulative effect of the intervention. Overall, responses after this week's workshop resulted in lower frequencies in the "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree," a surge in the "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" categories, and a particularly striking increase in the "Strongly Agree" category as represented in the highlights below. In summary, the intervention's positive influence on participant perspectives is evident throughout the weeks, characterized by increased agreement, higher average means, and reduced variability. The cumulative effect of the intervention is underscored by the sustained positive trajectory in participant responses, reflecting a robust and consistent impact on perceptions.

Highlights from this week include the following:

- 15% of the before responses were in the "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree" categories, compared to 4% after the intervention. The proportion in the "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" categories increased from 57% to 85%.
- 11% of the before responses were in the "Strongly Agree" category, compared to 48% after the intervention was completed.
- The average means for all responses increased by 21% from before to after the workshop. In one instance (Q. 13), the mean increased by more than 41%.
- In all but two cases, the standard deviation was lower after the intervention, suggesting that the responses in these sets became less variable and more consistent. In terms of the impact of the intervention, the lower standard deviation might indicate that the impact was consistent across the sample.

As for informing interviews, the data provided this week suggest several areas of interest to explore further in individual interviews. First, responses in multiple questions suggest the value of investigating the ways in which the workshop contributed to changes in participants' clarity, confidence, and self-awareness in terms of their life themes, wisdom, and career direction. During interviews, if participants indicate an improvement in clarity regarding their life theme after the workshop, it might be worth

delving into the specific aspects of the workshop that helped them gain this. I might also explore how participants envision applying the wisdom gained from the workshop to guide their actions and career decisions. Interviews might be an opportunity to further investigate if and how the workshop contributed participants feeling more equipped to guide themselves forward in life. Finally, it might be informative to ask participants to ponder whether and how the workshop provided practical tools or insights around what they see as the next steps and if they experienced any changes in their sense of curiosity, confidence, and personal control in navigating these episodes.

### ***Workshop Series Post-Pre Evaluation Results***

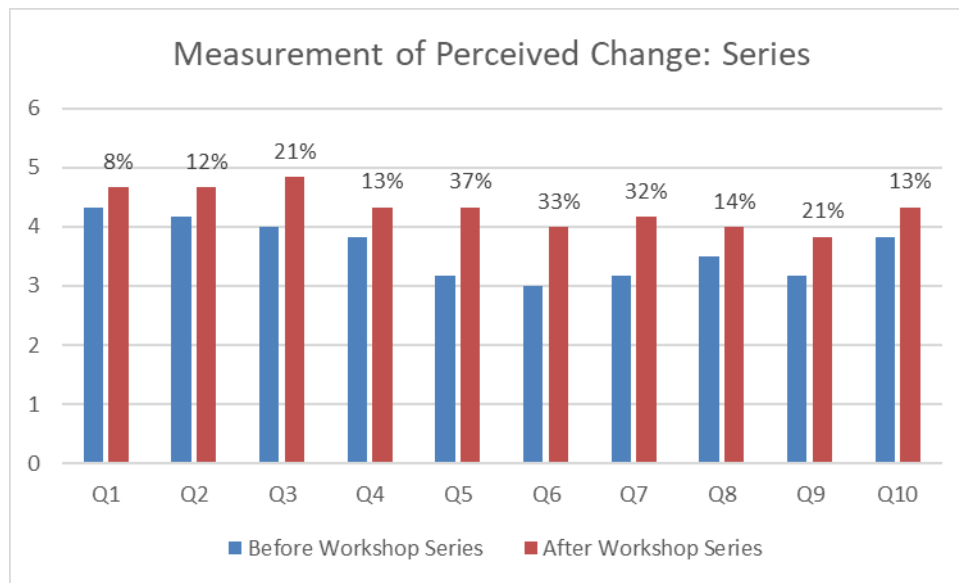
Results for the overall series post-pre assessment can be viewed in Table 4.7 and Table 4.8, indicating responses and percent change in means per question.

**Table 4.10. Series Evaluation of Post-Pre Self-Assessments**

Series Evaluation: 6 Responses	<b>BEFORE</b> participating in the workshop series.					Mean	SD	<b>AFTER</b> participating in the workshop series.					Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA			SD	D	N	A	SA		
	Q1. I am curious about exploring how my knowledge, abilities and interests align with the world of work.	0	0	1	2			3	4.33	.75	0	0		
Q2. I am curious about exploring what my preferred future might look like.	0	0	1	3	2	4.17	.69	0	0	0	2	4	4.67	.47
Q3. I intend to explore my career preferences and consider my past work experiences and preferences when thinking about my desired future options.	0	0	1	4	1	4	.58	0	0	0	1	5	4.83	.37
Q4. Preparing for my future career is important to me, which is why I intend to explore my career preferences and consider my past work experiences and preferences.	0	1	1	2	2	3.83	1.1	0	1	0	1	4	4.33	1.1
Q5. I am confident in my ability to solve career problems & overcome obstacles.	0	2	2	1	1	3.17	1.1	0	0	0	4	2	4.33	.47
Q6. I am confident in my ability to pursue my career aspirations.	0	1	4	1	0	3	.58	0	0	1	4	1	4	.58
Q7. I am confident in my ability to make career decisions and transitions.	0	1	3	2	0	3.17	.69	0	0	1	3	2	4.17	.69
Q8. I have a sense of personal control and personal responsibility for planning my career path.	0	1	1	4	0	3.5	.76	0	1	1	1	3	4	1.2
Q9. I have a sense of personal control and personal responsibility for taking intentional and deliberate action towards my desired career and work future.	0	1	3	2	0	3.17	.69	0	1	1	2	2	3.83	1.1
Q10. I have a sense of personal control and personal responsibility for taking charge when faced with career-related decisions and challenges.	0	1	0	4	1	3.6	.90	0	0	0	4	2	4.33	.47
<b>Totals</b>	0	8	17	25	10			0	3	4	24	29		
<b>Responses: SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neither Agree or Disagree, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree</b>														



**Table 4.11. Series Evaluation Comparison Between Perceptions Before and After Workshop (Percent Change in Mean Per Question)**



The final evaluation of the series reveals a comprehensive and positive trajectory in participant perceptions and indicates that career adaptability competencies may have been positively impacted. The highlights from the series evaluation underscore significant shifts in response frequencies and average means, indicating a cumulative impact of the intervention. Notably, the proportion in the "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" categories increased significantly and there was a substantial increase in the "Strongly Agree" category, as reflected in the highlights below. Moreover, there were sizeable increases in average means, highlighting pronounced positive shifts in participant perspectives. In terms of standard deviations, in every case, they moved very little compared to before and after responses, indicating stability. The consistent standard deviation in the final evaluation suggests that the movement in a positive direction in every single item was a sentiment expressed by most participants.

Based on participant responses to the series evaluation, the intervention's apparent positive impact on career adaptability competencies is worth exploring further through interview questions, in the areas of confidence, curiosity, concern, and control. Positive shifts in confidence are evident across various dimensions, which does not necessarily represent significant findings, but does showcase in these participants

increased self-assuredness in problem-solving, pursuing aspirations, making decisions, and taking charge of one's career path. Additionally, there is a clear indication of heightened curiosity and intentional exploration of career preferences.

Highlights from the series evaluation include the following:

- 13% of the before responses were in the “Strongly Disagree” or “Disagree” categories, compared to 5% after the intervention. The proportion in the “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” categories increased from 58% to 88%.
- 17% of the before responses were in the “Strongly Agree” category, compared to 48% after the intervention was completed.
- The average means for all responses increased by 20% from before to after the workshop. In three instances, the mean increased between 32% and 37%.
- In every case, the standard deviation moved very little either way between before and after responses, and in some cases did not move at all. As the final evaluation, assessing the impact of the overall series on career adaptability dimensions, the consistent standard deviation might indicate that the movement in positive direction was a sentiment expressed by most participants.

In conclusion, the series evaluation supports the value of digging deeper into the apparent positive impact of the intervention on participant perceptions and career adaptability competencies. Individual interviews stand as a valuable next step to capture qualitative insights, providing a deeper understanding of participant experiences and potential areas for further enhancement. As anticipated, individual interviews can offer deeper insights, which might shed light not just on whether the workshops impacted participants, but how and in what ways. In addition to factors generated by the previous weeks' results, interviews can explore the results contributing to increased confidence, participants' intentions regarding leveraging curiosity in exploring career preferences, and their sense of personal control and responsibility in planning, taking intentional action, and facing career-related challenges. Through reflexive thematic analysis of interviews, reviewed in the next section, the highlights of the preceding data analysis are transformed into overarching themes that together represent the final assessment of the impact of this intervention on my original research questions.

Before moving on, readers should be cautioned that further investigating this data would benefit from a larger sample to see if there were significant pre and post differences, as is reviewed in my chapter interpreting findings and identifying implications for practice and future research. Great caution should be exercised about

any interpretations from the survey results due to the small data pool. Moving from quantitative to qualitative data, my intention was to investigate the trends in the data and to discover the degree to which they might be verified or further developed and illuminated through the interviews.

### **4.2.3. Development of Interviews**

Prior to reviewing core themes developed through individual interviews, it is worth summarizing the ways in which the data analysis in my study provided valuable insights that explicitly informed the design and focus of the interview questions and areas for probing. The following overview highlights how specific results from the data analysis influenced the interview questions and themes, ensuring a thorough exploration of key areas. The data analysis explicitly informed the interviews by highlighting key areas that needed deeper exploration to understand participants' experiences and the impact of the workshop. The interviews aimed to learn more about how personal narratives contribute to developing adaptability, the benefits of presenting versus writing about their roles, and the transferability of public speaking skills to other domains. They also sought to identify which workshop activities boosted confidence and their broader applicability, as well as how personal mottos align with life goals and values. Additionally, the interviews explored the influence of role models on self-understanding and coping strategies, shifts in attitudes pre- and post-workshop, and the impact of consumed stories on self-image and career aspirations. Other areas of focus included participants' self-awareness and its practical implications for career choices, the motivational role of storytelling, and how the workshop enhanced clarity, confidence, and self-awareness. For a full list of interview questions and probes, see Appendix E. By investigating these aspects, the interviews aimed to shed light on the workshop's effectiveness in providing practical tools and insights for navigating career challenges and planning intentional actions.

## **4.3. Results of Individual Interviews**

As described in detail in the methodology chapter, the individual interviews were designed and delivered as semi-structured interviews, which offer advantages such as striking a balance between the researcher's and participant's interests, providing

flexibility for the interviewer to address emerging topics, being adaptable and responsive to context, and accommodating individual participant needs and preferences (Nathan et al., 2019). Most importantly, they allow interviewees to explore and reflect on their experience. Guided by reflexive thematic analysis using a combined approach of deductive and inductive analysis, outlined in detail in my data analysis section, I will describe below my development of themes. It should be noted, to be transparent, that although my primary lens of analysis was of an inductive nature, I generated codes and data through a deductive filter, which mapped the data to career adaptability competencies that were of interest to me. In my view, this filter contributed to answering my research questions and still allowed for participant voices and unanticipated codes and themes. This approach is in line with semi-structured interviews, which as noted earlier, include the balance between the researcher's and participant's interests. By combining inductive and deductive analysis I was able to understand the data in relation to the existing literature, explore how and where the theoretical framework might explain the data and where it did not, which contributed to the discussion and implications.

After becoming familiar with the data, initial codes were generated without restriction, which in this case, produced 74 codes. At this initial stage, I labeled all segments of interest and relevance and ignored segments of transcriptions that had no relevance to the research questions (see Appendix F for a list of initial codes). During the next stage, constructing themes, I set about telling a story about the data while staying oriented to the research questions. By identifying bigger and more meaningful patterns across a range of different codes, I combined some codes and collapsed other codes into larger themes, while discarding other codes that no longer fit into the story I was trying to tell. The outcome of this step was a reorganization and clustering of codes into a preliminary codebook containing eight themes that fit under the four research questions and 33 codes that fit into the themes. Upon further analysis of this codebook, there was room for further amalgamation where there wasn't enough nuance to justify distinct codes. These combinations aimed to streamline the codes based on their shared meanings within the broader context of each theme. This analysis resulted in a final codebook containing seven themes and 24 codes (see Appendix G for a complete list). Figure 4.4 presents a visual representation of the relationship between the research questions, the core themes, and the respective codes.

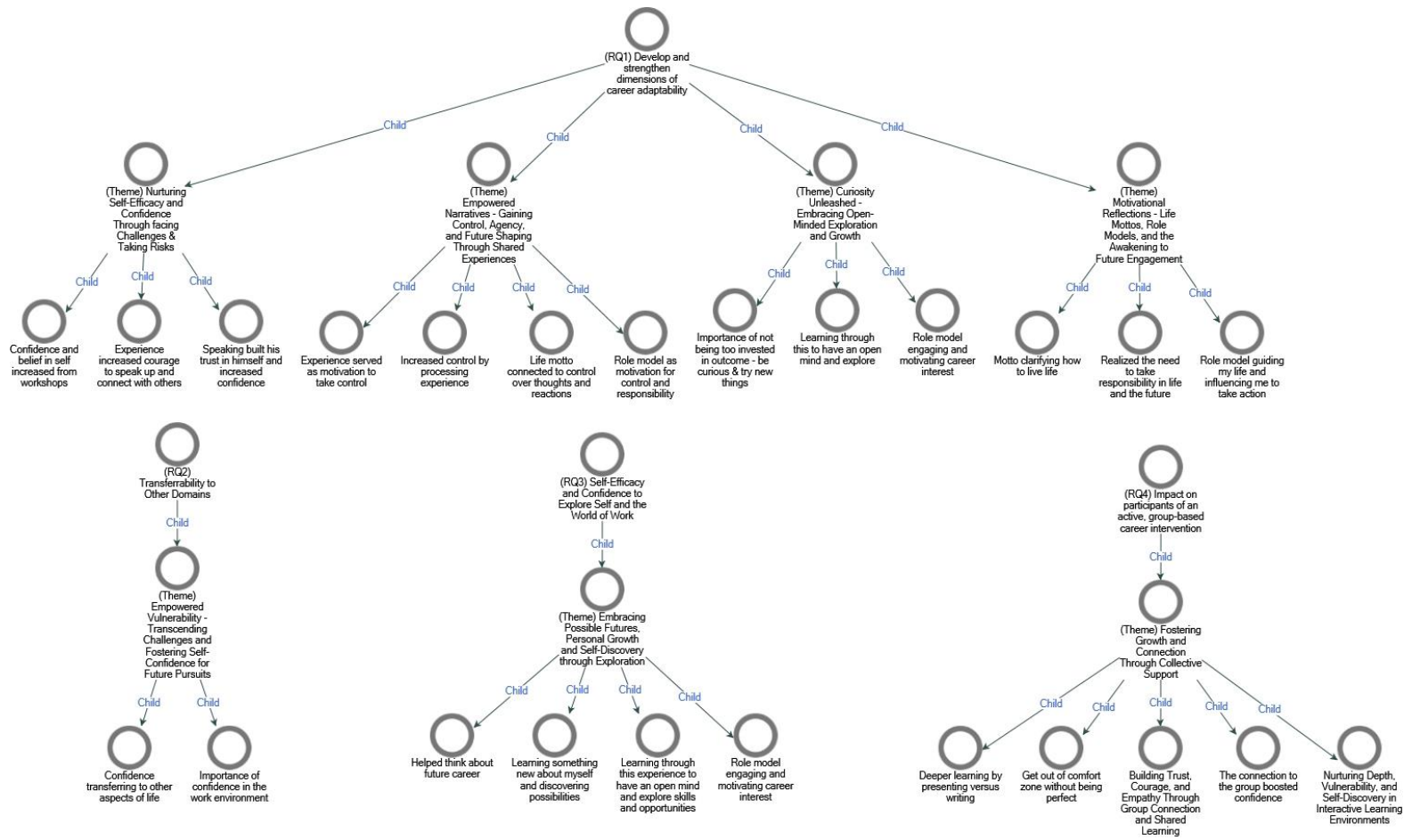


Figure 4.1. Project Map of Final Themes and Codes

### 4.3.1. Alignment of Themes to Research Questions

This section seeks to delineate the themes generated from the thematic analysis of interviews by presenting relevant excerpts from the interviews and exploring how these themes align with the research questions, all within the context of the methodological approach and survey findings.

#### ***Themes Aligned with Career Adaptability (RQ1)***

Based on my curiosity about whether a series of public speaking workshops, built upon active learning and elements of the career construction interview, might help students develop and strengthen dimensions of career adaptability, four themes were generated from my interview analysis.

#### **Theme 1: Nurturing Self-Efficacy and Confidence Through facing Challenges & Taking Risks**

This theme, represented by six of the eight participants, centres around the commonly expressed way in which the workshops served as an opportunity to experience a sense of self-efficacy or confidence. Participants voiced their experience around coping with challenges and setbacks in the process, taking risks and believing in their own abilities. Within this theme, participants discussed the positive impact of their involvement in the public speaking workshop series on their confidence and a revitalized belief in their abilities. In some cases, participants clearly expressed a transformation in their confidence and belief in themselves, compared to before the workshops:

I'm like I was like when I when I came on the stage kind of a stage like when I went for the presentation, it was like I owned the space. Earlier I wasn't that confident, but like after doing this exercise I was like I was a straight as a poster and like I think I got a confidence after that. Like I was relaxed and I was not that much nervous after that. I was nervous, but it was like not that much, not at that level.  
(Ajay)

As discussed earlier, adaptability and the resources that support it are considered psychosocial, in the way they exist and manifest within the person in an environment. Considering the psychosocial space in which students experienced the workshop series, Ajay represents the interplay between the person and the environment:

So I realize that there's quite [a lot] I can use like I can say that if I love myself, if I respect myself, I can get in confidence. Like whenever I'm in front of anyone, I can

...speak and I trust in my values, and I can have my own rules, so basically it makes me feel more confident.

An important aspect of developing confidence, or self-efficacy, is to act on and pursue one's aspirations (Savickas, 2013). Alycia's comments about her experience in the workshops seem to indicate these outcomes, in this case to acquire the ability to speak up:

So it kind of like opened up, I guess space like instead of like being like uncomfortable while speaking to people, just knowing that you can like you know, kind of like stand up and if you say it, it'll have a greater impact and also like help you stay in that environment.

For these participants, and others, the intervention provided them an opportunity to experience confidence and to take personal risks in the process. In the discussion that follows on the transferability of these skills to other domains, these experiences will be revisited around the ways participants might gain from this experience that go beyond the workshop.

## **Theme 2: Empowered Narratives: Gaining Control, Agency, and Future Shaping Through Shared Experiences**

Representing the next dimension of career adaptability, control, this theme was generated through participant expressions of agency and control gained through the experience of processing the presentation topics, by speaking about them and by witnessing the courage of their peers. Implicit in these data excerpts was a heightened sense of control and belief that they have the power to shape their futures and to not be limited by external factors beyond their control. While excerpts connected to this theme came at various points during the interview, the main question around control asked participants about their willingness and interest in taking greater responsibility for their future, based on participating in the workshops, speaking about the topics, and learning from their peers. A particularly interesting reflection came from Sarah:

Totally, it totally does. And you know, it's not more, it's not the focus about having control; it's the focus about remembering that we have very little control, what but what we can control is our thoughts and how we react to situations and how we see how we see and perceive things, because that's all a decision and choice.

In this case, Sarah demonstrates that through the experience of stepping into the public speaking space, and reflecting on it, she recognizes that control comes not just in the sense of *having* control, but by the thoughts and ways one reacts to a situation. In the

way career transitions involve choice and decision making, perhaps the experience of the workshops helped remind her of the value of practice in gaining a sense of control.

Through the interviews, which served as a form of reflection for many of the students, it became apparent that the sense of control came from an elevation in personal agency. Without saying this directly, Nanda certainly seems to indicate this:

I feel like, yeah, after the workshop, I definitely feel more like I can be persuasive, I can have like a leadership role I don't need to be like I guess just the follower all the time. Like I can like, you know, kind of step up a little bit.

Related to agency was the way some participants connected the learning in the workshop to aspects outside of school by experiencing being out of their head, as Sarah expressed:

So it reminded me that there are things that I can do and connections I can make that are unrelated to school. And that helps me feel like I have more control because because it gets me out of my head.

Although it may represent an incremental step, it is safe to say her sense of agency shifted as a result of the workshop series.

### **Theme 3: Curiosity Unleashed: Embracing Open-Minded Exploration and Growth**

This theme, representing the career adaptability dimension of curiosity, was generated from repeated expressions relating to the importance of being open minded, to not limit themselves, and to not be invested in the outcome. Participants saw the value of being curious to explore where they came from, to assess where they were at, and to be curious about and explore new experiences. As mentioned earlier, a person displaying curiosity is believed to have tolerance for anxiety and uncertainty, among other qualities. This tolerance, represented by a willingness to step into the arena of public speaking, was expressed by the majority of the participants.

Exploring it, experimenting. Just means to me being I guess open minded, like trying different things - don't have a narrow set path. If you have the opportunity and the time, definitely try to branch out and try, like see what else is out there you might like it more cause at the end of the day, um like you have one life so you might as well try different courses for example like right now at this stage.  
(Chandra)

To me, this excerpt from Chandra represents the role curiosity plays in the development of an exploratory mindset, a wide lens useful for inevitable transitions, and a willingness to try new things. In a way, this reflection represents for this student an opportunity to



see first-hand the benefits of taking action, but also the impact of the topics she explored through the themes of the workshop.

Because I was analyzing the interviews for both semantic and latent meaning, student-shared experiences represented not only dimensions of adaptability, but also connections to deeper learning through the experience. For instance, the following excerpt from Hassan, where he expresses his discovery over the three weeks that only by not being invested in the outcome could he fully benefit from the experience, seems to represent the relationship between openness and mindfulness and a heightened sense of curiosity. I can't help but ponder if just recognizing this, through reflecting on the experience, may transform his curiosity to try new things and thus open doors that may otherwise never be seen.

Because if I'm investing in the outcome, then I'm just thinking about that and I'm missing out on so many different possibilities and more beautiful things that I could miss out on and I don't want to just shut the doors. (Hassan)

What also strikes me in this theme is the way, in speaking about role models, how many participants ended up seeing the experience as a portal to a realization that the path that they might have seen as narrow might actually be a pathway to greater curiosity and exploration, as this excerpt demonstrates:

So this actually does add into the explore and experiment just thinking about that. Like my parents, they didn't have a lot of opportunities growing up. So me being able like being able to explore those opportunities now and like since I have the opportunity to go out and try different things, I should really take hold of that. So this actually helps me realize that yeah, I don't have to be set on that narrow path and just choose one thing I'm like. I have, like, the opportunity to explore in a way I guess so. Yeah, just like. (Chandra)

#### **Theme 4: Motivational Reflections: Life Mottos, Role Models, and the Awakening to Future Engagement**

This theme was generated from the way participants viewed the process as a way of reflecting on the value of their life motto and role models in motivating them to be intentional about their decisions. Beyond the semantic, the latent messages in this theme center around the “wake-up call” or “awakening” leading to the feeling of concern about being actively involved in their futures. Also apparent in this theme is the concept of resilience and the need to stay engaged and not be complacent. In the following excerpt, Sarah refers to her realization, through participating in the workshops, that a sense of concern could be elevated and that our experiences don't have to be limiting,

that there are always options. In times of uncertainty and continual change, it would seem critical that this heightened sense of concern would enhance adaptability.

And there is there's only so much time for everything. And it reminded me that I can still do things on the sides, such as workshops and classes of that sort, even while I'm in school, and I can still learn other skills that are not related to business, even when I'm in school, because sometimes it can feel too busy or too limiting or like you know this is all I need to or I can focus on right.

Through her reflection, Sarah refers to the way in which speaking about her favourite quote reminded her how having a sense of concern over her emotions and thoughts comforts her in moments of change and transition.

Talking about it made me feel so great because it reminded me that I mean that quote and that way of thinking of, you know, if something doesn't add up, it's for a reason it's and it's OK and just because a path that you thought was yours doesn't work out doesn't mean that everything is over. It just means that it's a redirection, it's going somewhere else and that way of thinking makes me feel so in control of my thoughts and my emotions, and it makes me worry less about life and it is a safe place for me.

In her reflection, Kyla realized that by reflecting more deeply on her role model, she began to become more concerned about her own aspirations, and her need to apply herself and takes risks like this workshop, thereby indicating an important learning outcome of the module.

So I spoke about Michelle Obama, and that's something that I do, I do look up to her as a role model in the way she does have an impact on my career choices because she was a lawyer as well, and that's something I aspire to be. And so seeing her. And actually the way she speaks is something as I, wow, like if I work on myself, I can eventually speak like her as well or like, do the things she does. So having a role model like that in a career that I actually want to be in as well, I feel like that's quite influential.

Through the use of narrative and receiving peer feedback, participants also communicated the unexpected impact of learning not only the benefits of sharing their stories, but also the way in which this acted as a motivational force, as represented by this excerpt from Kyla:

It was like actually a like kind of a punch in the face for me and like to like to, yeah, for to take greater responsibility in my like, life choices and future in a way because yeah, like taking feedback in and stuff like oh wow, there's actually a lot of things I would work on myself so. It was. It was quite impactful for me that actually reflect and think like, OK, I have things to work on. Actually I need to get those things started.

Another discovery made in the interviews around the career adaptability dimension of concern, and its impact on future engagement, is the benefit for participants of the group process. It was the presentation of personal narratives that

allowed participants to go deeper into their own journeys, but also hearing other stories that motivated them to take stock of their own responsibilities.

It really helped me see how just being able to sit with everyone who participated in the workshop, how everyone had different challenges in their life and how they held themselves up and made you see that every single person in the room is responsible for their own destiny at the like at the end of the day. (Chandra)

There were times in many of the interviews where participants would say things that represented all four dimensions of career adaptability, such as the following excerpt from Alycia. Though it is not a long excerpt, by exploring and speaking about her role model, she communicates the sense of confidence, curiosity, control, and concern she gained from this role model. In providing her an opportunity to see this for herself, by sharing a personal story with an audience of peers and later reflecting on it, this data represents a major finding in this study.

Oh yeah, my role model is my teacher. She always helped me when I face in the when I first come to Canada, she helped me face difficulties and always encourage me to do anything I'm scared to do things. And she is always patient. She influenced me because, because of she helped me so much so that I can, so I'm. I'm also interested in that.

### ***Themes Aligned with the Transferability of Career Adaptability to other Domains (RQ2)***

The main element of this theme and research question, knowing that participants spoke of the ways in which elements of career adaptability were tapped through participation in the workshops, is the degree to which the experience made an imprint on participants and whether participants foresaw the outcomes transferring to other dimensions of their lives now and in the future. As we discovered earlier in the literature review, there is a growing base of research showing that self-efficacy or confidence transfers between domains, making the following theme even more meaningful in the way it contributes to the value of the intervention.

### **Theme 5: Empowered Vulnerability: Transcending Challenges and Fostering Self-Confidence for Future Pursuits**

This theme demonstrates the view of participants that, because of the safety and comfort created by this positive experience, there was a general feeling that the resulting self-confidence would likely transfer to other spaces, including pursuing career. Central to this theme is the opportunity to be vulnerable and to face a difficulty, allowing them to

apply this immediately and in the future. In a way, it would appear that the workshop series, for many participants, scaffolds onto other experiences that might also contribute to adaptability, which together serve to transfer competencies to multiple domains, such as interpersonal interactions in various social situations, speaking in a classroom setting, and the workplace, as reflected when Chandra talked about her self-confidence:

It really did work because you felt more safe and comfortable being able to interact with others, and then you could, if you apply that you can easily apply that outside of the workshop to everyday life and just, you know, like they're using the techniques even if it's not for as speech like you do in front of an audience you can still apply that when. I guess like making friends outside in the real world and your job.

In another excerpt, Chandra expands on the long-term benefits she anticipates this experience providing for her:

And, this is exactly the thing like if you try something new or something that you're a little uncertain about, you might enjoy it and it might be good, so, being able to apply this, I'll be more confident exploring and experimenting for something else to do, like for example another workshop and other course. Or later on in my future, like with a career. Because this experience was, it was really positive.

Because transition and change can be difficult for many people, it is safe to assume that any experience of facing vulnerability might improve one's ability to adapt in the future. In Alycia's reflection, she expresses her realization that she needs experiences like the workshops to practice facing difficulty and that this is what might transfer to other domains:

I think it's very important actually, people need using communicate. Because, you know, I'm an international student, so language is also my biggest difficult because English is my second language. And I also need to overcome it. So the I think the languages I need to face the difficulty.

While the literature refers to the spaces that adaptability competencies might transfer to as domains, to Hassan, these spaces are referred to as "other rooms." For him, the room represented by the workshop series, and the safety provided, allowed him to be that vulnerable person and to gain the confidence to be that person in other rooms.

The room's like, that public speaking room allows you to be vulnerable and they're so supportive of you actually facing your fear or like going for it, that it gives you, like, hey, I think. There are other rooms that would allow me to be this guy.

In applying the learning from these workshops to other spaces, I was surprised how quickly this occurred for some of the participants, as Nanda expresses:

I feel like as it is right now like it had like a really like immediate impact like even in my business 217 class and group discussions, I've started speaking up a lot more like taking up space again. I feel like it's like kind of, now my everyday interactions are so much more different.

It is clear, in the subsequent statement, that Nanda has gained a deeply felt confidence that might serve her when adaptability is needed during times of transition:

So I feel like even in the future, whether it be like, even with my manager at work, instead of being scared or saying I'm sorry or like kind of downplaying myself in the beginning of a conversation. So I kind of just learned not to I guess belittle myself and like the beginning of a conversation and be confident what I'm saying, and I think I've started applying that to like everything now, no.

As an intervention promoted to provide participants with the skills of public speaking and career planning, numerous participants felt the career element to be lacking. While this may not have been as implicit as it could have been, the interviews proved, time and time again, that the competencies of career adaptability were not only positively impacted through presenting, but the elevated motivation, through heightened concern and control, and self-confidence, would contribute to their willingness to pursue a career of interest. In other words, as Nanda communicates, competencies that would benefit her career development were in fact delivered and received through the intervention.

I feel like it definitely did lack the career aspect, but I feel like it definitely motivates you more and your career gives you more confidence to, I guess, pursue your career because I was so skeptical. I wasn't sure if I had like, you know, like the skills to be to go into investment banking, but after this I definitely feel I can do it like it, I just have to kind of speak up a little bit more and be confident.

In terms of skills that might align with the competencies of career adaptability, as demonstrated by participants, relates to the recognition of numerous participants of the need for communication skills, transferrable to so many domains and an essential component of demonstrating one's adaptability.

I mean, I believe not everyone are speaker in the future, but you will definitely need to communicate no matter if you are our colleague or manager or friends. So after the workshop, you will be, cause for my case I do have a lot of idea, often me, but sometimes hard to organize it and then present it or delivered a message to other so after the workshop, I am able to receive more feedback from instructor and also for peers regarding for organizing the message into one and are able to create the structure to while presenting to the others. So I think that will be the most beneficial point for myself. (Jay)

While there were many examples of the transferability of adaptability, especially self-confidence, this excerpt from Jay nicely summarizes the way in which the workshops seemed to be a springboard for future risk-taking, continued growth, and a positive impact on career development:

Uh, link to the confident you build up in the workshop, so it will eliminate your overthinking perspective, so it allows you to push yourself to continue to pursue whatever dream you like in the future, and also will be build up a great confidence when you have the interview with the interviewer.

### ***Themes Aligned with Self-Efficacy and Confidence to Explore Self and the World of Work (RQ3)***

The theme generated in this case is centred around my curiosity about how the workshop series impacted participants' perception of their sense of self-efficacy and confidence to explore themselves and the world of work and their preferred futures.

#### **Theme 6: Embracing Possible Futures, Personal Growth and Self-Discovery through Exploration**

This theme highlights the importance of exploration, experimentation, and open-mindedness in various aspects of life, particularly in career choices and personal growth. The extracts emphasize the value of stepping outside of one's comfort zone, being open to new experiences, and embracing the opportunities for learning and self-discovery. The theme also touches upon the realization that mistakes and setbacks are part of the learning process and should be viewed as opportunities for growth.

During Sarah's interview, it became clear to her that through experiential learning such as these workshops, approaching career is a mindset requiring an openness and willingness to explore.

Rejection is redirection, right just because you know it's not, I don't know how to explain it, but career wise, um, it helps me stress less, you know. Or maybe I realize that I love and that, you know, you learn something from everything, even. Yeah, even the bad things. Um so yeah, I feel like that kind of explains the career-wise like.

To me, it was interesting that she realized she learns from things she tries, gains confidence and adaptability, followed by more trying and learning, in a continuous cycle. Someone with this mindset might even be better at adjusting because of their experience being open to whatever comes, seeing rejection, or unwelcome change, simply as redirection.

In many of the interviews, it was interesting to me that even in cases where the workshops revealed insecurities to participants, this contrasts to the alternative of not knowing what they don't know. Kyla's realization that she needs to work on her confidence demonstrates the lessons in risk-taking and that before she can improve, she needs to know there is an issue. So, perhaps this experience of self-discovery may reveal possibilities to her and represent practice getting out of her comfort zone, which manifests in applying adaptability to other domains.

I feel like after this workshop and the impact that they had on my confidence, I feel like I feel more insecure about it. Because now knowing that, ok, I have these factors inside of me, I need to work on these things. But now I'm like, OK, if I stand in front of a group, I will notice these things even more now.

Another interesting discovery expressed during the interviews was the way the post-pre surveys served as a reflective practice. In Chandra's case, the survey reminded her how the experience of the workshops helped her begin to explore her interests and future possibilities, which may also indicate that dimensions of career adaptability were tapped in the process.

When we're going through the survey questions, I realized, oh, this does help me think about what I would like in the future in terms of careers and, yeah.

In terms of each week's speaking topics, there is evidence that the speaking prompts along with the act of speaking served as a source of discovery for participants. For example, the following excerpt from Chandra illustrates the way she connected her motto around acknowledging roots and her past, and how this tapped into curiosity and control in the form of exploring and experimenting. By realizing she doesn't have to choose a narrow path, like her parents did, her adaptability might allow her to try different things.

So this actually does add into the explore and experiment just thinking about that. Like my parents, they didn't have a lot of opportunities growing up. So me being able like being able to explore those opportunities now and like since I have the opportunity to go out and try different things, I should really take hold of that. So this actually helps me realize that yeah, I don't have to be set on that narrow path and just choose one thing I'm like. I have, like, the opportunity to explore in a way I guess so. Yeah, just like.

As previously discussed, a central element of the career construction interview is that the stories are told not for the listener, but for the speaker. In Hassan's interview, he demonstrates this in the way he connects to his emotions simply by speaking his own story. Around the theme of generating the confidence to begin exploring the self and its relation to the world of work, this discovery might potentially serve as a transformational experience for Hassan.

I mean, it taught me something about myself that, you know, when everything is so scientific or very businesslike, very formal, I'm quite comfortable. I'm quite comfortable, you know, because my confidence is based on how much I know about this topic and the more I study, the more confident I am and the better I do in the presentation. But when it comes to feelings and you know, because I believe one of the things I was lacking before this was trying to communicate with the crowd, you know, like, I'm not comfortable telling joke. I'm not really comfortable talking about my personal life...Because I walked into this for the experience and being good at public speaking, but I feel it taught me so much more.

As Hassan processed and reflected on the experience, he concludes his realization that, through his courage to participate and hear his own story, prompted by the topics, possibilities open up to him.

And for me to explore, maybe there is something I don't know about myself. Maybe I have to experience put myself in this situation. For them to teach me something I didn't even know about myself. But now coming out of it, I feel that was something that I got away from it is that maybe I'm, just there are other skills and opportunities that I can explore to be a well-rounded businessman in the future.

Something I hadn't expected from participants was the transformational impact on their mindset towards learning. For instance, in Nanda's interview, she demonstrates a renewed understanding of the importance of learning for learning as opposed to the tangible outcome such as a certificate. What this tells me is that adaptability may come from experiences of risk, vulnerability, and learning about ourselves. Over time, it is through these experiences that a person develops the dimensions of adaptability that serves one in times of inevitable change.

But as for that, like I've already registered for three other programs and like, ever since I kind of transferred over, I've been trying to, like, get into different things. But just now I go in with the mindset that I'm going to learn so much rather than just the certificate or like you know, what I'm going to get from it.

#### ***Themes Aligned with the Impact of an Active, Group-based Career Intervention (RQ4)***

If it is true, as Dewey said, that one's reflection on learning is as important as the learning experience, interviews with participants would serve as a reflective practice and contribute to an understanding of the impact on participants of an active, group-based career intervention relative to other individual-based modalities, such as writing or 1-to-1 counselling. Also, it was my hope that interviews would help identify the ways this active learning intervention "involves the active construction of meaning by the learner" (Michael, 2006, p. 160). Finally, given the benefits of group-based learning, outlined in the literature review, I was curious how participants might have experienced this and what themes might indicate this.

#### **Theme 7: Fostering Growth and Connection Through Collective Support**

This theme, represented in all eight interviews, combines the transformative power of a supportive group in a workshop format with the value of sharing personal experiences. It emphasizes embracing challenges, delivering emotionally charged



presentations, and recognizing the impact of peer feedback. Ultimately, it highlights how collective support boosts confidence, facilitates personal growth, and makes a meaningful difference in facing challenges.

Although Sarah's reflection does not elude directly to speaking versus writing, she does seem to refer to the impact of a personal narrative spoken to a group, learning from others, perspective-taking, and the impact on both the speaker and the listener.

I think we talked about this in our session that there's a when someone starts talking about a role model or something that's important to them, it really does change. You can see the energy and the behavior and people's eyes light up and it makes a difference when someone's talking about something that they're truly connected with. And you learn from each other. You learn things and you see other people's learning experiences and learning curves that you wouldn't have otherwise seen. Right, because I think we get caught up in ourselves and what we do and our thinking and everything.

Similar to Sarah's sentiment, but more directly responding to the impact of speaking compared to writing, Chandra makes an interesting comment about the way both preparation and presenting to a group made the experience more meaningful and impactful.

Because this way, like on top of doing that, you kind of combine everything, the writing and speaking, but it's also more. More memorable. Guess it will stick with you more so. And since you are sharing it with a group of people, you're you're putting more effort in it.

One aspect that came up repeatedly during interviews, and contributed to the development of this theme, was the impact of watching others face adversity, share personal stories, make mistakes, and gain confidence. In terms of connection and growth from collective support, Alycia's reflection fits into this theme and demonstrates how the experience let her witness growth of control and confidence that might inspire her going forward.

I think they are they are always more confident than me because they are more louder, but I'm not, my sound is not like so louder, but they can louder and the confidence saying their story. And even though they are, like forgetting their words and feel some awkward, but they still can continue to their speaking. So I think they very impact me.

In a similar way, Hassan demonstrates the power of a group format for facing their fears together and by taking risks, gaining confidence, and a sense of control that comes from the support of a group.

I would say is that you're not alone in this. You know you're experiencing something. Everybody else is as nervous. Everybody else is as clueless and everybody else is as courageous. So it's, and it's very surprising after three sessions. I mean, I was involved in two of them. I didn't know anybody in that class, but by the end we were talking like we've known each other for weeks.

Recognizing the impact of the group format of this intervention, it appeared there was a common thread and a repeatedly expressed theme of gaining strength through struggling together. In terms of adaptability, there would seem to be something about this active, shared experience that revealed to participants a possible approach when facing adversity in their careers, as Nanda expresses.

Like everybody's kind of similar in away but like so different, like everyone's kind of struggling with the same thing, but just in the kind of different way if that.

Returning to the view that active learning “involves the active construction of meaning by the learner,” as noted, the words of Nanda provide evidence of this perspective and clearly indicate the effectiveness of this intervention as a meaning-making practice. In her experience, there was something about presenting to an audience that represented a higher level of meaning than the act of writing.

There's definitely a difference. When you're, I guess, just writing it down, you just kind of are trying to like I guess, fill in words, you're not actually, there's not that much meaning into it I guess as much as it when you're like presenting in front of people... It's a lot more, I guess, not emotional, but like personal when you're saying it in front of people versus writing it down, if that makes sense.

As a group-based intervention, I was interested in the impact on dimensions of career adaptability, but also the ways that this might be processed by participants. Since the surveys were not really designed to accomplish this goal, the interviews represented a more suitable approach. For example, at one point in his interview, Jay refers to the benefits of immediate peer support and feedback, possibly providing a greater level of insight than delayed assessment.

I think will be very helpful, such as will be very helpful if you get feedback right after the presentation. So I'm very satisfied with my peers to give me the feedback right away, or we'll be having a. It would be very helpful, but compared with you having an interview but you have to wait for a week to get feedback from.

#### **4.4. Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented an analysis of post-workshop surveys conducted across the series of public speaking workshops, examining their impact on participant knowledge, skills, and attributes. Interviews, informed by the survey results and to further explore these findings, represented the next step. Through a combination of survey data analysis and interview exploration, the chapter helped to gain a deeper understanding of participant experiences and the workshop's overall impact on public speaking skills and career adaptability.

Overall, participants showed a positive reception towards the public speaking exercises and instructional methods. They recognized the value of these activities in enhancing public speaking skills, fostering self-reflection, and increasing motivation. Notably, activities such as presenting about personal interests and receiving peer feedback were highly regarded. Despite variations in survey participation across weeks, positive trends persisted. Participants continued to appreciate activities like the superpower icebreaker and peer feedback. While some activities received slightly lower ratings in certain weeks, overall usefulness was acknowledged, particularly in areas such as breathing techniques, warm-up exercises, and peer feedback. The series evaluation revealed a consistent positive trajectory in participant perceptions throughout the workshops. Significant shifts in response frequencies and average means underscored the cumulative impact of the intervention on career adaptability competencies.

To explore these findings on a deeper level, interviews revealed seven themes aligned with each of my research questions. As a whole, the interview results reveal a profound impact on participants, reflecting a journey of personal growth and development. Throughout the interviews, participants consistently articulated a newfound sense of confidence and self-efficacy, which emerged as a central theme in most of the individuals. They described how the workshops provided them with opportunities to confront challenges, embrace setbacks, and ultimately believe in their own abilities. Through engaging with the workshop content and actively participating in public speaking exercises, participants experienced a transformation in their confidence levels, often surpassing their initial expectations.

Moreover, the workshops fostered a sense of control and agency among the participants, as they navigated through presentation topics, shared their thoughts openly, and observed the courage displayed by their peers. This theme of control emerged as a significant dimension of career adaptability, with participants expressing a newfound belief in their capacity to shape their futures and overcome external obstacles. The workshops served as a platform for participants to reflect on their personal agency and recognize the power they held in influencing their career paths and life trajectories.

In addition to confidence and control, the interviews highlighted the importance of curiosity and open-mindedness in fostering personal growth and adaptability. Participants emphasized the value of exploring new experiences, embracing uncertainty,

and maintaining a curious mindset towards their backgrounds and aspirations. This theme of curiosity underscored the workshop's role in promoting exploration, resilience, and continuous learning, essential qualities for navigating career transitions and pursuing meaningful opportunities.

Furthermore, the supportive group environment of the workshops played a crucial role in participants' confidence-building and collective growth. Through storytelling, peer feedback, and shared experiences of facing challenges, participants found strength and inspiration in the camaraderie of their peers. The workshops provided a safe space for vulnerability and self-discovery, encouraging participants to step outside their comfort zones and embrace the transformative power of shared learning experiences.

Overall, the interview findings paint a compelling picture of the workshop series as a catalyst for personal and professional development. Participants emerged from the experience with heightened confidence, a sense of agency, and a curiosity-driven mindset, equipped with the skills and resilience needed to navigate their career paths with confidence and adaptability.

# Chapter 5.

## Discussion

### 5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study was to pioneer a new approach to career interventions, drawing upon public speaking techniques rooted in career construction theory. This intervention sought to respond to both the formidable challenges facing emerging adults surrounding career decision-making and their readiness for today's dynamic job market. Compounding these challenges is the pressure many students face to commit to an academic major and career trajectory early in their academic journeys, despite the uncertainties and rapid shifts in the job landscape. While institutions of higher education acknowledge their role in supporting students' career development, questions persist about graduates' possession of the skills of adaptability necessary for effective career navigation.

My study aimed to examine the effects of sharing career narratives and personal experiences with an audience of peers on participants' career adaptability competencies, particularly self-efficacy and confidence levels. At its core, this research sought to satisfy my curiosity regarding the potential impact of delivering a career intervention in this innovative manner. Through this exploration, my goal was to identify strategies and attributes that could mitigate the challenges associated with career decision-making and enhance students' readiness for the evolving demands of the contemporary workplace.

The findings of the study reveal a positive response from participants to the workshop series. Themes emerged highlighting increased confidence, feelings of empowerment, curiosity, and the importance of an active and supportive group dynamic. These results underscore the role of the workshop series as a catalyst for personal and professional growth, helping to equip students with the skills and resilience necessary to navigate their career paths effectively. The following questions guided this study:

1. How might a group career intervention, in the form of a public speaking workshop series, anchored in career construction theory and active learning, contribute to a change in students' perception and experiences of career adaptability (Confidence, Curiosity, Control, Concern)?

2. How might participants view the transferability of the dimensions of career adaptability to other domains, now and into the future?
3. In what ways might the workshop series impact participant's perception of their sense of self-efficacy and confidence to explore themselves and the world of work and their preferred futures?
4. What would the impact be on participants of an active, group-based career intervention relative to other individual-based modalities, such as writing or 1-to-1 counselling?

## **5.2. Interpretation of Findings**

Here, I will interpret what I found based on looking closely at the survey and interview data and how the data connects to the questions I explored. By delving into the theories and concepts in the literature, I aim to situate my exploratory study and contextualize my findings, gaining a deeper understanding of my themes and grounding the generated patterns and themes, which allows for a meaningful evaluation of their implications for practice and future research. My personal reflections on implementing this novel career intervention will also be examined, followed by an exploration of how the findings of this study can inform future iterations of intervention strategies aimed at cultivating career adaptability.

### **5.2.1. Unlocking the Cornerstone of Career Adaptability**

As the literature tells us, young people today are entering a world of unprecedented and rapid change, facing careers with a level of uncertainty few generations have experienced before. In this space, and as my literature review supports, there seems little need to argue in defence of the need for skills and competencies required to navigate this new world of work. Knowing that adaptability skills are at the forefront of this response, what can and should be argued is what educational approaches are needed to equip young people with requisite adaptability competencies. Within the context of this discourse and considering the theories presented in this thesis, I will start by aiming the lens at the themes generated in relation to my first research question around career adaptability.

At the heart of my curiosity was exploring the ways in which students experienced and articulated their relationship to dimensions of career adaptability based on active participation in the series of public speaking workshops. In simple terms, did it

make a difference and if so, how? Notwithstanding the limitations of the study, discussed later in this chapter, the themes generated around this research question provide some clues. Informed by the surveys, interviews served as a deeper exploration into participants' experience, providing some interesting points of reflection. One notable feature of the workshop series, regarding fostering a preference for adaptability, was the significance students placed on actively engaging in practice and taking risks, as a way of bolstering their confidence. Referring back to the suggestion by Savickas (2005) that career adaptability, as a psychosocial construct, contributes to an individual's readiness and resources for coping with occupational transitions and tasks, the workshops seemed to provide a psychosocial experience that fits this description. We discovered earlier that embracing happenstance, seeing the wisdom of indecision, and having a positive approach to uncertainty requires reflection, imagination and creativity. Based on responses from participants, it would seem that the active process of preparing a presentation, presenting it to an audience of peers, and reflecting on it served as an active practice of all of these tasks. In this regard, students experienced the idea that decision making requires the arranging and rearranging of possibilities in one's mind.

Clearly, stepping into the public speaking space required students to practice taking control, in a similar way one is required to have a sense of control when making decisions in transitioning to a new career stage or between stages. Given the opportunity to reflect during the interviews, participants talked about the way the experience supported confidence, agency, and control. As previously mentioned, during the process of analysing the data for the interviews, I discovered that the post-pre surveys themselves served as a reflective practice by asking the participants to self-assess their experience. Perhaps it could also be said that the reflective aspect of the interviews also contributed to the importance students might place on elements of adaptability. Practicing public speaking also seemed to help students face anxiety and uncertainty, a trait a curious person tends to display. In the process of speaking about role models, for instance, many participants indicated a shift in perspective from seeing their path initially as constrained to discovering an opening to exploration and curiosity, thus reinforcing the usefulness of having an openminded attitude. Recalling that career construction theory underscores the importance of individuals' narratives in shaping their careers and adapting to vocational changes, it is interesting that to some participants, the workshops acted as a wake-up call, prompting them to reflect on their narratives and engage actively in shaping their futures. This aligns with Savickas' (2006) idea of

constructing an "autobiographical bridge" between past, present, and future selves. Additionally, speaking about a role model seemed to lead to an important learning outcome of becoming more concerned about one's own aspirations by looking deeply at a source of inspiration. Equally important, in line with the literature, is a need for students to hear their own story, and in this case, to do it in front of their peers, and later reflect on it.

### **5.2.2. Perceptions of Transferability: Career Adaptability Dimensions Across Domains**

In conceiving the idea of a series of public speaking workshops to help students tap into career adaptability, its value would be meaningful only if participants anticipated the transfer of learned competencies to other areas of their lives. As it turned out, as the analysis of interviews indicated, students not only appreciated the applicability to other domains, but, in some cases, even began experiencing real benefits in the weeks between workshops. Considering the idea from Mitchell et al (1999) that chance events exist everywhere and impact everyone's career, and that career adaptability helps a person navigate through these encounters, the evidence that participants experienced or anticipated experiencing a transfer of adaptability to other domains is an important outcome to consider. Interestingly, for many students, their reflections seemed to indicate a realization that the workshop series, as an experience in itself, represented a chance experience. So, just by actively engaging in the experience and reflecting on it, students were witnesses to the impact of not only chance events, but that they had agency in the process. In other words, participation alone served as an indicator and practice of effective behaviour, helping students to recognize its impact and develop ways of not only coping with uncertainty, but actively preparing for unplanned events.

An important discovery, reflected upon by participants, was the role that the attribute of open-mindedness played in realizing the benefits of a social learning activity such as these workshops. In terms of how learning might transfer to other areas of their lives, one can consider what they were exposed to, but also the fact that participants generated their own learning events by taking personal action. To me, this behaviour, combined with the opportunity to process the kind of people they are, the self-concept they want to implement, and the potential they want to realize, indicates a desire to continue exploring and developing these goals in other aspects of their lives. Given the



increasing frequency of transitions in today's careers, practice being open-minded and developing adaptive behaviours or constructive activities with positive results can only support the transfer to other areas of their lives. Finally, it would seem that only by being open-minded and engaging in opportunities of learning and reflection lead to developing narratives that help direct behaviour as agents, articulate goals, evaluate opportunities, navigate career barriers, transform self-concept, and write themes that support positive development. Through this process, experienced in these workshops, participants discovered the benefits of examining personal narratives and the possibilities of actively shifting narratives to better position themselves to benefit from unplanned events. To conclude that participants viewed their relationship with uncertainty in more positive light following the workshops seems like a fair observation to make.

### **5.2.3. Empowering Preferred Futures: Boosting Self-Efficacy and Career Confidence**

As previously discussed, the core idea of career construction theory is to help people use their own stories and narratives to shape their careers and move through transitions. One of the primary ways it is believed this happens is by individuals hearing their own stories and, in the process, connecting to their past and identifying life themes. A central outcome, over time, would be a boost in self-efficacy and an elevated confidence in one's ability to navigate one's career in a dynamic world of work. Based on data from surveys and interviews, it seems clear that the workshop series contributed to these goals and served as an effective and innovative use of the career construction interview. Through the process of developing presentation ideas, exploring role models and interests, presenting this to their peers, and reflecting on the experience, it is safe to say participants witnessed a shift in confidence and a novel way of not only understanding themselves but also experiencing the opening of a portal to their preferred futures. Without the predictable scripts and identifiable career paths of previous times, these developments seem more important and useful than ever.

As Savickas (2013) stated, it is through the narratives we each tell ourselves that we direct our behaviour, articulate goals, evaluate opportunities, navigate career barriers, express our identity and its relation to society, author deeper meanings, and write occupational plots and themes. Based on this exploratory study, which integrates the theoretical approaches outlined in the literature review, the voices of the participants

indicate the intervention provided an opportunity to explore these outcomes, which are both dependent on and contribute to the career adaptability dimension of confidence. If, as Savickas (2019, p. 32) suggests, career construction theory contains the idea that “people organize their lives around a problem that preoccupies them and a solution that occupies them,” interventions such as this public speaking workshop series hold the possibility of contributing to the self-confidence required of this idea.

#### **5.2.4. Comparative Impact: Group-Based Career Intervention vs. Individual Modalities**

In addition to exploring the impact the workshops had on career adaptability dimensions and the potential transferability of these attributes to other domains, I was especially interested in the ways spoken narrative in a group format might be experienced compared to one-on-one applications of the career construction interview and individually delivered written approaches. As the literature suggests, stories have the power to generate rich narratives and uncover patterns and themes through engaging in dialogue, an opportunity provided throughout the workshops. Within this format, participants benefited by making discoveries through their interpretation of speaking prompts, by observing others, and gaining meaningful resources for further life designing. In line with the need for interventions that go beyond the person-environment fit, it was clear that engagement and meaning making within workshops contributed to shifting views of self and adaptation, as reflected in interviews. Circling back to the known benefits of dialogical group career interventions previously reviewed in the literature, the workshops represented an effective platform for telling stories and helping to fill the existing gap for innovative and impactful career interventions for groups.

In terms of the documented need for active and collaborative approaches to learning combined with observational learning and rehearsal as opposed to passive reception, the interviews with participants seemed to show this need addressed by the workshops. Contributing to this outcome is the idea that learners learn more when learning with others, a central element of the intervention reflected in speaking to others, the power of the audience, observing peers, and also receiving peer feedback. Within the group space, as compared to individual approaches, the experience was impactful by listening to stories of others, and through this process, reflecting upon the collective

wisdom of their peers, and allowing the experience of active learning to mediate self-discovery, meaning-making, and decision-making.

### **5.3. Implications for Practice and Future Research**

Situated within the space of career education in the university setting, the intention of this study was to adapt an existing public speaking workshop series, to pilot this adaptation in the form of a brief career intervention, and to understand how participants experienced the impact of participation on dimensions of career adaptability. The results of this study suggest several promising avenues of research around innovative applications of narrative-based career exploration, yielded several useful results that can practically be applied within the context of career development, and contribute to the existing understanding of the benefits of active learning and group approaches to career education.

#### **5.3.1. Future Research Directions**

On the topic of future research directions, it may be worth exploring the long-term effects of such interventions on participants' career trajectories, navigating change, and applying adaptability. Tracking participants over time would provide insights into the sustainability of the skills and confidence gained from the workshops as well as the transferability to other domains. Also, it would be of interest to follow-up the intervention with individual career counselling to build upon the participant discoveries, curiosities, and potential pathways of further exploration. Comparative studies could be conducted to further understand the comparative impact of group-based interventions like public speaking workshops versus individual-based modalities such as writing or one-on-one counseling. This could help identify the most effective approaches for different student populations.

Further research could investigate the transferability of skills learned in the workshops to other domains of participants' lives. Understanding how these skills generalize beyond career decision-making could inform the design of more holistic personal development programs. Based on the earlier reference to the transfer of skills of self-efficacy between domains, it would be worthwhile and insightful to explore this further. It would be valuable also to examine the effectiveness of such interventions

across diverse student populations, including those from marginalized backgrounds. Ensuring the inclusivity and accessibility of career development interventions is essential for promoting equitable outcomes. There might also be a further assessment of data around the format of the delivery of the intervention for continual refinement of intervention strategies based on empirical findings and participant feedback. Future research could focus on optimizing the content and structure of public speaking workshops to maximize their impact on career adaptability.

As with most studies, there are other theories that could contribute to the understanding of the research problem and refinement of the research questions, but that were beyond the scope of this study. In the case of this study, I can see the benefits of looking into the ways overt and covert self-observation generalizations (SOGS) about one's abilities, performance, and views lead to a generalized conclusion and how these foundational impressions impact future behavior, thoughts, and career planning. A deeper dive into this area, which falls with the work of John Krumboltz and the social learning theory of career decision making, would no doubt be an interesting contribution to this research and something to be harnessed within my intervention. Also, further work around comparing the effectiveness of writing and one-to-one counselling to a narrative-based group workshop such as public speaking, and a deeper dive into the processes at play, is of great interest to me.

Due to the limited scope of this study, and the need to contain the parameters of the wide array of theoretical approaches that might contribute to an understanding of the research problem, an assessment of the intervention, and interpretation of results, I see value in widening the lens into a more comprehensive examination of the scholarship around active learning in group formats that may benefit both individuals and the institutions that offer career development resources. Also, I feel there would be value in integrating the work of John Biggs by more deeply exploring the three approaches to learning he alludes to around surface, achieving, and deep learning to both support the design of the intervention and provide a lens for assessment of outcomes (Biggs et al., 2022). If, as Thalluri and Penman (2013) state, higher education is moving more towards teaching and learning strategies that are interactive, collaborative, and engaging for students, it would be advantageous to ground this intervention in this research. Finally, a more in-depth exploration of the value of spoken versus written career development learning approaches would be highly valuable.

### 5.3.2. Practice Implications

The study suggests that utilizing public speaking workshops rooted in career construction theory can be an effective approach to enhancing students' career adaptability. Institutions of higher education could consider implementing similar workshops to support students in navigating the dynamic job market. The findings also highlight the importance of active learning and supportive group dynamics in fostering career adaptability. As a result of pressures to prepare students for the workplace in the context of diminishing educational resources, institutions may need to incorporate more group-based activities and opportunities for peer learning and feedback into career development programs. Based on the benefits of utilizing a narrative approach for building confidence, agency, a sense of control over career paths, and exploring themselves and careers, the success of the workshops demonstrates the possibility of filling the gap for innovative interventions that empower students to actively shape their futures and overcome career-related anxieties. Further, when there are discrepancies between student and parental or societal desires around career, it would seem important to find other promising areas of research that point to intervention approaches that help sustain student momentum for both the institution and the student.

From the interviews with participants, one finding stands out amongst all others as an implication for practice, that the clearer and more compelling one is at telling one's story to others, the better they are able to understand it themselves. With the need for reflective practice in all areas of experiential learning, it seems evident that efforts at conceiving of new ways to offer students narrative opportunities to coalesce their experiences with their evolving selves is worthwhile, as demonstrated by the workshop series.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of innovative and experiential approaches to career development that prioritize active learning, group engagement, and the cultivation of confidence and agency among students. By addressing these factors, institutions can better prepare students to navigate the complexities of the contemporary job market and pursue fulfilling careers aligned with their aspirations.

## 5.4. Study Limitations

Looking back on this experience and reflecting on the research problem I identified and the questions I was curious to explore, my understanding of the theory and the task of developing an intervention to address my questions has grown immensely. However, only by being cognizant of my positionality as the researcher and by identifying limitations of my study with humility can my learning be deemed sufficient. It is my hope, as with all research studies, that knowing the limitations of this study might better prepare myself or others to explore the topics of this study further.

Related to the methodology, there are several limitations that might limit the value of this study, bearing in mind the exploratory nature of the research. First, the study might have been limited by a potential sampling bias, as participants who voluntarily chose to participate in the public speaking workshops and subsequent surveys and interviews may have had pre-existing positive attitudes towards such interventions. This could skew the results towards more favorable perceptions and outcomes. Second, the reliance on self-report measures, such as surveys and interviews, introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, where participants may provide responses they believe are socially acceptable or expected rather than reflecting their true experiences or opinions. Additionally, their interpretations may be influenced by various factors such as mood and memory recall. Third, although this did not fit the purpose of the study, the absence of a control group makes it difficult to ascertain whether the observed improvements in public speaking skills and career adaptability can be solely attributed to the workshop series. Without a comparison group, it's challenging to rule out other potential factors contributing to the observed changes. Fourth, the study's focus on short-term outcomes limits the ability to assess the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of the workshop intervention. It's uncertain whether the positive changes observed immediately after the workshops will persist over time or if participants will revert to their previous levels of confidence and adaptability. Fifth, the study's findings may have limited generalizability beyond the specific context and population studied. Future iterations of this study might want to employ a more experimental approach in this regard. Factors such as the demographic characteristics of participants, institutional context, and cultural influences could impact the transferability of the results to other settings or student populations. The variations in survey participation across weeks mentioned in the text suggest potential participant

disengagement over the course of the workshop series. This could introduce bias if those who continued to participate differed systematically from those who dropped out in terms of their perceptions or experiences. Seventh, while the interview findings provided rich insights into participants' experiences, the qualitative interpretation of themes could be influenced by my subjectivity and preconceptions. My preconceived notions or expectations about the effectiveness of the workshop intervention could introduce confirmation bias into the analysis of the qualitative data. There may be a tendency to interpret participant narratives in a way that aligns with my beliefs about the intervention's impact. Finally, as I explicitly stated earlier, there is no intention to establish a direct causal connection between the workshop intervention and career adaptability outcomes. Instead, the focus is on exploring and understanding participants' experiences and perceptions. Consequently, the study cannot definitively attribute changes in participants' confidence or control to the workshop intervention alone.

In addition to limitations of the methodology, there are a number of other factors that need to be considered, with benefit of hindsight. First, while a management plan was presented in the ethics approval application along with full transparency in the participant consent form, the potential conflict of interest due to my spouse participating in the design of the workshop as well as facilitating the workshop needs to be considered. Also, my involvement in both the design of the workshop intervention, as well as the data collection process, could introduce researcher bias into the study. This bias might influence the framing of research questions, interpretation of findings, and selection of interview prompts. Second, while the connection between the workshop series and its influence on career planning remained ambiguous to participants, this ambiguity did not significantly detract from the study's focus, as the primary interest lay in assessing the impact on dimensions of career adaptability, which are vital competencies in today's dynamic career landscape. Third, participants may have begun the workshop series with diverse levels of decidedness, which could have influenced their engagement and response to the interventions. Fourth, the relatively short duration of the workshop series raises questions about its effectiveness in inducing lasting changes in career decision-making processes.

Due to the novelty of the intervention, there may be interest in replicating or duplicating the study. This may pose challenges, as it requires a trained presentation skills trainer, making implementation within a career center without such expertise

difficult. Additionally, the extent to which the facilitator's ability to foster a safe space and connect with participants, as compared to the workshop design and content, contributed substantially to the observed impact remains uncertain. Furthermore, the study's limited representation across faculties and absence of observational data might diminish the breadth and depth of insights garnered. In terms of the workshop design, the participant reflections indicate the value in extending the workshop beyond three sessions and the inclusion of more career-related content linked to the speaking prompts. Lastly, the absence of scaffolding for additional support or exploration suggests missed opportunities for enhancing the efficacy and comprehensiveness of the intervention. Addressing the imitations in future research endeavors would strengthen the validity and reliability of findings, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and impact of public speaking workshops on career adaptability.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

In chapter one, I introduced my son who, at the age of 17, was facing the same question most young people do as they consider a career path: what are you going to do with your life? Since that time, my son has gone from being accepted as a first-year undergraduate student in history or communications to applying and being accepted in a grade 13 music school in Norway. This is not what one would call a conventional path, but it does represent his decision about the next step of his life, which will most likely have an immense impact on the trajectory of his life. When I think of the work of this study, and the hours I have thought about the importance of career adaptability, I now see clearly the impact my son's decision-making experience has had on his own developing competencies of adaptability: his curiosity around the opportunity and possibilities, his sense of concern over his future, his growing sense of control and agency over his own decisions, and the expression of confidence in his own abilities and willingness to trust himself.

Considering the fact that one does not need to know what one is planning to do with one's life in order to make the next decision, as my son demonstrates, there is freedom and joy in embracing chance, being open to change, preparing for uncertainty, and developing the skills of adaptability. Today's labour market and changing world of work makes this even more urgent and relevant. As I have discovered, only if we view indecision differently, as the theory suggests, can we harness the positive aspects for



preparing youth for a life of transitions. It seems to me that if we find ways to give young people opportunities and time for reflection and the chance to develop these essential skills by finding innovative ways of getting their attention through active engagement, they will become more familiar with their own stories and learn that these stories hold important truths. In this way, we will be helping to prepare emerging adults for the inevitable tasks of a rapidly changing career landscape. I am delighted to say that, notwithstanding its limitations, the public speaking workshop series that came out of this study has perhaps played a role in applying theory to practice and thereby contributing novel ways of addressing the challenge at hand.

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# Appendix A.

## SFU Events Listing

SFU.CA f X @ GIVE TO SFU STUDENTS FACULTY • STAFF ALUMNI PARENTS • PUBLIC EMU

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

ADMISSION PROGRAMS LEARNING COMMUNITY ABOUT RESEARCH

CAMPUSES A-Z DIRECTORY SIGN IN

### Speak Up: A New Workshop Series on Public Speaking & Career Planning

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023

Seminars & Workshops - Services for Students

f X @

Presented by Career and Volunteer Services

Join fellow SFU undergraduate students for *Speak Up*, a brand new **free workshop series** where you will learn the skills of **public speaking** and practice presenting to your peers under the guidance of a professional public speaking trainer. Over **three 2-hour workshops**, you will explore your personal attributes and interests, values, goals, social roles, and your self-concept that together guides your **academic and career decisions**.

**This is a 3-Part Workshop. Participants must attend all three workshop sessions Tuesdays Jan 17, 24 and 31 to receive an SFU Career & Volunteer Services Certificate of Completion.**

Sponsored by Career and Volunteer Services.

Join fellow SFU undergraduate students for *Speak Up*, a brand new **free workshop series** where you will learn the skills of **public speaking** and practice presenting to your peers under the guidance of a professional public speaking trainer. Over three 2-hour workshops, you will explore your personal attributes and interests, values, goals, social roles, and your self-concept that together guides your **academic and career decisions**.

By the end of the workshop by Michael Ford, you will:

1. Gain valuable public speaking skills for use in class presentations and in the workplace;
2. Connect your past, present and future while reflecting on and reconnecting with your life themes and purpose;
3. Gain inspiration from the stories and experiences of your peers;
4. Acquire self-knowledge to support your career exploration and academic decision making.
5. Receive a certificate of completion and added professional development for your resume.

**RESERVE TICKET**

**PRICING**  
Free  
[View Ticket Information](#)

**DATE & TIME**  
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. PST

**LOCATION**  
SFU Burnaby Campus

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**  
Simon Fraser University respectfully acknowledges the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the **səlilwətaʔ** (Tsəlil-Waututh), **kwiəkəlan** (Kwikwetlem), **Sḡəgwúʔmesh** (Uxwumixw) (Squamish) and **xməəlxəw** (Musqueam) Nations, on which SFU Burnaby is located.

**CONTACT**  
Direct inquiries to Michael Ford at [mrford@sfu.ca](mailto:mrford@sfu.ca)

Schedule:

**Three Tuesdays**, 4-6pm, January 17, 24, & 31 (SFU Burnaby Campus)

**Day 1 (January 17th)** – Assessing personal areas of growth in public speaking/presenting, modes of persuasion, elements of a 1-minute presentation, personal story & structure, performance basics, developing content, giving and receiving feedback, presentation #1.

**Day 2 (January 24th)** – Exercises in gesturing and grounding, warm-up exercises, body language, crafting and delivering a presentation using a pre-set structure, rehearsal tips, presentation #2.

**Day 3 (January 31st)** – Breathing and warm-up exercises, identifying strengths, reflecting on previous experience designing and delivering presentations, synthesizing workshop series learning experiences verbally and in written text, words of advice to yourself, presentation #3.

**\* Participants must attend all three workshop sessions to receive an SFU Career & Volunteer Services Certificate of Completion.**

Limited space available. Register early.



## Appendix B.

### Study Participant Invitation (Email)

January 13, 2023

Dear Student,

Thank you for registering for *Speak Up!*, a pilot program of SFU Career & Volunteer Services, scheduled for January 17, 24 and 31, 2023. We hope you are excited about the opportunity to develop your public speaking skills, useful in your university classes and at the workplace, and to further explore your academic and career interests.

To help us assess the value and effectiveness of this innovative pilot program, we are fortunate to have SFU graduate student, Michael Ford, evaluating our program in fulfillment of his thesis requirements for his MA in Educational Psychology. Since you will be asked to complete evaluation surveys following each workshop, as required in all our programs, all you will need do to participate in the study is to consent to share your de-identified data with the lead researcher, Michael Ford. As a study participant, you will also be invited to participate and consent to a 1-on-1 interview about your experience of the workshops, which is entirely voluntary, confidential and no obligation to you as a study participant. Please note that you can still participate in the series even if you do not consent to being part of the study.

Please complete the 1-minute SurveyMonkey form (below) **by Sunday, January 15, 2023** indicating your interest in helping us by participating in the research study.

Here is the link to the participation survey and consent form: *Intent to Participate in a Graduate Student Research Study*

<https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/R27MCDK>

Should you choose to participate, you will be contacted by Michael Ford who will provide you with further details.

If you have any questions about this request, please reply directly to me at this email address. Thank you for considering this request to help us assess this innovative program.

Sincerely,  
Tony Botelho  
Director, SFU Career & Volunteer Services

# Appendix C.

## Consent Form

*Speak Up!* - Workshop Series Research Study

### Invitation to Participate in Graduate Research Study

**As a registered participant in the workshop series *Speak Up!*, you are invited to participate in a student graduate study to help us understand the effectiveness of the workshop series, determine if this program might be of value to other undecided students and assess the impact on your career planning. As a consenting study participant, you may limit your participation to sharing your post-workshop survey data with the researcher or also agree to help us deepen our understanding of participant experiences of the workshop series by participating in a voluntary, one-on-one confidential interview.**

**Please review the consent form below and indicate whether you agree to participate in the study. If you agree to participate, please also indicate whether you agree to participate in post-workshop interview.**

### **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF A PUBLIC SPEAKING WORKSHOP ON THE CAREER ADAPTABILITY RESOURCES OF UNDECIDED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Exploring the Impact of a Public Speaking Workshop on the Career Adaptability Resources of Undecided University Students* that is being conducted by the student lead researcher Michael Ford.

Michael Ford is a graduate student in the department of Education at Simon Fraser University, and you may contact him if you have further questions by email at [email address redacted]. As a graduate student and student lead researcher, Michael is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Educational Psychology. It is being conducted under the supervision of the principal investigator, Dr. Kris Magnusson. You may contact the supervisor if you have any questions or concerns about the study by email at [email address redacted].

## **STUDY PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this research project is to assess the effectiveness of a career intervention involving a series of public speaking workshops.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH**

Research of this type is important because students graduating today face an uncertain world of work, unlike any other time in history. Rapid technological change is a constant, roles of the past are being rapidly discarded, graduates of tomorrow will be expected to fill roles that today don't even exist, and the ways in which we work have forever changed. In this context, many students need to develop the skills of exploring careers, adapting to constant change, and flourishing in school and work. This research project is an attempt to try an innovative and new approach of helping students achieve these goals.

## **PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your status as an undergraduate SFU student who is undecided about your career path and/or has not yet declared an academic major.

## **POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The student researcher has a personal relationship with the workshop facilitator. In order to mitigate any real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, the student researcher will not be involved in the delivery of any workshops and the workshop facilitator will not be involved in any aspect of the research project, including collection, access, or analysis of data. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study.

## **STUDY PROCEDURES**

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, following each of the three workshops, your participation will include completing an online questionnaire about your experiences and opinions of the workshops and sharing this data with the lead researcher, which should take no longer than 5-15 minutes to complete. Following the final workshop of the series, your participation, should you consent, will include a one-on-one interview with the researcher to further explore your experiences and opinions of the workshops and themes identified in the questionnaires. Interviews are expected to take 30-60 minutes and will be conducted remotely and recorded using the Zoom platform. Written transcriptions of the interviews will be created for detailed analysis of themes.

## **RISKS**

Although known or anticipated risks to you by participating in the surveys and interviews are minimal, there may be some potential risks to you by participating in the workshops, which include emotional, social, and psychological risks associated with disclosure of personal information to other participants, the workshop facilitator and the research team. Steps that will be taken to prevent or to deal with these risks include agreeing to group confidentiality during the workshops, securing data and referral to SFU Health and Counselling if necessary.

The research team will abide by the latest provincial health guidelines and SFU policies in relation to the COVID19 pandemic and will be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

## **BENEFITS**

The potential benefit to you as a research participant include contributing to a better understanding of career decision-making processes and adaptability of university students and supporting the assessment of an intervention to better support students navigate career transitions. As a workshop participant, you may benefit in the form of public speaking skills for school and work applications, increased confidence, enhanced career clarity and improved decision-making skills.

## **COMPENSATION**

To compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation in sharing data and being interviewed, your name will be entered into a draw for one of three \$25 Amazon gift cards.

## **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION & WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. To withdraw from the study, contact Michael Ford by email at [email address redacted]. If you do withdraw from the study your personal data will be deleted from the lead researcher's personal computer and OneDrive within 3-5 days following notification. Please be aware that, should you withdraw after the post-workshop questionnaire, it will not be possible to remove your response data from the study as your identity will be hidden from the research team.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data, including interview recordings, will be protected, and not be released without your consent. All participants will be identified in all instances of data collection and analysis by a unique code number and/or a pseudonym. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. Since workshops will be delivered in a group setting, full confidentiality cannot be maintained.

## **DATA SECURITY**

Post-workshop surveys will be delivered using SurveyMonkey. The identity of participants will be protected by using SurveyMonkey in accordance with SFU SurveyMonkey Terms of Service and by utilizing the Anonymous Responses collector option in SurveyMonkey settings. No identifiable information will be collected during survey data collection.

All one-on-one interviews will be recorded on Zoom and stored securely on the lead researcher's personal computer and backed up on SFU's Microsoft OneDrive service, which is protected by the enterprise-level security. Interviews will be hosted by Zoom, a US company. Any data you provide may be transmitted and stored in countries outside of Canada, as well as in Canada. It is important to remember that privacy laws vary in different countries and may not be the same as in Canada. Computerized files will also be stored securely on the lead researcher's personal computer and backed up on SFU's Microsoft OneDrive service. Data from this study, including interview Zoom audio recordings and interview electronic transcriptions and computerized files, will be deleted from the lead researcher's personal computer and OneDrive within one year after completion of the study and presentation of the final written thesis report. Interview data will use pseudonyms to protect participant identity.

## **DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS**

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books and presented at departmental or conference presentations. Participants will not be identified in any research outputs unless they have expressly consented to this.

## **CONTACTS**

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include Michael Ford (the researcher) and Kris Magnusson (the supervisor), at the contact information provided at the beginning of this consent form.

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, please contact the SFU Office of Research Ethics at [dore@sfu.ca](mailto:dore@sfu.ca) or 778-782-6618.

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

**AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE:**

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your grades, or employment, or any services to which you are presently entitled to receive. You do not waive any of your legal rights by participating in this study.

- By clicking Agree below, you are providing your digital consent to participate in this study.

- Agree  
 Disagree

By clicking Agree below, you consent to participate in a one-hour confidential interview following the final workshop.

- Agree  
 Disagree

Your contact information (must be completed if you answered yes to participating in the study)

<b>Name</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Email Address</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Phone Number</b>	<input type="text"/>

# Appendix D.

## Participant Surveys

### Post-Workshop Survey (Week 1)

#### Speak Up: Week #1 Evaluation

#### Week #1: Evaluation

**Please complete both Part I & II below.**

**PART I:** During week one, you engaged in a series of activities intended to contribute to your learning. Please rate the **usefulness** of each of these activities for the purpose stated in each of the following statements.

1. Sharing a personal object for the purpose of focusing your attention on an interest outside of school.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

2. Instruction on modes of persuasion for the purpose of understanding, processing, and creating a speech that is credible, emotionally appealing and logical.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

3. Instruction on the importance of personal story and structure for the purpose of exploring and conveying your own story.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

4. Instruction on performance basics for the purpose of crafting speeches that fully convey your messages in clear ways and help audiences and listeners understand your message.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

5. The 5-minute free writing exercise for the purpose of developing the content of your presentation.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful



6. The 5-minute free writing exercise for the purpose of exploring who you admired growing up.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

7. Presenting your role model to others for the purpose of deepening your understanding of yourself compared to only writing to yourself about your role model.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

8. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of building your confidence.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

9. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of motivating you to further develop your public speaking skills.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

10. I was able to find an influential role model when asked to explore one and the impact of the role model on me as a person.

- Yes
- No

**PART II:** For questions 11-18 below, please provide two responses for each statement. First, select the answer that describes your opinion **BEFORE** this workshop. Then, select the answer that describes your viewpoint **NOW** at the end of the workshop, knowing what you know now and after you spoke about who you admired when you were growing up.

\* 11. I understand how my role models impacted the development of me as a unique person and a social actor.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 12. I have a clear sense of what I learned from my role models in how they have provided me examples for guiding for my life.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 13. Through imitating my role models, I have developed certain coping attitudes and values and interests in certain activities.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 14. My reason for choosing certain role models helps me understand my ideal self and provides a path to follow in creating my life

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 15. My ways of adapting to the challenges of living have been influenced by my role models.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 16. I have a clear sense of the traits, values, skills, and personal characteristics that are important to me and that help me solve problems.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 17. I understand the resources I have available to me for adapting to the challenges of life.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 18. I have a clear understanding of how to find solutions to problems with decisions around my career plans and that I can overcome hurdles.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Post-Workshop Survey (Week 2)

### Speak Up: Week #2 Evaluation

#### Week #2: Evaluation

**Please complete both Part I & II below.**

**PART I:** During week two, you engaged in a series of activities intended to contribute to your learning. Please rate the **usefulness** of each of these activities for the purpose stated in each of the following statements.

1. The power poses and gestures exercise for the purpose of understanding and appreciating how your body language impacts how you think and feel about yourself and how that affects how others perceive you.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

2. Presenting about the stories you are most drawn to in books, movies, TV series, and websites for the purpose of deepening your understanding of your interests, dilemmas, and behavior.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

3. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of building your confidence.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

4. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of motivating you to further develop your public speaking skills.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

5. The rehearsal tips instruction for the purpose of equipping you with tools to increase your sense of confidence prior to delivering a presentation.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

6. In the workshop, I was able to find a favourite book, magazine, newspaper, website, movie or series that aligned to my educational or career aspirations and/or my career planning challenges when asked to explore one.

- Yes  
 No

**PART II:** For questions 7-18 below, please provide two responses for each statement. First, select the answer that describes your opinion **BEFORE** this workshop. Then, select the answer that describes your viewpoint **NOW** at the end of the workshop, knowing what you know now and after you spoke about your current favourite book, magazine, newspaper, website, movie or series.

\* 7. My greatest interests are reflected in the material I read or view in my day-to-day life.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 8. The stories contained in what I choose to read or view influence the image I have of myself in my imagined career.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 9. My favourite stories contain plots resembling my own preoccupation or life challenge.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 10. The things I read or view offer a life script for successfully dealing with problems.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 11. The things I read or view include characters who represent an ideal self.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 12. There is a pattern in my choice of reading material or my viewing habits, which indicate my preferred educational, leisure and future career environments.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 13. The plots in my favourite reading material and movies resemble my own dilemmas.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 14. Just like the characters in my favourite books, movies or shows overcome difficulties, I too can overcome difficulties and be an agent of my own career path.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 15. My behaviours, what I say and do, represent clues about my career interests.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 16. I pursue what matters to me.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 17. What I watch or read today predicts my future preferences and behaviour.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 18. It gives me hope when I see my struggles are reflected in the characters of the storylines I read or watch.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Post-Workshop Survey (Week 3)

### Speak Up: Week #3 Evaluation

#### Week #3: Evaluation

**Please complete both Part I & II below.**

**PART I:** During week three, you engaged in a series of activities intended to contribute to your learning. Please rate the **usefulness** of each of these activities for the purpose stated in each of the following statements

1. The superpower icebreaker for the purpose of identifying your unique strengths.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

2. The superpower icebreaker for the purpose of enhancing your understanding of your own ability to develop those strengths in your favour.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

3. The breathing and warm-up basics for the purpose of increasing your confidence and preparation for your presentation.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

4. Presenting about a motto or saying for the purpose of clarifying how you would like to live your life.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

5. Presenting about a motto or saying for the purpose of clarifying how you would like to be of service.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful



6. Feedback from your peers for the purpose of motivating you to further develop your public speaking skills.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

7. The discussion about career exploration and goal setting for the purpose of continuing to make plans to take further steps in pursuit of a life you want to live.

- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Not at all useful

8. In the workshop, I was able to find an influential motto, favourite saying, quote or words of advice that factor into how I live my life and how I would like to be of service.

- Yes
- No

**PART II:** For questions 8-14 below, please provide two responses for each statement. First, select the answer that describes your opinion **BEFORE** this workshop. Then, select the answer that describes your viewpoint **NOW** at the end of the workshop, knowing what you know now and after you spoke about a motto, favourite saying, quotation or words of advice.

\* 9. I have a clear sense of the words I wish to live by.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 10. I know what should be done to live a personally satisfying life.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 11. My life theme is clear to me.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 12. I can translate my experience into a verbal form of practical wisdom that clarifies my world and directs my action.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 13. I know how to move to the next episode of my career story.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 14. I have a clear source of advice to myself in propelling me forward in life.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Final Evaluation

## Speak Up Workshops: Series Evaluation

### Final Evaluation

During the workshop, you learned some strategies, tools and skills of public speaking. Most of the content of your speeches was focused around topics to help you think about your own work identity and career planning.

Now that you have completed the entire workshop series, please provide two responses for each statement. First, select the answer that describes your opinion **BEFORE** this workshop series. Then, select the answer that describes your viewpoint **NOW** at the end of the workshop series, knowing what you know now and having experience speaking publicly about career-related topics.

\* 1. I am curious about exploring how my knowledge, abilities and interests align with the world of work.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 2. I am curious about exploring what my preferred future might look like.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 3. I intend to explore my career preferences and consider my past work experiences and preferences when thinking about my desired future options.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 4. Preparing for my future career is important to me, which is why I intend to explore my career preferences and consider my past work experiences and preferences.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 5. I am confident in my ability to solve career problems & overcome obstacles.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 6. I am confident in my ability to pursue my career aspirations.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 7. I am confident in my ability to make career decisions and transitions.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 8. I have a sense of personal control and personal responsibility for planning my career path.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 9. I have a sense of personal control and personal responsibility for taking intentional and deliberate action towards my desired career and work future.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 10. I have a sense of personal control and personal responsibility for taking charge when faced with career-related decisions and challenges.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Before this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After this week's workshop:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix E.

### Interview Guide

#### Interview Guide:

##### Research questions:

1. How might a group career intervention, in the form of a public speaking workshop series, anchored in career construction theory and active learning, impact career adaptability for students?
2. What is the perceived impact of the workshop series on public speaking skills?
3. What is the participants' experience of the impact the workshop series on their ability to explore themselves and the world of work and their sense of self-efficacy and confidence?
4. To what extent and in what ways might the workshop series contribute to choosing a major and deciding on a career path?

##### Script: Introduction

My name is Michael Ford and I will be facilitating this interview. The purpose of this interview is to learn how you experienced the Speak Up workshop series and its impact on you. Through this interview, combined with the data you shared from the surveys, we hope to understand the impact, effectiveness and future development of the workshop series.

Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this interview. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Your confidentiality will be respected. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent. All participants will be identified only by a unique code number or using a pseudonym. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

Notes:	Conversational Questions:
<p><b>Opening question/setting the scene</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am curious about <u>why you registered</u> for this workshop series? What appealed to you and what were you hoping to get out of it?</li> </ul> <p><b>Probing/Follow-up (depending on their response):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After attending the workshops and doing the speeches, how close did it come to your expectations?</li> <li>- What did you learn or what ways did it impact you that you hadn't expected?</li> <li>- What impact did it have on your confidence in your <u>public speaking skills</u>?</li> <li>- How did getting feedback <u>from your peers</u> impact the experience? And what about hearing about other stories?</li> <li>- In your view, how does this compare to just <u>writing about the topics</u> or speaking one-on-one to a career counsellor?</li> <li>- How did the interactive nature of the workshop in a <u>group format</u> impact your experience and learning?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dimensions of Career Adaptability</b> (Confidence, Curiosity, Concern &amp; Control)</p>	<p>1. When you reflect on experiencing this workshop series, how would you describe its <u>overall impact</u> on you?</p> <p><b>Probing/Follow-up (depending on their response):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How has the workshop experience had an impact on your <u>sense of confidence</u>? How might that impact on how you think about your own future?</li> <li>- Sometime <u>confidence in one part of our life impacts other parts of their life</u>. How do you see this experience impacting other aspect of your life?</li> <li>- What does the idea of <u>exploring and experimenting</u> with different academic and/or career options mean to you? In what ways did this experience impact this? (<b>Curiosity</b>)</li> <li>- How did this experience impact your willingness and interest to take <u>greater responsibility</u> for their future? (<b>Control</b>)</li> <li>- How ready are you to <u>explore career and academic options now</u> that you have finished the workshop series? (<b>Concern</b>)</li> </ul>
<p>Week #1 – <b>Role Model</b> (self-concept, preferred self, re-authoring story)</p>	<p>2. Many forces, including <b>role models</b>, can influence the path we all choose. In what ways did speaking about your role model help you understand the impact influential people have on <u>adapting to life challenges, overcoming hurdles, and influence your future path</u>?</p> <p><b>Probing/Follow-up (depending on their response):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How might this impact you going forward?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do you see yourself when reflecting on your role model?</li> </ul>
<p>Week #2 – Favourite book, movie, etc. (stories)</p>	<p>3. How did speaking about a <b>favourite book, movie, website</b> or something similar impact the <u>career options you might consider</u></p> <p><b>Probing/Follow-up (depending on their response):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was there anything that presenting on this topic revealed to you about yourself or where you are today on your life path?</li> </ul>
<p>Week #3 – Favourite quote, motto, or saying (manifest interests, scripts)</p>	<p>4. What does the idea of a <u>life theme or career story</u> mean to you? To what degree did presenting about a <b>motto or saying</b> <u>clarify how you would like to live your life?</u></p> <p><b>Probing/Follow-up (depending on their response):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were there any other ways speaking about your motto impacted you?</li> <li>- Did speaking about this reveal anything about your current path or steps forward?</li> </ul>
<p>Closing question</p>	<p>5. Any <u>final comments</u>, now that you have had time to reflect, about the impact this experience has had on you?</p> <p><b>Probing/Follow-up (depending on their response):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What <u>would you say to another student</u> considering the workshop series?</li> <li>- Is there <u>anything I didn't ask</u> that you would like to talk about?</li> <li>- Can you think of anything you would recommend we <u>add or remove from the workshops?</u></li> </ul>



## Appendix F.

### Initial Codes

#### Initial Interview Codes

Code	Code	Code
A role model shapes your character	Experience served as motivation to take control	I believe in myself more after the workshop
Appreciated the support of the group	Favourite quote reinforced words to live by	I can bring this courage and confidence elsewhere
Be able to speak about something requires adaptability	Feedback from group as meaningful	I have confidence, but never knew I could show others
Benefit of listening to the group and taking inspiration from others	Feedback from peers as a motivational tool.	Impactful working in a group vs 1-on-1
Confidence increased from workshops	Feedback from peers building confidence	Importance of confidence in the work environment
Confidence transferring to other aspects of life	Feel more confident that I can succeed in my career	Importance of not being too invested in outcome - be curious
Deeper learning by presenting versus writing	Feeling more insecure	Increased control by processing experience
Desire to speak with confidence	Gave us the courage to talk freely	Instructor influenced him incidentally in his attitude to career
Easier getting out of comfort zone with a comforting group	Get out of comfort zone	Lacking networking skills and speaking in front of a group

Code	Code	Code
Experience being vulnerable increased confidence and willingness to explore	Having a structure helps apply confidence when speaking	Motto clarifying how to live life
Experience increased courage to connect with others	Helped think about future career	Movie topic influenced his growth
Learning something new about myself and discovering possibilities	Need to be perfect or proud of speech	Participants were there voluntarily sharing their emotions
Learning through this to have an open mind and explore	Need to work on things before exploring careers	People were willing to be vulnerable
Life motto reminding her of control over thoughts and how we react	Not as scared as I was before about speaking up	Public speaking relates to career goal
More motivated to pursue my career	Not living up to life motto	Realization of similarities to role model
More motivated to try new things	Not speaking naturally with voice in front of a group	Realization there are other skills and opportunities to explore
Motivation was to face his fear	Shaky when presenting	Realized the need to take responsibility in life and the future
Speaking built his trust in himself and increased confidence	Similarity to others in the group	Reflecting on and speaking about motto increased concern
Speaking to and hearing peers made me not feel so alone	Speaking about role model made me more grateful	Reluctance to speak up

Code	Code	Code
Take a risk and don't force perfection	Speaking about these topics was completely different than writing or counselling	Role model engaging and motivating career interest
The connection to the group boosted confidence	Speaking as an opportunity to see everything as the way it is.	Role model guiding my life
The need to appeal to the group versus something personally meaningful	There is value in learning from others	Role model influenced career choice
Want to speak about things that matter	Workshop reaffirmed interest in chosen major or path	Role model motivating exploration
We are all responsible for our own destiny	Workshop more than just speaking in front of a crowd	Role model motivation for control and responsibility
We learned that it's okay to make mistakes	With positive feedback, renewed confidence eliminates overthinking	

## Appendix G.

### Final Themes & Codes

Name	Description	Participants	References
<b>(RQ1) Develop and strengthen dimensions of career adaptability</b>	Research question #1: How might a group career intervention, in the form of a public speaking workshop series, anchored in career construction theory and active learning, help students develop and strengthen dimensions of career adaptability (Confidence, Curiosity, Control, Concern)?	8	61
1. <i>(Theme) Nurturing Self-Efficacy and Confidence Through facing Challenges &amp; Taking Risks</i>	<b>CONFIDENCE:</b> This theme centres around the commonly expressed way in which the workshops served as an opportunity to experience a sense of self-efficacy/confidence. Participants voiced their experience around coping with challenges and setbacks in the process, taking risks and believing in their own abilities.	6	18
Code 1.1: Confidence and belief in self increased from workshops	Refers to participants talking about how participating in the public speaking workshop series contributed in a positive way to their confidence and a renewed sense of self-efficacy around ability.	6	14
Code 1.2: Experience increased courage to speak up and connect with others	Refers to experiencing an increase in courage through the process of connecting with others by speaking and listening. Also refers to a transformation in self-concept as a leader, with less fear to confront challenges.	3	3
Code 1.3: Speaking built trust in self and increased confidence	Through processing a life motto, learned to trust personal values and discover the self-confidence that comes from that.	1	1

Name	Description	Participants	References
2. <i>(Theme) Empowered Narratives: Gaining Control, Agency, and Future Shaping Through Shared Experiences</i>	<b>CONTROL:</b> This theme was developed through participant expressions of agency and control gained through the experience of processing the presentation topics, by speaking about them and by witnessing the courage of their peers. Implicit in these data excerpts was a heightened sense of control and belief that they have the power to shape their futures and to not be limited by external factors beyond their control.	6	12
Code 2.1: Experience served as motivation to take control	Refers to an increase in motivation, through the process, that they need to take ownership and be in their own agents in taking action to grow.	3	4
Code 2.2: Increased control by processing experience	Refers to an elevated sense of control from processing and speaking about experience, resulting in enhanced interest in making career plans and taking action.	3	4
Code 2.3 Life motto connected to control over thoughts and reactions	Relates to the idea of agency over personal thoughts and the control that comes from an inner direction of choice.	2	2
Code 2.4: Role model as motivation for control and responsibility	Emphasizes the value of deeply exploring and speaking about a role model in the way a role model influences choices and decisions in the future	2	2
3. <i>(Theme) Curiosity Unleashed: Embracing Open-Minded Exploration and Growth</i>	<b>CURIOSITY:</b> This theme was generated from repeated expressions relating to the importance of being open minded, to not limit themselves, and to not be invested in the outcome. Participants saw the value of being curious to explore where they came from, to assess where they were at, and to be curious about and explore new experiences.	6	18

Name	Description	Participants	References
Code 3.1: Importance of not being too invested in outcome - be curious & try new things	Refers to the discovery of the value of engaging in the process, rather than the outcome, and the impact of being curious in one's ability to adapt.	2	6
Code 3.2: Learning through this to have an open mind and explore	Refers to the realization that being open-minded, experimenting and not limiting one's path is important and encourages exploration.	4	9
Code 3.3: Role model engaging and motivating career interest	Refers to the realization, through exploring and speaking about a role model, that a role model can be a source of curiosity and reaffirm possible futures.	3	3
4. <i>(Theme)</i> <i>Motivational Reflections: Life Mottos, Role Models, and the Awakening to Future Engagement</i>	<b>CONCERN:</b> This theme was generated from the way participants viewed the process as a way of reflecting on the value of their life motto and role models in motivating them to be intentional about their decisions. Beyond the semantic, the latent messages in this theme centre around the “wake-up call” or “awakening” leading to the feeling of concern about being actively involved in their futures. Also apparent in this theme is the concept of resilience and the need to stay engaged and not complacent.	7	13
Code 4.1: Motto clarifying how to live life	Refers to the discovery, or rediscovery, through speaking about a motto or quote, of a personal value that underpins life decisions.	3	3
Code 4.2: Realized the need to take responsibility in life, today	Refers to the importance of owning their lives, of being intentional, having concern over outcomes of their actions, and be actively involved in their decisions.	3	5

Name	Description	Participants	References
and in the future			
Code 4.3: Role model guiding my life and influencing me to take action	Corresponds to their sense of how their role models contribute to their concern with how they live their life, take action and how speaking about it elevated this.	5	5
<b>(RQ2) Transferability to Other Domains</b>	Based on answers to research question #1, how might participants view the transferability of the dimensions of career adaptability to other domains, now and into the future?	6	20
5. <i>(Theme) Empowered Vulnerability: Transcending Challenges and Fostering Self-Confidence for Future Pursuits</i>	This theme demonstrates the view of participants that, because of the safety and comfort created by this positive experience, there was a general feeling that the resulting self-confidence would likely transfer to other spaces, including pursuing career. Central to this theme is the opportunity to be vulnerable and to face a difficulty, allowing them to apply this immediately and in the future.	6	20
Code 5.1: Confidence transferring to other aspects of life	Reflecting on the workshop experience revealed a recognition that self-confidence will transfer beyond the workshop and will have value in other aspects of life.	6	18
Code 5.2: Importance of confidence in the work environment	Refers to seeing the importance of communication in future work environments and the possibilities that will arise from being a confident speaker.	2	2
<b>(RQ3) Self-Efficacy and Confidence to Explore Self and the World of Work</b>	In what ways might the workshop series impact participant's perception of their sense of self-efficacy and confidence to explore themselves and the world of work and their preferred futures?	7	41
6. <i>(Theme) Embracing</i>	This theme highlights the importance of exploration, experimentation, and open-	7	41

Name	Description	Participants	References
<i>Possible Futures, Personal Growth and Self-Discovery through Exploration</i>	mindfulness in various aspects of life, particularly in career choices and personal growth. The extracts emphasize the value of stepping outside of one's comfort zone, being open to new experiences, and embracing the opportunities for learning and self-discovery. The theme also touches upon the realization that mistakes and setbacks are part of the learning process and should be viewed as opportunities for growth.		
Code 6.1: Helped think about future career	Relates to the workshop series as a means through which to ask what kind of future they might like and also an opportunity try out possibilities, assess and reflect on their own stories and influences related to their choices.	3	3
Code 6.2: Learning something new about myself and discovering possibilities	Refers to the spark of discovery about oneself through engaging in the process and the impact on self-understanding and the urge to explore.	6	21
Code 6.3: Learning through this experience to have an open mind and explore skills and opportunities	Refers to the value of not having a narrow path and that being open-minded aligns to experimentation, trying things, discovering strengths and weaknesses, and exploring unplanned paths.	4	14
Code 6.4: Role model engaging and motivating career interest	Refers to the clarification of interests, values and career possibilities through exploring and speaking about a role model.	3	3
<b>(RQ4) Impact on participants of an active,</b>	What would be the impact on participants of an active, group-based career intervention relative	8	44



Name	Description	Participants	References
<b>group-based career intervention</b>	to other individual-based modalities, such as writing or 1-to-1 counselling?		
7. <i>(Theme) Fostering Growth and Connection Through Collective Support</i>	This theme combines the transformative power of a supportive group in a workshop format with the value of sharing personal experiences. It emphasizes embracing challenges, delivering emotionally charged presentations, and recognizing the impact of peer feedback. Ultimately, it highlights how collective support boosts confidence, facilitates personal growth, and makes a meaningful difference in facing challenges.	8	44
Code 7.1: Deeper learning by presenting versus writing	Represents the deep and meaningful impact of presenting the topics compared to just writing about it.	6	8
Code 7.2: Get out of comfort zone without being perfect	Represents the participants referring to sharing themselves, with the support of a group, as a way of practicing getting out of their comfort zone and to try things, make mistakes without needing to be perfect.	3	4
Code 7.3: Building Trust, Courage, and Empathy Through Group Connection and Shared Learning	Reflects the power of group dynamics in cultivating trust and community. Highlights the diverse benefits of group support, from enriching narratives to fostering empathy and promoting shared learning. Emphasizes the value of connection by acknowledging shared struggles, creating a supportive environment that encourages risk-taking, embracing mistakes, and facilitating learning	6	15
Code 7.4: Nurturing Depth, Vulnerability, and Self-Discovery in Interactive	Derives significance from peer support and feedback, where the interactive workshop format enhances learning depth compared to one-on-one experiences. It encompasses the impact of vulnerability, recognizing its value on self-concept when shared in a group setting.	6	14

Name	Description	Participants	References
Learning Environments			
Code 7.5: The connection to the group boosted confidence	Indicates, that for participants, there was an added benefit of connection and a further boost in self-confidence by being able to display that confidence to others.	2	3