

Studenthood: An ethnography of post-secondary student life

by
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Abstract

In this thesis, I argue that studenthood is a distinct phase of the life course for many Canadian youth. I argue that just as childhood and adolescence became new life course categories during the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively, Studenthood has recently emerged as a distinct life stage and subjectivity. Through ethnographic research at three Metro Vancouver post-secondary institutions, I explore how the shared activities of post-secondary students, the common environments in which they act, and the social discourses and relations they engage in contribute to this demarcated period in the life course. Life course theory and the related concepts of tacking and vital conjunctures allow me to explore student navigational strategies. A tacking model assists in rethinking what is often perceived as adolescent indecisiveness encapsulated as liminality. I further suggest that higher education marketing fosters an environment of student fragility that necessitates numerous institutionally sanctioned stress-relief practices.

Keywords: Studenthood; ethnography; post-secondary; marketing; fragility

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List of Acronyms

AMS	Alma Mater Society
BCIT	British Columbia Institute of Technology
DA	Daily activities
DC	Douglas College
PV	Photovoice
SFU	Simon Fraser University
UBC	University of British Columbia

1. Introducing studenthood

It was the end of a long dry summer in Metro Vancouver, and the 2017/18 academic year was just about to commence. The campuses of Douglas College, the University of British Columbia (UBC), and British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) were missing the usual flowing crowds of students, faculty, administrators, and maintenance staff, not yet returned from summer holidays.¹ In their place was a new, arriving population. On the morning of August 20th, 2017 UBC was beginning its annual Jumpstart international and out-of-province student orientation event. This is a week-long orientation period intended to help primarily, international and out-of-province first year students get acquainted with their new university home. On this day – the first day – events were dedicated to the in-migration of students to the on-campus dormitories.

Stepping off the 99 B-line bus at Student Blvd. loop, I began my trip to the south end of campus where the majority of student residences are located. My destination was the Jumpstart international and out-of-province student orientation event. Campus branding immediately became apparent as everything from lamppost banners to building signs and university maintenance vehicles bore the UBC insignia. Even the UBC crest embossed on the side of a Nalgene water bottle flashed by, attached to the hip of a passing jogger. Other than the occasional jogger, the campus seemed vacant and in an unusual state of rest – broken only by the excited, high-pitched chatter of a line of approximately 15 summer camp children dressed in matching, oversized t-shirts. Before getting too far into the center of campus, I made a quick detour into the Alma Mater Society (AMS) student union building (commonly referred to as the Nest) hoping to source a cup of coffee to shake off the early morning start. The usual wall of background-noise didn't hit me as I entered the vast atrium, and I was, instead, greeted with an eerie calm. The seats typically filled by students were empty, and the shops and food vendors bearing academic themed titles such as Uppercase Café and Honour Roll Sushi were closed. There was even generous, available space on the notice boards that

¹ I didn't attend BCIT Burnaby's orientation events; and therefore, cannot speak to the events that occurred. I did visit the campus twice in late August to arrange and later conduct an ethnographic interview with a member of the student council.

are normally overflowing with student postings. The only flyer that stood out was a call for a grocery checkout attendant, the flyer stating, “It’s literally the perfect student job”.

Slightly disappointed about the failed caffeine-seeking detour, I headed back outside into the beautiful, clear-sky day to continue onto the residences. While travelling along the wide cement walkways I noticed that UBC’s September Homecoming event was already being advertised, the ground-stake signs periodically stuck into the grass along the sides of the walkways. On my walk-through campus I caught snippets of some conversations. For instance, on Main Mall loop, I fell into stride with a family of three: a female student approximately 25-30-years-old and a man and woman who, from the content of their conversation, I took to be her parents. The family was touring the campus and having a conversation about the daughter’s education. The mother asked her if she was intending to complete her PhD after her masters, suggesting that “it [would] be hard, but get it done now while you are in the mode.” Continuing on, I came upon two middle-aged women; one dressed in a casual summer outfit of cream capris and a white blouse, the other in a dark blue pencil skirt and matching short-sleeve blouse. The women were discussing a UBC business-related event they were organizing and were trying to formulate a guest list. The women were trying to think of non-academic people they could invite – making the event appear less “academic centric.” Conversations such as these paired with individuals’ dress helped indicate people’s roles within this environment. Similarly, people’s gait and subtle behaviours were indicators of their level of familiarity with campus. There was an obvious difference between those who were well versed in UBC’s campus layout compared to those who were new and unfamiliar with campus grounds. The campus veterans had a seemingly unconscious confidence to their step – they were at ease in their environment compared to those who were unfamiliar with their surroundings. These campus newbies were wandering, taking their time to look at buildings, signs, and pathways, absorbing their environment. I passed more than one group of people bunched together on the walkway, facing a building and looking between it and their phones, trying to collectively determine whether or not they were in the right place.

Closing in on the student residence area and Jumpstart event, I noted an increased number people walking in the same direction, towing behind them one or more suitcases. I passed the Ponderosa Commons student residence where there was a group of three people with a trolley cart. The two girls and one guy were sitting on the

ground in the shade of the building, escaping the growing heat of the sun. This trio appeared to be in their early 20's and while they each had a light blue lanyard dangling from their short pockets, none of them were wearing shirts with UBC insignia. One of the girls was talking to the other two about her incorrect room assignment. She was going to have to temporarily move out tomorrow and was waiting for the call that would inform her on where she would be moving. She continued, calmly explaining that her current room didn't have a bed, but she had brought a sleeping bag with her from home. The person who did call her said they would bring her a mattress for tonight.

As I finally came upon the orientation command-center located in Bartlett & Braeburn House, I observed the well-organized event that was Jumpstart. Right from the start, a young woman dressed in a plastic, neon yellow safety vest, with clipboard in hand, stopped at each car, talking through the open window, asking the passengers if they knew where they were headed and offering directions if they were unsure. In the full parking lot across from Bartlett & Braeburn House parents, grandparents, siblings, and students were unloading from their vehicles enormous quantities of plastic containers, boxes and suitcases. I watched and listened as a middle-aged man leaned into the window of his Porsche SUV to address a very elderly man he referred to as "Dad", informing him they were going to his daughter's room but would be back shortly. Alongside the unloading families were multiple UBC Jumpstart student "volunteers" – smiling and very helpful. These worker bees were very energetic – practically jogging in an eager haste, back in forth between the cars and buildings, joking with one another as they went. While they may have been paid for their labour, these helpers, were referred to as "volunteers" by those in more authoritative positions. With walkie talkies held up to their faces, "We will get a volunteer to show you to your room". "We will get a volunteer to help unload your stuff" was repeated throughout the afternoon. The army of volunteers were identifiable in the un-loading frenzy by their bright blue t-shirts that read "I am UBC" across the chest. The volunteer's t-shirts also bore stick-on name tags, on which each person had written their name, academic year, faculty, and language fluencies. I overheard many of these volunteers sharing their own "move-in" stories and how because they enjoyed it so much they wanted to "give back."

While the stress of moving in, paperwork and uncertainty were clearly expressed on the parents' and students' faces, the majority were in high spirits, smiling, chatting and co-operating in the communal move-in effort. I lingered around the entrance of

Bartlett & Braeburn house and watched as stacked trolleys of clear plastic containers and plastic Home Sense™ and Bed Bath & Beyond™ bags containing, linen, clothing, books, picture frames with smiling faces, lamps, laundry baskets with soap, and foldable drying racks roll by. If I was noticed, I may have appeared as a participant in this migration – possibly taking a break from sisterly duties. The powder-blue lanyards with white lettering reading "Student Housing and Hospitality" were streaming from the pockets of the students moving in. This was similar to the lanyard placement I had noticed in front of Ponderosa Commons. Curious why the lanyards that are intended to be worn around the neck were, instead, in shorts pockets, I did some rudimentary Google searching, and found many pop culture articles suggesting that wearing the lanyard around the neck was a sign of someone's freshman status. I even found an online student newspaper article by a Butler University student listing 17, slightly humorous examples (with pictures) that demonstrated different ways to wear one's keys and student ID bearing lanyard. Only two placements involved the lanyard around the student's neck (Beck, 2017). Another online student blog post from University of Pennsylvania entitled "Seven ways to avoid looking like a freshman" echoed the same message – if you want to avoid looking like a freshman, don't wear your key and ID bearing lanyard around your neck.

An additional article from the Huffington Post titled "How not to be THAT freshman" elaborated on the different practices of first year university students. This was an article submitted by *Her Campus*, a lifestyle and 'survival' blog aimed at university students that has common-sense advice for everything from love, health, style, and "after college life." Again, the number 1 rule dictates lanyard placement, along with a bit of product marketing.

Nothing screams "freshman" more than wearing one around your neck wherever you go. Yes, getting your new school ID is super exciting. But trust us, it will be perfectly safe in your backpack, wallet, or pocket! If you want to keep your ID readily accessible, *Vera Bradley's Zip ID case* and *Merona's Hard Case Wallet* are great options to try.

I thought it interesting that I didn't see any parents in possession of the lanyard strung residence key cards – it was always the student who had possession of their keys. It was the student who oversaw their move-in, but at the same time did little of the actual physical labour and heavy lifting. Instead, they assumed the role of supervisor or director. It was the student's friends, siblings, parents and volunteers who were doing

most of the physical labour – conferring with the student as to where certain items were, what they wanted done with them, and what activities their evening schedule contained. This is illustrative of the push-pull relationship students experience between adult-like responsibilities and remaining dependent on parents and other figures of authority.

Curious as to where the keepers and distributors of the blue lanyards were stationed, I headed into Bartlett and Braeburn, following the many signs directing people to the appropriate areas in the large atrium. The blue balloons with white block lettering that read "Student Housing and Hospitality" immediately told me who was running this show. The activity was calmer and more organized on the inside of the building. Parents were sneaking pictures of their children (now post-secondary students) waiting in line at the check-in counter. At this counter a pair of neatly dressed, unruffled volunteers were sifting through pre-organized plastic bins that contained alphabetized cream-colored folders containing orientation information, room assignments and keys. Stapled to the front of a few of these orientation packages was a small, white piece of paper with typed writing that read "linen package".



Figure 1.1. Momentary peace at UBC's Jumpstart check-in counter, August 20th, 2017. The alphabetically ordered plastic bins held Jumpstart packages containing student move-in information and keys.

I noted that students collected their own packages while the people who accompanied them waited outside of the sectioned off serpentine line. Still, the guardians hovered near enough to jump in and help when they saw their charge was confused. Immediately following the housing package retrieval, the guardian and student had the option to attend the initial orientation session held in a meeting room just to the right of the check-in counter. UBC Jumpstart volunteers presented a 15-minute PowerPoint that provided the students and their family members with the information meant to help them make it through the next 24hrs. The basic information included; how

to use the residence key cards, the dining hall hours, how to purchase food with their student cards, and where to find people to help with personal and logistical problems. Hanging on one of the walls in this meeting room was a large, printed calendar that outlined the Jumpstart week's schedule. This wall-sized schedule wasn't being referenced as much as I thought it would have because the move-in packages already contained this information and the students and parents were more concerned about the immediate task of unloading their vehicles and getting settled into rooms. I continued to migrate around the different residences as people arrived, unloaded, and left. During these rounds I observed a few parties walking around – one parent and student group were heading in the direction of north campus – the student holding a printed paper map that had specific campus buildings circled in fine red marker. Passing another wandering party, I overheard a female laugh and jokingly exclaim, "I feel like Dora the Explorer" flapping her map towards her friends and wiggling the mauve Herschel backpack slung over her shoulders. The campus, nay, global popularity of Herschel backpacks could be attributed the narrative Herschel Supply Co. embodies, rather than a perceived quality difference. Carried on the backs of Herschel wearers is a story that involves a unique combination of a romanticized North American ruggedness with a contemporary urban utility. The backpack ruggedness stems from the small town in Saskatchewan that is the company's namesake. The urban utility and trendy ideals can be partially attributed to social media's proliferation of consumer goods. Herschel isn't exempt from the numerous companies that have a social media presence – their Instagram page a carefully curated collection of images of their products. The primary targets of these images are the 'traveling consumers' a category which undoubtedly includes students (Deshpande, 2016; Amit, 2011).

Similar to the story Herschel is selling, post-secondary institutions like UBC build their branding on abstract, culturally generated, lifestyle ideals that contain limited connections to manifest functions (Chapleo, 2011). Course viewbooks, dormitory pamphlets, and the plethora of student service advertisements depict images of smiling, studious, culturally diverse individuals. The confident, authoritative language used in conjunction with these images contains both subversive and overtly optimistic messages – using multiple adjectives to describe the facets of "the university experience". For instance, campus lamppost banners featuring different faculties contain images associated with the academic discipline along with an inspirational, thought provoking

quote. For example, the Faculty of Science's banner features an image of a female in a white laboratory coat looking into a microscope. The accompanying quotes poses an inspiring question – "How do we solve the world's greatest challenges? Together". The extent of my interpretation and measurement of the effectiveness of institutional branding is based on casual, observation of the frequency the institution's insignia appears both on and off their respective campus. The primary importance of higher education institutional branding is that it plays into the larger notion of students as consumers. For many students (especially those living in off-campus housing), post-sec introduces *spending* independence with the accompanied responsibility of acquiring personal, everyday commodities such as food, cleaning supplies and hygiene products. Students are newly responsible for not only the acquisition of these products, but the decision process behind product selection. In a subsequent chapter I will use Johan Nordensvärd's interpretation of students *as managers* and relatives *as co-consumers* to further illustrate the close connection between studenthood and the marketizing of higher education (2011).

Orientation week Douglas College in New Westminster looked quite different from the events at UBC, primarily due to the absence of campus residence halls at this much smaller and less elite post-secondary institution. Fewer and smaller events lacked the grandiose execution of the UBC welcome events. In the mid-afternoon of September 1st, 2017 new Douglas College students were simply carrying books and backpacks on campus instead of hauling boxes and rolling suitcases. The sidewalk along the steep walk uphill from the New Westminster Skytrain station was lined with plastic signs stuck into the ground with messages such as "We've missed you" and "Exciting year ahead" written in a variety of languages.



Figure 1.2. A “Welcome Back” walkway at Douglas College, September 1st, 2017.

The foyer of Douglas College’s New Westminster campus building was decorated with shiny silver, helium-filled balloon letters, spelling out a squiggled “Welcome,” above a large plastic statue of the letters DO. This monumental logo taking up valuable atrium space represented Douglas College’s DO orientation program and remained in the atrium for the entire orientation week. Placed all over these monumental block letters were Post-it™ notes with hand-written academic tips and study strategies. These were likely written by orientation staff, rather than, students and faculty. At 2pm on September 1st (the first day of classes) the atrium was sparsely populated, with more people in the downstairs bookstore line-up than there were in the atrium. The approximately 30-40 people in the atrium looked to be in their mid 20s and were partaking in various activities; some were eating and reading, others simply passing through the atrium on their way to other destinations. Large TV screens hung from the walls displayed messages and practical information such as security lock down drill notifications and tips on how to find courses.

Almost 2 weeks later on Wednesday September 13th, 2018, the Douglas College Student Union held their welcome back pancake breakfast beginning at 8am. When I arrived just after 8am, very few people were in the foyer of the atrium. At this early hour, most of the people on campus had places to go, and thus, either ignored the pancake station giving the table a wide berth or passed by quickly with a polite shake of their head. The area where the student union had set up the buffet style pancake serving station is the main entrance to the campus’s sole building. This meant that majority of students coming to campus that day had to pass through the foyer and past the pancake breakfast to make it to classes. Most of the people who did take a plate of pancakes only

did so after they were verbally encouraged and coaxed by the student union members who were serving and those who were snagged and given some pancakes were visibly uncomfortable with the situation, quickly thanking the servers for the offering of warm, sweet carbohydrates, and ending the social interaction as quickly as possible. Nearing 10:00am the campus population grew and as clusters of people started forming at the pancake station, more people joined in. Common to most campus events there was contemporary pop and hip-hop music blaring from large speakers hung from the atrium ceiling. The music was loud enough that people were talking in raised voices and the pancake distributors were resorting to hand gestures – holding outstretched plates of stacked pancakes to passing students. The most enthusiastic group of people to graciously receive the DSU's offering of pancakes was DC women's basketball team that emerged slightly sweaty and still in their practice pinnies and shorts from the gym entrance. Still a little flush, the basketball players chatted together while balancing plates of pancakes on their knees, seated on the atrium steps.

My purpose in describing UBC and Douglas College's 2017 orientation events is that these events serve as an effective introduction to my research into the phenomenon of "studenthood" – which I identify as an emerging phase in the life course of some youth. In this thesis, I argue that Studenthood is a distinct phase of the life course for many Canadian youth. I argue that just as childhood and adolescence became new life course categories during the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively, Studenthood has recently emerged as a distinct life stage and subjectivity. Through ethnographic research at three Metro Vancouver post-secondary institutions, I explore how the shared activities of post-secondary students, the common environments in which they act, and the social discourses and relations they engage in contribute to this demarcated period in the life course. Life course theory and the related concepts of tacking and vital conjunctures allow me to explore student navigational strategies (Johnson-Hanks, 2002). A tacking model assists in rethinking what is often perceived as adolescent indecisiveness encapsulated as liminality (Amit and Knowles 2016). I further suggest that higher education marketing fosters an environment of student fragility that necessitates numerous institutionally sanctioned stress-relief practices. Postsecondary enrolment in Canadian public colleges and universities has been on the rise since the mid 20th century. This trend is observable in census data, producing statistical analysis and numerical representation to inform public policy makers. By taking a qualitative approach

I have focused on individualistic and cultural factors stimulating actions and behaviours influencing life course transitions.

Each chapter of this thesis contributes an important facet required to analyze and understand the construction of studenthood. Each contains ethnographic details from my fieldnotes of on-site observations, and evidence stemming from participant provided data and interview transcripts. Deviating from conventional organization, I have chosen to fold my theoretical perspectives and literature review into the appropriate chapters in which they apply. Chapter two, *Methods*, details the four data collection activities that formed the core of my research: unobtrusive observations, ethnographic and informational interviews, daily activities collection, and Photovoice collection. These data are presented in chronological order, guiding the reader through the 5-month (August to December 2017) data collection period. Chapter three, *Studenthood and consumerism: The marketing of higher education* focuses on the marketing of post-secondary education and the three roles students occupy relative to the idea of 'academics-as-capital'. Chapter Four, *Student fragility*, begins by focusing on the continuance and effect of "undergraduate cynicism." "Undergraduate cynicism" is a term coined by Michael Moffatt (1989) to describe and characterize a specific type of discourse exclusive to students. I use this concept to examine the relatively recent popular portrayal of students as fragile actors. Evidence explaining this representation stems from multiple student operated programs dedicated to alleviating perceived hardships and stressors specific to students. Chapter Five, *Navigating studenthood*, introduces Vered Amit and Caroline Knowles (2017) concept of tacking. I have used this modality to illustrate studenthood's situation within a contemporary understanding of life course theory (Elder, 1994). The sixth and final chapter, *Conclusion*, is an ethnographic account of the end of semester events I participated in at UBC. This chapter also offers a summative explanation of studenthood, connecting the various chapters in creation of a holistic understanding. The qualitative research attempts to understand how students individually and collectively navigate post-secondary education.

2. Methods

My research is ethnographic in that it is aimed at understanding studenthood from the perspectives of students. My work attempts to elucidate the activities students participate in, the environments in which they act, and the social discourse and relations they engage in as *students*. I began conducting fieldwork in August of 2017 at three post-secondary institutions in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Four data collection activities formed the core of my research: unobtrusive observations, ethnographic and informational interviews, daily activities collection, and photovoice collection.

I chose the University of British Columbia (UBC), British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), and Douglas College (DO) as the sites for my research. I selected these institutions because they differ in terms of academic programs, institution size, and level of instruction. At each of the post-secondary institutes, I regularly walked around the campus visiting student union buildings, libraries, faculty buildings, cafeterias, campus cafes, and recreational areas. Visiting these sites enabled me to observe students' everyday lived experiences – their day-to-day practices, routine actions and behaviours. I observed commuting both to, from, and on campus, management of everyday tasks, material objects including dress, and social interactions. My observational fieldwork began just before the start of the semester and continued through final examinations in December. Usually, I began the day in the student union building where I could get coffee and decide where I wanted to go. I could also browse the many notice boards for events, taking note of any activities occurring that day. Coffee and cellphone in hand, I would start off on the main artery routes or hallways in the case of Douglas, through campus, eventually spiraling out onto the smaller roads and pathways to the edges of the school grounds. This walking pattern enabled me to explore different areas of campus such as the clusters of faculty assigned buildings. Reflecting on this, the assistance of a bike would have made familiarizing myself with UBC's massive campus more efficient.

With a backpack, rain jacket, coffee and a cellphone I fit right in. I even purchased a blue and yellow UBC thunderbirds t-shirt – the unofficial student uniform – further blending me into UBC's student population. My integration into the UBC student

body was so complete that one evening in October, as I was walking down the crowded University Blvd bus loop heading home, I was stopped by a formally dressed elderly couple. They were searching for the alumni building and were hoping I could provide some directions. Fortunately, after a month of roaming the campus, I confidently pointed in the direction I had just come from and told them that the building they were looking for was at the end of the walkway and to the right.

I blended into the student body well – partly due to my age, appearance, and backpack, coffee, and iPhone. This also resulted in constant bombardment by the various booth clerks I passed in the student union buildings. Student clubs, external enterprises, and volunteer groups all attempted to recruit passing students, or at the very least, to distribute their logo bearing pens, stickers, magnets, coupons and brochures. During orientation week at BCIT, even the Bank of Montreal (BMO) booth tender passionately attempted to sign me up for a student account and credit card. Even when I informed the BMO rep I didn't attend BCIT but was in fact a student attending a different university, the clerk continued to try and persuade me to sign-up. I also followed each institution on social media platforms such as Snap Chat and Instagram. These accounts featured student events such as Douglas College's "DO" week-long orientation, "Welcome Back" pancake breakfast, and clubs day. The Snap Chat stories presenting the campus events mirrored and embodied the event descriptions offered by the Douglas College recruiters during my informational interviews.

I conducted two informational interviews and two ethnographic interviews at the beginning of the fall semester. The informational interviews were with recruiters from Douglas College. These interviews focused on their own educational experiences, and how they came into their present employment. The interviews also covered their roles as recruiters, and their perspectives on student activities, educational experiences, life goals and expectations. For instance, Kelsey's² explanation of Douglas College's "To DO" events informed my field observations:

This year we integrated daily, one-hour chunks throughout orientation week which were called the "To DO" fair. In the "To DO" fair [students] had a list and [they] checked things off such as connecting to Wi-Fi and getting their student ID. We do these events to ensure that [the students] feel they

² Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of participants. See Appendix A for full participant list detailing roles and institutional affiliation.

have the support they need ... It's funny, because we know what they really need to do is make a friend. They need a familiar face. They need to be like "*That's Kelsey from the ONS and if I have a hard time I can go talk to her*" [or] "*That's so-an-so, and she is gona be in my psych 1000 class here.*"

The ethnographic interviews were with Kate, a third year, BCIT, Architectural Science student, and Henry a fourth year, UBC, Mining and Mineral Process Engineering student. The interviews were approximately half an hour long and occurred at the students' respective institutions. The interviews addressed their educational experiences, life goals and expectations, social activities, and current living accommodations. These initial ethnographic interviews were informative in that they helped me shape the types of questions I asked during the daily activity data collection. For example, both Kate and Henry discussed the influence and importance of their friend-groups in maintaining a balance between their academic performance and social needs.

L: Do you go out much? Like at night?

K: I actually do with my school friends, [but] not with my outside of school friends. It's really weird because we're supposed to be busy but at the same time we're like ... "We need a drink. Let's go out". I remember last year we had a five-week streak where we went out after working late on Friday nights.

L: So, you mostly go out with your school friends ... are they from the same program?

K: Yah [we're] all from the same program because we have classes together all day and then we study together all night. So, you get really close.

Dialogue such as this influenced the types of daily activity questions I employed. For instance, I included a few questions asking participants about who they were interacting with and what they were doing with them.

I began recruiting participants during the second week of classes, posting flyers in communal areas on all three campuses. I had prepared separate flyers for both the daily activities and photovoice, which listed activity specific details, inclusion criteria, contact information, and the financial compensation of twenty dollars. Over the course of a week, I travelled to each campus, equipped with stacks of flyers and tape that never seemed to cooperate, and always seemed to run out. The primary hosts of the recruitment flyers were wooden and fiberglass telephone poles located around the bus

terminals at UBC, and that lined the sidewalk at Douglas College and BCIT. These poles, as rudimentary as it seems, were prime real-estate for colorful print advertisements and posters announcing upcoming parties, calls for volunteers, housing opportunities, clubs to join, and tutors offering editing services.

At UBC, I began my flyering along the Student Union Boulevard bus loop by Gage dormitory, and slowly made my way to the University Blvd bus loop. I wanted to ensure that my flyers were located where both commuting students and campus residents would see them. While posting flyers, onlookers occasionally peered up from their phones to observe what I was doing, but no one stopped to formally inquire. The only interaction I had with someone while posting my flyers occurred at UBC. I had finished modestly flyering the area surrounding the Student Union Building when I was joined by a young male on a bike who was, like me, going from pole to pole, taping up posters. As we both evaluated the same pole, vying for a good flyer spot, he turned to me and casually stated, *“If you agree not to cover mine, I won’t cover yours”*. To this I gladly agreed, as I was already mildly concerned that within a day or two my flyers would be obscured by a layering of new ones. Most of the poles already bore an inch-thick wrap of old posters – the older flyers wrinkled and faded from consecutive soakings of rain. Similar to the growth of trees – the most recent flyers were taped, stapled and pinned to the outside, with the inner layers the oldest. My flyers joined the ranks of those newest, yet to be water stained and shredded by the wind. After this encounter I carried on, finishing near the center of campus along Main Mall Road near the Sauder School of Business. As I walked back to the bus loop to catch the 99 B-line bus home, the familiar ding-dong of an incoming email rang through the pocket of my rain jacket – I had received the first response.

Over the following days, I received close to 30 emails, text messages, and phone calls inquiring about the study. People requested more information, and some wanted to sign up right away. I had not anticipated this number of responses and immediately prepared a standard email that provided additional information about the study and clear instructions on how to proceed if they were indeed interested in participating. Within one

week of posting the flyers, I had arranged separate initial meetings with 16 potential participants from all three institutions.³

The initial, one-on-one meetings were held at the participants' respective institution – primarily in the Student union building common areas. Via email, I had arranged specific meeting locations and instructions, so the participant could easily locate me. For example, I detailed what I was wearing and what items I had with me such as a black jacket with a red pack, a lime green Nalgene water bottle and a bunch of multicolored file folders. While waiting for the participant, I would sit at the agreed upon location observing my surroundings and re-reading my notes. At Douglas College, I met participants across from the Tim Hortons in the cafeteria area. The combined sounds of conversations, cash registers opening and closing, coffee grinders crunching, and steamers with low whistles played as background noise to almost every meeting. With each participant I introduced myself through what were sometimes slightly awkward greetings. Within a few minutes into the meeting, the prospective participant relaxed and softened into casual conversation, quickly scanning the consent form I was verbally reciting. When we arrived at the page asking for a pseudonym, I was surprised that many participants struggled to think of a proxy name and for many, I ended up selecting one for them. During these initial meetings, after the participant had given consent, we took the time to add each other on our WhatsApp contact list. This connection was further solidified by initiating a private WhatsApp conversation thread. For both Daily Activities and Photovoice participants, this conversation thread would act as the catalyst for the activity, beginning on Sunday, October 1st.

Daily Activities (DA) data collection involved gathering brief student activities reports over the course of one month. Beginning October 1st, 2017, I commenced sending my six DA participants, 2 from Douglas College and 4 from UBC, a set of pre-determined questions at random times between the hours of 10am and 8pm. Over the course of one month I sent each participant 10 sets of three questions, totalling 30 questions asked of each participant. The questions focused on the participant's everyday activities and provided information about the activities students engage in, who they spend time with, and the environments in which they act. For instance, question set No.2 [Q: 4-6], sent during the evening of Friday, Oct 6th, 2017 asked the following three

³ UBC had the largest initial flyer response rate.

questions: What have you done today that *is* school related? What have you done today that was non-school related? What are your plans for this weekend? Lauren responded to the questions with the following:

A4: I have been at school since 11:30am today. I had the group portion of my biology midterm and wrote a math quiz.

A5: During my breaks, I was studying for tests. I haven't done much non-school stuff.

A6: My weekend plans are; going to eat dinner with friends, studying for my chemistry midterm this Tuesday, and going to a Thanksgiving dinner with my family & cousins :)

In combination with Photovoice, daily activities provided context to the notion of 'student life' through identification of student activities, movements, and peer relations. Lauren's responses indicate the environment she spent the majority of her day in, the type of peers she was with, and where, what, and who she was going to spend her weekend with. Other students responded with similar descriptions but varied in levels of detail. For example, Adrian responded to the same set of question with the following response.

A4: I have been in classes, went to the library, and went to a DSU meeting.

A5: I met with some friends and we went to their house to drink a beer.

A6: This weekend I'm going to Chilliwack to visit with family.

During the month-long run of daily activities, I was discouraged by one sentence answers, however, during the follow-up interviews those nuggets of information students provided acted as catalyst into larger discussions. For instance, Adrian and talked about his family in Chilliwack and how this influenced his decision to study in the Lower Mainland of B.C. We also talked about his failed involvement in the DSU (Douglas College Student Union). Adrian originally thought participation in the DSU was going to be a great way to meet new people, however, halfway through the semester he was still hadn't heard back from them regarding volunteer opportunities. The answers to DA questions helped me to form a collective impression of facets (homework, classes, examinations, peers, and social life) that construct and shape student life.

Another set of questions included the following: Where are you? What are you doing? If you are with someone, what is your relationship to that person? Participants were not required to respond immediately but were instructed to respond at the next appropriate time – as to not disturb classes or other important activities. To maintain the privacy of people who were not part of my study, I instructed participants to refrain from naming any third-party member(s) and they could instead respond with their relationship to the person(s). For instance, Figure 1, presents Louis’s responses to the first set of questions asked on October 2nd, 2017.

Date/Time	Question Set	Responses -- [1:03 PM, 10/2/2017]
Set #1 [Q's 1-3] 10/02/2017 (noon)	Q1. Where are you and what are you doing? Q2. If you are with someone, what is your relation to that person? Q3. What will you be doing later today?	A1: I was in <u>Swedish [language] class</u> going over the homework we had over the weekend. A2: I was with my classmates in the class & the professor. A3: Later today I will be finishing my last class (<u>Poly-sci</u>). Then [I'm] going to run stairs with my <u>ski team</u> and probably after that [I'll] be going to the <u>Scandinavian club's</u> first get-together with my friends, & girlfriend.

Figure 2.1. Louis’s responses to DA question set No. 1, sent in the afternoon of October 2nd, 2017.

During DA follow-up sessions, the participant and I reviewed the IM (instant messaging) transcription. These sessions were opportunities for participants to clarify and expand on the meanings the activities held for them. Participant responses, such as Louis’s in Figure 1, helped generate participant-specific topics of discussion for the follow-up interview. The underlined phrases in Figure 1 indicate the topics that I integrated specifically into Louis’s follow-up interview. I found this data collection method efficient in documenting the intimate, detailed individuality and life-event connectivity. Life course decisions and the participants’ reasoning behind them became apparent during the interviews. For instance, when Louis and I discussed his extensive experience and passion for alpine skiing, the conversation turned toward Louis’s relationship with his Swedish ski coach, revealing the connection between his athletic passion and language class.

I had a Swedish ski coach for a while who was like a mentor [to me]. So, when [I] was picking my electives, I was like, “Meh, I’ll take Swedish.” I needed a language course – It’s pretty cool, no one takes Swedish.

My final data collection activity was a modified version of Photovoice (PV). Photovoice is a subject-led data collection method used to document and reflect reality.

The elements of this frequently participatory action research (PAR) method include; seeking information provided by participants, focusing on their agency, and eliciting in-depth interviews that enables the participant to actively take part in the research process (Drew et al. 2010). PV is traditionally used to collect and communicate individual expertise and then share that knowledge in a group setting, promoting collaboration and group reflection (Wang et al. 1998). This data collection method is widely used in public health research with marginalized populations to enable participants to take an active role in the data collection and analysis. Caroline Wang, Jennifer Cash, and Lisa Powers applied this method when conducting their 1999 Language of Light Photovoice project, creating an opportunity for dialogue among the individuals who frequented community shelters in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Equipped with Holga reusable cameras, the men and women of this marginalized population became the forces and voices that counteracted the stereotypes of homelessness (Wang et al. 2000). Wang along with Mary Ann Burris and Xiang Yue Ping (1996) conducted Photo Novella, another name for Photovoice, with women in rural areas of developing countries. The theoretical basis for Photovoice lies in feminist theory and educational empowerment (Wang et al. 1996). In the early 1990s, Wang, Burris, and Ping conducted Photo Novella with 62 Chinese village women in Southwestern China. The three main goals of the project were to: empower women, collect *their* knowledge about *their* health status, and use it to update the status of women's health in rural China: and, to inform policymakers of vital women's health issues in rural China (Wang et al, 1996).

I used a modified version of Photovoice to capture visual documentation and expression of the realities of studenthood – *by students*. Beginning on October 1st, 2017, seven participants (2 from BCIT and 5 from UBC) were asked to take 1-3 photographs per day and text them to me via a private WhatsApp conversation thread. I did not have any Douglas College participants for this activity because no Douglas College students responded to my photovoice advertisements. Participants completed this activity for two weeks, sending their final photographs on October 14th, 2017. The participants were encouraged to focus on their everyday encounters, experiences, and the aspects of life that are *significant to them*. This included their daily commute, food and product consumption, leisure activities, and academic or home environments. It is important to note that the instructions provided to daily activity and photovoice participants might have impacted what was covered and what may not have emerged. For instance, PV

participants couldn't take photographs in environments that didn't allow the use of phones.

Self images (selfies) are prominent in North American youth and young adult culture. Therefore, I considered it reasonable to allow participants to send photos that included their faces or other identifiable features such as piercings and tattoos.⁴ Throughout the two weeks, I observed the photos participants sent and uploaded them into a password-protected computer file. On average, participants sent two photos each day, creating a collection average of 28 photos per participant. These photos were coded using the first four letters of the participants' pseudonyms and a number corresponding to the order the photos were sent in. Common photographic content included: campus classrooms and buildings, dorm room views, modes of transportation, coffee and fast-food, non-academic activities/events, and study set-ups. I am using the phrase "study set-up" to describe numerous photographs that depict student arrangements of laptops, notebooks, textbooks, and beverages. I am using a phrase to describe this aspect of student culture because, like an office worker's desk, students are setting up work stations when conducting both academic work and when partaking in 'busy work'. Some students included brief captions along with their photos, providing a description or explanation of the photos content.

⁴ Pictures containing identifiable features of any third-party members have been blurred to protect their identity. For example, Chapter Four, Figure Five.

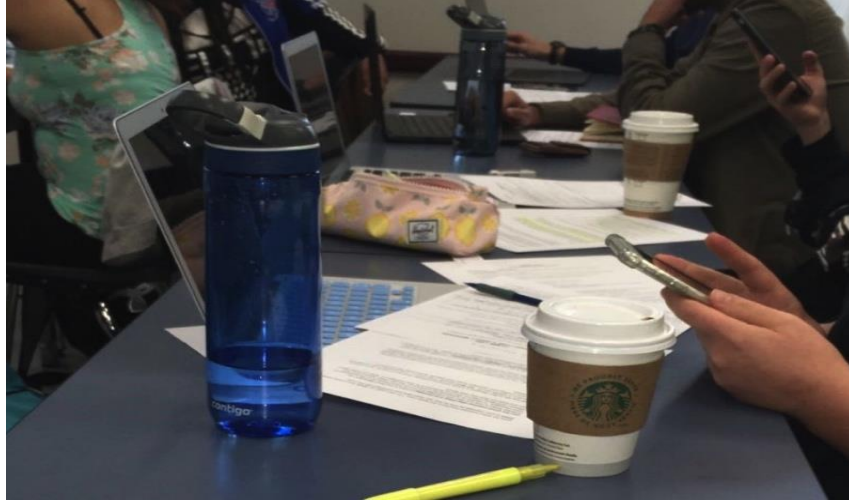


Figure 2.2. A photovoice image (CASS27) depicting multiple student “study set-up”, sent in the afternoon on October 13th, 2017. “Here, every student [is] doing what students do. You know ... everyone has water, everyone has coffee. Everyone has a notebook. Everyone has notes. Even I have water. Coffee, coffee, I had coffee as well. And then it’s notebooks and notes. Highlighters, everything ... it’s our life every day” (Cassie 2017).

After the image collection period, I held one-on-one, audio-recorded, follow-up interviews with each participant. During follow up interviews, the photos served as prompts to stimulate conversation and reflection. This also provided the opportunity for participants to clarify and expand on the meaning activities held for them. The photos proved to be excellent prompts for discussion and eased participants into talking about details of their everyday lives.

I chose to use WhatsApp’s IM to carry-out both daily activities and photovoice for practicality and security. An individual’s cellphone has become an appendage – a third arm extension of self that is performed on social media platforms and within conversations. Every student recruited had a personal cellphone they used constantly, and all except one participant already had a WhatsApp instant messaging account. Using WhatsApp minimized activity preparation and increased the probability that participants would carry-out the activity until the end. Using IM on mobile devices meant that DA and PV collection could occur 24hrs a day in almost any location.⁵ The participants were able to take in-the-moment photos using their cellphone cameras and

⁵ Jamie went camping for the Thanksgiving long weekend (October 6th - 9th) and was out of cell-range for two days. She sent me her pictures from the missed days when she returned home.

send them to me instantly – resulting in photos that were less staged. It also meant that I could receive the photos anywhere, instantly – on the bus, at school, and at home. Using WhatsApp enabled me to continue the DA and PV activities even when I travelled to Ontario to spend the Thanksgiving long weekend with my family. While out of province, I was able to receive photographs from the PV participants and send questions to the DA participants. I also chose WhatsApp because of its security features. Unlike Facebook and Instagram, WhatsApp doesn't store messages on their servers once they are delivered to the recipient, nor are they shared with any third parties.⁶ Also, the app uses end-to-end encryption that ensures that only the sender and the recipient can read what is sent (including pictures, videos and text). In most cases, the conversation threads and media files can only be found on the student recipients' devices.

To analyze the data, I transferred and converted the WhatsApp conversation threads containing DA answers and PV pictures into PDF and JPG files on my laptop. I then organized these into participant specific files for which I created catalogues. The catalogues organized the data chronologically, creating a storyboard for each participant. PV catalogues contain the date, photo code, initial participant comments that accompanied the image, photo content, and participants comments from the follow-up interview. For example, Figure 3 displays the catalog entry for Penny's 5th photograph, detailing and organizing the information pertinent to the image.

Date	Code	P Initial Comment	Photo Content	P Interview Comments
10-02 2017	PAND05	Late to class.	This is a blurry birds-eye-view of a cement walkway. The participant explained that the photo's blurriness was intentional – representing rushing between morning classes.	"[Going to] morning classes." (Pg.10 of interview).

Figure 2.3. Example of a photovoice catalogue entry for image PAND05. Catalogue entry included; date photo was received, image code, accompanying participant comments, description of photo content, and follow-up interview comments pertaining to the photo.

⁶ WhatsApp's headquarters and Data Center (servers) are located in California, USA. Messages (chats) are saved on the individual's phone and not on WhatsApp servers. Messages remain on WhatsApp servers only for the period of time that it takes to be delivered to the receiving phone. This might take a while when that phone is out reach of internet or is turned off. If the message is on the WhatsApp server for more than 30 days, it's deleted from the server.

Daily activities analysis was handled much the same as PV. The conversation threads were downloaded into PDF scripts. I edited these scripts into catalogues from which I made notes on interesting answers – creating participant specific discussion topics that I would cover during the follow-up interviews. The follow-up interviews compile the DA and PV collections, acting as mini roadmaps directing me through their picture storyboards, and month-long activities. I manually coded these interviews for three themes; tacking maneuvers, reference to future-self, and student material/non-material culture. These themes emerged from patterns in photo content and discussion during interview sessions. The follow-up interviews provided clarity and reason for the PV photos and DA answers received. Going forward, I would alter the running-time of the activities – in fact, I would switch the activities running durations. I would have daily activities run for two weeks with question sent daily. This would provide a narrow, detailed scope of what students were doing over a 2-week period. I would run Photovoice for a month with participants sending photos every other day. My reasoning for this is supported by Jamie’s answer when she was asked if anything was missing from her collection. Jamie replied, “I think this is a period when my life was a little less exciting. I went and did a lot of traveling [later] but I didn’t get to feature those photos here.”

The DA and PV collections aided the interviewing process for several very practical reasons. Firstly, they acted as prompts during the face-to-face interviews and eased the participant’s (and my) nerves. Secondly, they helped jog many participant’s memories about what they did over the past weeks. When going through the DA catalogues and PV photos, it was common that the participant would launch into a detailed dialogue describing photograph content or explaining a DA answer. This meant I was asking fewer ‘practical’ questions and dedicated more time to participant-unearthed, topics of conversation. Thirdly, many images and DA responses contained snippets of detail that further solidified my understanding of the participant’s sense of self. For instance, Jenny included an image of her physical calendar. On her calendar there are entries such as “apply for position”, “Free Geek”, and “dance”. When Jenny and I came to this photo during the follow-up interview, we discussed the significance of each appointment. The “dance” entry is interesting:

L: And do you think there is anything missing from the collection?
 Anything you would have wanted to add?

J: Yeah! I actually dance twice a week and I forgot to take pictures of that.

Jenny did include her pastime activity in the collection, just not in the obvious form. The above combination of photograph and dialogue demonstrates how this method facilitated additional conversation that might not have surfaced organically.

The photovoice and daily activities data collection methods were very effective in capturing student perspectives on the activities they participate in, the environments in which they act, and the social discourse and relations they engage in as students. Photovoice especially opened a space for students to discuss topics that were of importance to them. The main value of the two activities was that they allowed the participants to decide how to represent themselves.

3. Studenthood and consumerism: Marketing higher education

In Canada, for the 2015/16 academic year, post-secondary enrollment in both part-time and full-time university and college programs that met the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) totalled 2,034,957 students. Of this, 1,785,657 are Canadian students, 221,867 are international students, with the status of 27,438 students unrecorded (Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0018-01). Marketing of higher education and the targeting of student demographic can be traced to the changing concept of youth that began in the late 20th century and has since influenced Western societies understanding and practice of the life course.

In the late 19th century, concerns about youth began to emerge – youth were viewed as a wandering, disorderly population in need of institutional, regulated guidance. “Such concern about youth and social (dis)order led to the extensive development of a range of institutions, ideologies, and scientific discourse that used notions of youth and adolescence as a way to make sense of, control, and improve poor, working-class, as well as middle-class young populations” (Sukarieh and Tannock 2015, 51). A primary form of youth management was practiced through the establishment of a compulsory, standardized primary and secondary education system (Katz 1976). In the U.S.A 1890, only 39% of youth ages 14-17 were enrolled in high school. Fifty years later, in 1940 this number had grown to 67.3%, and by 1959, 95.3% of American youth (14-17) were enrolled in secondary school (Taylor et al. 1960). A secondary form of youth management was established through the introduction of a juvenile justice system that penalized youths separately from adults, and a tertiary form of youth management was practiced through the formation of youth organizations centered on a range of activities such as sports and religion (Cousseè, 2008; Dyck, 2012).

Resulting from these universal ‘strategies’ to address youth, the widening of the youth phase has occurred in two directions; a downwards push and an upwards extension (Hill 2011). Youth has been pushed down into traditionally childhood years and one resulting effect is the creation of a marketing demographic – the “tween”. Encompassing those aged 8-14, the ‘tween category quicken the pace of growing-up and is “emblematic of the marketing-led erosion of childhood” (Hill 2011, 349). The

concept of youth is also being extended “upwards” into traditionally ‘adult’ years – a response to the “idle youth” problem and their perceived threat to social order (Sukarieh and Tannock 2015). Taking a form of corporate paternalism, post-secondary education has been a factor facilitating the extension of youth. Like the universal acceptance of primary and secondary education, the perception of post-secondary education has developed into an appropriate and socially acceptable, normative experience of North American youth. During the 2015/16 academic year in British Columbia, enrollment in post-secondary totalled 273,288. Of this, 228,246 are Canadian students, 45,033 are international students, and the status of the remaining 9 students are unrecorded (Statistics Canada, Table 37-10-0018-01).

While not the sole explanation for the elevated number of post-secondary students, marketing of post-secondary education plays a significant role. Graduates become assets to state economies, contributing to a knowledge-based labour market while simultaneously supplying a population of targetable consumers. To explore how marketing and consumerism assist in the creation of studenthood, I examine post-secondary education as a commodity for student consumption as well as examine the ways that students are configured as a particular kind of consumer. In doing this I draw upon my fieldnotes, informational interviews with Douglas College recruiters, and data collected from both daily activities and Photovoice participants.

Created in 1974, Post-Secondary Institutions of B.C. is a co-operative of recruitment offices from BC’s public post-secondary institutions. Together, they organize and provide post-secondary information fairs for grade 11 and 12 students in British Columbia (Post Secondary Institutions of B.C.). Hosted in the early fall at high schools around the province, PSI Day recruiters from various post-secondary institutions provide high school students information about the programs, services, and facilities the institution offers. Interested in both the student and recruiter experiences, I attended Burnaby Mountain High School’s (BMHS) PSI Day. I also conducted informational interviews with two Douglas College recruiters. I chose to speak with recruiters from Douglas College because its Office of New Students (ONS) oversees both recruitment and orientation; therefore, during interviews we discussed both topics. They were also the only recruiters willing to speak with me.

BMHS's PSI day began at 2pm on Wednesday, November 22nd, 2017 in the high school's main entrance atrium/common area. The complete list of post-secondary institutions attending was posted on BMHS online calendar, so I knew which ones to expect. They included; Thompson Rivers University (TRU), University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), Capilano University, Canadian Armed Forces-Royal Military College (CAF-RMC), Quest University, Langara College, Trinity Western University (TWU), Vancouver Community College (VCC), British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), University of Victoria (UVic), Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), and Douglas College (DC). The University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) weren't present at the PSI Day fair. This might be due to the separate, private information session these institutions provided in November at BMSS. Post-secondary institutions outside of BC weren't present at PSI Day. A select few out-of-province institutions such as the University of Toronto and Western University (based in Ontario) and the University of Calgary and University of Alberta (based in Alberta), hosted BMSS students individual information sessions that occurred throughout October and November 2017.

Walking through the front entrance, I was met with individual post-secondary institutions' booths lining the walls of the atrium, beginning at the door and running its length. Clusters of high school students filled the no-man's land running down the middle of the booth-lined atrium. They were slowly circulating through the space between the booths, animatedly talking with one another while the teachers hung back on the edges of the fair, quietly talking with one another. From a quick scan of the space I estimated there to be about 80 people in the atrium, holding various items such as cellphones, notebooks and the numerous items they picked up from the booths. This population was primarily made up of students, teachers, and what I interpreted to be high school administrators. I don't recall seeing any students with parents or guardians. This might be due to the timing of the event as it began in the early afternoon during the work week. Intermittently, a single student or pair of students would break from their conversation and walk up to a booth, which their roving pattern had placed them in front of. The uniform 'booths' were all single, up-right, folding tables that were dressed in a fitted, rich-colored tablecloth that bore the institutions' colors and insignia. Manned by one or two professionally dressed recruitment officers, these tables held a variety of items. Token offerings of logo-embellished pens, stickers, and lanyards were in small piles at the front

edges of the tables. Placed alongside these offers were the institutions' glossy, thick viewbooks, thin pamphlets, and recruiter business cards. Many booths were framed by tall poster screens and banners that listed institutional 'quick facts' such as the number of programs offered and bore the smiling faces of 'poster' students standing in front of campus buildings. The booths and recruiters were all very similar and were competing primarily on the basis of reputation and popularity. My own PSI Day in 2011 in Orillia, Ontario, bore a close resemblance to the PSI Day in Burnaby. Hosted at the high school across town from my own, my friends and I spent most of our time gossiping with one another in a large multi-purpose room filled with post-secondary recruiters and their paraphernalia. My best friend and I roved the various booths of popular universities such as Queens, Western, and McGill together, each gathering our own collection of glossy viewbooks, fridge magnets and pens.

Back in Burnaby, I circumnavigated the atrium walkway for half an hour and hung around the farthest edge bordering the end of the information fair and the rest of the high school. I observed while listening to snippets of student conversations, which ranged from social media buzz to which post-secondary institution they already knew they wanted to attend. As obviously neither a high school student or a recruiter, I felt a bit out of place and became self-consciousness of what seemed to be inquisitive looks directed at me by recruiters and students. In addition to the recruitment/information sessions, BMSS also provided their Gr. 12 students a scholarship information session on Monday September 25th. This was designed to assist and provide information for students beginning the scholarship application process. About two months later, BMSS also provided a 2hr Information Evening for Parents of Gr. 12 students on Tuesday November 28th. Topics of this event included scholarship applications, career opportunities, and work experience and graduation events.

I supplemented my observations of the PSI Day with informational interviews with two Douglas College recruiters from the Office of New Students (ONS); Kelsey and Claire, themselves both undergraduate degree holders. Douglas College is a member of PSI-BC and their active recruitment season is from September to November. Douglas College's unique ONS oversees both recruitment and new student orientation, meaning that during late-August and September the two very busy activities overlap. When I first met Kelsey and Claire in mid-October, they were about halfway through visiting their roster of approximately 104 BC high schools.

People who work in post-secondary administration are shocked to hear this, because the busy times of year overlap drastically. Most orientation programming starts at the end of August, running through the first couple weeks of September and that's when things get very busy with recruitment. So, I feel like I have two different jobs.

- Kelsey, ONS, Douglas College

Kelsey considers the recruitment phase to be separate from the actual enrollment and orientation phase – there being a distinct difference between a prospective DC student and an enrolled DC student. When she has her “recruitment hat on,” Kelsey’s job is to visit high schools or attend community events and talk to students and their families about Douglas. The goal is to help students evaluate whether DC is the right school for them. They discuss what the prospective student “wants to be when they grow up” and the relevant DC program required to attain that imagined future. When Kelsey is wearing her “orientation hat,” her job is to create orientation programming and, with other ONS team members, and lead new students through it. This involves interacting with students in a wide range of settings, and primarily easing first year worries. Sometimes this has Kelsey delivering workshops on new student success – time management, culture shock, academic advising, and post-graduation life, or simply answering questions like “How do I get my U Pass? Where do I get my student card? Can I eat in class?”

During my conversations with Claire and Kelsey, the notion of “a right fit” frequently entered the conversation; the *right* environment, the *right* people, the *right* kind of energy, the *right* reasons. Furthering this ‘right fit’ notion, Claire suggested that this is what guides her recruiting practices and sales pitch.

It’s not a very stressful sales pitch; it’s not what a lot of people might think – that student recruiters are a little pushy. Our goal is not to get students in the door, it’s to get students in the door that think Douglas is the right school for them ... At the end of the day it’s going to hurt us more to have a student that is unhappy because that student is [going to] share that with their family and friends and Douglas College’s reputation will suffer. But, if we lose that student because we told them “*Oh, maybe going to this other institution is better for you*” they might think “*I respect Douglas College because they didn’t try to make a sale*”.

Both recruiters suggested that a student’s success at the post-secondary level is influenced by a variety of factors such as academic and social engagement. Claire suggested that a student’s post-secondary experience is what they make of it. If the

student studies all day long and goes home to just keep studying, their experience is not going to be the same as the student who gets involved in clubs and activities, and who tries to make new friends. Similarly, if the student dedicates the majority of their time to partying and social activities, “they’re not going to survive”. Both Kelsey and Claire also suggested that students from working class backgrounds and “blue-collar” school districts demonstrated lower levels of engagement and interest in their academic future in comparison to students with more privileged backgrounds coming from more affluent school districts. Though Kelsey applied the term blue-collar students from rural areas,

Some students come with lists of questions. I got a student in Kelowna the other day who came up to me with her notebook and whispered, “*I have 20 questions for you. Is that okay?*” But then I’ll go to another district – really working class, blue collar neighbourhoods – where students are less confident, and you might get a student come up to you and say “*I don’t know what I want to do. Where do I start?*”

- Kelsey, ONS, Douglas College

I suggest that post-secondary institutions are reproducing social class through both their recruitment strategies and offered programs. Douglas College has 6 primary program categories; *Child, Family & Community Studies, Commerce & Business Administration, Health Sciences, Humanities & Social Sciences, Language, Literature & Performing Arts, Science & Technology* (Programs & Courses, Douglas College). Within these categories, a variety of educational qualifications, diplomas, associate degrees, post-degrees and certificate programs, are available. For example, within the *Health Sciences* category, there are three different programs; *Community Mental Health Worker, Healthcare Assistant, and Healthcare Support Worker*. The specificity of these programs suggest that their purpose is to provide students the educational qualifications necessary to pursue a certain career. Many of these programs also function as preparatory work, qualifying students for university programs. The 2018 DC viewbooks most highlighted aspect of this pathway through post-secondary is the \$4000+ savings of tuition. Students can spend two years at Douglas and two additional years at a research university or an undergraduate teaching university such as Kwantlen Polytechnic University, University of the Fraser Valley, or Vancouver Island University. For instance, in the *Humanities & Social Sciences, Future Teachers* is a 2-year program that prepares students to enter either SFU’s Teachers Training Program (PDP) or UBC’s Faculty of Education. During the program, students complete two years’ worth of university transfer credits that can be applied to a Bachelor of Arts Degree. The

specifications and details pertaining to the *Future Teachers* program are listed on the webpage along with an image of a young woman standing in front of a red brick building smiling at the camera. The caption above the images reads, “Seizing her dream” and underneath the photo another caption states, “Future Teacher grad prepares for a career in the classroom”. This is what Andy is doing with his Business Administration Diploma – applying them towards SFU’s Bachelor of Business Administration degree program. This conveyor-like production produces students who, unless entering a university program, will be entering the workforce with very specific qualification and career opportunities.

Universities such as UBC can be considered “post-secondary marketplaces” due to the sheer number of program and course choices that are available to students (Cooley and Cooley 2009). Using UBC’s online search engine, you are presented 10 program categories which filter the 244 degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate level; *Business and economics, Earth, environment, and sustainability, Education, Engineering and technology, Health and life sciences, History, law and politics, Languages and linguistics, Math, chemistry, and physics, Media and fine arts, People, culture, and society*. These program areas offer a variety of educational degrees that provide students the qualifications to enter professional careers. In comparison, DC is where one attains qualifications to be a veterinarian technician or a dental hygienist; UBC is where one can attain the UBC qualifications to become the veterinarian or the dentist. For instance, despite Louis’s lack of career specificity, he knew he wanted options and (along with his parents) viewed university as a pathway to a specific lifestyle that could not be reached through college qualifications. This class distinction between university and college was mirrored in Linko’s experience – both Linko and her parents considered university to be a more prestigious pursuit of education compared to college – again, despite lack of academic direction.

Although the historical context is very different Paul Willis’s ethnography *Learning to Labor: How working-class kids get working class jobs*, offers some ways to think about the future pathways forged by education. The main objective of Willis’s research was to understand why working-class male adolescents entered working class jobs after finishing their secondary school education. The transition in focus was the school to workplace jump and their socially-constructed roles. Between 1972-1975, Willis observed and participated in academic classes, and after school activities,

conducting individual and group interviews with 12 boys from a secondary school in the West Midlands of England (Willis 1977).

Willis observed a divide in school culture which produced two groups of students; the Lads and the Ear'oles. Both were working class teenage boys who, immediately after their schooling, would be joining the manual labor force. This social fact generated an adverse disinterest in what the Lads perceived to be 'unnecessary' academic qualifications. The Lads actively opposed educational authoritative figures and rejected learning through performative, antagonistic attitudes, contributing to their own shop floor fate that was in part facilitated by their schooling. The justification of their negative attitudes resonated in the notion of capitalism and that they, the Lads, were never going to be given an opportunity for success. The Lads embodied counter-school culture through practices that prepared them for the role of 'young labourer' and the tough, manliness of "shop floor culture" (Willis 1977, 52). A primary contribution to the Lads dismissal of institutionalized education stemmed from their differentiation from, and rejection of, the 'Ear'oles. Defined by the Lads, the 'Ear'oles were the "school conformists" (Willis 1977, 14). This category encompassed all students who valued their education. This value was performed through paying attention in class, completing assignments and studying, respecting authority figures, dressing in accordance to school policy, and behaving in a socially accepted manner. The Lads felt the 'Ear'oles emitted a sense of inferiority in comparison to themselves. This was because the Lads were always laid back, having fun, and behaving (in their minds) as independent and autonomous actors.

Willis concluded that the education received by both sets of young men was reproducing and reinforcing class stratification. Education was training working-class youth to become working-class adults. BC post-secondary students understand post-secondary education as a route to desired futures. As noted above the different institutions attract students with different class positions and goals. For example, Claire reflected on what she understood to be social class differences among potential students, attributing the distinction to geography rather than other social factors.

Unfortunately, there some areas in BC that are very undeveloped in the education sector. You can see a difference in motivation in [both] the high school counsellors and the students. Sometimes, we'll go to a high school where the students are like, "*I don't want to be here. I'm here because I'm forced to [be at] your presentation*". And I'll see the energy

and it's not right, and I'll ask them, "*Well what do you want to do after high school?*" And they're like, "*I don't know... I have no idea... I don't care...*" And that's kind of the end of it because what do I say to that?

The inability to guide disinterested high school students or those unsure of their career paths contributes to the maintenance of class stratification. Beginning in high school, this system is present within post-secondary institutions themselves and can be analyzed through the advertisements and language promising, differing future lifestyles offered by institutions.

Douglas College's expansive marketing presence in public spaces such as Metro Vancouver transit stations and shopping centers embodies the objective of their programs – to prepare students to enter the labour market. In September of 2017, prior to my interviews with Claire and Kelsey, I was stepping off the Millennium Skytrain at the Commercial Broadway station and was faced with a series of platform poster panels featuring close-up portrait photographs of DC students or recent graduates. Each subject has an impassive, borderline serious expression and straightforward gaze. On the left-hand side of the image, running vertical to the student's face appears D-O-U-G-L-A-S, printed in white block lettering. A caption in smaller text at the bottom of the poster contains the subject's first and last name, offering a 'realness' aspect to the expressionless face. The student's name is followed by a brief, inspirational statement that suggests the graduated DC student is currently doing something meaningful. The final component of the DC posters is a noun, such as "*purpose*" and "*vision*" which is unique to each subject. A hashtag is a popular function on social media platforms and are meant to resonate with the majority of youth who were viewing these advertisements. This differs from UBC's "A Place of Mind" slogan. Displayed on campus banners and other advertisement materials, this tagline is a grandiose statement about the institution rather than about individuals.

As I moved through the station and up the elevator to reach the Expo line platform for the second leg of my transit, there again appeared the faces of Douglas College students. Exactly like the platform below, the walls were lined with a series of Lamar™ advertising posters occupied by Douglas College.

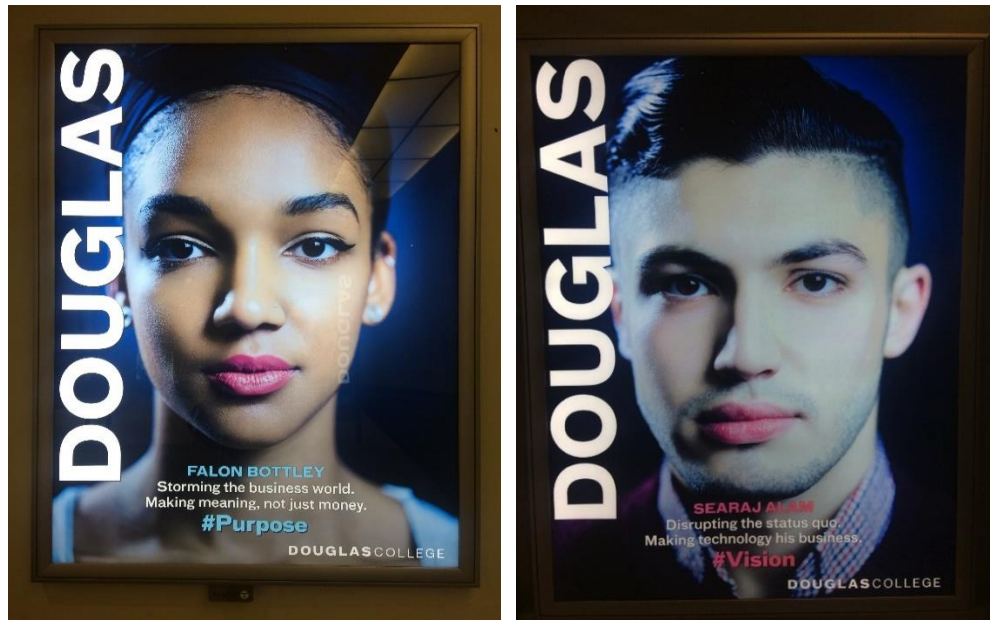


Figure 3.1. Two Douglas College poster advertisements in the Lougheed Mall, September 2017

Over the course of my data collection period (September – December 2017) my transit routines such as the one previously described involved observing multiple post-secondary recruitment advertisements as well as the turnover of Douglas College’s ad campaign. In January 2018 the serious faces and inspirational captions were replaced with full body, action portraits of people presented as Douglas College graduates. DC provides additional information about the graduates featured in their advertisements on their “Grads in our Ads” webpage. This webpage lists the graduate’s names, their employers, and provides a hyperlink for further information. Currently, Douglas College’s advertisements remain in the transit stations and have been recently joined by a trio of Simon Fraser University students. In a power pose stance, the three clean-cut SFU students’ have a happy straightforward gaze with recognizable areas of campus as a backdrop; the AQ’s colorful tile mural, the east campus transit exchange; and the AQ mountain scape. Rather than specifically stating what the featured SFU student or graduate is currently doing, the advertisement for SFU’s *Continuing Studies* only includes an academic program title such as *Business Management*. Unlike the DC advertisement which presents facts about their graduates, the SFU posters leave the unlimited narrative of each individual up to the imagination of viewers. The series of DC and SFU advertisements are selling post-secondary education and the different future lifestyles it promises to deliver. The DC transit advertising campaign is meant to

interpellate, potential students into the world of the purposeful individuals who populate the posters.

A characteristic of the hegemonic discourse of consumerism pushes individuals to construct their social identities through the consumption of commodities (Billig 1999). For many of my participants, attending post-secondary institutions is a prerequisite to an ideal, future life. Johan Nordensvärd (2011) suggests that students consume educational qualifications to improve their competitiveness in a knowledge-based labour market as well as for their own interest and entertainment. I believe this to be an idealistic assumption. The majority of my participants expressed that a small piece of their motivations lay in furthering their own human capital in the form of a degree program – increasing their future employability. However, this seemed to be an initial, stiffly rehearsed response. What was at the forefront of their motivations was the need to fill their current time with something to do and attending post-secondary was the expected and socially acceptable filler between their high school-selves and that of a working adult. This renders post-secondary education and the future lifestyle it promises a salable commodity. In addition to this, parents could be considered co-consumers of education. For most of my participants, their parents or close relatives acted as co-consumers, co-managers, and co-funders. Cassie's husband is a co-consumer of her higher education in two distinct ways. The first way is through purchasing of material goods. Cassie sent me two photos that encompassed this. CASS01 was the first photo she sent me and depicted her computer, hand-written notes and calculator spread out on her kitchen counter. When we were talking about this photo we skipped forward to CASS18 which is a photo of a small white desk, chair and lamp set up in a simply decorated room.

We live in a basement studio and once I was studying [in] the kitchen and my books were everywhere, and it was too crowded. So, by himself he went to Walmart and bought me a table, chair and light for me and set it up as a surprise. He was like "*I prepared a space for you to study*".

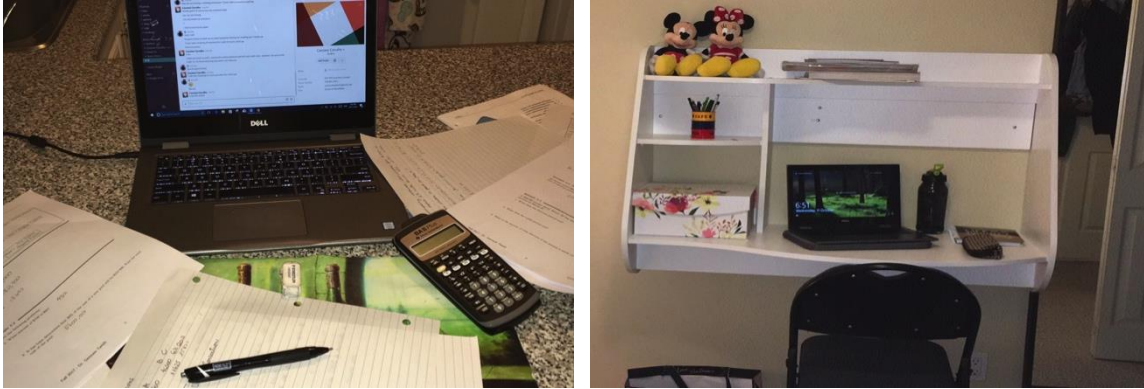


Figure 3.2. Left image (CASS01) depicts Cassie's student set-up on her kitchen counter in early October. A chat screen is open on Cassie's computer – her classmates were trying to work together on a homework assignment. The right image (CASS18) depicts the workspace Cassie's husband purchased an assembled for her.

The second form of co-consumption Cassie's husband participates in goes beyond the purchase of education related commodities but encompasses shared experiences.

[My husband] and his family are really supportive. When we went to Vancouver Island to his mother's home on Thanksgiving I said to him, "I don't know if your mother will be mad with me because I cannot help her cook – I had midterms to study for". During our visit, I did some studying and even had a phone conversation with my colleagues and worked on a team project in a bedroom, while other people helped out.

Many participants spoke of their parents assisting them while moving into residence and were very vocal about their parent's support. This background support materialized in various forms ranging from financial to emotional. Going beyond the tuition bill, parents and guardians sometimes fulfill their education and qualification aspirations through their children. Their children's degree attainment is a success they share with them. For instance, Cassie was unable to attend her summer graduation and her mother accepted her diploma on her behalf.

When my mom accepted my diploma in place of me she was so happy because when I was born she wasn't able to study anymore. She was just able to work and care [for] my brother and I. Throughout my education she kept saying *I was her diploma*.

Taking a different perspective, both Douglas college recruiters, Kelsey and Claire, spoke of parental involvement as a primary issue. Sometimes parental academic expectations don't align with the student's academic intentions. Claire suggests that

enrolling in a subject that is parent-approved isn't sometimes in the best interest of the student.

When I can have a real conversation with a student, I ask them what they want to do. How do they see themselves ... because if I ask them what program they're interested in they're gonna be like "*Oh accounting*" ... Okay, but what's the point of studying that... what do you want to do at the end...? If it's just accounting because your parents tell you there's accounting, then you're not going to enjoy it.

As co-consumers, parents occasionally foster unrealistic grade expectations and retain a sense of entitlement to their students' academic and financial information. Kate experienced this tension when her parent's academic expectations misaligned with her own.

I started post-secondary right after high school because my parents wanted me to. I wasn't forced but, was really pressured to go. I was always a straight-A-student in high school. [My parents] were like, "*Why don't you want to go straight back to school to post-secondary? You have the grades for it, you're so dedicated, blah, blah*". I just wanted to take a year off – didn't get to do that but, it ended up working out.

Marketing strategies targeting student consumers and parental co-consumers goes beyond the tuition bill and extend to everyday commodities. Students make up a consumer population targeted by advertisements and enticed by discounts in an attempt to foster brand loyalty. Ranging from haircuts to season ski/snowboard passes, students are offered a pricing category of their own. No longer going to the grocery store with mom or dad, students choose which products they want to buy and which stores they want to shop at – a process occurring in different ways, at different rates, among different students. While not being completely financially independent, students such as Linko comprise a fresh pool of consumers with the majority of wallets containing a varying degree of provincial loans, grants, bursaries and scholarships, parent-issued spending allowances, and emergency-only credit cards.

My parents have a plan and give me a certain amount of money each month and it's hard to use that for life things and not just fun things. I'm now like, "*How far can I use that shampoo?*" And it's not a huge problem because I know my parents are there for me and they'll help me but, it's just weird to feel like "*Do I really want to buy this?*"

Bed Bath & Beyond™ *Campus Ready* campaign has tapped into and capitalizes on the notion of campus life and the concept of the term home. Bed Bath & Beyond™

Campus Ready campaign is targeted towards students who are moving into residence housing at a university outside their home province/country. Each university that is registered with Bed Bath & Beyond™ had their own customized checklist which lists the items students should and shouldn't bring into the dormitories. Students and or their guardians can order the items online or in a store within their home province or country.



Figure 3.3. Bed Bath & Beyond™ *Campus Ready* desk services at 1740 West Broadway. Organized by province, the metal stand on the left holds the checklists of various post-secondary institutions. On loop, the T.V screen above the checklists plays a campaign advertisement

Come move-in day, the purchases are delivered to the campus dormitory where students and guardians can retrieve the items. In the store I visited on Broadway Street in Vancouver, there were multiple staged displays set up for this campaign. The employees were also wearing grey and orange *Campus Ready* campaign t-shirts as their summer uniforms. In the window of the Pier 1 Imports™ next door, a “Back to school” discount sale was also displayed.



Figure 3.4. Bed Bath & Beyond™ *Campus Ready* makes an afternoon delivery to SFU dorms on Wednesday August 30th, 2017

Bed Bath & Beyond™ is not the only retailer interested in selling products to students. Discounts and promotions directed towards students are very common in the food and service industries. For instance, many cafés in downtown Vancouver offer a variety of student discounts and specials. Glocalization marketing strategies are employed by Caveman Café™, a popular burrito joint in downtown Vancouver. Glocalization is a marketing strategy primarily used by large multinational corporations to make their products appeal to the local culture (Robertson 1995). At a microscale Caveman Café™ has targeted the local culture of student consumers – only students attending the institutions in the immediate area are offered the student discount.



Figure 3.5. Caveman Burrito™ offers VFS, IH, SFU, and VCC students discounts while Bean Around the World™ café offers a general 10% student discount. Jonsi, a PV participant, sent me a photo of a study session she participated in at this Bean Around the World™ coffee shop.

In addition to the role of consumer, Johan Nordensvärd (2011) suggests that students also occupy the role of manager. Post-secondary education is an investment in personal capital and students are responsible for maintaining this investment; a neoliberal proposition that has been widely but not invariably adopted in thinking about education. To manage this investment, students potentially develop their own learning strategies, monitor the process through formative grades, and evaluate the results through summative final grades. It is this process through which some students approach education with a managerial attitude (Nordensvärd 2011). Walking through the department marked hallways at Douglas College I overheard a group of friends who were standing in a classroom entranceway discussing their term courses. One student

had been waitlisted for a required course and was unsure of what they were going to do. One of the other students in this group suggested they attend the first class anyways because they once had a professor that accepted anyone that showed up on the first day, regardless of any waitlist status. This person continued by claiming that lots of Douglas College student's sign-up for extra courses to check them out and then drop what they don't want – the decision to drop usually based on teaching style and the workload of the course. Many of my interviews with students included discussion about the Rate My Professor website. Since its creation in 1999, this online platform is a virtual space where presumed students can post anonymously about their experiences with certain professors and academic courses. This website contains what some students interpret as insightful and useful evaluations of professors. For example, when talking to me about her course selections Linko, replied,

I went through all the courses and wrote which ones I liked. Then I looked at the professors for them then I eliminated the ones with bad professors. Then I looked at what worked with my schedule... *(laughs)* I spend a lot of time on Rate My Prof.

Upon my own inspection of the Rate my Prof forum, I found that majority of the website's content is weighted with sarcastic complaints and follows a positive, negative chain reaction – new comments are responses of agreement or disagreement with the previous. Rate my Prof now includes overall school ratings for categories such as food, internet reliability, happiness, and safety. Almost every student I spoke with, some reluctantly and others openly, admitted to using Rate My Prof to evaluate and judge a course before they enrolled. This spread into conversations on what qualities and characteristics make a course or a professor interesting and enticing. For instance, Linko and Louis both prefer professors who are entertaining and engaged with their subject – regaling their students with amusing stories.

To further analyze the manager role and student perception of the utility of their educational investments I have applied Colin Campbell's (1987) concept of bolting. Bolting suggests that consumers hook their imagined lifestyles onto various goods and services. The consumer believes that the good or service they are buying will provide, or assist bringing the idyllic lifestyle into fruition. When the good or service is acquired and the initial, imagined idea or lifestyle promised is not delivered, the consumer can detach their imagined lifestyle and re-bolt it to another good or service (Campbell 1987). For instance, Lauren applied to UBC for a Bachelor of Science degree with the hope of

entering a career in that field. Unfortunately, Lauren was only offered acceptance into her second-choice program, Food and Nutrition in the Land and Food Systems Faculty which she chose to pursue. In doing this, Lauren has detached her education from an imagined future in the sciences and reattached it to a future career in nutrition. For some students, it seems that when disappointments result from the difficulty of a course or the reality of a certain career choice disappoints, they develop new desired lifestyles and bolt them to new educational pathways. Other students remain bolted to their educational choice and instead modify their existing future lifestyle expectations. For instance, after a difficult and disappointing first year, Henry remained committed to his engineering degree, with his future career choice altering instead.

Worst memory? ... To be honest, probably the end of my first year. I failed a class and generally felt kind of crappy. I wasn't sure engineering was my thing ... I don't really see engineering as my future and I'm fine with that. I'm happy enough having that background and rather than using it in some sort of traditional kind of way. When I graduate, I'll work in an operations role of some kind.

In 1970 the global population of post-secondary students totalled 28.6 million. 37 years later in 2005 this number had reached 152.5 million (UNESCO 2009). The commodification and marketing of post-secondary education has increased youth investment in personal capital in attempt to become competitive in a knowledge-based labour market. In analyzing this, I have applied the roles of consumer and manager to explore student consumption practices of both post-secondary education and everyday commodities. Through this analysis I have found that post-secondary education in Canada potentially reproduces and reinforces class stratification. Similar to the experiences had by 1970's English Lads of Willis ethnography, higher education holds different meaning, experiences, and imagined futures for students of different social classes. Finally, to address the future lifestyle promised by post-secondary education, I have used Colin Campbell's (1987) concept of bolting to demonstrate the marketing of higher education as a conduit for an imagined, future lifestyle.

4. Student fragility

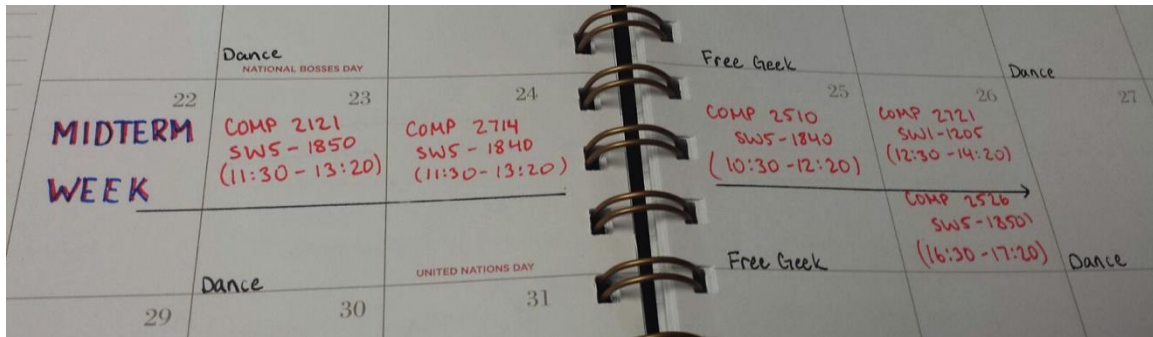


Figure 4.1. Photovoice image JENN06 received the morning of October 4th, 2017

On Thursday September 21st, 2017, by complete accident, I found myself at another pancake brunch, this time at BCIT hosted by the Student Association. It had been a couple days since I had traversed BCIT's Burnaby campus grounds, covering bulletin boards, telephone polls, and bus stop shelters with my recruitment flyers. I was now back to meet a potential participant who contacted me via text message after seeing one of these flyers. Early for my meeting, I decided to take a lap of some campus buildings to jot down some observations. After wandering past the registrar's office and a couple of empty study spaces, I entered the SE2 – Student Union Building (SUB). The SUB houses many student amenities and campus services including a food court, campus pub, bookstore, and BCIT's Student Association. The main hall of the SUB is a split-level atrium that is adjacent to the food court and the campus convenience store. The north and south facing walls of the atrium are floor to ceiling windows, providing an abundance of natural light which fell onto an expansive, sunken center area furnished with clusters of upholstered seating, low tables and a variety of potted tropical plants.

The first thing that hit me was the smell. A sweet, deep-fryer smell, similar to fresh donuts was thick in the air. My eyes scanned the room for the source, passing over the people occupying the area, and quickly landed on the folding tables set up on the west side of the sunken level of the atrium. On the tables, lined up four in a row, were rectangular metal chafing trays – two were capped with their lids and two were open with round, flabby beige pancakes haphazardly stacked inside. Three pancake servers stood behind the buffet-style set up. Two of the three were chatting to one another and to the people in the line-up while observing the third person who was using metal tongs to fetch pancakes from the chafing dishes. The people in line had picked up white disposable

paper plates and plastic cutlery from the piles stacked at the beginning end of the “buffet line”. As they proceeded down the line, they held out their plates as two round pancakes flopped gently down. This entire scene was framed by multiple, large printed posters advertising the event – *Student Association Free Pancake Brunch*. The redolence of the pancake breakfast brought me back to one I just observed at Douglas College’s ‘Welcome Back Week’ where a similar scene had unfolded. The primary difference was that BCIT’s set-up location made participation optional. Since the buffet set-up was off to the side in the lower section of the atrium and not directly in the path of traffic, individuals didn’t have to directly refuse food from volunteers. Rather, they could just avoid the area.

Slightly distracted by the pancake procession, I walked down the ramp leading to the lower level of the atrium and was abruptly accosted by an energetic, petite, woman in a bright blue polo-shirt. It took me a couple seconds to realize she belonged to the Bank of Montreal (BMO) booth set up just behind her at the right end of the ramp leading into the student cafeteria. The BMO booth was filled with forms, information pamphlets and neatly laid out free t-shirts and water bottles. A younger looking male also in a blue BMO polo shirt remained beside the booth while his co-worker prattled on. The woman first informed me that BMO was offering a student promotion – if I opened a student account I would receive a \$60.00 cash deposit and any of the free ‘merch’ I wanted. I first politely informed her that I attended SFU, not BCIT, pleased that I had an honest reason for rejecting her. She responded that it didn’t matter what institute I went to, I could still sign-up for a student account. I went for plan B, informing her that I already had a BMO™ account and I wasn’t interested in opening a new one – once again pleased that I hadn’t yet lied to get out of a sales pitch. Quick with a rebuttal she once again used the \$60.00 cash incentive in a final attempt to reel me in. Realizing my polite disinterest was not about to earn me a ‘get-out-of-a-sales-pitch-free-card’, I went for a deadpan “I’m not interested”. I proceeded to walk briskly past her, avoiding eye-contact with her colleague who had been watching the encounter unfold. I marched right across the half-empty cafeteria and placed myself in a prime location to observe how other people, especially other students, were navigating the BMO™ compromised pathway. This is where I remained waiting for my participant to meet me. Unsurprisingly, most people avoided eye contact, increased the space between themselves and the BMO™ booth, and silently shook their heads at the woman’s outstretched pamphlets.

The Bank of Montreal™ wasn't the only financial institution soliciting students at BCIT that day. On the north facing window-covered wall of the atrium there was a large window adhesive sponsored by Coast Capital Savings™. The sign was entitled "My Back to School Survival Tip is..." and resembled a pseudo-whiteboard sheet that mimicked a sheet of paper. People, presumably BCIT students, could use the permanent markers that were sitting on the window ledge to write a 'survival tip'.

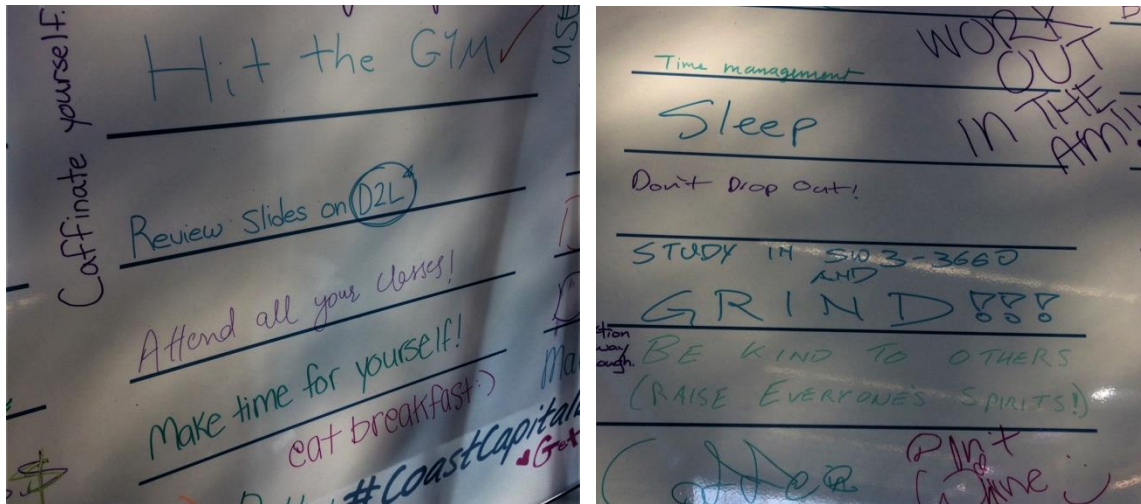


Figure 4.2. BCIT Student Survival Tips written on Coast Capital Savings™ pseudo whiteboard.

Some of the survival strategies are practical and seem like common sense; "review slides on D2L", "use your classmates as resources". These practical strategies center on the themes of preparation, self-care, and self-awareness. Other survival strategies fall into the category of "undergraduate cynicism," a form of discourse analyzed by Michael Moffatt during his 1977 fieldwork at Rutgers University. For the first few days of the fall semester Moffatt, a Rutgers Anthropology faculty member of four years, attempted to live in the university dorms, passing as a college freshman. Despite being in violation of the American Anthropological Associations code of ethical conduct, Moffatt was granted permission to conduct undercover research by his department and the university ethics review committee. He'd successfully argued to his colleagues that this method would grant him access to undergraduate culture without disorienting the undergrads with his true role of professor (Moffatt 1989). Showing up on move in day, dressed in casual clothing and carrying a single suitcase, Moffatt barely managed to fit in, fooling his suspicious dormmates for 2 days before being found out. After his cover

was blown, Moffatt continued to live in the dorms and foster relationships with the students who were ecstatic at the prospect of being written about.

During this time, Moffatt observed that student culture possessed its own satirical form of quotidian complaining. For example, after attending the dorm orientation and back talking in their own rooms, a freshman male stated, “What they said was, you can do whatever you want as long as you don’t get caught” (Moffatt 1989, 7). Moffatt initially took this rhetoric as a form of truth, taking it for what the undergraduates really thought. Eventually, Moffatt came to recognize undergraduate cynicism to be a common mode of discourse among freshman that mocked pretension, rules, and enabled them to complain about the rigors of school (Moffatt 1989). Although not stated by Moffatt, “undergraduate cynicism” might have been a residual practice carried over from the student’s high school experience and into their post-secondary schooling. The presence of a “survival narrative” peppering undergraduate discourse as noted by Moffatt in 1977 is also present within my data. For instance, Linko acknowledges a contemporary example of undergraduate cynical-within her own peer groups rhetoric. “Yeah, I feel like just in general everyone is like *“aww so much homework”* or *“I’m so broke”* but then their snap chat is like *“watching a movie”* or *“just bought this fancy jacket”*. Performed and expressed via social media platforms, this is an updated, technologically influenced form of student complaining. Many of Cassie’s photos featured her study-set-up along with a caption that evoked undergraduate cynicism.

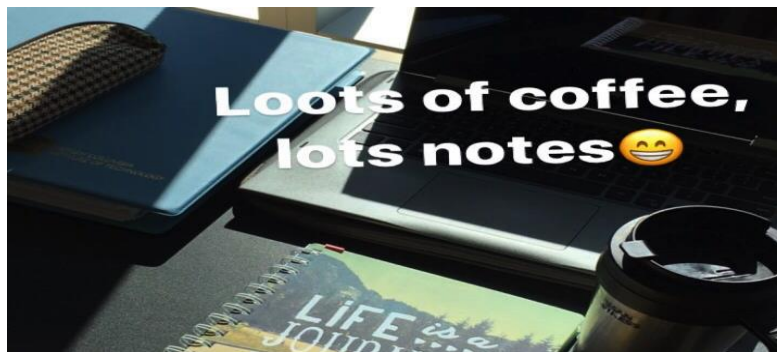


Figure 4.3. “The way I was surviving” (CASS09). When Cassie and I reviewed this photo during the Photovoice follow-up interview Cassie explained, “Yeah, I made this post on Snap Chat. All my life it has been notes and coffee – it’s how I was surviving.” What Cassie was trying to ‘survive’ was the first round of midterms.

My data collection period spanned the length of the Fall 2018 semester, beginning just before the start of the 2017/18 academic year, and concluding in

December at the end of the examination period. This meant I observed and participated in multiple orientation activities as well as “coping” events initiated by both the institution and students during examinations. What was interesting was the amount of attention and sympathy that was directed towards and enacted by student during extended, stressful periods. To understand the stressors of the initial transition and adjustment into post-secondary, I asked DC recruiter Kelsey about the objective of orientation events.

The whole point of orientation is to set up students for success. We try to strike a balance because students get really hung up if they can't do the simple things – like buying their textbooks or getting their student IDs. It's funny because you can literally do that whenever and its not complicated ... I think it's almost a coping mechanism. Students tend to just fixate on the things they know they must do.

Douglas College recruiter Claire also helped me understand the transition from a prospective student to an actual student that occurs during late August and early September. Claire suggested that at a lot of post-secondary institutions shower tons of attention upon prospective students which trickles away after enrollment. According to her, prospective students receive numerous email invitations for events they can usually attend for free. These range from minor concerts to movie nights hosted on campus. Claire further suggested that if that attention fails to continue at the commencement of the term, students might obsess over the minute issues and difficulties they are encountering and develop a sour opinion about their post-secondary selection. For Claire, it is very important that the Office of New Students (ONS) maintains the energy and have students continue saying to themselves, “I made the right decision coming here.” To keep the attention stream flowing, the ONS team and Douglas College's Student Union slams them with Welcome events. Claire highlighted the importance of creating a community-centered campus atmosphere because of DC's lack of on-campus housing. As strictly a commuter school, Claire says that DC has the added challenge of creating a campus student culture through providing an abundance of free events and activities throughout the year.

In the late afternoon of Tuesday October 24th, I was wandering the halls of a bustling BCIT campus, waiting to meet up with Cassie for her follow-up interview. Cassie was running about a half hour late and I figured it would be another great opportunity to conduct some observations. The first building I entered was SW01 – a large, open concept building that primarily houses financial services and the international student

offices. The outer edges of the vast room are dotted with different seating arrangements – almost all of them occupied by people with a variety of textbooks, laptops, and binders. The people sitting in groups quietly chatted to one another or were in silent concentration that occasionally broke when someone in the group raised their head and spoke. The people sitting alone were silent, headphones in their ears, watching or working on their computers and phones. The soft echo of the open space created a calm environment which was intermittently disturbed by an electronic pre-recorded female voice announcing the next number up for service from the small line-up at the entrance to the student financial center.

Exiting SW01 and walking outside to the student union building (SUB), I passed many people who were coming and going between the buildings. Most were in a groups of two or more, loudly talking to one another, their voices raised in competition with the construction noises emitting from the sidewalk renovations. It was a sunny yet brisk day and there were very few people lingering or working outside at the courtyard picnic tables between SW01 and the SUB – an indicator that the season of outdoor study sessions had come to an end. Upon entering the SUB, I took notice of an entirely different atmosphere. The entire lower atrium was crowded with students occupying almost every seat and table. Sitting in groups and as singles, students were talking or working on their computers, eating from containers, and drinking out of paper cups that sported the logos of multiple coffee chains. Most students looked quite comfortable, having spread-out their backpacks, coats, and legs over the area they have claimed. A slight smell of fried food wafting from the open Triple O's™ in the adjoining cafeteria sections tainted the air – growing stronger as I walked towards the cafeteria. In this area most students were eating with their study materials remaining out of sight in their bags. Food service workers slowly roved around the room, cleaning vacant tables of the messes left behind. As I continued into the cafeteria looking for a place to meet with Cassie, I passed a table in front of a Tim Hortons that was occupied by four students, two of whom were wearing deep-blue sweaters with the white BCIT letters emblazed on the front. Their table was filled with notes, textbooks, calculators, and four computers. One of the sweater-wearing girls had lecture slides printed 6 to a page and was constantly shifting her attention between them and her computer screen, a look of concern and frustration darkening her expression.

I eventually found a seat on the other side of the cafeteria, away from the cacophony emitting from the central atrium. I texted my location to Cassie, trying to be as specific as possible, and reviewed my photovoice follow-up interview schedule. A few minutes later I caught a glimpse of Cassie walking in my direction. She had stopped to speak with an older woman dressed in business casual attire. Within a few moments their interaction concluded, and Cassie headed in my direction, weaving between the crowded jumble of tables and chairs. Upon sitting down Cassie apologised profusely for her lateness, admitting she had just come from her last shift waitressing at Earls Kitchen and Bar™ in Burnaby. It was her last shift she explained, because she couldn't balance her course load and extra curriculars as well as a casual job. The woman I had just observed her speaking with was Glenda, the manager for the management mentorship program Cassie was a member of. Cassie explained that a few days prior there was an evening campus kick-off event for the mentorship programs members to use for initial networking. Unfortunately for Cassie, she had mixed-up the event dates and was working a shift at Earls during the mixer. When Cassie realized this, she emailed the Glenda informing her of the situation. Glenda responded with immense understanding, reminding Cassie to avoid oversteering herself mentally and physically.

Stress and self-care were re-occurring themes throughout my chat with Cassie. This was probably because midterms were occurring at the time of our interview, and Cassie had just attended some of BCIT's *Speak-up, Speak-out* events, hosted by the Student Association. *Speak-up. Speak-out*, is a week-long event occurring just before midterms. The purpose behind the slogan is to encourage students to share their struggles with stress, anxiety, and depression. During this week there are a couple of days students can bring their dogs to class. In addition, the Student Association gives out chamomile tea and chocolate in the SUB where they provide a variety of childish, repetitious activities such as finger painting and coloring which aim to de-stress students. Presentations are also scheduled throughout the week with speakers ranging from professional psychologists to students, delivering mini motivational talks about overcoming their struggles with anxiety, stress and depression.

BCIT's *Speak-up. Speak-out* collaborative event is comparable to UBC's *Take what you need., Give what you can* campaign that ran the length of the December examination period. Distributed in multiple areas of campus the *Take What you need. Give what you can* large hand-written cardboard posters were located in high-traffic

student areas like the AMS and libraries. The poster is covered in colorful sticky notes with self-care “allowances” and tips written on them. Acting as a primitive public discussion board, the posters allowed students to take a sticky-note for themselves or write a sticky-note for someone else. For example, a central theme involved food consumption:

- “Go down to Uppercase (café) and buy yourself a cookie. You deserve it!”
- Breathe. Eat food”
- “BAKING!”
- “Treat yourself”
- “Make yourself a cup of tea/coffee”

I found a connection between the junk food/snack theme of the “survival tips” and the photos my participants sent me. I received many photos that featured food and coffee, accompanied with explanations enacting undergraduate cynicism. For example, on October 4th, Leah sent me a photo featuring shelves filled with Oreos in the cookie section of the confectionary aisle in the Kitsilano No Frills™. Leah captioned the photo; “I'm running out of Oreos, which is super important for midterm prep”. UBC’s *Take what you need., Give what you can* campaign was similar to BCIT’s Coast Capital Savings *Survival Strategies* in that it drew a considerable amount of attention to mental health and encouraged students to write and share their own thoughts and strategies to combat exam stress. The stated objective is to increase student awareness of mental illness, stress and anxiety. The campaign is reinforcing the idea that students, right from the get-go of orientation week, will experience stress and hardship. Through the use of campaigns such as these, students are being conditioned and encouraged view the institution as caring.

Animal therapy is another common post-secondary event that has grown in popularity. I recall my own undergraduate experience in a “puppy therapy room” at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton. At the beginning of spring finals in 2014 my friends and I attended the puppy de-stress event held over a couple of days in one of the multi-purpose rooms in the student union building (SUB). Local volunteers brought their pooches in for petting sessions with students – the idea being to calm and distract students from exam related stress. During UBC’s 2017 fall final exams, the UBC MoveU

Crew (an AMS funded student group) offered a *De-Stress Dog Walk*. The flyer for this campus service featured a smiling woman crouching down and hugging her golden retriever. The caption accompanying the image stated the following;

Feeling stressed this exam season? Then walk and play your way to rehabilitation on our dog walk! We welcome everyone to bring their dogs along for the walk and enjoy the love that only comes from these adorable companions! No dog? No problem! You don't need to bring one to attend. No need to register either, just show up and be prepared to feel relaxed.

In addition to dog walking groups, UBC and other post-secondary institutions offer drop-in dog therapy sessions during the fall and winter examinations. The objective portrayed on the poster is for students to relieve their stress and academic related anxiety through canine cuddling. Many psychological studies and surveys have been conducted across Canada and the United States, in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of canine therapy. Psychologists at UBC recently conducted their own study about the effectiveness of student canine therapy. It was reported that both men and women experienced an immediate reduction in stress and increased happiness post-canine cuddle. It was also reported that these effects wore off and after 10hrs the students who played with the dogs felt only slightly fewer negative emotions such as stress and unhappiness compared to students who didn't participate (Ward-Griffin et al. 2018).

I suggest that institutional based 'coping' programs and awareness campaigns such as UBC's *De-stress Dog Walk* and BCIT's *Survival Strategies* ostensibly seek to respond to but perhaps also foster an environment of student fragility. This 'student-as-fragile' narrative has become a common element of post-secondary education that is practiced by both students and institutions. Even before attending their first class, students have been told by those in positions of power that they will experience stress and anxiety related to their academics and that it is a problem that must be combatted. The numerous intuitionally sanctioned relief strategies, while 'combating' student stress simultaneously legitimize it as a concrete experience of studenthood. By providing, facilitating and or generating awareness of the student fragility, the institution is deflecting attention from other student concerns – "don't worry about your student debt – here are some puppies". I question the effectiveness of these seemingly ordinary self-care practices and rather think the conversation created around student well-being is casting a shadow over larger institutional issues – such as tuition costs. I think these

strategies seek pacify students and provide the illusion that their struggles are being properly and seriously responded to. I also suggest that perpetuation of, and response to student fragility is not conducted only by students or post-secondary institutions but, is closely connected to capitalism. Marketing strategies for commodities such as energy drinks utilize the relationship between students and fragility. Red Bull™ energy drinks had a series of print advertisements that lined the panels of select bus lines. Featuring a student cartoon character equipped with laptops and books, the advertisement uses creative word play that resonates with student consumers.

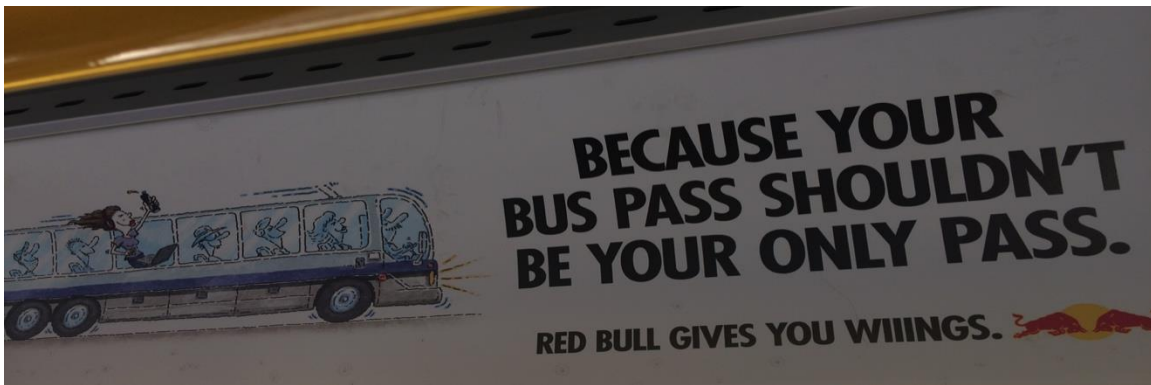


Figure 4.4. Red Bull™ energy drink advertisement on the 95 B-line bus. This is one example of a series of advertisements that were directed towards the student consumer. It's caption and illustration suggest that the consumption of Red Bull™ is beneficial to students.

During multiple years of examinations at UNB I recall observing an interesting on-campus Red Bull™ campaign. Hidden in corners and side hallways of high-traffic campus buildings such as the Library and Arts Faculty Building were temporarily installed boxes containing single cans of Red Bull™. The metal box was very small, painted red and titled "IN CASE OF FINAL" – designed to resemble fire alarms. Students passing by were free to take the can from these pseudo 'emergency stations' if they so felt like it. I also observed this occurring at SFU during the fall of 2016. Riding the 95 B-line bus to SFU during the Fall examination period I viewed another of the Red Bull™ advertisements and the live action fulfillment of the illustration.



Figure 4.5. Red Bull™ advertisement and the live-action enactment of the advertisements playing out on the 95 B-Line transit route in early December 2017.

In the top left of Figure 5 there is a Red Bull™ energy drink advertisement that features a cartoon picture of someone sitting on a bus seat, furiously reading a textbook. The caption reads, “Five more chapters but only three more stops?”. In the bottom right hand of the photo there are two probable students who are the real versions of the character featured in the advertisement. One person’s lap-top is visible, resting on their knees, while the female in the picture is hunched over the binder of notes resting on her knees. The individual using their laptop while in transit is the live version of the cartoon character featured in Figure 5. This scene of in-transit studying was not an isolated occurrence, but rather something I observed many times while I rode the 95B Line bus to SFU during the examination period. When speaking with my participants about their academic practices such as exam prep and assignments completion, I noticed that an interesting theme was emerging. Most of my participants, such as Vince, admitted to procrastinating on assignments despite knowing it would cause them anxiety.

Well it depends. When I *really* have things to be done I can do it. But if I still have time, I’m like, “*Okay, whatever*” and I’ll do something else – even if it’s just watching Netflix.

The mentality of getting work done only when it *really* needs to be done was echoed by some of my participants. It is their own agency that was a primary contributor to their procrastinating habits. Student fragility is the resulting effect of combined financial, social, and mental stressors. I by no-means suggest that students are passive recipients of these stressors; instead, I suggest that students take an active role in

exacerbating the effect that these stressors have upon them – some stressors even being reproduced as a means of excuse. Investing funds, time, and space into addressing student fragility is an increasing occurrence in post-secondary education and is observable through the plethora of student care and de-stressing events that occur at post-secondary campuses. Student fragility has become an accepted and well acknowledges component of studenthood that is embodied by students, conspicuously addressed by institutions, and utilized in marketing strategies.

5. Navigating studenthood

In late August, when Henry and I sat down in UBC's AMS building to chat, he had just gotten back from a summer working on the northeast coast of the U.S. for United Technologies™ – a U.S conglomerate that builds everything from air conditioners to airplane engines. Reflecting upon his recent work experience, Henry felt that while the work didn't directly relate to his studies in Mining and Mineral Process Engineering, it did offer a taste of an operations role – a career path that developed out of his disinterest in the process orientation that his studies had taken. Henry entered UBC's program in Mining and Mineral Process Engineering in the fall of 2014. At the end of his first year Henry was miserable, the rigidity of the program requiring him to become “number crazy”. Henry became set on the idea of an alternate career to that of a traditional engineer, suggesting that “you don't really need a specific educational background. I think a lot of people find that these days – your education maybe doesn't line-up directly with what you're doing” (Henry 2017). It was this dislike of his studies that encouraged Henry to pursue a minor in Political Science which had always been an area of interest to him and after having a very enjoyable Poly Sci class, Henry declared a minor in it – a decision that extended his degree an extra year, but offered balance to his studies.

Henry's experiences represent those of a vast majority of students. Students occupy a unique position within society – many of my participants suggested they didn't quite fit into the role of adult and instead exist somewhere in a push-pull relationship between youth and adult. While this is the dominant experience amongst young, traditional-aged students, I don't suggest that studenthood is entirely age-based. For instance, mature student participants took part in very similar activities to those of the younger students. I, therefore, argue that studenthood is defined more so by the activities involved and the navigational strategies employed rather than defined by static age categories. The term “studenthood” should be recognized as a category or a set of forms of experience related to a particular ‘occupational’ slot encompassing Canadian post-secondary students for various reasons. Firstly, higher education is a legitimized, positively valued, activity acceptable for adolescence and is an increasingly common experience. But students also include individuals who pursue post-secondary education after working for a number of years. This has occurred primarily due to the widening age range of the youth category and the marketing of post-secondary education. Secondly,

Canadian post-secondary students share a unique identity – performing and embodying student culture through daily activities distinct from other socially recognized groups. Studenthood, is not static, but is influenced by political, economic, and social trends that have incorporated student status and roles into Canadian society.

Life course theory is a multi-level paradigm, spanning structured pathways within social institutions and organizations to the social trajectories of individuals (Elder 1994). This model views the entirety of the life course, focusing attention especially upon the significance of early life choices, experiences, and their resulting consequences. Elder (1994) identifies four central components of the life course perspective. The first is the influence of macro and micro external events. This refers to issues of age and the corresponding social constraints, and available opportunities within society. People's individual life courses reflects the historical circumstances and resulting available life opportunities to which they were born into. These historical effects can be analyzed in terms of a cohort effect or a period effect (Elder 1994). Within a cohort, social, economic and or political changes can result in differences between people belonging to successive cohorts. For instance, economic booms or crises can affect the opportunities available to children of different cohorts. The period affect has greater longevity and differing effects upon people across different cohorts, race, and socio-economic standing. For instance, one of the most prevalent period effects in the 20th century is the growth of mass media and public education (Elder, 1994). The second component is cultural norms and expectations. This suggests that specific life events such as marriage and starting a family possess socially prescribed "age-graded expectations" or, socially accepted age-norms (Elder 1994). For instance, teenage child bearing is now considered ill-timed in North America, resulting in the incompatibility of roles. Higher education, through the booster of marketing, has become an appropriate activity to partake in after high school. The third and most important principle is family history. In layman's terms, family history refers to the social interaction's individuals experience throughout their life – highlighting the importance of human interdependency. Family, peers, and co-workers provide social expectations, regulation and support that aids actors in navigating personal problems. The fourth and final theme is human agency. This is the socially constrained capacity to act through which the individual constructs their own life course. This principle stresses the importance of individuality and how people react to changing circumstances and social environments (Elder 1994).

The life course observes a variety of intersecting pathways, including those of the private and public, and the institutional and the individual, enabling the observer to analyze these interdependent pathways at their intersections. The pathways in a given narrative can be analyzed through the life course paradigm with attentions given to the four principles of life course theory. For instance, at 18 years-old, Jenny is in her first year of a 2-year diploma in Computer Systems Technology (CST) at BCIT and foresees that she will subsequently extend her diploma into an additional two years of study, thereby earning a bachelor's degree. "I'm sure the diploma will be useful, [but] there is a bit of an advantage to having a bachelor's and I'm still pretty young" (Jenny 2017). Embedded in Jenny's statement are three primary assumptions. Firstly, Jenny is suggesting that post-secondary education is intrinsically linked to getting a good job. Secondly, Jenny suggests that more education is better and necessary to jumpstart a successful career. Thirdly, she suggests that youths, such as herself, have multiple, flexible options that can be pursued. This statement suggests that Jenny is adhering to contemporary cultural norms and expectations regarding her participation in post-secondary education.

Prior to Jenny's enrollment in the CST program, she was considering studying Mechanical Engineering and pursuing a career in a related field. However, after a semester break between high school and post-secondary schooling spent working at a retail job, Jenny decided she wanted to go into CST. This decision stemmed from the positive experience she had participating in a Robotics Program during high school. Jenny's decision was, ultimately, hers to make and she pursued her CST passion – enacting her own agency. Jenny attributes her interest in technology and science to her volunteer work with Free Geek. Free Geek is a non-profit organization in East Vancouver that focuses on reusing and responsibly depositing of electronic waste – accepting old electronics, dismantling them and retaining or repurposing useful parts to fix broken electronics donated by people in the community. Referred to Free Geek by a friend, Jenny began volunteering in 2013 and attributes her interest in computers to this. Her family history and influence of her peers played a very important role in constructing the basis of Jenny's current daily life.

It was just by chance. Honestly if [my friend] hadn't recommended me to Free Geek, I wouldn't be taking Computer Systems Technology. I only started volunteering there because if you volunteer for 24hrs you get a free computer.

On the day Jenny and I met to discuss her participation in the study and review the consent form, she learned that she had landed an interview for a practicum with Safe Software™. The procession of interview and offer letter was captured through photovoice and discussed in detail during our follow-up interview.

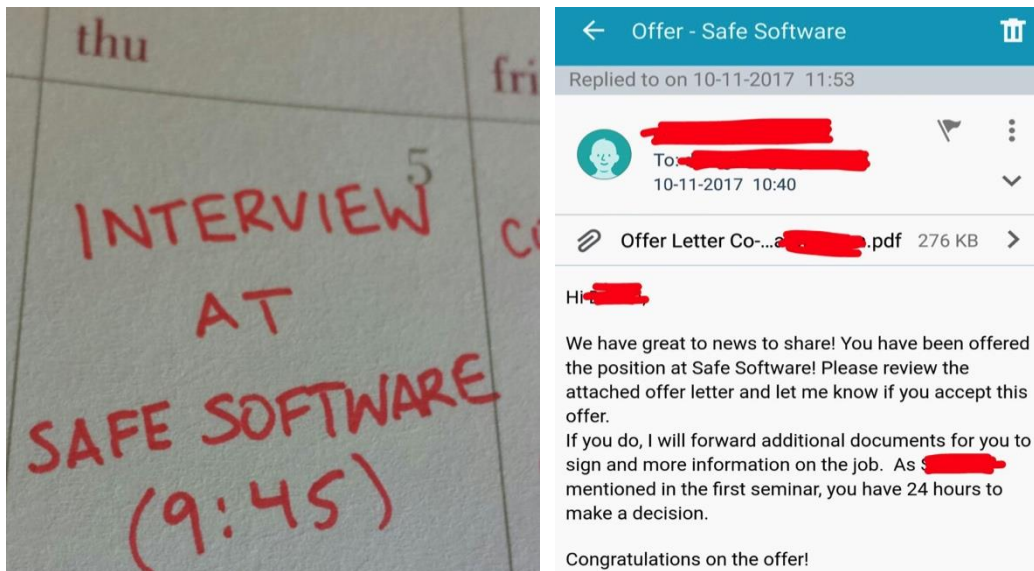


Figure 5.1. Received via WhatsApp on October 3rd, the image on the left (JENN04) is of Jenny’s scheduled interview with Safe Software™, written in her day planner. Received on October 11th via WhatsApp, the image on the right (JENN18) is a screenshot of her co-op employment offer from Safe Software™.

I actually remember thinking when I sent you the photo (JENN18) that a year prior to getting this email I was still working at The [Hudson’s] Bay. I remember I only got my acceptance for this program in November so at this time Oct 11th, 2016 I had no idea what I was going to do with my future. I was like, “*I’m gona be working in retail for the rest of my life, this is gonna suck*”. I was so desperate to hear anything from BCIT, and a year later I got a job offer!

A knowledge-based economy is a competitive environment that renders people (specifically youths) who are lacking post-secondary credentials for opportunities. Jenny’s involvement with Safe Software™ began when she ran into one of her mother’s friends at the grocery store. “She asked me what I was up to and I was like, “*I’m in the co-op program*” and she offered to help me find a job”. Upon receiving a recommendation from her mother’s friend, Jenny was offered an interview and landed the job – something Jenny considers to be a big moment as it’s her first job in in the tech industry. This is an instance where Jenny’s family support aids in navigating personal problems.

As a starting point, the life course model is a useful theoretical orientation for understanding studenthood as it accounts for individual coping skills, human diversity, agency, and is attentive to global shifts in cultural, political, economic, and social expectations. However, researchers such as Jennifer Johnson-Hanks (2002) call for an updated life course paradigm that centers on the uncertainty and the improvised nature of responses to developmental pathways. Johnson-Hanks' notion of *vital conjunctures* is that life events are not always clear and acknowledged. These moments do not always stand-out as life changing and instead can be conceived of as everyday strategies and improvisations. Johnson-Hanks defines these oscillations in status embodiments as "experiential knots during which potential futures are up for grabs" (Johnson-Hanks 2002, 872). Johnson-Hanks applies the concept of experiential knots to the Beti women of Cameroon's whose negotiations between the status of girl and womanhood suggest that seemingly stable statuses such as motherhood and childhood are fluid statuses defined by uncertainty, change, and indecisiveness. Therefore, life stages and identities are much more fluid than the traditional, static form assumed within psychological literature positing developmental stages. A very similar concept presented by Vered Amit and Caroline Knowles (2017) refers to these improvised responses to everyday irregularities and uncertainties as *tacks*. Tacking is visible not only in retrospect, but can help shape an individual's future. Similar to the action of moving a sailboat into the wind, tacking involves a series of responses to shifting circumstances – deviating, improvising and adjusting to new courses of action. Using a mobility model of tacking or the notion of vital conjectures can assist in understanding and conceptualizing navigations within the studenthood phase. For instance, the structural pathways in Matt's narrative can be analyzed through the use of tacking with attention paid to the four principles of the life course.

Born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta, Matt remained at home and completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Alberta in Engineering Physics. Finishing in four years, he spent the summer after graduation travelling in Europe, returning to Edmonton in September to begin working for Schlumberger, an oil and gas fields servicing company.

I got really lucky. I started my online application for Schlumberger and I didn't finish it all. That night I got a text from a friend saying, "Hey I'm doing a co-op at Schlumberger. Do you want a job?" I got an interview right away and never had to finish the online application.

After 6 months of work, the Edmonton office closed, and Matt was transferred to the Calgary office where he worked for a year and a half before being offered a job in Houston, Texas, which he declined. Schlumberger's Canadian offices were closing because of the slump in Alberta's tar sands industry. Matt was asked to remain on for 9-months until he was let go with a sizable severance. It was at this point that Matt was done with the oil and gas industry – Matt had met Phoebe. A mobile massage therapist based in Calgary, Phoebe was very environmentally conscious and encouraged Matt to follow a more environmentally friendly career path. Matt reflected on this as a pivotal moment, for if it hadn't been for Phoebe, he might have remained in the oil and gas industry.

I wasn't sure what I wanted to do after I got laid off, but I knew I wanted to do something renewable – something sustainable. I was looking for jobs as well – I didn't come back from the summer across Canada and think "*I'm going back to school*" ... because when I finished undergrad I was like, "*there's no way I'm going back to school*" ... Phoebe, my wife, at that time fiancée, suggested "*Well, what about going back to school*", and I was like "*Maybe*".

When they returned from their cross-Canada adventure, Matt contacted an old professor he worked for during his undergraduate years, who was now in New York City (NYC) working on a start-up company. The professor suggested that Matt move to NYC and work for him while pursuing a master's degree. Before Matt started seriously considering schools to attend, the funding fell through on the start-up and Matt figured it was best to pursue a master's in renewable energy full time.⁷

I thought to myself, "Okay, if I want to do something in sustainability no one is going buy the 'I'm a huge environmentalist'. Look at my resume. I worked for years as an oil and gas man." So, coming back to grad school was a way to make that transition.

The tacking model posited by Knowles and Amit contrasts with Jeffery Arnett's Emerging Adulthood. Arnett (2011) posits that Emerging Adulthood is a new transitional phase in the life course of all American youths – offering a formalized life course perspective that categorizes individuals into rigid, psychologically based developmental phases. Arnett had used Erik Erikson's notion of *institutionalized moratoria* as a foundation for Emerging Adulthood. Based on fieldwork conducted in the mid-20th

⁷ Matt began his Master of Applied Science in Electric Engineering focusing on power electronics for renewable energy at UBC in January 2017

century Erikson suggests that all societies provide “a more or less sanctioned intermediary period between childhood and adulthood during which a lasting pattern of inner identity is scheduled for relative completions” (Erickson, 1980, p.119). In layman’s terms, Erikson is suggesting that American society provides young people with a break in responsibility during which they can peruse a variety of interests such as travelling, military service or post-secondary education. Arnett offers a similar model of free choice and postponement of commitments, failing to acknowledge that transition outcomes are dependent on relationship between structural opportunities and constraints as well as individual capabilities and resources. The “universal” life stage of Emerging Adulthood ignores individuals who take traditional routes into adulthood through entering the labor market; nor does it recognize those who lack the financial liberties to take up a moratorium period. Schoon and Schulenberg (2013) suggest that Emerging Adulthood may be a useful synonym for transitional periods into adulthood. However, the term cannot extend beyond that as it fails to account the social and economic conditions that have produced extended transitions. Côté and Brynner (2008) further this line of evaluation by suggesting that the 1980’s onward decline of economic opportunities for young adults has resulted in involuntary delays in occupying the role of adult. “More and more young people are either forced out of the workforce and or driven into higher educational systems in the hopes of improving their employability” (Côté and Brynner 2008).

The concept of tacking assists in evaluating what is often perceived as adolescent indecisiveness that academics in various disciplines have traditionally ignored or situated under an umbrella diagnosis of liminality defined by an assumed materialization of the futuristic self. I want to make clear that I view student subjectivity as status in flux, constantly being constructed from everyday experiences. Amit and Knowles (2017) advocate for the recognition of the importance of everyday improvisations and insist that these should be viewed as important units of knowledge. Rather than dismissing instances of improvisation as failures to achieve an original goal, they suggest these tacks can shed insight upon everyday life events and activities. The mobility model of tacking shifts the perspective of everyday navigation through life events from a linear trajectory with a defined and solidly established beginning and end to a more fluid and open-ended model. Amit and Knowles (2017) acknowledge that tacks possess evaluative components which determine how helpful or unhelpful an

improvisation or tack is. This evaluative component also enlightens the individual on the future tacks that are subsequently needed. For example, when Matt decided to reroute his career into environmental engineering and sustainability, he recognized that his educational qualification would need to reflect this.

Despite the tack being enacted “in the moment”, tacks are retrospective and prospective (Amit & Knowles 2017). Retrospectively tacks utilize the individual’s skills set and experiences that pre-exist the alteration. For instance, Linko enrolled in UBC’s Arts program so she would be able to ‘test’ different academic areas of interest. “For my first year I kind of just like took one course of everything that remotely interested me just to see what direction I wanted to focus on. I remember over the summer I went through all the courses online and wrote which ones I liked, and I looked at the professors and then eliminated the ones with bad professors” (Linko 2017). Linko is leaning towards Film Studies because she has always enjoyed films and gets to watch classic movies that she normally wouldn’t have even heard of. “Citizen Kane is a super old movie that I have never heard of but it’s supposedly the best movie ever made, and I like learning about it” (Linko 2017). Linko had intended on applying to New York University (NYU) for film school, but the challenge and cost of moving across the continent to a much larger city was too daunting a task. Prospectively, tacks involve conceptualizing an expected impact of the potential tack (Amit and Knowles 2017). This influence doesn’t necessarily occur directly after the improvisation and can gradually divulge over a prolonged period of time. For instance, Louis is unsure of a career path and is using his time at university to “see what he likes” it out. Falling into the category of students who are “figuring it out”, Louis has filled his first year in UBC’s Bachelor of Arts program with a smattering of introductory courses. “Well... it was the biggest program with the widest range of stuff and I really don’t know what I want to study so I was like I may as well” (Louis 2017). This was done with the intention and hope of discovering academic areas of interest them while avoiding areas that lacked the promise of prosperous careers. Louis, while interested in Earth Sciences and enjoying his Geography intro course, is not interested in pursuing this area.

I would have to transfer into the Faculty of Science to really do it the way I want because the Faculty of Arts has Human Geography but lacks Geophysics and Volcanology. I don’t think I’ll transfer into the Faculty of Science because I don’t know what I would do with a Geo/Science degree. Like I’d become a Scientist or an Academic and I don’t know if those are things I really want.

Pertaining to Louis's next semester, he said "it's mostly just the classes I have now but the next level. And I'm probably going to change it but, I haven't given it that much thought. Hopefully inspiration will come. That's the goal." Louis's indecision partially stems from his post-graduation plans. "After school I don't think I'm going to go to work right away. I'll focus less on academic and career pursuits. I want to have some time between school and working". Louis's plan of action is an example of post-secondary students' negotiation between broader economic and social forces alongside their own interests. In addition to larger society, student navigate within the structures of the post-secondary institution, previously demonstrated through Louis's decision to refrain from pursuing a degree in Geography.

In summation, studenthood is a term I have developed to describe the state of being a post-secondary student in Canada. This is a relatively new phenomena that contains its own period and cohort effect and therefore collecting student subjectivities and spatial life course narratives is an effective method to analyze studenthood. The application of Amit and Knowles tacking paradigm is an excellent way to analyze the navigating strategies of students and their improvisations to daily challenges and changing circumstances. The duration, intensity and creativity of the responding tack is based on the retrospective and prospective factors involved (Amit and Knowles 2017). In doing this, research can shift away from the traditional orientation of life course trajectories and begin to adopt a potentially more fluid, open understanding of the life course. I disagree with Arnett's (2016) suggestion that "the American college is the Emerging Adult environment par excellence". Rather than viewing young people as freely choosing to prolong their transitions toward adulthood while experimenting with identities, I argue alongside with Côté and Brynner (2008) that young people have been forced to navigate through a compilation of historical process of economic exclusion and marginalization, which have made their financial independence difficult to achieve. Instead of entering a new stage of development, young adults are simply coping and strategizing their way through new institutionalized social and economic' structures.

6. Conclusion



Figure 6.1. On December 1st, 2018, students lined the shores of Wreck Beach to participate in UBC's 5th Annual Last Day of Class Polar Bear Swim. Two minutes before swim.

Standing in the drizzling rain, on the cold sand of Wreck Beach I looked out over the sloshing, grey Strait of Georgia and thought to myself, “*why the hell did I think this was a good idea?*” Tugging my thin, cotton towel tighter around my goose bump covered body, I turned back towards land. A slow but steady stream of people were filing down the wooden staircase that traversed the steep forested inclined connecting UBC's west end of campus to Wreck Beach. Wrapped in layers of bulky sweaters, rain jackets, towels and blankets these people joined the growing crowd on the beach. It was late in the afternoon of December 1st and I, along with approximately 200 other people were about thirty minutes away from jumping into the frigid waters. It was the 5th annual Last Day of Class Polar Bear Swim, an event organized by the UBC Party Calendar – a student-run committee that designs, arranges, and executes student activities. The objective of this event was simple, if not a little twisted – celebrate the end of the fall semester by jumping into the ocean on the last day of classes.

I had arrived early with a close friend who had a few days earlier graciously volunteered to assist my participation at this event – taking pictures and holding various articles of clothing. When we first got to the beach there were 50 or so people already there. A few representatives from the UBC Party Calendar committee – the organizers of this event – were among those identifiable by logo bearing sweaters. The event's hype-man was already doing his best to raise morale – a tough act considering the rain and 5-

degree temperature. Dressed in a black full-body wet suit and colorful trucker cap, the hype-man had strapped a giant square speaker to his back and proceeded to run/dance around the beach between the different groups of people. Friends of his joined in and while we were waiting on the beach he managed to start a congo-line of people running up and down the shore in anticipated excitement and in an attempt to warm themselves up. By 3:15pm the beach had become crowded. Most people had already changed out of their clothes, into their bathing suits and were wrapped in towels. Piles of backpacks and jackets were scattered in clumps by the large logs laying parallel to the shore. Not everyone in attendance was there to swim. A small number of people were there to help their friends by cheering them on, holding umbrellas, and most importantly, to capture the whole ordeal on camera. Unlike the other university events I had attended during the semester, there were no signs or other visuals that indicated the event – this was probably because of the weather and location of the event, the stairs to get down to Wreck Beach are no small feat and the beach was vacant except for us.

Using a megaphone, a female in charge directed those of us who were jumping in to lineup on the shore 5 minutes prior to the 3:30pm jump-in time. I don't recall seeing anyone who looked like they were a lone attender. Everyone I saw was with at least one other person and large groups of females linked arms at the shore – high pitched screams and laughter rising when jesting splashes of cold saltwater hit them. The actual “plunge” into the water was a very quick and seemingly anti-climatic event. The woman with the megaphone who herself was already in the water counted down from ten and all at once the line of people including me jostled into the water. The majority of people went all in, dunking their heads quickly under water, and resurfacing with a gasping sputter. Instantly everyone was out of the water and madly wading back to shore and dashing around to their piles of clothing. I was one of these people, no longer caring about watching others, I ran back to my companion who was smirking and holding my towel in an outstretched hand. The chaos and calamity slowly died down as people, me included, began layering on clothing which was now dirtied by sand and seawater. My companion and I gathered our belongings and joined the slow-moving crowd of people back up the hill to campus. At the foot of the enormous staircase ascending the slope, event organizers were rewarding our bravery with free coffee and beer vouchers to Loafe Café™ – a central campus café. As people slowly trudged up, one youthful male jogged up the stairs past the slower paced persons, gleefully yelling he was late for class.



Figure 6.2. Multiple study set-ups in UBC’s AMS building on Tuesday December 12th, 2017.

The commencement of fall finals brought with it an onslaught of changes to the post-secondary campuses. In the early afternoon of Tuesday December 12th, just past the midway point in UBC’s examination period, I took note of multiple campus transformations that had occurred. I began walking through the AMS nest at the bottom level, eventually making my way to the uppermost “nest” level (featured in Figure 3). On the bottom level, almost every available chair and table was occupied. Students had spread out their study set-ups, covering the tables with handwritten notes, binders, and textbooks that had until now been scarce and only sighted in the library – evidence that the tactile experience while studying is still needed by many students. Making my way through the second, third and fourth levels I found all of the bookable study rooms occupied by groups of students. Some rooms were filled with students diligently working, reading textbooks, comparing notes, and sharing PowerPoints. Other study rooms were filled with students who were loudly talking, joking and busy leaving and re-entering the room more often than they were just sitting – they would visit friends in nearby study rooms or return with food and drinks. It was also on these upper levels where students had sourced out horizontal areas (bench’s or the floor) in which to curl up or stretch out to take a nap. I think napping in campus public spaces during exam week is characteristic of student culture. This would be considered inappropriate behaviour in almost any other public space or workplace, but at a post-secondary campus during the examination period napping in public is a practiced norm.



Figure 6.3. UBC's Communal campus spaces occupied by students and their study set-ups. In the forefront of the photo, a student sleeps on a bench, and directly behind this figure by the farthest edge of the space, another student lies on the floor watching their computer.

Leaving the AMS, it was a short walk to the Irving K. Barber Learning Center (library), a place I suspected would be full of studying students since it was open 24hr from Sunday Dec 3rd to Tuesday Dec 19th. Similar to the AMS building, students were occupying every available space. Even in the formal environment of the library, I passed a few students who had found secluded corners and were having public naps. The Chapman Learning commons on the third floor with its stone cathedral interior and worn leather chairs was completely packed with students. Walking through, I was mostly ignored, only a few students looked up from their pages of notes, textbooks and electronics. Post-secondary fall examination preparation breached the boundaries of campus and found its way into cafes such as Breka Bakery and Café in downtown Vancouver. A 24-hour café with an abundance of cheap sweets, free wifi, and background conversation, made it a studying hotspot. At 9pm on Thursday December 14th, Breka was packed with students studying, conversing with friends, drinking hot beverages and eating an assortment of pastries. The café's central table was co-opted by students and their study set-ups. Donning casual clothing, sitting in groups and in singles, a lot of the students appeared comfortably settled into their work. With the tables completely full, I even observed a couple of people using the outside, heated patio as a work station. One woman, bundled in her dark blue winter parka and white, knit tuque was seated outside at a patio table typing away at a Word document while the Christmas lights hanging from the sidewalk trees twinkled.

My purpose in describing the end of semester rituals and campus landscape is to provide a complete account of the 2017 fall semester at the University of British Columbia, British Columbia Institute of Technology, and Douglas College. Throughout my thesis, I have incorporated ethnographic descriptions that illustrate students lived experiences, practices and discourse. The progression of the semester is captured through the ordering of event such as Douglas Colleges “Welcome Back” week and UBC’s Jumpstart program, to midterm prep, and all the way to end of semester celebrations and finals preparation. This creates an informal timeline of events spanning the commencement and conclusion of the semester from which an observable contrast in the campus landscape and student actions appear. I supplemented my unobtrusive observations with four additional methods outlined in Chapter Two. The ethnographic and informational interviews, that addressed participants educational experiences, life goals and expectations, social activities, and current living accommodations. These initial ethnographic interviews were informative in that they helped me shape the types of questions I asked during the daily activity data collection. Photovoice captured visual documentation and expression of the realities of studenthood – by students. In combination with this, daily activities provided context to the notion of ‘student life’ through analysis of student activities, movements, and peer relations.

Through understanding the marketing of higher education and the roles students occupy relative to the idea of ‘academics-as-capital’, we can better understand how post-secondary education has evolved into a legitimized activity acceptable for youth. In Chapter Three, Studenthood and consumerism: Marketing higher education, I suggest that for many of my participants, attending post-secondary schooling is a prerequisite to an ideal, future life that is dependant on their educational qualifications. A characteristic of the hegemonic discourse of consumerism pushes individuals to construct their social identities through the consumption of commodities (Billig 1999). The marketing of higher education has created class and lifestyle ideals that can be pursued through post-secondary schooling & qualifications. I consider this to be directly linked to socio-economic class differences which are reproduction by institutions. This is observable through the various marketing advertisements employed by the colleges in comparison of those of universities. I further my analysis by suggesting students are consumers and managers of educational qualifications and their parents and loved ones occupy the roles of co-consumers and co-mangers (and even co-funders) of their significant others

post-secondary schooling. I further my connection between Studenthood and marketing through analyzing students not only consumers of educational qualification, but also as consumers of everyday commodities. I suggest that students, similar to the 'tween, have become a targeted marketing demographic. Evidence to support this stems from my observations of various commercial incentives and sales marketed towards student. I conclude by suggesting the complex role of targeted consumer within the marketing of higher education may not empower students but instead subscribe them to the role of consumer.

In Chapter Four, Student Fragility, I shift my analysis to investigate an observed 'student-as-fragile' narrative. The numerous intuitionally sanctioned relief strategies, while ostensibly 'combating' student stress simultaneously legitimize it as a concrete experience of studenthood. I suggest that institutional based 'coping' programs and awareness campaigns such as UBC's Take what you need. Leave what you can and BCIT's Survival Strategies ostensibly seek to respond to but perhaps also foster an environment of student fragility. This 'student-as-fragile' narrative has become a propagated prerequisite of post-secondary education that is practiced by both students and institutions. Even before attending their first class, students have been told by those in positions of power that they will experience stress and anxiety related to their academics. By providing, facilitating and or generating awareness of the student fragility, the institution is portrayed in a positive light and I question the effectiveness of these seemingly ordinary self-care practices and rather think the conversation created around student well-being is casting a shadow over larger institutional issues – such as tuition costs. I think these strategies seek pacify students and provide the illusion that their struggles are being properly and seriously responded to. I reconnect with student consumption by suggesting that perpetuation of, and response to student fragility is not conducted exclusively by students or post-secondary institutions and is closely connected to capitalism. Marketing strategies for commodities such as energy drinks recognize and utilize the expected relationship between students and fragility. I illustrate this through series of Red Bull™ energy drinks print advertisements that were marketed towards students.

Illustrated through descriptive accounts of my participants life experiences, I explore the ways in which students navigate through educational, social, and economic structures. I firstly applied life course theory to Jenny's narrative, focusing on the four

principles; external events, cultural norms and expectations, family history, and human agency. This enables observation of interdependent pathways including those of the private and public, and the institutional and the individual, at their intersections. In *Navigating Studenthood*, I also apply Amit and Knowles (2016) tacking model to illustrate navigational strategies employed during studenthood. Similar to the action of moving a sailboat into the wind, tacking involves a series of responses to shifting circumstances – deviating, improvising and adjusting to new courses of action. Tacks are improvised responses to everyday irregularities and uncertainties, and I demonstrate their employment within a descriptive account of Matt's post-secondary experiences.

Through these various avenues of investigation, I argue that Studenthood is a distinct phase of the life course for many Canadian youth. I argue that just as childhood and adolescence became new life course categories during the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively, studenthood has recently emerged as a distinct life stage and subjectivity. While overarching analysis provides public policy makers a simplistic understanding of a social movement, the statistics fall short of accounting for the individual factors that stimulate actions and behaviours influencing life course transitions. My research has aimed to combat this lacuna and present a more holistic understanding of this studenthood subjectivity. Through ethnographic research at three Metro Vancouver post-secondary institutions, I explore how the shared activities of post-secondary students, the common environments in which they act, and the social discourses and relations they engage in contribute to this demarcated period in the life course. Life course theory and the related concepts of tacking and vital conjunctures allow me to explore student navigational strategies. A tacking model assists in rethinking what is often perceived as adolescent indecisiveness encapsulated as liminality. I further suggest that higher education marketing fosters an environment of student fragility that necessitates numerous institutionally sanctioned stress-relief practices.

This thesis attempts to encompass the individual, multifactorial influencers of student subjectivity and grasp how youths perceive post-secondary education as part of their life course trajectories. I suggest the attention of future youth and post-secondary research be directed towards student fragility and student navigational strategies. Using a tacking model or similar mobility concept such as Johnson-Hanks (2002) vital conjunctures, future research can attempt to better understand how students navigate

through social, and economic, and other institutional constrains which as I have suggested, contribute to student fragility.

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Appendix A.

Participant list

- Andy** *Institution:* Douglas College (DC)
Program & Year: 1st year, Business Administration Diploma
Method: Daily activities
- Benji** *Institution:* University of British Columbia (UBC)
Program & Year: 3^d year, Business Administration (Accounting)
Method: Photovoice
- Cassie** *Institution:* British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
Program & Year: 1st year, Marketing Management
Method: Photovoice
- Claire** *Institution:* Douglas College (DC) Recruiter
Program & Year: N/A
Method: Informational interview
- Henry** *Institution:* University of British Columbia (UBC)
Program & Year: 4th year, Mining & Mineral Process Engineering
Method: Ethnographic interview
- Jamie** *Institution:* University of British Columbia (UBC)
Program & Year: 3^d year, Civil Engineering
Method: Photovoice

- Jenny** *Institution:* British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
Program & Year: 1st year, Computer Systems Technology
Method: Photovoice
- Jonsi** *Institution:* The University of British Columbia (UBC)
Program & Year: 1st year, Master of Experimental Medicine
Method: Daily activities
- Kate** *Institution:* British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
Program & Year: 3rd year, Architectural Science
Method: Ethnographic interview
- Kelsey** *Institution:* Douglas College (DC) Recruiter
Program & Year: N/A
Method: Informational interview
- Lauren** *Institution:* The University of British Columbia (UBC)
Program & Year: 1st year, Land & Food Systems, Bachelor of Science
Method: Daily activities
- Leah** *Institution:* The University of British Columbia (UBC)
Program & Year: 3rd year, Master of Civil Engineering
Method: Photovoice
- Linko** *Institution:* The University of British Columbia (UBC)
Program & Year: 1st year, Bachelor of Arts (undeclared)
Method: Daily activities

Louis

Institution: The University of British Columbia (UBC)

Program & Year: 1st year, Bachelor of Arts (undeclared)

Method: Daily activities

Matt

Institution: The University of British Columbia (UBC)

Program & Year: 1st year, Master of Applied Science in Electric Engineering (thesis based)

Method: Daily activities

Penny

Institution: The University of British Columbia (UBC)

Program & Year: 1st year, Bachelor of Arts (undeclared)

Method: Photovoice

Vince

Institution: The University of British Columbia (UBC)

Program & Year: 3rd year, Geology, Bachelor of Science

Method: Daily activities

Appendix B.

Daily activities questions

Date/Time	Questions
Set #1 [Q: 1-3] Mon, Oct 2 nd (noon)	1. Where are you and what are you doing? 2. If you are with someone, what is your relation to that person? 3. What will you be doing later today?
Set #2 [Q: 4-6] Fri, Oct 6 th (pm)	4. What have you done today that <i>is</i> school related? 5. What have you done today that was non-school related? 6. What are your plans for this weekend?
Set #3 [Q: 7-9] Wed, Oct 11 th (pm)	7. Have you taken any transportation today? If so, what modes? 8. Have you purchased anything today? If so, what did your purchases consist of? 9. Have you eaten today? If so, where & who did you eat with?
Set #4 [Q: 10-12] Mon, Oct 16 th (noon)	10. Do you have any assignment (i.e. essays/projects/presentations) due this week? If so have you completed them? 11. When is your next assignment/midterm? Are you studying for it? 12. Are you stressing about anything today?
Set #5 [Q: 13-15] Wed, Oct 18 th (noon)	13. Where are you and what are you doing? 14. If you are with someone, what is your relation to that person? 15. What will you be doing later today?
Set #6 [Q: 16-18] Fri, Oct 20 th (am)	16. What type of clothing are you wearing today? 17. So far, where have you been today? 18. Do you have any plans for this weekend? If so what are they?
Set #7 [Q: 19-21] Sun, Oct 22 th (pm)	19. What are you doing this evening? 20. What are you doing tomorrow that is school related? 21. What are you doing tomorrow that is non-school related?
Set #8 [Q: 22-24] Mon, Oct 23 rd (noon)	22. Did you get enough sleep last night? 23. Are you completing what you intended to get done today? 24. Are you stressed about anything?

Date/Time**Questions**

Set #9 [Q: 25-27]
Thu, Oct 26th
(am)

- 25. Did you cook/prepare food for yourself today or did you purchase prepared food?
- 26. What type(s) of household chores do you have to do?
- 27. What have you done today that is school-related?

Set #10 [Q: 28-30]
Mon, Oct 30th
(noon)

- 28. Where are you and what are you doing?
- 29. What will you be doing later today?
- 30. How are you feeling?