

PREPARING FOR WORK: A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN POWELL RIVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1993

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In Powell River, British Columbia

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the implications of local restructuring for school-aged youth in forestry towns, particularly with respect to their choices about education and their labour market expectations. The thesis focuses on Powell River, a classic example of an isolated Canadian resource town with one dominant company producing one commodity, newsprint. In recent years however, the role of the company as an employer in the community has been greatly reduced and prospects for local youth are drastically different from previous generations.

Given the context of restructuring in Powell River, this thesis examines the role of institutions, most notably the family and the school, in influencing how secondary school students prepare for work. A conceptual framework is developed which links the labour market segmentation literature with the idea of vocationalism. The empirical analysis uses a multi-method approach which includes a student survey questionnaire and key-informant interviews with students, parents, school staff and community members.

The analysis reveals considerable changes in how secondary school students prepare for work. The local secondary school, Max Cameron, has taken a decidedly active role in preparing students for labour market demands. This is reflected in changes to the school's curriculum and in its collaboration with other local training and labour market institutions. The value placed on education within the home is found to be an important factor influencing students' choices and expectations. The ways in which students conceptualize the link between school and the labour market appear to be related to family background. As such, the family provides a basis for segmentation within the school and in students' preparation for work.

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CHAPTER 1

LABOUR MARKETS AND YOUTH IN POWELL RIVER

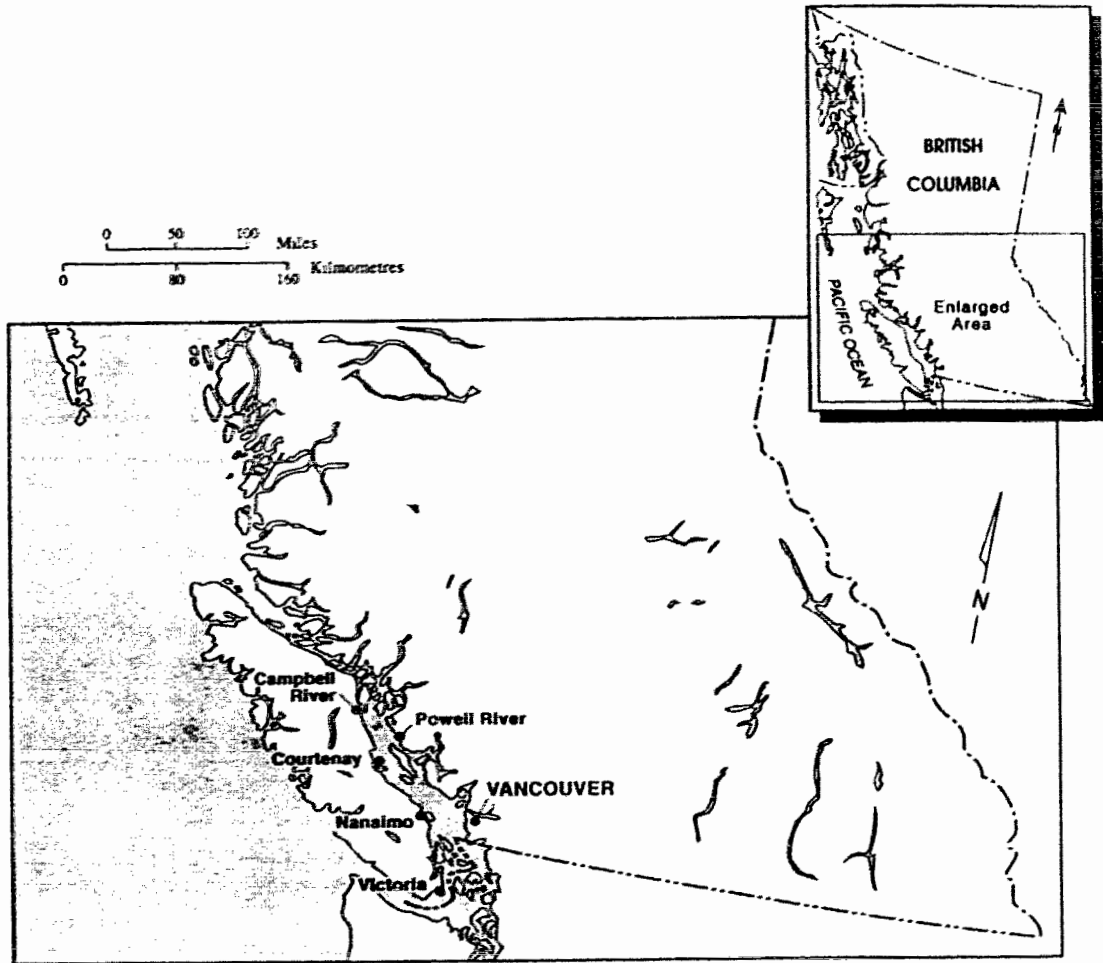
Introduction

The British Columbia forest industry has undergone fundamental restructuring since the recession of 1981-1985. This industrial restructuring has taken several forms, including capital intensification, work force down sizing, changing labour relations and mill closure. These industrial changes have had tangible impacts on local labour markets in mill towns along the British Columbia coast. Coastal mills have ostensibly shifted, or are in the process of shifting, from a Fordist mode of production to one of flexible production (Hayter and Barnes 1992; Hayter and Holmes 1994). The impetus for this change stems from a variety of factors, perhaps the most influential being the recession of the early 1980s, when 23,000 forestry workers lost their jobs and the industry suffered a \$500 million loss (Barnes, Hayter and Grass 1990; Barnes and Hayter 1992). In forestry towns, where large portions of the local labour force have historically been employed in forest product manufacturing, reductions in jobs not only displaced forestry workers and their families, but also eliminated job possibilities for new, young entrants. Youth labour market expectations have clearly altered since the pre-1980s era of stable, secure mill employment which characterized the Fordist era. Today, youth living in forestry towns are facing dramatically different opportunity structures.

This thesis addresses the implications of local restructuring for school-aged youth in forestry towns, particularly with respect to their choices about education and their labour market expectations. This thesis focuses on Powell River (see Figure 1.1), an isolated coastal mill town located approximately five hours by car and two ferry journeys from Vancouver, an exemplar of restructuring within the British Columbia forest industry. Powell River provides a classic example of the Canadian hinterland resource town with one dominant company producing one commodity, newsprint. Changes occurring in Powell River reflect changes in the shift from Fordism to flexibility. In turn, these changes have

Figure 1.1

Location of Powell River, British Columbia



significant implications for labour market dynamics with respect to youth. Youth however, have been largely neglected in labour market literature.

From Fordism to Flexibility

The Fordist era prevailed from the end of WWII to the beginning of the 1970s, and up to the 1973 oil crisis. This era has been characterized as the 'long boom,' when Fordist industries including the British Columbia forest product manufacturing industry enjoyed growth in demand and stability in production and labour relations. Fordism is based on the large scale mass production of a standardized product and the exploitation of internal economies of scale. Fordism employs the Taylorist principle of separating production from management within the firm. Tasks are designed and overseen by specialized management who control the production process. Workers perform routinized tasks in a production line fashion, as in the case of pulp and paper production at MacMillan Bloedel facilities in British Columbia. Under Taylorism, minimal skills are required from workers who perform repetitive motions at their station along the assembly line. The main requirement of workers under Taylorism is that they are able to follow instructions from specialized management. Workers do not play a role in the design of the production process, they simply implement it (Marshall and Tucker 1992). Work starts at an entry level position and wages and responsibility rise with increasing seniority.

Like many other Fordist industries which enjoyed stability and prosperity during the 'long boom,' the B.C. forest industry experienced rising productivity during this period (Hayter 1987; Binkley 1993). The Taylorist principle of separating production from management does not foster learning among workers. Thus while production increased, workers continued to earn high wages, while their skill levels remained low. Marshall and Tuckers' depiction of Fordism in the US applies equally well to the situation in British Columbia during this period.

Workers with no more than an eighth grade education and little in the way of technical skills could end up drawing paychecks that enabled them to have two cars, a vacation cottage as well as a principal residence, and

maybe a boat for fishing and waterskiing. The system worked for everyone (Marshall and Tucker 1992:8).

There were extremely high standards of living and expectations among working class families in B.C. forestry towns.

The shift from Fordism to flexibility began to occur in the mid 1970s after the 1973 oil crisis. This shift towards flexibility is multi-faceted and, for example, alters the basic way in which work is performed. The production line and rigid job demarcations upheld under Fordism have been replaced by an emphasis on team work and task sharing. Flexibility in manufacturing also frequently entails the replacement of outdated machinery by modern computerized technology. Mechanization is largely responsible for the widespread loss of jobs during this shift from Fordism to flexibility. An example of this is the installation of computerized technology in the ground wood mill in Powell River, where employment has dropped from 248 in 1971 to 28 in 1994 (Hayter and Holmes 1993). The new regime incorporates flexibility into all areas of production, requiring workers to perform variable tasks, to be trouble shooters and team workers, all of which conflict with the rigid job demarcations upheld under Fordism. Continuous training and skill widening are primary means towards becoming flexibly specialized (Hayter and Holmes 1994). The economic crisis of 1981-5 and again in the early 1990s enabled management to achieve inroads towards these goals because of labours' vulnerability in the midst of cutbacks.

Labour Market Dynamics

The emergence of flexibility has altered youth's job opportunities. Entry level positions afforded under Fordism no longer exist for unskilled young workers. According to the dual labour market hypothesis, the labour market is bifurcated into two sectors under Fordism, the primary and the secondary (Doeringer and Piore 1971). In this model, the primary and secondary sectors operate independently of one another and do not compete with each other for jobs. Primary sector jobs offer workers high wages and good working conditions compared to the low paying secondary sector jobs (Peck 1989a; Hayter and Holmes 1994). Under Fordism, the primary sector is further subdivided into the primary

independent and the primary subordinate sectors, represented by management and unionized labour respectively. The primary independent sector oversees work performed by the primary subordinate sector.

New workers in the primary subordinate sector start work in entry level positions and advance according to the seniority system. These entry-level positions provide youth with jobs. Lay-offs are conducted through the seniority system, with the last person to join the union having the lowest seniority and hence the first to be laid off during cutbacks. In this way, unions help organize the firm's own internal labour market. According to Doeringer and Piore's model (1971), the secondary sector operates on the basis of supply and demand for unskilled labour. It contains the most marginalized members of the labour market, including women, ethnic minorities and youth, who are excluded from competing for jobs in the primary sector.

The labour market's tendency to selectively discriminate between workers with different attributes was evident in the dual labour theory and remains central to 'flexibility' models of segmentation (Peck 1989a; 1989b; Hanson and Pratt 1992; Morris 1994). In the dual labour model, core workers are highly specialized and enjoy seniority and security. In the flexibility model of segmentation, core workers are skilled, receive continuous training and good wages and enjoy relative job security. In this model, peripheral workers are also flexible but with some exceptions, they are part-timers or possess low skills so they receive low wages, have minimal job security and limited opportunities for advancement or training (Atkinson 1987; Barnes and Hayter 1993). Moreover, flexible core workers require higher skills and compete for fewer 'good' jobs than under the previous Fordist model. This trend is especially apparent in mature industries in decline.

With the shift towards flexibility-based segmentation, there has been a growing recognition that supply as well as demand factors are important to the segmentation process. Peck (1989a), for example, identifies the role of supply-side factors in influencing youth's job expectations, remarking on the scant attention which has been paid

to such an integral part of the labour market. On the supply side of the labour market, labour is reproduced through socialization in the household and in other social institutions. Socialization of youth in the informal sphere, Peck writes, is a central force shaping youth's future expectations regarding work.

The supply-side of the labour market was inadequately conceptualized in the dualist models.... The 'causal sociology' which was employed in the dualist models to explain the channelling of social groups into different segments of the labour market in terms of feedback mechanisms reflect a wholly inadequate conception of the influence of the sphere of reproduction of labour market structure (Peck 1989a:125).

Supply-side factors addressed here include the reproduction of labour within the family and in the education system.

Families play a crucial role in the process of socialization for work. This, the family does very much in tandem with the formal education system ... As expectations about the world of work evolve, they significantly affect the terms under which individuals will make their labour available (Peck 1989a:129).

Within these basic institutional levels, youth are socialized to behave in certain ways and to expect certain labour market outcomes for themselves. But labour supply-side factors such as socialization have not received equal attention as demand-side factors. "Serious treatment of processes such as those of socialization within the family and the school system and those stemming from the domestic division of labour is absent from this work to its considerable detriment" (Peck 1989a:125). Socialization of the labour supply potentially acts as a process of occupational structuring.

Socialization of the labour supply in the family and school helps to direct young entrants towards labour market outcomes which they themselves grow to expect. The degree to which education is valued in the home is an important influence upon youth's educational choices and career aspirations. Studies suggest that youth's range of possible labour market expectations are restricted by structural barriers operating within the family and in the educational system (Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992; Marshall and Tucker 1992).

Vocationalism

According to Peck (1989a), segmentation of the labour supply begins before youth enter the labour market. Even at the secondary school level, youth have begun to conceptualize their future work roles. Gaskell (1985) illustrates the different ways in which youth conceptualize the link between school and the labour market through the concept of vocationalism. According to Gaskell, most students see school as a way of gaining a leg up in the labour market, treating school as a vocational tool. This pragmatic treatment of school by students is described by Gaskell as 'vocationalism,' a concept which describes the link between the educational system and the labour market.

Writing from a Canadian perspective in the mid-1980s, Gaskell notes that students' family status has an important bearing on the way in which students conceptualize this link between school and the labour market. Studies suggest that family background also affects the type of school program a student enrolls in, the level of academic success, the educational and career aspirations, and ultimately the eventual port of entry into the adult labour market (Ashton 1988; Hamilton and Powers 1990; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992).

Socialization at the cultural level

In his 1977 classic, Learning to Labour, Willis explored male working class youth culture in a northern British school. Willis stresses the importance of the cultural realm, namely the peer group and the family. It is within these social environments, Willis writes, where youth develop ideas about society and themselves, including ideas about work. Willis suggests that through the cultural realm, working class youth grow up to expect working class jobs.

We can predict final employment quite well from class background, geographical location, local opportunity structure, and educational attainment.... But what is it to say in any sense that these variables *determine* job choice? We are still left with the problem of the forms of decision taking and of the apparent basis of willing acceptance of restricted opportunities (Willis 1977:172-3).

Willis attempts to reconcile the constraining effect of family status on labour market expectations with the ability of individuals to make decisions regarding the future. Willis highlights the variability and contested nature of youth's labour market expectations.

Family background and educational experience are the two main labour supply factors identified by Peck (1989a) requiring greater discussion in the segmentation literature. While these factors offer compelling support for pre-market segmentation of the labour force (Livingstone 1985; Gaskell 1985; Hamilton and Powers 1990; Morris 1994), youth's eventual labour market expectations and outcomes are not written in stone. The processes which shape youth's labour market expectations are variable and do not conform to any strict formula (Peters 1987). The variegated paths which youth follow after high school reflect the variability of youth's abilities, interests, achievements and experiences. Recognition of this variability must accompany the structural aspect of segmentation theory.

Any research on youth and employment must recognize that adolescents are not monolithic. They vary in education, experience, social awareness, effectiveness in interpersonal relations, self-identity, as well as social background and job expectations (Peters 1987:466).

Willis (1977) draws attention to the contested nature of youth's labour market expectations, emphasizing the interplay between human agency and structural constraints.

To contract out of the messy business of day to day problems is to deny the active, contested nature of social and cultural reproduction. It is a theoretical as well as a political failure ... this suggests that there is *some* room for action at the cultural level (Willis 1977:186).

Here, Willis warns against using deterministic models to predict labour market outcomes, whereby human agency is cancelled out by the structural constraint of family background. People are not zombies or "cultural dupes," wholly unable to make decisions about the future. Youth are more than the products of their family background, schooling and peer groups put together. As individuals, they possess abilities, such as the ability to make decisions about the future. Some are better planners than others (Hamilton and Powers 1990). Youth with similar class backgrounds vary in their degree of preparedness for the

future. Noting this variability, Mason writes that youth expectations "are hypothesized to be a function of social origin, present experience and attitudes and preparedness" (Mason 1985:20), linking structural constraints with individual characteristics. Recognition of this variability must accompany segmentation research, a point noted by Burchell and Rubery (1990) in their study of labour market segmentation in the United Kingdom. There are also reasons to believe that youth labour market expectations are shaped by locality (Ashton 1988). In a comparative study between the United Kingdom and Canada, Ashton found that local opportunity structures in both countries tended to outweigh the impacts of uniform policy in shaping the career aspirations of youth.

Rex Lucas' classic model of community development characterizes resource towns in terms of evolutionary stages of development (Lucas 1971). The final stage of development is one of 'maturity,' which signifies the end of significant change within the locality. According to this model, youth in resource towns have few employment options. The dominant industry offers a group of male youth secure unionized jobs. Those who cannot find work migrate out of the community. Lucas saw few options for females. Among these he included marrying, finding clerical work or migrating.

With the notable exception of textile mills, most industries in such communities exclude females from all work except office routine ... The plight of girls, then, is more serious than that of boys because there are so few jobs for females in communities of single industry The final solution to all the girls' problems is often seen as marriage (Lucas 1971:355).

For Lucas, the 'mature' stage is apparently the last stage of development. But the efficacy of his model breaks down with the recession of 1981-1985 which devastated local labour markets and led to the fundamental changes in B.C. coastal forestry communities (Hayter and Barnes 1995).

Lydia Morris (1987, 1988, 1991, 1994) suggests that locality alone is insufficient for analyzing labour market dynamics. Morris argues that the household, neighborhood and peer group also provide important scales of enquiry because within these multiple levels, informal social networks are formed and reproduced. By the same token, the

school provides an important focus for analyzing the formation of youth's labour market expectations. The notion of 'vocationalism' incorporates family and school into the formation of youth's labour market expectations. From a Canadian perspective, Empson-Warner and Krahn (1992) state that the path from school to work has become less linear and less certain, as youth constantly reassess their job aspirations in relation to a dynamic job market. This need for reassessment becomes particularly acute in the context of a British Columbian resource town undergoing restructuring.

British Columbia's Forest Communities

As a type of locality, Canadian resource towns have been studied extensively, with a decided focus on labour markets and the unstable 'boom and bust' pattern of production (Hayter 1979; Bradbury and St. Martin 1983; Marchak 1983; Bradbury 1984, 1985, 1988; Bradbury and Senbuehler 1988). Since the shift from Fordist production to flexible production has occurred in the British Columbia forest industry, forestry towns have become a focal point for examining the economic impacts of restructuring (Barnes, Hayter and Grass 1990; Barnes and Hayter 1992; Hayter and Holmes 1993, 1994; Lidstone 1993). Yet, relatively little has been written on the impact of restructuring on youth labour market dynamics in resource towns (see Lee et al. 1990). An overview of the British Columbia coastal forest industry provides the context in which changes in Powell River have occurred since the early 1980s.

Traditionally, the B.C. forest industry exhibited many of the characteristics typical of Fordist industry. It specialized in the mass production of a limited range of products, namely raw logs, lumber, pulp and newsprint. The industry's structure is oligopolistic, dominated by a small group of large corporations. Largely driven by American capital, lumber, pulp and newsprint production was export-oriented from the outset, supplying the United States and eastern Canada with low value-added bulk forest products. From 1920 onwards for example, 90 percent of newsprint manufacture has been destined for export, principally to the US (Hayter and Holmes 1993).

Since the 1940s, labour has been represented by strong unions, which have helped to provide stability for labour in the industry. Trades played a valuable role in the industry's functioning, but many skills were learned "on the job" and required little or no formal training at the entry level. Employment was gained through an entry level position at the bottom of the seniority chain. It was through these entry level positions where youth, especially males, gained a foothold on the shop floor.

Forest product manufacturing occurred close to resource extraction. Local forest industry-based communities are typically small and have depended largely on exports. Because of the specialized nature of forest town economies, a large portion of the local labour force depended and continues to depend on forestry income, both directly and indirectly. Even in the 1990s, forestry employment-related income accounts for no less than 50 percent of total basic employment in some areas of British Columbia (Lidstone 1993).

During the 1950s and 1960s, the stability of the B.C. forest industry was off-set by periodic recessions common among Canadian primary industries (Binkley 1993; Hayter and Holmes 1993; Norcliffe 1993). This pattern can be attributed to an over-reliance on export markets for a limited range of resource products (Hayter 1987). This pattern fits into Innis' characterization of the Canadian 'staples trap' (Innis 1930; Hayter and Barnes 1990; Hayter and Holmes 1993).

When market demand resumed, production levels rose to former capacity levels, and workers were rehired according to their seniority. This created an injection of high wages back into local economies, spurring through the multiplier effect, an economic recovery. Stability in B.C.'s hinterland was "punctuated by periodic recessions. Typically, however, these recessions were seen as temporary downturns ... and the pattern of labour vulnerability associated with recession was understood and predictable" (Barnes and Hayter 1993). Under Fordism, opportunities for unskilled entrants into the industry were plentiful.

Restructuring in the British Columbia coastal forest industry

The recession of 1981-1985 represented a pivotal period for the B.C. coastal forest industry (Barnes, Hayter and Grass 1990; Hayter and Barnes 1992; Norcliffe 1993). This turning point was the result of several factors. The dependence upon export markets for standardized products and the high degree of out-of-province ownership "conspired to increase the vulnerability of Canadian regions to cyclical events originating elsewhere" (Norcliffe and Featherstone 1990:73). The market position achieved by the British Columbia forest industry over the 'long boom' has been eroded by the emergence of new producers, namely the southern United States and Newly Industrializing Countries (N.I.C.s) (Marchak 1991, Binkley 1993; Hayter and Holmes 1993). Timber supply has been severely diminished by overcutting, and in the coastal region in general, the 'fall down' effect has become more evident, yielding lower timber volume in areas of second growth (Barnes and Hayter 1992). Environmentalism has become important. Coastal mills' old labour intensive technology is obsolete in terms of meeting current market demands and handling smaller trees as a result of the 'fall down' effect (Hayter, Barnes and Grass 1993). These factors have lead the British Columbia forest industry to take visible steps towards flexible specialization (Barnes and Hayter 1992). Although the shift has been gradual, opportunities for new entrants have been eroded.

Research Goals

Considerable research has been undertaken on labour market segmentation (Peck 1989a; Burchell and Rubery 1990, Barnes and Hayter 1992). However, supply-side factors have only been examined recently and little analysis of youth's labour market expectations has been undertaken. Similarly, while social and economic aspects of resource town life have been documented (Lucas 1971; Marchak 1983, 1990; Gill 1990a, 1990b; Lee et al. 1990), youth's experiences have largely been sidestepped. One exception is provided by Shera and Gill (1990) who use a multi-perspective approach to investigate

the experiences of school students in the northern resource town of Tumbler Ridge, B.C. Little is known about how youth prepare for work in an increasingly uncertain job market.

Within the context of a British Columbian resource town undergoing restructuring, this thesis seeks to fulfill the following research goals:

- a. To develop a model which links the concept of vocationalism with the labour market segmentation literature.
- b. To examine how the secondary school in Powell River has responded to local economic restructuring in the 1980s and 1990s.
- c. To examine the educational choices made by secondary school students in Powell River.
- d. To examine the labour market expectations of secondary school students in Powell River.

Powell River is an excellent example of a Canadian resource town in which to undertake a case study. It was a company town until the 1950s and the mill has been the central economic base of the community since its establishment in 1912. A prototype of the Lucas (1971) model until 1980, in recent years Powell River has undergone restructuring from Fordism to flexibility. Since the early 1980s, high school students have adjusted their labour market expectations to match the changing reality of the labour market.

The transitional nature of the local economy has prompted the school and other local institutions to develop new programs which are intended to equip youth for an altered labour market. A case study allows for an examination of how youth's labour market expectations have changed, specifically in the context of a locality undergoing economic restructuring. In another context, Clark (1989:47) has suggested that case studies are useful "to throw light on our theories and categories of analysis. The case is used as an exemplar ... it provides an opportunity to reflect upon the coherence of conventional categories and explanations." Scant attention has been paid to the impact of economic restructuring on youth's labour market expectations in the context of a resource town

undergoing restructuring. In addition, the role of the school in dealing with these changes has not been dealt with from a Canadian perspective.

Research Method

This thesis uses a multi-method approach. The use of the multi-method approach is supported in the literature (Gaskell 1985; Babbie 1989; Burchell and Rubery 1990; Shera and Gill 1991). "The incorporation of attitudinal alongside more objective data on individuals' employment position should allow for a more complete understanding of the interaction between experience, behavior and opportunities" (Burchell and Rubery 1990:555). This case study of high school students in Powell River combines key-informant interviews with a survey questionnaire. In addition to combining several research tools, this thesis relies on a diverse range of perspectives within Powell River, drawing from interviews with high school students to parents, school staff and mill workers. This allows for a fuller understanding of a complex social issue (Ball 1977; Shera and Gill 1990).

The most efficient way of contacting Powell River youth was through the school. Several studies conduct research through the school system, because of its formal and organized setting (Gaskell 1985; Levin 1985; Hamilton and Powers 1990; Empson-Warner 1992). At the time of the research, Powell River had only one regular secondary school from Grades 8 through 12. The school's catchment reaches as far north as Lund (40 km north of Powell River) and includes neighboring Texada Island. This thesis focuses specifically on Grade 12 students since these students are most likely to have developed post-graduation plans. In order to obtain a representative sample, students were selected on the basis of those taking a mandatory Grade 12 English course in the fall semester of 1994. The survey questionnaire was distributed to 156 students, accounting for approximately half of the Max Cameron Secondary School Grade 12 class. The other half of the class was taking mandatory English 12 in the following semester.

All 156 students who were present in class agreed to complete the survey. The current school principal stated that there is a random distribution of English 12 students between the fall and spring semesters and a hence a random distribution of gender and academic achievement among students in the two semesters. The sample is assumed to be representative of the class as a whole and normally distributed. Of the 156 students who completed the survey questionnaire, one respondent was actually a Grade 11 student taking an English 12 course. This questionnaire was dropped from the sample.

The survey questionnaire deals with several qualitative aspects of students' lives. It is divided into nine sections including student's personal and family background, school, skills, family members' work experience, education and training status, job experience, the Powell River mill, short and long-term plans and perception of the locality (Appendix B). Cross-tabulation was used to apply simple statistical tests to the data. Issues on the survey questionnaire were adapted from previous studies (Gaskell 1985; Hamilton and Powers 1990; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992) and include suggestions from school counsellors. A pre-test was conducted and the survey questionnaire was completed in school during class time. Interviews were conducted with six key-informant students, parents of the six students, two school counsellors, the former school principal, two union representatives at the MacMillan Bloedel mill and a programs officer at the Canada Employment Centre.

The key-informant students were selected to represent both females and males, high academic achievers and low academic achievers, different interests and personalities, parents of professional and labourer status, and parents who both work in the mill and elsewhere. With respect to a large urban centre such as Vancouver where the population is more diverse, these six students represent a rather narrow range of perspectives. They are all able-bodied, five are Caucasian, each comes from a home where at least one parent works and all of them have spent most of their lives in Powell River. None of them appear to come from destitute backgrounds. In terms of an isolated resource town, this group represents diversity. Pseudonyms are used in place of students' real names.

The key-informants are not intended to represent the sample as a whole. Rather, their viewpoints stand out from the rest of the sample, allowing for an exploration of key issues which they pinpoint in their survey questionnaire responses. All six selected candidates willingly agreed to participate in interviews.

The interviews lasted approximately one hour each and were semi-structured. Discussion focussed on students' expectations after high school, their evaluation of the school as a place to learn skills, their families' expectations, work environment, and how they viewed Powell River as a locality. Often students expressed their answers to questions through trajectories, which opened up new areas for discussion. Due to the open-ended structure of the interviews, the free flow of ideas between the student and the interviewer resembled conversations rather than a formal interview. "Essentially, intensive interviewing is a directed conversation that elicits inner views of respondents' lives as they portray their worlds, experiences and observations" (Charmaz 1991:385). A sense of shared control over the interview process was evident when students reflected and elaborated on their viewpoints without being prompted by the interviewer. Students identified aspects of local change which they experienced personally. The utility of the in-depth interview is noted by Schoenberger (1991) for this quality.

While (intensive interviewing) does not lend itself to formal hypothesis testing, it can provide fertile ground for the generation of hypotheses of behavior. Indeed, the value of its qualitative and inductive aspects may be highest in periods of great economic and social change that pose new challenges to the analytical categories and theoretical principles underlying much quantitative research (Schoenberger 1991:181).

Due to the explorative nature of this research project, the personal and qualitative viewpoints of key-informants are integral towards an understanding of how high school students prepare for work in a resource town context.

Limitations

This study is obviously limited by virtue of the fact that it focuses on a single town. While this town is in many ways typical of Canadian resource communities, the latter are

not a homogenous group (Randall and Ironside 1993). However, the constraint on time and resources limits the scope of this thesis to one case study town.

Also, by using the school as a catchment for Powell River youth, youth who dropped out or had been expelled from school before they reached Grade 12 were inevitably missed. The labour market expectations of these youth would surely provide an interesting contrast to the youth in this case study, in addition to their views on the school's particular shortcomings in meeting their needs, but this was outside the scope of this project.

Thesis Organization

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The preceding discussion has introduced the themes and central goals of the thesis. Chapter 2 provides a literature review which links vocationalism with labour segmentation in the context of a resource town undergoing restructuring. This provides the conceptual framework for the following three chapters which focus on the empirical research undertaken for this thesis. Chapter 3 discusses the Powell River labour market in transition and explores initiatives undertaken by local institutions to upgrade the local skills structure. Chapter 4 examines the role of labour supply factors in shaping students' educational choices and values. Vocationalism provides the conceptual framework for discussion. Chapter 5 addresses Powell River students' labour market expectations and their migration intentions after graduation. Chapter 6 presents a general overview of vocationalism and youth in resource towns.

CHAPTER 2

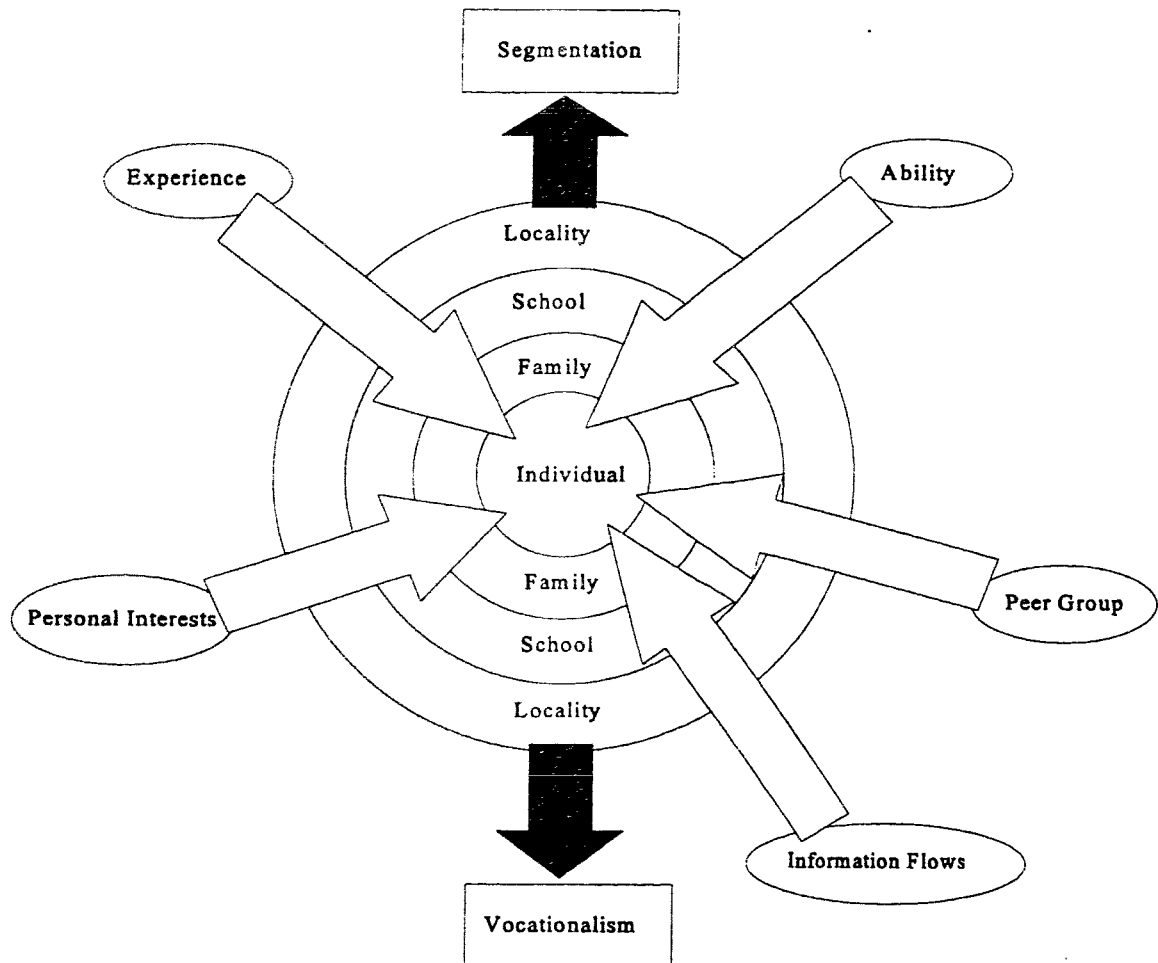
LITERATURE REVIEW: VOCATIONALISM, PRE-MARKET SEGMENTATION AND LOCALITY

Introduction

This chapter has three objectives. The first objective is to integrate two bodies of literature which inform the empirical basis of the thesis, namely labour market segmentation theory and the notion of 'vocationalism.' The second objective is to link schools and labour market expectations of youth to labour market segmentation. The third objective is to direct these concepts towards the context of the resource town, which exhibits a particular labour market dynamic. Much of the literature relating to labour market segmentation omits reference to school aged youth (Doeringer and Piore 1971; Atkinson 1984, 1987; Barnes, Hayter and Grass 1990; Hayter and Barnes 1992). Studies which do address pre-market segmentation of youth within the school system often lack spatial context (Gaskell 1985; Livingstone 1985, 1987; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). Peck and Haughton (1991) examine how a state policy, specifically the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in Britain, can have vastly different results in two different localities, thus providing an important study of youth and the formation of skills with particular reference to spatial and historical contexts. Locality research stresses the importance of spatial reference when looking at labour market changes over time (Massey 1984, 1991; Peck and Haughton 1991; Hayter, Barnes and Grass 1993).

In bringing these diverse literatures together, it becomes apparent that youth's labour market expectations are products of several interwoven factors (Figure 2.1). Youth labour market expectations combine individuals' unique characteristics within the context of the family, school and locality, which provide the main social environments in which youth learn about work roles and develop personal preferences. Within these environments, youth experience different information flows which contribute to the variability of their perspectives on the nature of work and education. In addition, individuals' abilities,

interests, peer groups and experiences interact to create highly differentiated labour market expectations. Figure 2.1 illustrates this multi-faceted factors underlying youth's expectations.



Factors Influencing Secondary School Students' Educational Choices and Labour Market Expectations
Figure 2.1

No single theory adequately addresses the complexity of youth's expectations. Willis (1977) and Peck (1989a) identify the family and the school in the socialization process. Gaskell (1985) identifies the school as the focus for youth's vocationalism. Human capital theory gives primacy to individual ability and personal interest. Local opportunity structures are also identified (Ashton 1988; Peck and Haughton 1991). The model presented in Figure 2.1 provides a heuristic device and builds upon themes identified in a diverse body of literature. By drawing these diverse themes together, Figure 2.1 provides the conceptual framework for the empirical research.

"Vocationalism" in the School

Labour segmentation theory that is based on the emergence of flexibility roughly divides the labour market into two sectors, the core and the periphery (Atkinson 1984; Barnes and Hayter 1992). Core workers are highly paid and are regarded as the 'brains' of the labour force, and peripheral workers are regarded as the low skilled and low paid labourers. Segmentation studies (Peck 1989b) point out that core workers generally come from a privileged socioeconomic background in relation to their peripheral counterparts. Opportunities for periphery workers to advance to core jobs are bleak, as institutional barriers existing at multiple levels prevent them from doing so (Peck 1989b; Hamilton and Powers 1990). As outlined in Chapter One, labour supply-side factors play an important role in reproducing this division within the labour market. Socialization within the home and the school are key labour supply-side factors (Peck 1989a) wherein youth's labour market expectations are formed and reproduced.

Gaskell (1985) sees the school as a pre-market streaming mechanism, reproducing class divisions among students based on academic grades and students' orientation towards academic or vocational programs. Gaskell introduces the notion of 'vocationalism,' which details the ways in which secondary school students conceptualize the link between school and work. In a study of senior secondary school students in downtown Vancouver,

Gaskell found that "most students treat school as a means to an end, as the way to get a leg up in the labour market" (Gaskell 1985:220). Students expressed two distinct forms of vocationalism, one immediate and the other distant. Students following the "immediate logic" of the labour market choose course electives with the belief that the skills learned therein will be directly transferable to a job.

Gaskell found that few students expressing the immediate logic of the labour market plan to pursue further education after high school. These students tend to come from working class homes. Interestingly, working class youth following the immediate logic of the labour market express optimism in terms of finding jobs after graduation (Gaskell 1985; Hamilton and Powers 1990; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). These youth are likely, at least for the short-term, to occupy the peripheral work force because of their limited training.

The distant logic of the labour market is adhered to by students who value academic credentials for their more intangible long-term benefits. These students choose courses to fulfill distant post-secondary or job requirements, not for their immediate use in the labour market after graduation. Class differences between students following the distant and the immediate logic of the labour market are noted by Ashton (1988) and Empson-Warner and Krahn (1992). Ashton writes that working class students who consciously aim to elevate their class position through education adhere to a more distant logic than the majority of working class students. Ashton calls this latter group the 'ordinary kids,' who tend to take applied versus academic courses. These 'ordinary kids' adhere to a more immediate logic in terms of course electives, "which promise more immediate pay-offs in the labour market in return for compliance within the school" (Ashton 1988:6).

Gaskell (1985) and Livingstone (1985) see the distinction between vocational and academic students reinforcing social divisions within the school. Firstly, vocational courses are considered to have lower status than academic courses (Levin 1985). One reason for this may be the general stigma in North America against blue collar workers who

require much training and are highly paid. This stigma translates into a prejudice against vocational programs. Related to this stigma is the perception that vocational courses are somehow easier than academic courses. This perception pervades the education system and is reinforced by educators themselves (Gaskell 1985; Levin 1985). Gaskell sees vocational courses used as a tool to motivate students who are otherwise at risk of dropping out of school. Keeping 'at-risk' students motivated means giving them course work which they can accomplish successfully. As a result, Gaskell sees the school system gauging vocational course difficulty to the level of students' abilities and tolerance for work.

The counsellor encourages students to take courses they can pass. The teachers adapt the content of their courses to the level of student they expect. The result is that vocational classrooms become part of a process of streaming in the high school, a process which separates out the less successful students (Gaskell 1985:217).

By adjusting the standard of vocational courses to meet the abilities of low achievers, the school system reinforces the social division between academic and vocational students. Vocational courses end up becoming a classroom ghetto for low achievers who graduate with lower credentials than their more academic peers. "Vocational courses therefore have less status with students and, a good deal of evidence suggests, with employers who prefer academic students" (Gaskell 1985 :217). In this way, the school can be seen as a screening device for future work-based segmentation.

Reproduction of Class Identity Through School

Several studies suggest that class identity is articulated through the school system (Willis 1977; Gaskell 1985; Livingstone 1985). This is achieved through the social interactions between students and the administration. In a formal sense, the Canadian school system has no overt agenda to separate students according to their class position (Levin 1985; Ashton 1988). This differs from the British school system, especially grammar schools and secondary school which formally separated academic from vocational students. This system has largely been replaced.

Within the school, peer groups, which are invariably made up of individuals with similar family background, help to consolidate class identity among youth. Within the peer group, accepted values and norms of behavior are reproduced on a social level. Willis' 1977 classic study of male working class values vividly demonstrates this reproduction. Willis focussed on a tough fringe of working class 'lads' which embody for Willis the 'counter-culture.'

Willis found that working class youth tended to favour other working class youth as peers while middle class youth favour other middle class youth as peers, due to similar family backgrounds and values. The tendency for youth of similar socioeconomic backgrounds to gravitate toward each other results in an informal divisioning in the school. Willis observed social relationships between teachers and youth aiding in this division. For working class youth, teachers represent middle class values by virtue of their professional status. This assertion is based on the fact that educators themselves moved successfully through the educational system and hold white collar jobs. Levin (1985) suggests that because most teachers are products of the school system themselves, many have little understanding or sympathy for other sectors of the labour force. Because of the general socioeconomic gap between the counter-culture and school educators, the counter-culture resists school authority in a rejection of middle class values.

Resistance results in discriminatory treatment by teachers, which leads to further antagonism between administration and the 'counter-culture.' This antagonistic relationship helps to consolidate fringe working class values and to rally the counter-culture towards greater unity. Willis suggests that teachers, and career guidance counsellors especially, work on two levels simultaneously, serving the needs and expectations of middle class kids and those of working class kids differentially.

In a comparative study of school-aged youth in the U.K. and Canada, Ashton (1988) found that class consciousness exists to a much lesser extent in Canada than in the U.K. In the U.K., the working class counter-culture rejects the education system as a

middle class construct. In contrast, Ashton found no evidence of a Canadian counter-culture and no outright rejection of the education system among Canadian working class youth. Ashton attributes this difference to the two countries' different political histories, with Canada lacking a formal aristocracy against which a strong working class consciousness could be formed. Ashton draws on Willis' 1977 study to depict the British counter-culture's attitude towards school.

In Britain, not only is class consciousness stronger but there is also a long tradition of resistance on the part of certain working class groups to the cultural forms in which knowledge is transmitted within the educational system Research findings suggest that about 10 per cent of the British school leaver population has developed a strong rejection of the culture of the school by the age of 15 or 16 (Ashton 1988:5).

Although drop-outs in Canada are generally from working class backgrounds, Ashton contends that Canadian youth drop out for reasons like boredom and the desire to find a job, not as an expression of resistance. Canadian youth also tend to stay in school longer than British youth.

In addition to behavioral differences, Ashton found marked institutional differences in educational policy and labour market regulatory mechanisms between the two countries. In Canada, each province retains authority over its own educational system and certain aspects of labour market regulation such as training and unemployment programs. In Britain, employment and training programs such as the Youth Training Scheme are administered at the national level. In Canada, youth participation in part-time work while attending school full-time is widespread. In Britain, youth employment and participation in training programs is most prevalent among those who have dropped out of school. These differences between Canadian and British society highlight the need to qualify the context in which other studies, such as Willis' (1977) have taken place.

Experience-Based Learning

A growing gap between what schools teach and what the labour market demands from them is identified by Mason (1985) and Levin (1985). Levin criticizes the school system for being elitist in that it caters to middle class students planning to attend university after graduation. This alienates youth who are less academically-inclined and who are more likely to enter the labour market directly after graduation.

There appears to be an inconsistency in an education system which stresses humanities and general sciences (i.e., improving the minds of future citizens) if youth are to be ultimately used by industry as a source of cheap labour. This appeared to be especially pertinent for working class youth, for whom the education system appeared to be simply - and functionally - a massive irritant (Mason 1985:22).

The school's focus on teaching abstract skills has created a gulf between the school curriculum and skills needed by the majority of students who will enter the labour market. Levin (1985) sees this gulf reinforced by the auxiliary status of experience-based programs like work experience, career counselling and vocational courses in relation to academic courses. According to Levin (1985:274), "schools are academically focussed places," with an emphasis on learning through abstractions rather than through experience.

Students who benefit from this academic focus tend to be well-motivated and to come from middle class backgrounds where parents provide educational role models. Working class youth have fewer educational role models to follow. Levin argues for increased emphasis on work experience for youth, writing that work-experience should be accompanied with reflection by the students on what they learn from their work. Aspects of work which warrant reflection include the social dynamics of work and skills. While vocational education and work experience may be tools for motivating 'at-risk' youth (Gaskell 1985), their utility in helping to provide tangible skills and a high school diploma is a boost for youth who might otherwise drop out or do badly in academic programs.

Segmentation theory has neglected the significance of labour supply factors in the formation of youths' labour market expectations. Peck (1989a) draws attention to this gap in the literature, and identifies the family and the school as important supply factors

warranting close inspection. In addition, paid work, which is such a prevalent feature among contemporary youth, warrants close examination as a supply-side factor.

So little attention has been paid to the impact of work experience on young people's ideas about work and their vocational planning. Theory and research regarding adolescent occupational socialization and career choice have been developed in isolation from the phenomenon of widespread adolescent work. For the most part, career choice has been conceived as a process that takes place in families and schools (Hamilton and Powers 1990:245).

Part-time jobs outside of school are held by an increasing number of high school youth. According to Stern et al. (1990) and Levin (1985), students' jobs outside of school are often treated by the school as a distraction from 'real' learning. Stern et al. (1990) writes that this apparent conflict can be overcome if students' jobs are treated as a learning tool by the school.

The youth labour market is consistently portrayed in the literature as a dismal ghetto for students (see Gaskell 1985; Peters 1987; Hamilton and Powers 1990; Steitz and Owen 1992). Hamilton and Powers (1990) studied the value of work experience among a group of female Grade 12 students from working class families in New York state. In spite of the fact that the majority of students described their jobs as positive learning experiences, Hamilton and Powers portray the educational aspect of youth jobs as virtually worthless.

The experience of working is in itself sufficiently novel at first to teach valuable lessons to almost any youth. But lessons of punctuality, diligence and neatness can be learned quickly; prolonged employment adds nothing to them. The kinds of jobs available to youth often have nothing new to teach after the first few months of initiation (Hamilton and Powers 1990:259).

Youth jobs, according to Peters (1987) and Gaskell (1985) consist of menial and boring tasks, they are low paying and offer little satisfaction. "Wages are low and most pay the minimum wage. The jobs offer little or no chance for advancement and are filled by an almost exclusively teenage labour force, among whom the turnover is high" (Gaskell 1985:215). This bleak picture of the youth labour market suggests that students' jobs fit within the peripheral sector in a segmented labour market (Atkinson 1987). Periphery jobs are characterized by a lack of job security, low pay, minimal chances for advancement, low

skill requirements and few opportunities for learning on the job, contributing to a high turnover rate. In spite of this seeming 'fit' of youth jobs with the periphery, most students who work describe their jobs as rewarding in some way (Hamilton and Powers 1990).

Studies which evaluate the merits of youth jobs or lack thereof consistently discount or ignore what youth have to say about the value of their jobs (Peters 1987; Hamilton and Powers 1990). They seem to imply that youth are incapable of comprehending that they are being exploited by the labour market and that their jobs are essentially worthless, save for the meagre minimum wage they receive in exchange for their labour. But the reality of the youth labour market is that many youth jobs contain features considered by labour segmentation theory to be exclusive to the core (See Peck 1989a; Hayter and Holmes 1994). Examples of these features include the opportunity to learn new skills, job advancement, security, benefits and even unionization.

Thus, even at the bottom, jobs do not fit the more extreme descriptions of secondary jobs as lacking all skills, benefits, and learning. Instead of falling into a 'good jobs/bad jobs' model, these are, over all, just poor jobs. Most have one or a few good features, but few combine numerous good features (Friedman and Friedman 1986:56).

Stern et al. (1990) and Levin (1985) believe youth's jobs can possess significant educational value. They contend that labour market experience teaches youth skills which the school is incapable of teaching, such as communication skills, the importance of teamwork, problem solving and flexibility. Although these skills are not taught within the formal school curriculum, Stern et al. (1990) point out that labour market demand for these skills is rising.

Levin maintains that since the school system has little background in experience-based learning, it is ill-equipped to guide youth in this area. Levin contends that business and trades groups provide a better grounding in experience-based learning, and identifies the potential for partnerships between the school and other groups in integrating experience-based learning into the formal curriculum.

Linking School to Labour Market Segmentation

The conventional model of labour market dynamics and skills formation is conceptualized by human capital theory (Mason 1985). Human capital theory maintains that youth are differentiated in school based on their intrinsic abilities and personal interests. Students' enrollment in particular school programs, whether they are vocational or academic, is seen as a product of students' personal preference and level of ability. The skills learned through a particular program affects a student's career trajectory due to varying skill requirements of jobs. Human capital theory views youth choosing career paths based on the skills which they have 'chosen' to or have been able to acquire (Mason 1985; Peck 1989a). Thus, the tendency for working class youth to take working class jobs is seen by human capital theory as a result of personal preference and ability. The weakness of this theory is that it fails to recognize the impact of socialization in shaping youth's opportunity structures, educational choices and ultimately their labour market expectations.

Segmentation theory criticizes human capital theory for its inability to account for the differential opportunity structures youth face within the community and challenges the primacy afforded to individual preference and ability. Segmentation theory affords a role to socialization within the family and the education system as important labour supply-side factors. Family background acts as a structural constraint on the range of possible expectations youth may hold, just as school experiences restrict youth's post-graduation options. Several studies point to the link between an individual's experiences and their range of potential labour market options (Morris 1988, 1994; Burchell and Rubery 1990; Hanson and Pratt 1992).

The academic achievements of youth are strongly influenced by the degree to which education is valued in the home (Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992; Marshall and Tucker 1992). Therefore, the tendency for vocational courses to be filled by working class youth and the tendency for academic courses to be filled by middle class youth cannot entirely be

understood in terms of youth's personal "preferences." These questions must consider supply-side factors which account for why "children of higher status parents are typically better educated and, in turn, are more likely to obtain high status occupations" (Empson-Warner and Krahn: 1992:40) than their working class school mates. Peck (1989a) rejects the simplistic notion that youth 'choose' careers but rather maintains that youth are socialized to expect certain outcomes. "These orientations to work tend to be regarded in orthodox theory as 'preferences,' a term which is completely inappropriate, given the nature of their origin" (Peck 1989a:129).

Segmentation theory provides a superior framework to human capital theory in terms of understanding vocationalism as a form of class division within the school, because it incorporates labour supply factors in the formation of youth's educational choices. Wary of a deterministic outlook, Mason (1985) suggests youth's labour market expectations are a function of the interplay between the individual factors emphasized under human capital theory and the structural factors emphasized by segmentation theory.

Livingstone (1985) presents a particularly dogmatic viewpoint of class streaming within the school system. He suggests the existence of a covert agenda within the school system, which actively perpetuates the division between working class and middle class youth. Livingstone describes the labour market as requiring both 'mental' and 'manual' laborers. Mental laborers perform white collar jobs, and compose the middle class. Manual laborers perform blue collar manual jobs and compose the working class. This social division of labour resembles the bifurcation of work under the Taylorist production regime. Livingstone sees the school's formally acknowledged role as being the reproduction of appropriately skilled workers for the labour market which demands both mental and manual laborers. The school's role therefore is to reproduce this division while at the same time appearing to be non-discriminatory.

In Canada, streaming within schools is contentious because it implies state sanctioned differentiation of youth.

The inherent contradiction confronting education in a capitalist society functioning under the guise of a democracy is the need to appear to promote equality while successfully producing the differentiated and unequal labour power demanded by corporations and other employers (Livingstone 1985:119).

Livingstone (1985) examines the notions of skill and entry level requirements, criticizing the emphasis placed by human capital theory on skill as the determining factor in job acquisition. Gaskell (1987) notes that it is not necessarily the individual's skill or level of ability that gets a job, but rather the investment of time in training which demonstrates to prospective employers determination and perseverance. Both Livingstone (1985) and Gaskell (1987) see the entry requirements of most jobs as being superficially higher than the actual skills required to perform the work tasks. This point is confirmed by a group of American corporate executives who summarize the value they place on education and training.

Industry places a high value on the college degree, not because it is convinced that the four years of schooling insure that individuals acquire maturity and technical competence, but rather because it provides an initial starting point of division between those more trained and those less trained; those better motivated and those less motivated; those with more social experience and those with less (Livingstone 1985:108).

Superficially, high entry level requirements favour workers who have the resources to pursue extensive training over those who do not, which has the tendency to eliminate working class youth from realistically competing for these jobs. The perpetuation of class divisions through the school is critiqued by Willis (1977), who sees screening in schools as a necessary process in averting a labour market crisis. The social reproduction of working class values helps to divert significant numbers of working class youth from aspiring to middle class jobs, which are limited in quantity. Some degree of mobility does exist for those working class students who are motivated by the distant logic of the labour market, and who view education as a tool for elevating their class position (Ashton 1988).

Under Fordism, the availability of semi-skilled and unskilled manual jobs allowed working class youth the opportunities to find jobs. The shift towards flexibility has meant that manual jobs are becoming increasingly mechanized. This results in the gradual

elimination of many employment opportunities which were once available to working class youth. The shift from Fordism to flexibility demands a markedly different skill structure among the labour force from the past. With rising job entry requirements, young workers with skills and training today face a more restricted job market than unskilled workers did under Fordism.

Expectations Formed Through Experience

Youth's labour market expectations must be contextualized in terms of their past experiences. Youth pick up knowledge about the labour market through contact with peers, family members, teachers and co-workers. Through these informal social networks, youth gain knowledge of job opportunities, job restrictions, entry level requirements and labour market conditions. Mason (1985) notes that informal contacts with family and friends play the major role in the securement of teenagers' first jobs. These informal contacts, most especially with parents, influence youth's labour market expectations. "Students report being influenced by people, by events, and by their own predispositions. Among people, parents are clearly the key influences for most students, with all others (siblings, friends, teachers) trailing far behind" (Levin 1985:271). The relationship between individuals' social contacts and the formation of economic expectations shows that social life is endogenous to the economic system, not separate from it.

Several studies point to the impact of individuals' experiences in shaping their labour market expectations and opportunities (Burchell and Rubery 1990; Hanson and Pratt 1992; Morris 1994). "One of the main hypotheses of segmentation theory is that individuals' current opportunities in the labour market will be influenced by their past experience both within and outside the labour market" (Burchell and Rubery 1990:554). Individuals' experiences vary. Incorporating the role of individual experience into labour segmentation theory allows for the variability of outcomes, and modifies Livingstone's (1985) rigid model of labour market dynamics. Life experience is a key supply-side factor,

yet it has largely been neglected in segmentation literature. Hanson and Pratt (1992) identify this absence.

Few will argue with the notion that a person's experience helps to define what he or she sees as possible or suitable opportunities, in that experience helps to shape ambition, goals, and expectations about jobs and careers. But the power of everyday life to shape and constrain the spatial reach of labour markets has been neglected (Hanson and Pratt 1992:399).

The role of social networks in the labour market has been explored by Hanson and Pratt (1992). They found that informal contacts between family and friends were major sources of job information for working class women. In addition to institutional structures, an analysis of youth labour market expectations must include an appreciation of informal social contacts. The importance of social life has largely been excluded from locality studies (Morris 1991, 1994; Hanson and Pratt 1992). By focussing on scales such as the household, the peer group and the neighborhood, the labour market is seen as being as much a social construct as it is an economic construct.

Parents' expectations and information flows

Parents' expectations play a major role in influencing youth's labour market aspirations (Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). The value placed on formal education in the home helps shape youth's educational aspirations and labour market expectations (Marshall and Tucker 1992). Parents' expectations are played out through the socialization process, whereby their educational values are transposed onto their children, contributing to the social reproduction of labour through the family.

Information flows provide another vehicle for the formation of youth's expectations. The influence of information flows in shaping labour market expectations has been studied extensively (Morris 1987, 1988, 1994; Hanson and Pratt 1992). Information flows vary according to peer groups, families, neighborhoods and so on. While information flows carrying news about job opportunities can benefit the individual, they can also potentially constrain the individual. Studies of job search strategies used by working class women show that social networks contribute to the further entrenchment of

their subordinate labour market position (Morris 1987, 1991, 1994; Hanson and Pratt 1992).

Structural barriers restrict social mixing between the working class and middle class. Working class women tend to get their news from other working class women. Hence, information relating to job and training opportunities tends to be restricted to marginal working class opportunities. "The employment options that people encounter in the course of their daily round of activities, as well as those they encounter through family, neighbors, and friends, alert them to a (limited) range of employment possibilities" (Hanson and Pratt 1992:399). Morris (1994) examines how social networks aid in the entrenchment of the working class in Hartlepool, north-east England, where industrial decline and rising unemployment have occurred since the 1950s. Morris found that the experience of unemployment and underemployment tend to concentrate within particular social networks of working class households. Like Hanson and Pratt (1992), Morris found that the very social networks which lend support to individuals in finding jobs also act to constrain their scope of opportunities.

It was the case that informal access to employment could in itself be disadvantaging; a particular network might tend to carry information about a particular kind of work, as seemed to be the case for the insecurely employed group (Morris 1994:121).

Morris' study challenges the assumption under human capital theory that individuals' labour market expectations are formed free of economic barriers. Labour market expectations are influenced by highly filtered information flows.

Labour market expectations versus eventual outcomes

Several Canadian studies dispute the reliability of youth's labour market expectations as indicators of eventual outcomes (Gaskell 1985; Levin 1985; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). In Ontario and Alberta, Empson-Warner and Krahn (1992) found that youth's labour market expectations are unrealistically high and subject to change.

When the aspirations of young people are compared to the current distribution of occupations in the labour force, teenagers appear to be aiming much higher than their probabilities of success. Given the jobs available, not all can hope to attain the occupations to which they aspire (Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992:40).

Levin (1985) suggests that the degree of change in youth's plans is directly related to family background. The higher the socioeconomic status of the youth, the less likelihood of change in plans. Middle class youth planning to attend university and college are most likely to stick to their original plans. Due to their limited financial resources, Levin (1985) argues that working class youth are least likely to stick to their pre-graduation plans because immediate material needs take precedence over long-term plans. "At the aggregate level, students' intentions are indeed borne out in that post-secondary enrollment in the fall is about what one would expect from surveys of students in the spring" (Levin 1985). Students expressing plans to attend post-secondary school are not necessarily the same ones who enroll in the fall.

The evidence indicates that about half of any given student population will have done something other than intended within about two years of that expression of intention. Even among those most definite in their plans, there will be considerable degree of change in actual behavior. Moreover, the number of students not fulfilling their high school plans increases steadily over time (Levin 1985:271).

In a Vancouver study, Gaskell (1985) found ironically that working class youth expressed the greatest optimism in terms of finding fulfilling jobs after graduation. Middle class youth were more pessimistic about the labour market, using post-secondary schooling both to delay job entry and to improve their eventual point of labour market entry. "Those who are more pessimistic about the labour market go on to further education, and feel that by so doing they will improve their chances to get the jobs they want. In hard economic times, they see education as a solution to their economic difficulty" (Gaskell 1985:216).

In a study of 76 graduating working class girls in rural upstate New York, Hamilton and Powers (1990) found that an overwhelming majority of the respondents expressed optimism in terms of moving out of the youth labour market after graduation and finding well-paying jobs which would confer upon them adult status. Six months after

graduation though, most respondents were still working in the youth labour market or were unemployed. "None had embarked upon a career in the sense of taking a job that offered security, training, and upward mobility along with earnings sufficient to support a family" (Hamilton and Powers 1990:257). Hamilton and Powers refer to the group of students who go straight from high school into the work force as the "Forgotten Half." Their post-graduation expectations are least likely to be fulfilled. They have low skills and their employment contacts tend to be concentrated in the youth labour market, leading to their entrapment in peripheral jobs.

The entrapment portrayed by Hamilton and Powers (1990) bears close resemblance to Morris' (1994) and Hanson and Pratt's (1992) portrayal of restricted strategies available to working class women. The vocational entrapment of working class youth in a sense truncates their passage from youth to adulthood. "Youth whose education ends with high school, the Forgotten Half, cease to be students without yet becoming fully adult. Their jobs do not confer adult status; nor do their jobs pay enough to make them financially independent" (Hamilton and Powers 1990:243). Youth's family background influences their labour market expectations and affects how accurately expectations are borne out after graduation. In these ways, youth labour market expectations reflect characteristics of pre-market segmentation.

The Effect of Locality on Labour Market Expectations

Local context is a significant influence in labour market dynamics (Hayter, Barnes and Grass 1995). Peck notes that there is little understanding of local factors in labour market dynamics. "There is no conception of the role of spatial structures in shaping labour market processes or outcomes. The important questions concerning whether, and if so how, labour markets operate in locally specific ways remain unaddressed" (Peck 1989b:44). Several studies have responded to this lacuna. An emergent literature begins to examine the role of locality in articulating labour market dynamics (Ashton 1988; Peck 1989b; Peck and Haughton 1991).

The role of locality in labour market dynamics is explored in a comparative study of youth labour market segmentation in Canada and Britain (Ashton 1988). Ashton found that local labour markets play a significant role in the determination of youth's life chances. Local labour market structures tend to outweigh the effects of uniform educational policy in determining the life chances of youth in both Canada and Britain.

Of crucial importance in both societies is the significance of local labour market variations in life chances. What the evidence suggests is that irrespective of political and other differences in the wider society, local labour markets appear to generate distinctive cultures which influence the behavior and attitudes of youth (Ashton 1988:4).

Ashton's focus is on single industry towns in Britain and Canada. He concludes that while there may be plenty of work opportunities for local youth within their home towns, mobility from one type of work to another may be limited. Therefore, the *local* opportunity structure becomes an important consideration.

The importance of local context is supported by Peck and Haughton's (1991) analysis of the national Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in Britain. Peck and Haughton compare the impact of the YTS on two localities, which responded differently to the program due to labour's unequal degree of leverage in the two localities. Labour unions maintained a strong presence in Preston and felt that the YTS posed a threat to its traditional apprenticeship program. The scheme was boycotted, which led to the failure of the state implemented policy in its attempt to colonize the local training structure. In the depressed economy of Crewe on the other hand, labour had little power to resist colonization by the YTS, where it caught on rapidly. This study illustrates the effect of locality on labour market dynamics by showing how broad spatial policies can have varying local outcomes.

Heterogeneity of locality

Local labour markets have traditionally been conceptualized as internally coherent structures, defined by the similar commuting patterns of workers and the spatial catchment within which a firm's work force travels from home to work (Watts 1987:93). This implies that all workers living within a particular spatial catchment belong to the same

labour market, suggesting equal access to jobs and to training opportunities. This interpretation is challenged when labour markets are viewed as segmented entities. Segmentation theory draws attention to the differential opportunity structures within a particular spatial catchment. Several studies point to the internal divisions within localities, shattering any notion of local cohesiveness implied by Watts' definition of a local labour market (Peck 1989b; Cox and Mair 1991; Morris 1991). "Segmentation can be seen as a set of processes that 'slice up' local labour markets, undermining their local coherence to a potentially debilitating degree" (Peck 1989b:49). The internal divisions created by labour market segmentation apply to youth's labour market expectations because opportunity structures existing locally and within the household and school affect the 'life chances' of youth differently (Ashton 1988).

Localities and change

Local labour markets, including youth labour market expectations, are dynamic. As the local opportunity structure changes, so too do youth labour market expectations. Paasi (1991) suggests that more focus be given to cultural and historical factors in the study of how localities function and change. Paasi explores how regional identity, like local identity, evolves over time. Paasi maintains that regional identity is mediated through the informal relationships between successive generations. Massey supports this view of local dynamism, suggesting that localities resemble processes more than place-bound entities. Youth labour market expectations must be viewed within the temporal context in which they are formed. This includes consideration of how past generations' values and expectations relate to the present. This relates to Burchell and Rubery's (1990) contention that an interpretation of the present must be accompanied by a thorough understanding of the past.

The formation of skills as a form of local development

Local development most commonly refers to the promotion of entrepreneurial activity (Coffey and Polese 1985; Barnes and Hayter 1992), but skills formation can also

be considered as an important form of local development. Peck (1989b) and Peck and Haughton (1991) point to the roles of institutions and of the state in shaping local skill profiles. Peck (1989b) argues that learning institutions have an important role to play in responding to fluctuations in local labour market demands, but that they are often out of touch with current labour market demands and are therefore often unable to provide appropriate training.

Cox and Mair (1988, 1991) argue that any development pursued in the name of 'local interest' inevitably undermines working class interests in favour of capital. Cox and Mair see local development ultimately leading to competition between localities. In the context of skills development, the validity of Cox and Mair's pessimistic outlook on local development falters since skills upgrading can potentially liberate the unemployed if a demand for new skills exists. Coffey and Polese (1985) take a more optimistic viewpoint. They see local development stemming from the investment in local entrepreneurial skills and training, through what they call the "people development paradigm." School programs which equip youth with appropriate skills for the labour market are seen as expressions of local agency in overcoming structural impediments in a restricted job market. The importance of local agency becomes highlighted in the context of a Canadian resource town undergoing restructuring. Youth in resource towns face increasing restrictions in the local labour market, as the shift from Fordism to flexibility continues.

Canadian resource towns represent distinct localities with specific labour market characteristics (Randall and Ironside 1993). They are typically isolated and historically dominated by a single industry. Under Fordism, jobs in the dominant industry were predominantly held by males. In contrast with larger urban areas, Canadian resource towns usually have only one secondary school. This contributes to the mixture of youth quite different perhaps from an inner city high school, where the population of students is more heterogenous.

Resource Towns

The aspect of change underlies the basic nature of resource towns in a post-Fordist era. Several studies assess the impact of industrial restructuring on local labour markets (Bluestone and Harrison 1982; Clark 1986, 1989; Hudson and Sadler 1986), many with specific reference to B.C. coastal forestry towns (Barnes and Hayter 1992; Hayter, Barnes and Grass 1993; Hayter and Holmes 1994). While employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector become scarcer in resource towns, youth's local opportunity structures have altered. The link between industrial restructuring and social change in resource towns has been traced by Machlis, Force and Balice (1990) in a study of two resource-based communities in northern Idaho. In both communities, industry underwent capital intensification with the resultant loss of jobs. Machlis et al. found that social change within the localities could be traced back to industrial transformation, although a lag time was discovered to exist between industrial and social change. This interdependence between the social and economical spheres has been documented in numerous studies (Peck 1989a; Hanson and Pratt 1992; Morris 1994), drawing attention to the link between youth's labour market expectations and their social background.

Declining employment opportunities in resource towns has been identified as a root cause of the out-migration of youth (Lucas 1971; Marchak 1990; Weeks 1990). Weeks studied demographic trends in six Washington State forestry towns experiencing employment decline in forestry-related employment. The populations in each community remained stable over the study period, but in each case, demographic profiles showed an aging trend. While high school enrollment steadily dropped in five of the six communities, older migrants settled in the isolated communities. Weeks directly links drops in high school enrollment and out-migration of youth to the loss of local jobs. "High school students in these communities recognize the diminishing possibility of acceptable employment in the community upon graduation" (Weeks 1990:134) and, hence, many make the decision to leave.

Marchak (1990) offers the same explanation in a case study of three British Columbia forestry communities. Marchak perceives the out-migration of youth as a negative consequence of declining forestry jobs, which she directly links to the excessive external control of the local industry in the towns. Marchak argues that by increasing community control over the local resource base, local employment will stabilize in forestry towns. Marchak assumes that with employment stability, youth will perceive more viable job opportunities, increasing their incentive to stay within the locality.

Nelson (1990) writes about the importance of including youth in the community planning process in order that they maintain a sense of belonging to the community. By promoting participation of youth in community planning, Nelson argues that youth will pick up leadership and entrepreneurial skills needed to catapult a depressed economy out of the doldrums, echoing the "people development paradigm" outlined by Coffey and Polese (1985). While the encouragement of youth to participate in community decision making may act as an incentive to remain within the locality, the question lingers as to whether remaining in a locality is the best option.

Lucas (1971) links migration intentions of youth in single industry towns directly to the local employment opportunities. "The number of jobs in any community of single industry is finite, and no matter what the hopes and plans of the youth may be, the great majority cannot be accommodated by the local industry" (Lucas 1971:378). Lucas sees youth being forced to migrate out of isolated resource communities because of the finite job market. Lucas sees a rural "brain drain" occurring, where the best educated youth leave the community in search of higher education and job opportunities.

The assumption that a lack of viable job opportunities leads to the 'forced' migration of rural youth is contested by several studies (Freudenburg 1984; Murdock et al. 1984; Seyfrit 1986). These studies suggest that youth's migration decisions are influenced by factors other than labour market considerations. In a longitudinal study of Texas counties, Murdock et al. (1984) found that the importance of non-economic factors has

risen significantly in influencing young rural residents' migration decisions. Availability of amenities and closeness to family are examples of non-economic factors.

Seyfrit found no difference in the migration intentions among youth living in communities with rapidly growing job opportunities and youth in communities with stable job markets. "A straightforward comparison shows that high school seniors in the rapid-growth counties are no less likely to migrate than those in the comparison counties. Of those expressing definite intentions, the majority of students in all rural counties intend to migrate" (Seyfrit 1986:204). This finding parallels the study by Murdock et al. (1984) which found that other considerations besides labour market opportunities feature prominently in youth's migration intentions. Freudenburg (1984) compared the perceptions of youth in Colorado towns experiencing rapid growth and no growth. Like Seyfrit (1986), Freudenburg found that the expansion of job opportunities does not lead to improved perceptions among youth of their locality.

Summary

This chapter links the main bodies of literature related in Figure 2.1. Vocationalism is introduced as a form of labour market segmentation within the school system. The immediate' and 'distant' logic of the labour market are explored in relation to supply factors such as family background, peer groups and information flows. The school is portrayed as a screening mechanism reinforcing class identity among students. The informal social realm of life is identified as a significant force in shaping students' expectations. Supply factors such as family background and peer group act to restrict information flows and hence to constrain the potential range of expectations. Local opportunity structure is also an important supply-side consideration. In resource towns experiencing industrial decline, youth's migration intentions are influenced by a combination of market and non-market considerations. Upon high school graduation, many youth's expectations will not be fulfilled, most notably those of the working class.

CHAPTER 3

POWELL RIVER IN TRANSITION: IMPLICATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL, YOUTH AND LOCAL SKILLS STRUCTURE

Introduction

The Powell River mill began restructuring in the early 1980s. Restructuring at the mill has acted as a catalyst for broader social and economic changes within the locality. This chapter has three objectives. The first objective is to identify the impacts of the 1980s recession and restructuring on job opportunities for youth. The second objective of this chapter is to identify current institutional initiatives to upgrade the local skill structure. The third objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how Max Cameron Secondary School has adapted its curriculum, courses and programs to cope with the changing labour market. The training initiatives in Powell River create a distinct skill mix among youth from that which existed under Fordism. In spite of these various efforts to address youth's training and educational needs, low income youth continue to face difficulties. This chapter demonstrates the interrelationship between local labour markets, local schools and the importance of locality.

Impact of Restructuring on Job Opportunities

Burchell and Rubery (1990) assert that an interpretation of an individual's present situation must be accompanied by a thorough understanding of their past. If people are cumulative products of their past, so too are places. In Powell River, the mill still commands a strong physical presence within the community but its centrality to the local economy has diminished and been displaced by the influx of new businesses since the early 1980s.

Lucas' (1971) anticipation of continued stability in single industry towns was not misguided when he wrote Minetown, Milltown, Railtown. After all, factors leading to Fordism's decline such as technological change, encroaching competition from Newly Industrializing Countries, resource depletion and the first energy crisis in 1973 had not

posed realistic threats to the stability enjoyed by Fordist industry during the 'long boom.' Indeed, if stability was the ear mark of Fordism during the 'long boom' years in Powell River, change and unpredictability marked the newly emerging era of flexible specialization during the 1980s and early 1990s. Even during the 'long boom' years in Powell River, when the cyclical pattern of growth and decline was predictable and well-understood, events were culminating outside the locality precipitating the eventual economic disaster of 1981, when 17 percent of the mill work force was laid off (Hayter and Holmes 1994:16). The emergence of flexible specialization had particular relevance to towns of single industry.

The wide spread job loss during the recession of 1981-1985 not only impacted workers and their families but also affected the entire community of Powell River, which suffered from the loss of wages and taxes previously derived through forest product manufacturing. Many workers who lost their jobs in Powell River and saw no realistic possibility to find work within the locality left to look for work elsewhere, taking their families with them. In the aftermath of cutbacks, many youth migrated out of resource towns with their families. Employment at the mill dropped sharply in 1981 and continues to decline due to mechanization and rationalization (Table 3.1) (Hayter and Holmes 1994).

Table 3.1
Powell River Paper Mill Employment Levels, 1971-1994

Year	Total Employed
1971	2456
1976	2165
1981	2335
1986	1833
1991	1828
1994	1275

Source: Hayter and Holmes 1994:17

Although mill jobs were cutback after 1981, between 1971 and 1994, the overall population of Powell River remained stable (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2
Powell River Population, 1971-1994

Year	Total
1971	19,127
1976	20,040
1981	19,849
1986	19,042
1991	19,763
1994	19,983

Source: B.C. Stats (1994)

While the local population remained stable between 1971-1994, the decline of jobs at the mill was paralleled by a decline in the local teenage population in the 15-19 age group. Powell River's teenage population increased between 1971-6, levelled off, and then declined after 1981 (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3
Powell River Teenage Population (15-19 years), 1971-1994

Year	Total
1971	1878
1976	2021
1981	1994
1986	1633
1991	1422
1994	1352

Source: B.C. Stats (1994)

It is unknown whether there exists a causal link between declining employment opportunities at the mill and the dropping teenage population in Powell River. These findings resemble the demographic patterns described by Weeks (1990) in a study of six

forestry communities in Washington State undergoing employment decline in forestry related employment. Weeks found that as forestry jobs were disappearing, the high school population in each town dropped. At the same time, older migrants from urban centres were coming in, either to retire or to set up businesses. This latter trend is identified in a labour market review for the Powell River region as "penturbia." "Penturbia has hit the Powell River area and with it, a construction boom. Penturbia is the current trend where people are moving out of the larger cities to escape over crowding, crime and violence" (Human Resources Development Canada 1994a:1) in addition to other environmental and social factors.

Construction accounts for the largest growth in employment since the early 1980s recession, expanding 56 percent between 1986-1991. Housing starts alone rose 20 percent in 1994 from the previous year (Human Resources Development Canada 1994c). Tourism is actively promoted as an industry with enormous growth potential in the Powell River area. Plans to attract tourists include waterfront revitalization, enhancing services for disabled visitors, promotion of eco-tourism activities, milltown revitalization and publicizing local festivals (Ministry of Regional and Economic Development 1991; Community Futures 1992; Human Resources Development Canada 1994c). The 1991 profile of employment by sector in Powell River shows an approximate distribution of the currently diversifying economy (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4
Powell River Labour Force by Industry (1991)

Industry	Number of workers	Percent of work force
Agriculture	130	1.5
Fishing	215	2.4
Logging	635	7.1
Mining	150	1.7
All Primary	1130	12.7
Manufacturing	2105	23.6
Construction	625	7.0
Transportation	460	5.2
Trade (Wholesale/Retail)	1365	15.3
F.I.R.E.*	225	2.5
Government plus all other services	3000	33.7
All Service	5675	63.7

Source: Human Resource Development Canada 1994a:8

*Financial/Insurance/Real Estate Services

The growth and prominence of the service sector in the local economy has presented youth with employment opportunities which had virtually vanished after the 1980s recession. Its emergence is greeted with enthusiasm by many key-informants, including the Canada Employment Programs Officer.

***Canada Employment Programs Officer:** Over the last 5 years or so, the Powell River economy has changed. It was very much a one industry town. The pulp and paper mill was the only game in town. It's now diversified to the point of small business being almost an industry in itself. Like all these fast food outlets that have come over the last year. A&W, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Dairy Queen, Panagopolous Pizza and Robin's Donuts. That's all over the past year. They employ a lot of young people who couldn't get any work previously. They tend to be minimum wage type of jobs but a good place to start.*

History of youth at the mill

An established feature among high school students was for many to quit school around Grade 10 to find a job in the mill. This pattern was stable and relatively unchanging and was incorporated in the local value system. Several key-informants including an employment officer, school staff, mill workers and parents testified to the predictability of this pattern.

***Canada Employment Programs Officer:** Eighteen to 40 years ago in this town, kids went through school, dropped out of school, somewhere around Grade 10. Went to work for the mill. Bought them self a big car and had a great time. That was the pattern. Their fathers, their grandfathers all worked for the mill. They knew once they finished school, what ever that meant, when they reached working age for the mill, which was probably about 16 at the time, they could drop out of school. And go and work in the mill and earn good money.*

This pattern is echoed by several other key-informants.

Head counsellor: *When I first came here, anybody could walk down the hill and get a good job that paid more than what the teachers were making. And they did it! They walked in droves, especially in Grade 11. They just quit school and went down, because they knew that there were jobs to be had and excellent money and they didn't need any specific education or training. They didn't need Grade 12.*

Former school principal: *When I went to school here, we used to be able to work when we were 16 in the mill. That would be some kid in Grade 10, beginning of Grade 11. It wasn't all that uncommon to quit school at the end of Grade 10 and start in the mill and away you go.*

President Local 76 at mill: *When I was in school, you could work 4 to 12 on the weekends during the winter months and almost work full-time every summer. So for people trying to go to school and stuff like that, it was a lot easier to get funds together at a fairly good paying job. And there wasn't much effort to it. You knew you didn't have to go out and find it, it was sort of there. In some ways maybe that's soft, in the respect of knowing that it was always there.*

Key-informants' recollections seem to draw directly from Lucas' account of single industry towns during the long boom. The gendered nature of job availability in resource towns was recognized by Lucas and is articulated by one of the student's mothers. She drew a reaction from her mill worker husband who chose to see the unbalanced labour force under Fordism as the result of women's own preferences.

Mill worker and father: *Up until 10 years ago, there was always work in Powell River. Because everyone that came out of Max Cameron School was almost guaranteed a job with MacMillan Bloedel.*

Interviewer: *All the guys?*

Mill worker: *All the guys and the girls.*

Interviewer: *Is that right?*

Mill worker: *Ya. They had openings for just about everyone that came out of school.*

Wife of mill worker: *They didn't hire too many girls way back when.*

Mill worker: *Well, who ever wanted to work! If the girls wanted to work there.... a lot of the girls didn't want to work there. It's just in the last few years that they've wanted to work with the men. Except for the war. There was a lot of women working in the mill during the war.*

Powell River's current drive towards economic diversification must be contextualized within the historical framework of a locality developed upon Fordist principles. The mill was the dominant local employer and the symbolic centre of the community up until the 1981-1985 recession (Southern and Bird 1988). Generations of workers from the same family had a history of going to work at the mill. Labour market expectations were well-

founded upon what previous generations of males had done since the mill's inception in 1909. Paasi (1991) and Lambert (1972) point to generations as important carriers of local knowledge, values and expectations. The transmission of local values binds generations together with common history.

The "lost generation"

The ease with which young males found work in the mill ended abruptly with the severe cutbacks in 1981 (see Table 3.1). Male youth who had grown up to expect a job in the mill held on to the illusion that the recession of the early 1980s was just another dip in the predictable growth and decline cycle. They expected eventual economic recovery, and with recovery, resumed hirings at the mill. This expectation inspired many Powell River youth to remain in the locality. Male youth who might otherwise have sought alternative training and employment outside the locality waited years for the opportunity to be hired, continuing to live with their parents and working at menial jobs. However, the cutbacks at the mill were permanent, eliminating the need for new young entrants. The recession marked a dramatic blow to Fordist industry all over North America (Bluestone and Harrison 1982; Clark 1986, 1989) and for these male youth, there was nothing to replace the mill jobs. This resulted in low morale, lack of direction and extreme negativism about the future. The plight of this group was well-recognized throughout the community, many members of whom refer to this group as the "lost generation."

Former school principal: *There's an interesting thing going on right now. Powell River had their layoffs in 1982, probably their first big layoffs ever. In the mid80s, the problems started to arise. It was a group of people that came out of high school at that time, and they were sort of the first generation that never had that opportunity to enter the mill. I was at Oceanview (school) at the time, and most of those students had come through the system. I knew them all. I would speak to their brothers and sisters and ask,*

"Well, how's your brother doing?"

"Well, they're at home."

"What do you mean they're at home?"

Basically they didn't get work right away when they came out of high school. The ones that stayed behind. What's interesting is that particular group, probably near 30 (years old) now, ended up getting into the mill 5 or 6 years ago. Sort of a delayed reaction. And now they're the first ones with this last layoff, who are back out doing other things. It's interesting to talk to a couple of them who are starting small businesses, and things like that. They sort of had a 5-year stint in the mill, started when they were 25 instead of when they were 16.

The "lost generation" left a strong impression on parents and other community members. Parents are loathe to see their children fall into the same dilemma faced by members of the "lost generation," who lacked alternative goals when faced with limited local options. Many key-informant parents blame the school for not adequately preparing youth for the labour market. In particular, they see goal setting as tantamount to providing youth with a career direction. Without goals, youth are "lost."

Shawn's father: *There's a lot of kids that have graduated in the last few years and are still wandering around, wondering what they should be doing.*

Interviewer: *Sticking around Powell River?*

Shawn's father: *Sticking around town and taking on these low paying jobs just to put spending money in their pockets. But they really don't know what they want to do.*

The Programs Officer at the Canada Employment Centre has seen local youth go through a visible transition from extreme negativism towards their future labour market prospects to regaining a positive outlook, in spite of labour market uncertainty.

Programs officer at Canada Employment Centre: *I've always talked with the schools over the last 10 years. But there was a period there, maybe a 4 or 5 year period, up until a couple years ago, where the kids were very negative.*

Interviewer: *About?*

Programs officer: *About their potential for the future. It was kind of like, "It's hopeless. I'm not going to get a job. I might either go on welfare or be unemployed in some form. What the heck, why bother?" That was sort of their vision of life. Which was really hard to deal with.*

Interviewer: *Yes, because you can't really do anything about that.*

Programs officer: *It's really tough to deal with that. I guess as the economy started to improve, it diversified and the job situation improved. And now you're getting that positive spark again. With good ideas.*

Technological change and rationalization were two major factors contributing towards 17 percent of the mill work force losing their jobs in 1981 (Hayter and Holmes 1994:16). Members of the "lost generation" can also be viewed as victims of technological change, for they held job expectations based entirely on the obsolete Fordist production system. They believed the changes occurring in the labour market to be temporary and thus failed to adapt to the newly emerging system of flexibility. In essence, they were caught between two fundamentally different institutional production systems, Fordism and flexibility. This inability to adapt created a lag effect between high school graduation and movement into eventual career trajectories. This lag effect between technological change and social

adaptation is documented by Machlis et al. (1990), who write that resource communities are the most likely candidates for this pattern.

Related to the lag effect is the "jarring relationship" observed by Peck (1989b) between changing labour market conditions and state institutions attempting to adapt to these changes. One of the most notable state training institutions in Powell River is the secondary school. Max Cameron Secondary has made impressive inroads towards preparing youth for an uncertain future. School vocational programs previously in place to prepare youth for the mill and other manual jobs have been phased out since the recession of 1981-5. Several initiatives in Powell River mitigate against this "jarring relationship" between institutions and labour market dynamics.

Local Institutional Initiatives

Institutions within Powell River actively strive to update the local skills structure in order to meet current labour market demands. These include Max Cameron Secondary School, Malaspina College, the Canada Employment Centre and business (Dufour 1994). Malaspina College and the Canada Employment Centre collaborate to offer training courses which meet the needs of local employers. Employers representing each major sector in Powell River join Canada Employment in an annual consultation process whereby they assess their skills and training priorities with Canada Employment. Canada Employment consults with Malaspina College to assess which training programs can be offered in the community.

Canada Employment Programs Officer: *In essence what we end up is a statement of what employers see as their own training needs for the short term. For the next year or two. From that, we come back, we take a look at our budget, and kind of prioritize these training needs. With them, we approach Malaspina College and say, "Could you put on an appliance repair course for us this year?" They would say "Ya, we can do it." or "No, it's not possible to do it." And we do it.*

The objective of the consultation process is to match training programs with the skills priorities of local employers. This process achieves a high placement rate among participants. Participants in recent training programs range from laid off mill workers to high school drop outs.

Programs officer: *All of our focus is on unskilled people. Therefore, a lot of it is on youth. You're looking at the high school drop-out or graduate.*

So right now in town, we're sponsoring a carpentry course, an appliance repair course, micro-computer systems specialist course, auto-mechanics, cook training. Quite a few courses that are designed to give people the skills so they can obtain employment. Which courses we buy every year are decided by what are the needs in this community.

The local Canada Employment Centre conducted a survey among local employers, identifying the skills which local employers need but deem to be in short supply within the locality (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5
Ranking of Skills Needed by Powell River Employers

Rank	Skill Group/Program	# of Requests
1	Computer/ software	25
2	Personal improvement/attitude	24
3	Business skills/management	22
3	Customer Service	22
4	Literacy and academic skills	13
5	Construction	8
6	Tourism	7
7	Food and cooking	6
7	Mechanics	6
7	Special needs client support	6
8	Appliance repair/handyman	5
8	Trucking	5

Source: Powell River Post-Secondary Education 1993

The top four skills were rated as being by far the most important, though these are general in nature and lack the need for specific training qualifications. In spite of their general nature, these skills represent essential aspects of work under flexibility. The next highest category, literacy and academic skills, stands on its own between the top four and the remaining bottom skills. The remaining skills require specific technical training.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of curriculum development, Malaspina University-College collaborates with North Island College in Comox to design courses which minimizes overlap. Coordination between communities means that residents from either community can take advantage of courses taught in either location. Ferry schedules between the two localities are organized to make attendance feasible. The collaborative

process between Malaspina College, Canada Employment and local employers is an illustration of Peck's "institutional thinness" (Personal Communication with Peck 1995).

Peck distinguishes between the ability of institutions in large communities and those in small communities to respond effectively to labour market changes. Institutions in small communities, he argues, are more likely to adapt quickly to changes, due to their "institutional thinness" (Personal Communication with Peck 1995). "Institutional thinness" refers to the degree of maneuverability within institutions. Institutions which adapt quickly to change are considered 'thin,' whereas bureaucratic institutions which exhibit an inertia to change are 'thick.'

In small communities such as Powell River, institutions retain the personal element because closer contact with the public and a higher degree of collaboration is more feasible than in large urban centres. An implication of 'institutional thinness' in Powell River is the close collaboration between Max Cameron Secondary School and the Canada Employment Centre in educating youth about labour market changes. Regular consultations occur between the school employment counsellor and the Programs Officer at the Canada Employment Centre regarding labour market fluctuations. In contrast, institutions in large urban areas have less contact with the public, are more sectorialized and thus are "institutionally thick." In effect, "institutional thinness" diminishes the 'jarring relationship' between the state and the labour market because an institution like the school is more adaptable to changing labour market dynamics. This raises the importance of place in assessing state education and how effectively it relates to current labour market demands.

The skills and training programs implemented at Max Cameron Secondary School show the school as an agent preparing youth for the future labour market. These programs, which are outlined in detail, show a sensitivity to local labour market changes. The importance of place to skill formation at an institutional level is addressed by Peck and Haughton (1991) in an analysis of the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) in Britain. The authors found that the scheme had markedly different levels of success in the localities of

Crewe and Preston due to the particular contingencies of place. Similarly, the process of skill formation in Powell River is locally configured on the basis of local labour market changes and the sensitivity of institutions to such changes.

Preparing Youth for the Labour Market

Since the 1980s recession, there have been several local institutional initiatives to prepare youth for the changing labour market. Collaborative efforts between Max Cameron Secondary School, the Canada Employment Centre, Malaspina College and local businesses have raised the levels of awareness and preparedness among youth for the changed labour market. The school administration constantly monitors the labour market and the demands of post-secondary institutions in order to maintain a relevant curriculum with high standards. Work experience has become a major focus for curriculum development and growth. The school's commitment to accommodating at-risk students is demonstrated by a number of institutional changes which have taken place within the last five years. Educational planning for the future attempts to incorporate modern workplace realities into the classroom setting. Part of preparing youth for the changed and uncertain labour market is communicating the importance of having flexible career goals to students.

Students in Grades 10, 11 and 12 meet several times a year with speakers from diverse backgrounds to hear about various aspects of the labour market. Approximately 85 percent of the Grade 12 students already have jobs or are looking for one, so their level of contact with the labour market is already high (Survey data 1994). In terms of long term career options, the Programs Officer at the Canada Employment Centre tells students to be adaptable to change and to maintain open minds. He identifies the service industry as a source of growing opportunities.

Programs officer at Canada Employment Centre: *I talked to a guidance class, about the changing economy in Powell River. About people expecting to go to work for the mill. That was normal. Now we are based on the small industry, pay is lower. There is lots of potential for development. Because they've been changing it already. Because of the growth in tourism and the retirement community concept, etceteras.*

Interviewer: *So you're talking more about services and entrepreneurial things?*

Programs officer: Yes. Pushing that type of stuff. Trying to get their vision to branch out a bit. The message I was trying to make was "o.k., this is what's happening economically in Powell River. How are you going to fit into that?"

Interviewer: What sort of response were you getting?

Programs officer: Um, pretty good. Actually, I was really impressed with them all. Especially for Grade 10s. They asked really intelligent questions. Every class had some questions. They seem to listen. They seem to understand.

The former principal of the school, Mr. Brian Bennett, believes in being honest with youth about the realities of the labour market, rather than fostering unrealistic expectations. The tendency for youth to harbour unrealistic labour market expectations has been well documented by Empson-Warner and Krahn (1992) and Hamilton and Powers (1990).

Young people with very high career goals are leaving school and entering a service-dominated labour market which, while offering a considerable number of high status jobs, also contains a substantial number of less rewarding jobs. This suggests a growing gap between aspirations and outcomes (Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992:49).

In Powell River, the former principal spoke strongly about dispelling unrealistic aspirations among youth.

Former principal: I became principal at this particular school in 1990. Even since then, everything has changed. When you talk to graduating students, the first time I spoke to them, I said, "Not many of you will work in the mill." We're promoting other kinds of things among the students. Each year I've spoken to the Grade 12 class. And this year I said, "probably none of you will ever work in the mill." That's probably not true in one sense but it's appropriate.

The school hosts a variety of special events aimed primarily at raising students' awareness about the job market. David Street, an animated speaker from Canada Employment, gave a dynamic talk in 1992 to a full gymnasium of Max Cameron students. His presentation, called "Modern Workplace Realities," emphasizes the aspect of change in the world of work. Repeatedly throughout his talk he yells "Nothing is more constant than change, people!" Street contrasts job requirements of the 90s to those of the 60s, 70s and 80s, stressing the importance of post-secondary education and training in the 90s. He also emphasizes the importance of maintaining the 'right attitude' by projecting a positive outlook and having flexible labour market expectations. His gift of 500 jelly filled doughnuts during his talk symbolizes the core/periphery model of the labour market. Street

explains to students as they munch away that 54 percent of the labour market is made up of full time jobs, symbolized by the delicious jelly centre. The other 46 percent of the labour market contains alternative types of employment like part time, temporary, seasonal, self-employment, contracting out and term positions, symbolized by the not-so-desirable dough which surrounds the jelly. Street drives home the point that, "While the centre of the jelly doughnut is getting smaller and smaller, the outside is getting larger and larger!" The reality of the work place, he impresses upon students, is that good jobs are not out there for them. Rather, youth must go out and create their own opportunities by being flexible with their expectations and willing to learn new skills. Faculty found Street to be an effective communicator with youth.

Employment counsellor: *His number one thing is "attitude." You have to have the right attitude. Without the right attitude, the other 5 skills are useless to you. But with the right attitude, somebody will take you under their wing and mentor you. He does it in such a way that the kids are really mesmerized for an hour. It's a good impact. I can talk to kids now and say, "Who's the best guest speaker you've had?" and they'll go, "the guy with the doughnuts! Remember the guy with the doughnuts? Yeah! Wow, he was great, man!"*

The former school principal supports Street's analysis of the job market. He believes that jobs are less straightforward to find but that there is plenty of work available if youth are willing to be creative and flexible in their approach.

Former principal: *Right now there is a fair amount of work out there, but there aren't that many jobs. What people are having to do is go and pick up the work in various places and put it together as a job. It's not such a bad deal but it really does entail almost going into a small business.*

The Programs Officer at Canada Employment conveys a sense of optimism to youth regarding labour market opportunities.

Canada Employment Programs officer: *It's kind of exciting times. I guess that's the message I try to convey to the kids. I say, "there's all kinds of potential out there. As long as you can be flexible and creative. See where you can fit in." But the traditional routes are kind of evaporating slowly. Even the fast food places are more mechanized.*

In order to give youth an accurate account of what the labour market holds for them, the employment counsellor plans to invite Max Cameron graduates to talk to students

about their labour market experiences. He believes this would be highly effective because "kids really do listen to kids."

Employment counsellor: We need to bring those people back in here, so we need some travel money. Most of them are relocated in other centres. But we would like to be able to bring them back in. And put a panel together in front of these Grade 12s maybe three times a year. "Here's a group of kids who went out and did Trades. Here's a group of kids who went out and did Human Services. Here's a group of kids who went out and did Travel Tourism. Here's what they're telling you about how they got there."

The school administration, still wary of what happened during the mid 1980s to the "lost generation" believes that giving youth a realistic picture of the labour market is the best way to prepare them for the future, rather than to nourish unrealistic expectations.

Changes at Max Cameron Secondary School

The school has responded proactively to rising skill requirements in the job market and in post-secondary institutions by raising its own academic standards. One way in which it has done this is its attempt to lessen the distinction between students going into vocational and academic streams. The former school principal described how enrollment in vocational courses has dropped significantly since the down sizing at the mill. He attributed this both to a decline in students' interest and to the school's active role in discouraging students from pursuing strictly vocational programs.

Former school principal: ...The numbers are dropping. Welding is an example. Probably 7 or 8 years ago, enrollment in welding was way up there, because anybody in a short period of time could get training, get work on construction, get fairly high wages and be a welder. It's sort of romantic to be a welder, I guess. Now there's just really little interest in that.

The school consults regularly with post-secondary institutions' requirements, adapting its own programs accordingly. Malaspina College, the only local post-secondary institution, has raised its entry requirements to include upper division Math and Sciences for example. In order to be accepted into a Trades program at the College, incoming students must already have passed Math 11 and 12 and Physics 11. A direct response to this has been the development of the 'Maths Centre' within Max Cameron Secondary School. This initiative has resulted in a doubling of enrollment in academic maths since its inception in 1990.

Former school principal: *The standard is Math 11, and English 12. We try not to even encourage Math 11A. We keep that to a bare, bare minimum. At one time, it was called 'Trades Math.' It's of absolutely no value other than that you can get a graduation certificate, but you can't take any other training with it. I really restrict kids going into courses like this. We're better to do some other things, like extend that child's math instruction over a longer period of time, rather than give them the false hope of, "If I go into Math 9A, I'll be successful." And then where does it lead? It doesn't lead anywhere.*

The drive towards computer literacy in the labour market has prompted Max Cameron to expand its Computer Science department to overlap with Business Education courses. In order to maintain a stimulating learning environment, the school encourages advanced students to take on semi-instructional roles. In many cases, the principal sees students leading the teachers in instruction.

Former school principal: *Here, we have to keep changing the course every year and go further and further and further, because of the skills of the kids coming in. Some areas are having a hard time even keeping up. Like in the Business Ed. area, I moved the computer programming from Apple to IBM this year. That's attracted a lot of those propeller-head kids, you know. They've all got their own computer businesses and stuff like this. They go up there and the poor teachers haven't got a hope. And so I've sort of had to transfer a few people around and put a propeller-head with the teacher.*

These efforts by the school to 'keep up' with labour market changes contrasts with Peck's (1989) portrayal of a "jarring relationship" between state training institutions and the labour market. The school's adaptation to labour market changes demonstrates both sensitivity and flexibility.

Artificially high requirements

Although Max Cameron school strives to keep abreast of the latest hikes in post-secondary entry requirements, it recognizes that many of these requirements are artificially higher than the actual skills needed to succeed in certain programs. Gaskell (1987) and Livingstone (1985) note the utility of artificially high entry requirements to schools and employers as being a mode of separating out the motivated from the less motivated applicants. "Elevated educational requirements and long training programs reduce the number of people who are eligible to do a job and thus make the ability to do the job scarcer and more valuable" (Gaskell 1987:141). The former principal expressed resignation over

what he sees as superficially high requirements for courses such as Home Health Care taught at Malaspina College.

***Former school principal:** Malaspina College announced a local course here which was in the health care field. Anyway, we were going over the requirements and the counsellor said, "You have to have a C+ in English 12 to get into the course."*

I said, "In a 10-month course in bed-making the jumping height is a C+ in English 12!?" It's not really much relevance to what they do, C+ in English 12, but anyway, that's just the way things are.

Union representatives also attest to the artificially high entry requirement at the mill. Employment eligibility at the mill in 1994 was contingent on the applicant passing a rigorous math exam, which is pitched at the first year university level. The apparent absurdity of this standard is highlighted by the fact that many of the older mill workers possess a Grade 10 education or less. During Fordism, Lucas (1971) noted the incongruity between the high entry requirements for new applicants and the minimal educational background of older workers in industry.

Livingstone suggests that while skill requirements are increasing in many blue collar jobs, often workers do not gain greater autonomy over the tasks they perform. "Employed proletarian workers are expected to perform increasingly standardized and specified tasks, which may require substantial basic literacy, numeracy and physical dexterity skills to follow changing machine-driven routines but which minimize workers' capacity to plan their own work" (Livingstone 1985:111). While Livingstone's viewpoint is dismal, limited space in training programs contributes towards the further upward spiraling of entry level requirements.

Promoting entrepreneurial skills

Resource towns have a distinct historical lack of entrepreneurial skills among residents (Barnes and Hayter 1995). Lucas (1971) details how paternalism in company towns fostered dependence among residents on the dominant company for the provision of new services, rather than encouraging residents to start new businesses. This historical lack of local control in resource towns is a central characteristic to the branch plant

economy outlined in Marchak's classic, Green Gold (1983). Fordism did not contribute towards entrepreneurialism in resource towns because labour was organized along the Taylorist work principles of docility and repetition, neither of which inspire risk taking or innovation. Therefore, youth in resource towns have typically had few entrepreneurial role models to follow. The employment counsellor at Max Cameron recognizes this problem, both within the locality and the school system.

Interviewer: How many students are entrepreneurial?

Employment counsellor: Not enough. I mean, that's the only thing the school system does not do. We don't encourage risk taking. We're a very, very conservative institution. And when we see someone who looks like they're going to crash and burn, we start throwing pillows out to soften the blow. So we are not entrepreneurial in any spirit.

In addition to the historical scarcity of entrepreneurial role models in resource towns, the social stigma against applied skills creates a substantial barrier to promoting entrepreneurialism among youth. Parents, the employment counsellor explains, want their children to go to university, in the hope that they will become middle managers. According to the counsellor, middle class parents discriminate against trades or business education because they see these as somehow beneath their status. In spite of this perception, the counsellor continues to push entrepreneurialism as a means "to get rich."

Employment counsellor: Entrepreneurial's the way to go. Be your own boss. That's how you get rich. You don't get rich working for wages. And certainly Canada Employment tells us that those are the kind of skills that kids need when they exit.

Their head statistician said, "It's real simple. Every kid should come out of school prepared with an understanding and the skills to start and run their own business."

Although teaching entrepreneurial skills is not a formal mandate within the school, the employment counsellor heartily encourages youth with an interest in business to become entrepreneurial. The intent of the employment counsellor is to enable youth to succeed in the labour market. In direct conflict with the school's policy, this counsellor has no objection to a student dropping out of school to start his own business. His enthusiasm for youth entrepreneurship is palpable.

Employment counsellor: The young guy who was just in here, Warren, is a computer genius. And he's got his own business running out of his home. He's

just quit school. He doesn't need to finish Grade 12 because he's too busy with his business. School was really getting in his way. Could he run that business from Powell River? You bet he can. There's lots and lots of computer people here who need help. He teaches at Malaspina College.

This young computer consultant boasts a long list of local clients, one of which is Max Cameron Secondary School. Another entrepreneurial student was described as "focused."

Employment counsellor: *I've got a kid in here who's doing financial planning for people. He knows exactly how many RRSPs he's got, how much money out of his part-time job he puts away. Some kids are really focused.*

This combination of business skills with academic learning would meet with the approval of Levin (1985) who presents a strong case for higher student involvement in experience-based learning. The employment counsellor commented that keeping abreast with advances in business software is a difficulty facing the school because of the high cost of new programs. As a solution to this problem, he would like to see more sharing of specialized software packages taking place between the school and other local institutions. An example is the accounting program recently purchased by the Powell River municipal hall. The employment counsellor says the Business Education students would benefit from gaining access to this program as an educational tool, of which the school has "seen neither hide nor hair off."

Work experience

Work experience presents a means for the school to incorporate experience-based learning into formal education. Max Cameron Secondary School has developed an integrated work experience program. The program falls under the provincial "Career Prep Initiative." The initiative prompts the B.C. school system to take an active role in preparing youth with appropriate skills for the labour market. The Max Cameron School employment counsellor currently liaises with approximately 70 businesses and professional associations in the Powell River area. Students participating in work experience are mentored by representatives in business and labour groups. Students work with a wide variety of professionals including lawyers, accountants, banks and credit unions, insurance adjusters,

Superhost (tourism and hospitality), trades persons and artists. Work experience through the school allows students to meet with trained professionals who work outside the confines of the youth labour market. Three work experience programs are currently administered by Max Cameron School, including Work Experience, Job Shadowing and the W.O.W. Program designed for at-risk youth.

Under the Work Experience Program, students work several weeks for a single employer in a field that they are interested in. The program is paid for jointly by the employer, who mentors the student, and the school. The employment counsellor monitors students' progress by consulting regularly with students and employers. Students generally complete their work experience during the summer months and receive credit for this upon graduation.

A less lengthy program intended to give students a brief glimpse of a variety of jobs is the "Job Shadowing" program. A student who is "Job Shadowing" spends up to two days with a professional in a field that he or she specifies an interest in. The purpose of this program is to allow students a chance to form constructive opinions on prospective careers.

Head counsellor: *As long as the student is learning something, either about the job or about themselves or improving their skills, then we consider that a successful experience.*

Work experience is also used by the school as a motivational device for at-risk students. By giving less academically-inclined students opportunities to learn skills which they personally deem relevant and useful, they are less likely to drop out. The W.O.W. Program is specifically designed to meet the needs of at-risk students. This program grew out of a local initiative called Work Opportunities for Women, hence the acronym W.O.W. Originally it was aimed at providing economically disadvantaged women with work experiences in a variety of jobs contexts. The fact that W.O.W. specifically targets at-risk youth distinguishes it from other school programs such as Job Shadowing and Work Experience. These latter two programs are offered to the general student population and are

not used as motivational tools. The W.O.W. program has grown to incorporate male and female youth considered to be at-risk of dropping out of school for any reason, economic or social. Under the W.O.W. program, students receive a small wage and are mentored by a professional for approximately ten consecutive weekends. The head counsellor says that the W.O.W. program helps at-risk students take their new skills outside the locality.

***Head counsellor:** It's to give that individual student some specific work skills, to make them more marketable. But not necessarily to make them more marketable here. It's to give them skills that are transferable just to anywhere.*

All three work experience programs administered by the school show a commitment by the school to bridge the gap identified by Levin (1985) and Mason (1985) between school and the labour market. The W.O.W. Program in particular attempts to mitigate alienation among at-risk youth by addressing their needs and interests within the institutional framework of the school.

The B.C. government initiated the 'Skills Now!' program in 1994 in an attempt to bring relevant labour market skills into the school environment. The program is oriented towards promoting strong technical skills and computer literacy among youth. The 'Skills Now!' initiative has allotted \$200 million to be administered over a two year term province wide. School districts such as Powell River access funding through a lengthy application process in which the district details current work experience programs already in place and sets targets to be met over two years. Powell River (School District #47) submitted a comprehensive application in 1994 listing in descending order nine priorities for curriculum development. In total, the district requested \$337,600 to be spent over two years in order to establish infrastructure to be carried over after the program's completion. The district was awarded \$112,000, a third of its original request. This allows the district to pursue only two of its priorities listed on its 'Skills Now' application.

The first priority for the Powell River School District #47 is to increase the number of students participating in work experience programs. To implement this the district needs more work experience supervisors to liaise with employers and to oversee students'

progress. Supervisors would play an active role in training students to critically appraise their work experiences. The district's second priority under the 'Skills Now' initiative is to establish early goal setting among students using two computer programs called "CHOICES" and the "Pathfinder Learning System." Parents have expressed strong concerns that youth are not forced to set goals for themselves and are hence afraid that they lack direction with little or no career aspirations. The school district recognizes the need to include parents in the formal career counseling process. Students' vocational goals are to be discussed jointly between career counsellors, students, parents and teachers. Progress towards those goals will be monitored by the school. The school's priorities of expanding work experience and encouraging students to set goals show a strong institutional commitment to bridge the gap between students' classroom experience and labour market dynamics.

Accommodating students within the school

Max Cameron School has implemented structural changes to its curriculum in the last five years which attempt to accommodate more students than previously done in the past. New initiatives include a switch from the full year system to the semester system, increased access for upgrading students, the construction of a day care centre for student mothers, and a gender equity study co-sponsored with the Powell River Women's Employment Strategy. The school district articulated an awareness of the barriers within the school system faced by disadvantaged youth in its 'Skills Now!' application. The school administration is working to eliminate these institutional barriers within the school itself.

Our district has worked toward eliminating the practice of streaming students, recognizing that it places obstacles to achievement in the path of those children least advantaged in our society and forces the school to play an active role in perpetuating social and economic inequalities as well (Skills Now! application 1994:2).

Levin (1985) writes that schools must be more accommodating to students who do not follow a linear progression from school to work.

There should be increased institutional flexibility to respond to changes in young people's plans. Since plans are going to continue to change, the institutions involved have an obligation to accommodate such changes (Levin 1985:273).

Max Cameron School adopted the semester system in 1993. The semester system allows students to attend school full-time for one semester and then to work full-time in the next. The rationale behind this move is based on the school's belief that 'at-risk' students are more likely to finish school if they can commit to four months at a time instead of eight. Course modules are completed within a semester. The semester system allows for more student work placements throughout the year and for a wider range of courses to be taught.

Youth who have graduated but who wish to upgrade their Grade 12 qualifications can return to school and obtain course credits. Although returning students put a strain on the school's resources, the employment counsellor considers that it is worth the added strain if upgrading helps returning students to obtain prerequisites for post-secondary programs. In 1994, twenty five students were upgrading at Max Cameron, accounting for 8 percent of the Grade 12 class. The head counsellor says that many youth who upgrade at Max Cameron are not yet ready to leave the locality or do not have the financial resources to do so.

Powell River has an exceptionally high rate of births among teen mothers (McCreary Centre Society 1992). Between 1989-1993, the birth rate per 1,000 teen females in Powell River was 33.4, noticeably above the provincial rate of 23.8 (Vital Statistics 1994). Recognizing this, the school district targeted teen mothers as a special needs group requiring relevant work skills and encouragement to stay in school.

New initiatives need to be mounted to assist the largest possible number of learners to make a transition to adult society, to realize their individual potential and to contribute to society. There is a need to ensure girls and women access to new technologies. Particular emphasis should be placed upon enabling young mothers to access educational and social programs (Skills Now! application 1994).

The school has built a day care centre next to the counseling department in an effort to encourage young mothers in school. However, in spite of the day care centre, the head counsellor sees teen mothers facing insurmountable struggles.

Head counsellor: They can't make it at school. Attendance becomes a real problem. We have a lot of kids who we then accommodate by having partial programs and it drags out there, it just drags and drags. If you're only in Grade 10 and you're pregnant and you have a baby, you've got two more full years of high school. That just becomes extremely difficult. Even as accommodating as it can be, you still have to pass a certain number of courses. Right? You still have to attend. That becomes a problem.

The school is working to eliminate differential opportunity structures facing youth by becoming more flexible and accommodating to disadvantaged youth. Additional changes within the school include raising the academic standards, greater harmonization with post-secondary requirements and closer consultation with labour market demands. The school's liaison with the local Canada Employment Centre ensures that students are made aware of labour market dynamics well before graduation and early enough to make informed decisions regarding their selection of courses. The promotion of entrepreneurialism has enormous potential for development within the school.

Work experience programs are designed to expose students to work environments much different from those found in the youth labour market. Work experience attempts to fill the gap identified by Levin (1985) between classroom and experience-based learning and has the potential to keep the less motivated students in school. As Peck states, "the on-going process of institutional change should, therefore, be seen both as a response to, and as a stimulus to labour market change" (Peck 1989:48). The 1980s recession initiated institutional changes. With the cutbacks at the mill, many skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled job opportunities vanished for youth. The recession prompted the school to take significant steps towards educating and training its youth for the current labour market. These institutional changes have led to an inevitable change in the local skill structure of Powell River youth. By changing the skill structure the school is influencing labour market opportunities for the youth of Powell River.

Technology and workplace skills in design of new school

The construction of a new secondary school is currently underway in Powell River. The new school, Brooks, will operate in addition to Max Cameron Secondary. The design of Brooks incorporates many of the curricular changes which have taken place at Max Cameron directly into its blue prints. The school's layout emphasizes technology and its applications in the workplace. For example, a teaching kitchen in the Home Economics department is designed on the format of a commercial kitchen setting. Food prepared by the students will be sold and served to real customers in the cafeteria.

The vocational curriculum shows a distinct move away from the traditional 'shops' courses which existed throughout the Fordist era at Max Cameron. Vocational courses will combine a hands-on approach with solid grounding in theory. The former principal of Max Cameron Secondary has been hired as the principal for Brooks, and is heavily involved in the design of the new school and its curriculum. He described the direction of vocational education at Brooks.

Brooks principal and former principal at Max Cameron: *The shops area is designed on a whole new philosophical bent which is one of technology instead of mechanics. Students are expected to learn processes as opposed to the actual manual skills. Manual skills are not as high in demand any more.*

So we are changing. Things like business education, the demand for that is rising again because the jobs in small business are increasing. The first thing you have to have is computers, you have to have accounting skills and the business entrepreneurial skills.

The school's orientation towards technology and applied skills is related in an article in the local newspaper.

On a recent tour, Brooks principal Brian Bennett proudly showed off a technology lab where students will learn computer-assisted drawing (CAD) and mechanical drawing (CAM). The lab is designed to mimic a modern engineering work place. In another area, students will learn about robotics, and other new technologies (Powell River Town Crier, Nov. 7 1994:A3).

The changes which have taken place in Max Cameron's computer education program are paralleled and surpassed by the design of the new school's library, which encourages students to access information electronically rather than through books. The new school's

emphasis on technology is meant to prepare youth with relevant and competitive work place skills. These educational priorities demonstrate a conscious and conspicuous move by the Powell River school district towards relevant education for the labour market. This institutional move is the district's reaction to a shift in the local labour market from Fordism to post-Fordism, and from the anticipation of future change.

Difficulties faced by low income youth

The school system in Powell River has made commendable progress towards ensuring that a large proportion of students graduate with solid academic qualifications and relevant technical skills. In spite of this progress, a segment of impoverished youth remain unable to reap the benefits of these initiatives. During the Fordist era in Powell River, entry requirements were minimal and working class youth were able to access mill jobs through entry level positions. The recession of the early 1980s saw the beginning of a down sizing trend which has continued into the 1990s. Few viable employment alternatives remain available within the locality for low-income youth.

The solution at first would appear to be for these youth to leave Powell River in order to seek alternative work and training outside the locality. Yet the head counsellor attests to the fact that many impoverished youth perceive the cost of leaving the locality to be too high to afford. Feelings of entrapment and hopelessness are rampant among low-income youth.

Head counsellor: I think what I'm seeing now is more of a split in wealth. We're getting a lot of kids who are on welfare and have no expectations what-so-ever of going on to any sort of further education. There is no money. Period.

Several informants commented on the exorbitant cost of leaving the locality to pursue post-secondary education. At an estimated cost of \$10,000 a year for tuition and living expenses, attending school outside the locality is out of the question for poor youth. The head counsellor maintains that youth need to leave the isolated community in order to "grow up."

Head counsellor: I say, "Leave. If you've got any money, if you've got any desire to travel, why not do it now?"

Interviewer: Get out?

Head counsellor: Get out. Get out. Then if you choose to come back, that's fine, you know what's out there. But we don't do it for jobs. I do it more for worldly experience. This is too sheltered. We've got kids who have actually been to Vancouver once, twice.

Other key-informants support this viewpoint, describing Powell River as "too sheltered" and as a "spoilt little town."

Canada Employment Programs Officer: I would say it's healthy for Powell River kids to go out of town. This is a very protective environment. It really is. Parents are over-protective in this town. The whole society is really protective.

Helping the students leave the locality, even if only temporarily, is seen by the head counsellor as part of youth's development into adults. If impoverished students have aspirations for post-secondary education or training, she advocates using student loans as a means to leave the locality,

Head counsellor: If you know that there's not one penny coming in from home, I mean, not one penny can this parent give you, and you have to come up with \$5000? Isn't that an impossible sum to come up with, for a student to conceive of where you're going to get it?

Interviewer: Is that why you're recommending student loans?

Head counsellor: Oh yeah. To get them going. To say, "hey, nobody's going to hand it to you, but if you really want this, we can help you find a way to get out of here."

Fear is pervasive among Powell River's impoverished youth, many who see no opportunities for advancement. Much of the head counsellor's work involves allaying the fears of students, especially those who come from financially disadvantaged homes.

Head counsellor: We do our best to give them their options and to keep their fears down. You've got to balance it. You've got to give them balance, because there's nothing but fear mongering, like "you're never going to get a job, you're not going to have enough money" ... They're going to lose all hope. And you can't have that.

The counsellor says that parents and students alike equate "post-secondary" education with "university" education. Options like college and technical training are seen as inferior to a university education. The employment counsellor pointed out that in spite of no hirings at the mill, Powell River continues to import trades people. The school now emphasizes the 'new trades' which are theory-based and generally require computer skills.

Summary

This chapter explores institutional initiatives in Powell River which attempt to widen the skills structure of local youth. Initiatives at Max Cameron Secondary School include raising academic standards, incorporating work experience into the general curriculum and accommodating more learners within the system. An overview of local employment and demographic trends since the 1970s illustrates a climate of change in Powell River, paralleling the shift from Fordism to flexibility. This industrial change has had a marked impact on the school. This chapter demonstrates the collaborative relationship between the school, the state employment centre and the employer base, a relationship suited to meeting youth's training needs within the education system.

CHAPTER 4

VOCATIONALISM IN POWELL RIVER

Introduction

Max Cameron Secondary School and other local institutions in Powell River have made conspicuous efforts to adapt their programs to labour market demands. School programs emphasize higher academic standards and greater relevance to labour market dynamics. Chapter Three explored the changing skills of Powell River students from historical and institutional perspectives, dealing with program initiatives at Max Cameron Secondary School. Using Figure 2.1 as a heuristic model, this chapter assesses vocationalism, the role of family and youth jobs with respect to Max Cameron students. The model in Figure 2.1 illustrates the interaction between several factors, which allows for varied responses by students as they prepare for life after high school.

Vocationalism provides a basic framework for understanding how youth conceptualize the link between school and work. Gaskell identifies two main forms of vocationalism in her study of youth in a Vancouver high school (1985). Gaskell found that one group of youth is motivated in school by a distant logic of the labour market and another is motivated by an immediate logic. The motivation of the first group is based on a belief that success in school and in specific courses will eventually pay off in terms of meeting post-secondary requirements or other distant labour market demands. According to Gaskell and Ashton (1988), this group favours academic courses over vocational or 'hands on' courses.

The second group, which adheres to a more immediate logic of the labour market, takes vocational courses in the belief that skills learned in these courses have direct relevance to the labour market. Gaskell's theory of vocationalism supports the notion that high achievers are motivated by the distant logic and low achievers are motivated by the immediate logic. Proponents of vocationalism argue that family background also plays a

role in determining the type of vocationalism students adhere to (Livingstone 1985; Ashton 1988; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). According to Empson-Warner and Krahn, youth of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to follow an academic path in school, whereas youth of lower socioeconomic status are more likely follow the vocational path.

The value of students' jobs is highly contentious in the literature. The contribution that such jobs make to the development of career aspirations has largely been neglected (Hamilton and Powers 1990). The youth labour market is consistently portrayed as a dismal ghetto for young workers (Peters 1987; Hamilton and Powers 1990). Using evidence from the survey questionnaire and interviews, this chapter explores the value of youth jobs from the perspectives of Max Cameron students. The chapter starts with a review of empirical methods, and introduces the six key-informant students. Aspects of students' school performance are examined with attention to grades and other factors which motivate students to select certain courses. Simple statistical tests are used to investigate potential relationships between family background, academic performance, gender and the valuation of skills.

Most of the data in the survey questionnaire are nominal in nature. Cross-tabulation is used to determine differences between groups (Weinbach and Grinnell 1987). The chi-square statistic is measured at the 0.05 confidence level, and in all cases is applied to a 2 X 2 table (ie. two columns and two rows). Where the chi-square statistic is less than the expected value under the null hypothesis, the null hypothesis is accepted and no relationship is inferred. The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship among the variables being evaluated and that any clustering in the distribution of responses is a result of pure chance. Where the chi-square statistic is equal to or greater than the expected value under the null hypothesis ($X^2=3.84$), the null hypothesis is rejected and it is assumed that some relationship exists among the variables being evaluated. Once a relationship is determined using the chi-square statistic, 'phi' is used to measure the strength of association between variables. The value of 'phi' ranges from 0 to +1, with a value of 0

implying no association and a value of +1 implying perfect association between variables (Nie et al. 1975).

Survey findings are related to Gaskell's theory of vocationalism (1985). In addition, the relationship between family background and school performance is assessed, providing some support for segmentation within the school based on fathers' job status. The value of education in the home is identified as the overriding factor influencing students' school performance. Finally, students' jobs are evaluated with respect to skills and factors motivating them to seek paid work. The next section details the backgrounds of the six key-informants.

The survey questionnaire was administered to Max Cameron students early in the 1994/1995 school year. The sample contains 155 responses. From these responses, six key-informants were selected for interviews. Parents of the six students were interviewed separately in their homes. Additional community members who were interviewed included school staff, a civil servant, union representatives and mill workers.

Case Studies of Key-Informant Students

The six key-informant students were selected to include approximately equal numbers of females and males, high academic achievers and low academic achievers, students with parents of white collar and blue collar status, and parents working at the mill and outside the mill. In Powell River terms, key-informant students represent a broad range of backgrounds. Pseudonyms are used in place of students' real names.

David comes from a 'blue collar' home and his parents have limited formal education. His father quit school at Grade 8 and has worked for the MacMillan Bloedel pulp and paper mill as a saw filer for 21 years. His mother completed secondary school and works at the local Bingo Hall as a caller. He has two older brothers, one a pipe fitter who works for the municipality and the other a paper worker at the mill. David is a 'C+' student whose school program is dominated by vocational non-academic courses. These include Communications 12, Metalwork 11 and 12, Mechanics 12 and Physical Education

12. For a part-time job, David delivers pizzas approximately 30 hours per week. He works night shifts, often until 1:00 a.m. David appeared sleepy during the interview, commenting that he is often tired during school due to the late hours he works. David intends to upgrade at Max Cameron. His long-term expectations are vague but are oriented towards earning a trades ticket.

Shawn comes from a 'blue collar' home and like David, his parents have limited formal education. Shawn's father quit school at Grade 10. Shawn's family has a long history in Powell River and at the MacMillan Bloedel mill. He listed seven family members who currently work for the mill, including his father who has worked there as a saw filer for 27 years. His mother completed Grade 12 and is currently working in a bakery. Shawn is an adopted child, originally born to Cree parents. He is the only key-informant and one of the few students in the school who is not Caucasian. Shawn is a 'C+' student and most of his courses are non-academic in nature. These include Communications 12, Metalwork 12, Woodwork 12, Computer Studies 11 and Math 11. He hopes to be trained as an auto-mechanic after working for a year.

Sarah comes from a 'blue collar' family and her parents also have limited formal education. Her father, a shingle sawyer, quit school in Grade 10, but has subsequently received his Grade 12 certificate. Her mother is a flag person and also quit school before graduating. Sarah's older brother has already completed Grade 12 and is currently upgrading at Max Cameron Secondary School. Sarah has a 'C' average. Her courses are mainly non-academic and vocational in emphasis and include English 12, Math 10, Construction 12, Drafting 11, Accounting 11, Band 12 and Computer Studies 11. Sarah works 35 to 40 hours a week during the school year, the equivalent of a full-time job. She hopes to become a custom carpenter and to own her own business.

Marcus comes from a 'white collar' family and both parents received university educations. His father is a health care specialist and his mother is a therapist for victims of sexual abuse. Marcus has two older sisters who have both attended university. Marcus is

an 'A' student and is enrolled in several heavy academic courses. His timetable is dominated by academic subjects and includes Enriched English 12, Chemistry 12, Biology 12, Applied Calculus 12, Math 12, Band 12, Pottery 11 and Lab Assistant 11. His expectations are clear. He intends to travel to Israel and work on a kibbutz for one year and then return to Canada for further schooling.

Ann comes from a single parent family. Her mother grew up in Powell River and is a nurse at the hospital. She graduated from high school and received a professional nursing certificate. Her older sister attends university. Ann is enrolled in regular English 12 and is an 'A' student. Like Marcus, she has several heavy science courses including Chemistry 12, Physics 12, Math 12 and Calculus 12. In addition, Ann is taking Band 12 and Geography 12. She is active in extra-curricular sports and holds down two jobs that total 20-30 hours a week. Ann enjoys her jobs, which give her a sense of familiarity and routine in contrast to her school and sports commitments. Ann intends to enter the sciences at university after Grade 12.

Debbie comes from a family who own their own business. Her father is a barber and has a high school education. Her mother now sells Avon products but was a professional accountant in the past. Debbie is a 'C+' student. She is enrolled in several academic subjects. Her courses include English 12, Biology 12, Geology 12, Math 12, French 12, Law 12 and Information Management 11, which is a heavy course load for someone who does not intend to pursue post-secondary education. Debbie explains she has no talent for 'arty subjects' and that she would rather "finish" subjects taken in previous grades rather than start completely new courses. She sees herself working indefinitely as a cashier and ultimately becoming a homemaker in Powell River.

Key-informant interviews exhibit a range of family backgrounds, school performance, interests and skills in relation to the general Powell River population. For the purpose of this thesis, family background is generalized in terms of father's work.

Students whose fathers are blue collar workers are differentiated from students whose fathers are white collar workers.

Selected Characteristics of Max Cameron Students

A review of selected characteristics of Max Cameron students is followed by an interpretation of how these results relate to vocationalism. This thesis considers students who take four or more academic subjects to be enrolled in an academic program. Courses which are academic in nature are tested by a British Columbia provincial exam at the end of Grade 12 and are credited by post-secondary institutions. Examples of Grade 12 academic courses include Physics 12, Calculus 12, English 12, French 12, Biology 12 and Western Civilization 12. Students enrolled in less than four academic subjects are considered to be in a non-academic program. Examples of non-academic courses include Construction 12, Metalwork 12, Band 12 and Mechanics 12. At Max Cameron, slightly more students are enrolled in an academic program than in a non-academic program (Table 4.1).

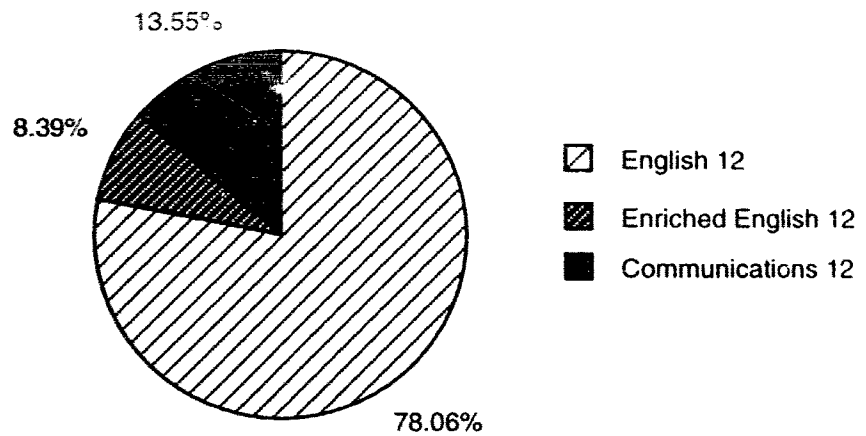
Table 4.1
Max Cameron Students: Proportion of Grade 12 class in
Academic and Non-Academic Programs

Program	Number	Percent
Academic	87	56
Non-academic	68	44

Source: Survey data 1994

Ann, Marcus and Debbie are enrolled in academic programs because their timetables include at least four academic subjects. David, Shawn and Sarah are taking less than four academic subjects. Their timetables are heavily oriented towards vocational courses.

The survey questionnaire was conducted among students enrolled in mandatory English 12 courses. These include Enriched English 12, English 12 and Communications 12. Enriched English 12 is the most advanced and Communications is most basic course among the three. Student enrollment is highest in English 12 (Figure 4.1).



Source: Survey data 1994

**Max Cameron Students: Proportion of Grade 12 Class in Each English Class
Figure 4.1**

Among the six key-informants, only Marcus was enrolled in Enriched English 12. Debbie, Sarah and Ann were taking English 12, and Shawn and David were both in Communications 12.

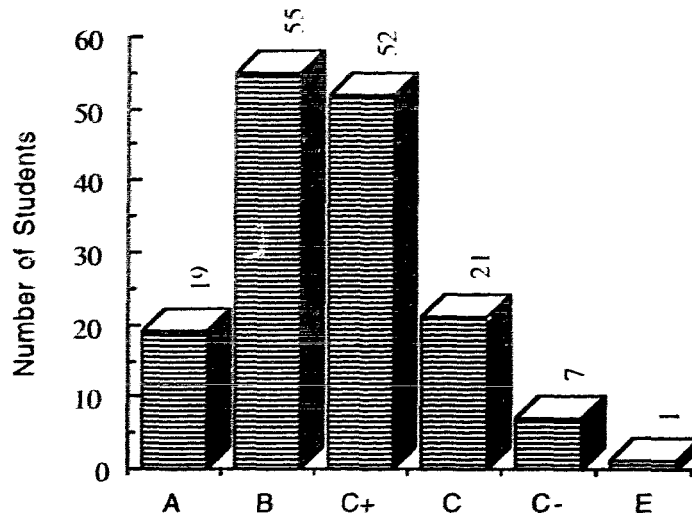
Typically, students' academic achievement is measured by a letter grade. Although grades are not necessarily the most accurate measure of students' abilities, their convenience in ranking gives them primacy over other more qualitative measures. At Max Cameron Secondary School, grades run A, B, C+, C, C-, E with the corresponding percentages seen in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2
Grades at Max Cameron School

Grade	Percentage
A	86-100
B	73-85
C+	67-72
C	60-66
C-	50-59
D	40-49
E	39-1

Source: Max Cameron School administration 1994

The modal distribution of students' grades according to the students is a 'C' when 'C+', 'C' and 'C-' are combined (Figure 4.2).



Source: Survey data 1994

Max Cameron Students: Distribution of Grade 12 Students' Grades
Figure 4.2

For the purpose of this thesis, students who reported an 'A' or 'B' average are considered 'high' achievers. Students who reported less than a 'B' and who have a 'C+', 'C', 'C-' or 'E' average are considered 'low' achievers. Ann and Marcus both are considered high achievers because they have 'A' averages. Debbie, Sarah, David and Shawn are considered low achievers because they have averages of 'C+', 'C', 'C+' and 'C+' respectively.

Max Cameron students cite several motives for selecting courses. Personal interest, career preparation and educational requirements for after graduation are cited by most students as motivating factors (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3
Max Cameron Students: Reasons for Choosing Courses

Factor	Number	Percent
Personal interest	125	81
Career preparation	108	70
Educational requirement	90	60
Perceived easiness	21	14

Source: Survey data 1994

It is difficult to relate most of the above factors either to a 'distant' or 'immediate' logic of the labour market, because each factor can be interpreted differently by students. 'Personal interest' in a course is cited most commonly and implies personal commitment to a subject, regardless of its pay-backs in the labour market. 'Career preparation' did not specify whether the student planned immediate entry into the labour market or distant entry. Therefore it is difficult to classify 'career preparation' as either a 'distant' or 'immediate' motivating factor under Gaskell's (1985) vocational model. The selection of courses based on 'educational requirements' clearly corresponds to Gaskell's (1985) 'distant logic' because its benefits in the labour market are realized over the long-term. 'Perceived easiness' is rated by few students as a motivating factor and is perhaps the clearest example of an 'immediately' gratifying reason to take a course, although even this factor's vocational orientation is slightly ambiguous.

Vocationalism at Max Cameron

The selected characteristics of Max Cameron students give some support to the existence of differentiation within the school. Differentiation within schools is a commonly identified theme in the literature (Willis 1977; Gaskell 1985; Livingstone 1985; Ashton 1988; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). Differentiation occurs between students pursuing a 'distant' logic and those pursuing an 'immediate' logic (Gaskell 1985; Ashton 1988). According to the vocational model, students use school as a means to gain a 'leg

up' in the labour market. Students following a 'distant' logic use their courses, grades and skills as credentials for further training, implying that the benefits of schooling are realized over the long-term. According to Gaskell (1985) and Empson-Warner and Krahn (1992), these students are inclined to take academic programs over vocational programs.

Conversely, students following the 'immediate' logic of the labour market use their courses and skills as practical levers into the labour market. These students, according to Gaskell (1985), are more vocationally oriented and less academic in their course selection. A good proxy for the 'immediate' and 'distant' logic is students' enrollment in academic or non-academic programs. Academic students (those taking four or more academic courses) show a greater tendency to plan to attend school in the year following graduation than non-academic students (those taking less than four academic courses) (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4
Max Cameron Students: Secondary School Program and Plans to Attend School After Graduation

Short-term plan	Academic	Non-academic
School	61	27
Work	13	27
$\chi^2=15.285$ $\phi=0.346$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		

Source: Survey data 1994

A greater proportion of non-academic students plan to enter the labour market directly after high school. The relationship between school program and students' short-term plans is statistically significant but weak. A 'distant' logic is implied in the students planning to attend school, whereas an 'immediate' logic is implied among the students planning to work after graduation.

Ann and Marcus are both enrolled in academic programs and both plan to attend university. For Ann, this seems like "the *only* thing to do." She appears to be following a 'distant' logic.

Interviewer: Could you tell me what you plan on doing next September?

Ann: Well, I know I'm going to go to university.

Interviewer: Why did you choose that path?

Ann: It just seems like I don't have any alternatives at the moment. Because obviously I enjoy school, learning. There's only so much you can get out of your high school education. I want to pursue something that I've found interesting. I want to have a degree and a job. For now, that seems like the only thing to do.

In spite of the moderate relationship between students' school programs and short-term plans, there are several examples of students who adhere to both the 'distant' and 'immediate' logic or to neither. After he graduates, David intends to upgrade his high school certificate and to work at the same time. He exhibits both a 'distant' and an 'immediate' logic. Shawn plans to work for a year and then go to school again to get trained. He too is an example of both the 'immediate' and 'distant' logic of the labour market.

Shawn: I plan to take a year off school. I plan to work full-time. Just for a year, then go back to school.

Interviewer: What do you see yourself doing after that year?

Shawn: Probably go to Malaspina College in Nanaimo.

Interviewer: What sort of program do you want to take?

Shawn: Mechanics. I want to get my mechanics certificate, I'd like to get a full-time job in a garage.

Shawn's expectations appear to be well thought out and clear. Debbie, another anomaly, is enrolled in at least four academic subjects but plans to continue working as a cashier indefinitely. Although Debbie is enrolled in an academic program, she has no intention of using her courses to enter a post-secondary program. Different proportions of students in the three English classes have plans to attend school and to work in the short-term (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5
Max Cameron Students: English Course Enrollment and Short-Term Plans

English Course	School	Work
Enriched	12	0
Communications	7	10
Regular	69	30

Source: Survey data 1994

Every single student in the Enriched English class plans to continue their education (see Table 4.5). This course is the most theoretically advanced of the three and seems to attract students who are motivated by a 'distant' logic. Marcus is one example. He plans to travel for a year and then to attend university.

Over half of the sample indicated that they chose courses for their relevance to future school or training requirements. Most of these students were enrolled in an academic program of four or more academic courses (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6
Max Cameron Students: School Program and Choice of Course
Based on School Requirements

School program	Yes	No
Academic	66	21
Non-academic	24	44

$\chi^2=25.797$
 $\phi=0.408$
 $df=1$
 Sig. at 0.05 level
 Source: Survey data 1994

There is a moderate relationship between school program and students' choice of courses based on distant school requirements. There is no relationship between students' school program and course choice based on career entry. A greater proportion of both academic and non-academic students choose courses for their career relevance than do not (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7
Max Cameron Students: School Program and Choice of Course
Based on Career Preparation

School program	Yes	No
Academic	60	48
Non-academic	27	20

$\chi^2=0.048$
 $\phi=0.018$
 $df=1$
 Sig. at 0.05 level
 Source: Survey data 1994

"Career preparation" is ambiguous in its vocational orientation. Several students who indicate that they choose courses for distant school requirements also say they choose courses based on career preparation. Ann is such an example. David indicated that he chooses courses based only on 'personal interest' in the survey questionnaire. During the interview, he cited other reasons.

Interviewer: You are taking two Metals and Mechanics right now.

David: Yeah.

Interviewer: Are you taking those for any particular reason, like are you preparing for some sort of job?

David: Yeah. Like metal. At B.C.I.T. I would probably take pipe fitting or something like my brother did.

"Personal interest" is difficult to relate to vocational logic because it implies both an immediate gratification in the class room and a long-term commitment towards a particular subject. David's personal interest in metalwork has translated into a long-term goal of becoming trained as a pipe fitter.

Students' grades are a prominent factor differentiating high achievers from low achievers at Max Cameron Secondary School. A moderate relationship is found between grades and students' choice of courses based on distant school requirements (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8
Max Cameron Students: Grades and Choice of Course
Based on School Requirements

Grades	Yes	No
(A-B)	56	18
(C-E)	34	47
$X^2=18.037$ $\phi=0.341$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		
Source: Survey data 1994		

The finding lends support to Gaskell's (1985) theory of vocationalism, implying that the students who earn high grades (A-B) are the same students who plan to attend post-secondary school. This finding is a bit tautological since high academic achievers compose the largest portion of applicants who will be accepted into post-secondary programs. The intangible rewards of achieving high grades and being accepted into a post-secondary institution are examples of the 'distant' logic of the labour market "wherein students see schooling as a place where they will have to work hard so that they will do well and be given a piece of paper that says, to them, to employers, to institutes of higher learning, that they have done well" (Gaskell 1985:220). Low achievers showed less tendency to select courses based on preparation for future education.

High academic achievers show a greater tendency to enroll in an academic program than low achievers (Table 4.9). This relationship corresponds to Table 4.8, because students intending to pursue further schooling are required increasingly by post-secondary institutions to have academic prerequisites.

Table 4.9
Max Cameron Students: Grades and School Program

Grades	Academic	Non-academic
(A-B)	57	17
(C+-E)	30	51

$X^2=25.114$
 $\phi=0.403$
 $df=1$
 Sig. at 0.05 level

Source: Survey data 1994

Although there is a moderate relationship between students' grades and school program at Max Cameron, there are several exceptions. Debbie is one. She is taking five academic courses and is also a low academic achiever, with a 'C+' average.

In a Vancouver study of secondary school students, Gaskell (1985) found that low achievers tend to dominate vocational programs. Gaskell expresses concern for this trend because vocational programs are deemed to be inferior to academic programs by the school, students and employers. She argues that vocational programs have a reputation for being easier than academic programs and hence attract low achievers. There is evidence at Max Cameron that low achievers are attracted to non-academic programs (Table 4.9). Not all non-academic courses are vocational in nature though.

Course choice based on "career preparation" is ambiguous in its vocational orientation. Career preparation can be interpreted both as a 'distant' and 'immediate' motivating factor. There is a weak relationship between students' grades and the tendency to choose courses based on career preparation (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10
Max Cameron Students: Grades and Choice of Course
Based on Career Preparation

Grades	Yes	No
(A-B)	58	16
(C+E)	50	31
$X^2=5.074$ $\phi=0.181$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		
Source: Survey data 1994		

The results suggest that the association between grades and choice of course based on "career preparation" is very weak but statistically significant. A larger proportion of high achievers choose courses based on career preparation than low achievers. An explanation for this weak relationship may be regarded as consistent with Gaskell's (1985) theory of vocationalism to the extent that career preparation requires some degree of planning and foresight. This implies a more 'distant' than 'immediate' logic of the labour market. The relationship is not surprisingly weak because a large proportion of low achievers choose courses for their application in the labour market directly after high school.

Evidence from the survey questionnaire and interviews supports aspects of vocational theory (Gaskell 1985; Ashton 1988; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). Differentiation between students adhering to 'distant' and 'immediate' logic is apparent in terms of students' short-term plans and in their choice of school program. An important note to make though is that exceptions abound. Key-informant interviews illustrate that multiple and complex motives influencing students' educational choices. Although there are several examples of vocational logic among Max Cameron students, the sample does not fall neatly into a rigid bifurcation of 'distant' versus 'immediate' logic.

Gender and School Performance

Powell River girls show a tendency to outperform boys in terms of school performance (Table 4.11, 4.12, 4.13). Although the relationship between gender and grades is extremely weak, it is statistically significant (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11
Max Cameron Students: Grades and Gender

Grades	Female	Male
(A-B)	44	30
(C+E)	33	48
$\chi^2=5.42$ $\phi=0.187$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		
Source: Survey data 1994		

A larger proportion of Max Cameron girls achieve high grades than do boys (Table 4.11). Among the key-informants, Ann and Marcus are the only high achievers. David, Shawn, Sarah and Debbie have grades in the modal 'C' range. A lower proportion of girls are enrolled in the basic Communication 12 class than boys and a slightly higher proportion are enrolled in the advanced Enriched English 12 class than boys (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12
Max Cameron Students: Enrollment in English Course and Gender

English course	Female	Male
Enriched English 12	8	5
Communications 12	5	16
$\chi^2=4.84$ $\phi=0.378$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		
Source: Survey data 1994		

There is a moderate relationship between English course enrollment and gender at Max Cameron School. Boys in the Communications 12 course outnumber girls three to one (Table 4.12). Both Shawn and David are enrolled in Communications.

Shawn: *I can't take English 12 because it's really hard, so I had to take Communications 12.*

Max Cameron girls are more likely to enroll in an academic program of four or more academic courses than boys although the relationship between gender and school program is extremely weak (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13
Max Cameron Students: School Program and Gender

Program	Female	Male
Academic	50	37
Non-academic	27	41
$X^2=4.813$ $\phi=0.176$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		
Source: Survey data 1994		

Ann, Debbie and Marcus are enrolled in academic programs. In addition to the segmentation of course enrollment through students' grades, these results suggest that academic achievement and course enrollment are somewhat gendered in character.

Role of Family in School Performance

Family socioeconomic status is cited in the literature as the single most important factor influencing youth's educational experiences, career aspirations and eventual labour market position (Willis 1977; Livingstone 1985; Mason 1985; Peck 1989a; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992; Marshall and Tucker 1992). "Socioeconomic status does play a part: young people with higher status parents were more likely to have completed an academic high school program which in turn, led to higher occupational aspirations" (Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). Socialization within the family contributes to a certain degree of reproduction of values in the home and in conjunction with formal education, it is also argued that socialization within the family contributes to the formation of youth's labour market expectations (Peck 1989a; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). "The family exerts an important influence upon labour market activity ... and plays a key role in the social conditioning and education of the young" (Peck 1989a:129).

Although family appears to have some affect on students' school performance and labour market expectations, family is not the *determinant* at Max Cameron school. The

variability of students' school performance at Max Cameron demonstrates that family is but one of several factors shaping students' school performance. Among several aspects of family background explored in the survey questionnaire, fathers' job status appeared to show the strongest links with students' school performance. Max Cameron students whose fathers are blue collar workers have a greater tendency to be low achievers (C+-E) in school than students whose fathers are white collar workers. The latter group have a greater tendency to be high achievers (A-B) in school (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14
Max Cameron Students: Grades and Fathers' Job Status

Grades	White collar	Blue collar
(A-B)	27	38
(C+-E)	14	57
$X^2=7.672$ $\phi=0.238$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		
Source: Survey data 1994		

The survey results (Table 4.14) indicate that although a statistically significant relationship exists between father's job status and student grades, there are several students whose level of academic achievement do not conform to this relationship. However, enrollment in the basic Communications 12 course is dominated by students whose fathers are blue collar workers (82 percent). Enrollment in the advanced Enriched English 12 course is evenly distributed between students whose fathers were blue and white collar workers. The results suggest that students' school performance is at least to some degree linked with family socioeconomic status. The survey lends modest support to the role of class (Livingstone 1985), but also even more strongly supports the role of individual factors in school performance (Peters 1987). Evidence from key-informant interviews show that the value placed on education in the home plays a key role in students' school performance.

Value of Education in Home

The head counsellor believes that the most important factor in a students' school performance is the value placed on education within the home. She sees this as more influential than family socioeconomic status in determining youth's school performance.

Interviewer: Do you see class differences in school performance? Working class parents versus parents who are better educated?

Counsellor: I don't think so. I don't think you can generalize about the students. I think part of it depends on how education is viewed in the home. If education is viewed as valuable, there is more pressure then put on the child to perform and to have some aspirations.

The counsellor suggests that many parents who did not succeed in school now want their children to succeed. This evidence undermines the crude class argument made by Livingstone (1987) and supports the notion that class is less important in Canada than in the UK (Ashton 1988). Of the three key-informant fathers who are blue collar workers, none have completed high school as youth. In Sarah's case, neither parent graduated from high school. In spite of this, each of these parents express strong sentiments in regards to their children completing school. The opinions of David's father, who dropped out at Grade 8, are indicative of this pattern.

Interviewer: What if your son ever expressed a desire to leave school, what would you say?

David's father: Well, I told him he would have to move out. My oldest boy was chummin' around with a young guy. And I heard through the grape vine that his friend was going to quit school. I said,

"I heard your friend is going to quit school." He says,

"Is that right, Dad?" and I said,

"Yeah." But I said,

"If you got any notion of quitting, you get your bags packed the day you quit." I said the same thing to Jacob. I even said the same thing to David, didn't I?

David's mother: Uh-huh. We try and tell them to stay in school.

The parents of David, Shawn and Sarah attest to the fact that when they entered the labour market, a high school diploma was unnecessary. Now, they see a high school education as essential to their children's success. Neither of Sarah's parents completed high school, but they place a high value on having a high school education today.

Interviewer: How important is school now for kids?

Sarah's mother: Oh, I think it's really important now! I don't think it was when we went to school as much as it is now.

Sarah's father: *There was a lot more manual jobs that people could do, that didn't take a lot of education, just talent in one way or another. Like I've done everything from working in a kitchen hospital, driving a truck, mechanics helper, cook, I've done so many things.*

You don't need all that stuff (skills) for those kind of jobs. But if the kids want to focus on a job that is needing skills, then they're going to have to go to school.

Sarah's parents encourage her in school. She knows that an education is important in the contemporary labour market, even for the most manual jobs.

Sarah: *They encourage me quite a bit. They really, really want me to finish high school. They know that now, in this world today, it's really hard to do anything without a Grade 12 education. You can't even get a trimmer's job up in the bush unless you at least have Grade 11. You have to be educated.*

They don't push me. They encourage me, they help a lot. When I have a hard time with my homework, they'll help me as much as they can, or they'll get me a tutor who knows how to.

In Powell River, parents from blue collar backgrounds emphasize the importance of staying in school. White collar parents implicitly assume that their kids will stay in school. Key-informant students from blue collar families stated that their parents are vigilant over their performance in school.

Interviewer: *How do your parents feel about your school work? Do they encourage you to do well or are they pretty 'hands off'?*

David: *Oh, my mom's always on my back.*

Interviewer: *Is she?*

David: *Oh, big time. She always like, "Get your homework done, get your homework done!" She wants me to do well in everything.*

Interviewer: *Are your parents concerned about how you do in school?*

Shawn: *Oh! Very concerned. Every time I come home with like a 'C' or something like that, they're like, "Get that mark up, or get it (the course) out," so I end up dropping it (the course), cuz I can't keep my marks up.*

Shawn's account of his mother forcing him to drop difficult courses in order to obtain 'good' marks indicates the importance placed on doing well in school, even in homes where at least one parent did not graduate.

Max Cameron students showed varying degrees of orientation towards academic and vocational streams. Approximately equal proportions were enrolled in academic and vocational programs, accounting for 56 percent and 44 percent of the sample respectively (Table 4.7). Several key-informant students conformed to Gaskell's bifurcated model, with David, Shawn and Sarah definitely following a more vocational route than the other

three key-informants. All three students are enrolled in shops courses like Mechanics 12, Metal 11 and 12, Construction 12, Drafting 11 and Accounting 11. David, Shawn and Sarah express enthusiasm and respect for the skills they learn in their vocational courses. Sarah in particular has developed a mentor/protegee relationship with a retired teacher who comes to class expressly to guide her.

Sarah: There's a lot of things that I learned from Mr. John. He's my mentor. He helps me a lot and he shows me a lot of things. He even brings his own personal tools in for me to use because we don't have them at the shop. He shows me how to use them, he teaches me new skills that I wouldn't learn in a regular shop class.

Interviewer: Right. Has he chosen you as his favorite student?

Sarah: I think so. Because I like doing the same things he's doing. He's not into mass production like most of the guys in my class. He's into slowly building, shaping the wood the way he wants. Making it just so ! And that's what I like to do. Making it just so ! The way that I like it. And it's nobody else's idea and nobody else can change my mind on the way that I like it either.

Each of the students who are taking shops classes have fathers who are blue collar workers, providing some evidence for class inheritance.

The parents of Marcus, Ann and Debbie are white collar workers. These three key-informants have heavy academic course loads. According to Gaskell's (1985) theory of vocationalism, students who take predominantly academic courses follow the more 'distant' logic of the labour market. The theoretical skills they learn in class relate to post-secondary requirements and are distantly related to labour market demand. In spite of this trend, even the more academically-inclined key-informants expressed greater respect for practical skills over abstract skills.

Debbie is an example of a student who does not conform to either the distant or the immediate logic of the labour market. She is taking four academic courses, and thus, in this thesis, she is classified as an 'academic' student, but she is also taking Information Management 11 which is a vocational course. Debbie's course load is weighted with heavy academic courses like Math 12, French 12, English 12 and Biology 12. However, Debbie plans to continue her job as a cashier after graduation, and does not see herself attending post-secondary school. These findings show that rigid classification of students'

motivation into the 'immediate' and 'distant' categories of labour market logic is not possible at Max Cameron. Some students, like Debbie, show aspects of both.

The Value of Skills

Max Cameron students indicate which skills they offer employers (Table 4.15).

"Serving the public" is cited well above the next highest category of "computer skills."

Table 4.15
Max Cameron Students: Skills They Offer Employers

Skills	Number	Percent
Serving the public	103	67
Computer skills	75	49
Writing	67	44
Typing	62	40
Public speaking	62	40
Manual skills	50	33
Accounting	33	22
Other	26	17

Source: Survey data 1994

"Serving the public" is at the forefront of students' minds when they conceptualize relevant labour market skills they possess. This finding supports the argument made by Hamilton and Powers (1990) that their involvement in paid work should be considered as an important supply factor shaping youth's labour market expectations. In Powell River, most youth who work are exposed to the labour market through the service sector. Seventy five percent of the students who have jobs work in the service sector (Survey data 1994). Perhaps this explains why "serving the public" is the most commonly cited as a relevant labour market skill among Max Cameron Grade 12 students (Table 4.15).

Max Cameron girls are more likely than boys to cite "serving the public" as a skill that they offer employers (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16
Max Cameron Students: Gender and Citing "Serving the Public" as Skill

Gender	Yes	No
Female	59	18
Male	44	32

$\chi^2=6.098$
 $\phi=0.200$
 $df=1$
 Sig. at 0.05 level

Source: Survey data 1994

A greater proportion of Max Cameron girls work in the food service sector than do boys (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17
Max Cameron Students: Gender and Work in Food Service

Gender	Yes	No
Female	30	26
Male	12	36

$\chi^2=8.764$
 $\phi=0.290$
 $df=1$
 Sig. at 0.05 level

Source: Survey data 1994

This finding corresponds with female over-representation in the North American service sector (Christopherson 1989). Christopherson argues that females dominate the North American service sector which requires workers who are numerically and financially flexible, translating into minimum job security, part-time work and low wages. Debbie is convinced that the reason why females dominate service sector jobs which require computer skills or interaction with the public is because females have more "brains" than males.

Debbie: If you're going to work in a store, I think they prefer girls, because they think we're quicker or smarter. Because usually when you walk into a grocery store, you see the guys, and they do the garbage and sweep the floor, you know, they pack up the groceries and do all the labour stuff. But we seem to stick to the stuff that takes brains.

Max Cameron students indicate that they had learned skills mainly in school, home and work, in that order of preference (Table 4.18).

Table 4.18
Max Cameron Students: Where They Learn Skills

Place	Number	Percent
School	130	84
Home	108	70
Work	102	66
Other	22	14

Source: Survey data 1994

Although school ranked highest (Table 4.18) among places to learn skills, "serving the public" is not taught in school. Interviews with key-informants imply that Max Cameron students tend to dissociate theoretical skills, like critical thinking, literacy and numeracy from skills needed in the labour market. Levin (1985) writes that after graduation, "students tend to wish that the emphasis at school had been more practical" than abstract. When reflecting on the practical aspects of school, key-informants emphasized courses which had taught them 'life skills.' 'Life skills' are valued for their relevance in everyday life, not for distant rewards in the future. Debbie for instance, is enrolled in an academic program but implies that her most valuable skills learned at school were in her Home Economics class the previous year.

Debbie: I think the Home Ec. courses are good. The foods and the sewing and the family management classes are useful because it teaches you more about life. And you know, it's not just the usual Math, English, and those kinds of subjects.

Shawn says his part-time job has taught him more than school has in terms of giving him useful skills in the the labour market.

Interviewer: Do you think the school does a good job for preparing you for work afterwards?

Shawn: Not really.

Interviewer: Why not?

Shawn: I don't know. I'm working now, so I notice it's totally different from school. It doesn't help you at all. Well, it does in Communications.

Communications 12 teaches you how to do resumes, so that helps. That's about the only thing that helps in that course.

David identified skills he has learned in shops class as being the most useful.

Interviewer: What sort of skills have you developed at school for life after school?

David: How to take a carburetor out and clean it. Mechanics. How to use the machines up in the shop.

Interviewer: Have you found Communications useful at all?

David: Yeah. If you're writing out something to somebody's whose deaf. But all that punctuation...I don't see why we need that.

Students undervalue the ability to speak with good diction and grammar, which is essential to any job interview and to any job which involves communication. Similarly, Marcus comments on the lack of life skills he has learned in school, even though he is enrolled in five academic subjects and is achieving 'A's in all of them.

Interviewer: Do you think the school does a good job at giving you skills for after high school?

Marcus: It gives me useful skills for going into college. I don't think it gives you useful skills, if for instance, all of a sudden I got put out and I had to live on my own and support myself. I don't think it's really prepared me for that at all. It's more trivial than practical.

These comments imply that Max Cameron students value practical skills over abstract skills. Abstract theoretical skills like language and grammar are integral to the formation of practical skills, such the ability to interact with the public. They are not separate. This point was overlooked by most key-informant students, who were critical of the relevance of school to life in general. Parents were also critical of the school in this respect.

Most parents of key-informant students criticize the school in some way. Parents feel that although their children are going to graduate, they will not leave school with adequate skills. This point is raised by both David's father and Marcus' mother, two parents with vastly different levels of education and training. David's father feels that keeping kids in school who are not interested in learning is a waste of time.

Interviewer: Do you think the school prepares kids for life after high school?

David's father: Sure the school has prepared a lot of people to get out and whatever. But then I think that there's a lot of kids that stay in school that shouldn't be there. In the 60s, if you were so-so in school, you didn't really like school, you quit and got a job.

But now they're keeping a lot of kids in school and when they've finished their Grade 12, they can't even spell their own name. You know what I mean? A lot of them can't even read properly.

Marcus' mother expressed a similar criticism. She feels that although students 'put in time' in class, they are not learning the necessary skills for post-secondary education.

Parent: There's some excellent math and science teachers and luckily my kids were interested in math and science. But there's some other areas where I really think they fall short and where we've really ripped our kids off.

Interviewer: What areas?

Parent: I think all the language arts and socials and the way the French program is taught. They don't really do anything like immersion. For years, my kids have had the most hideously boring socials teachers. Often English hasn't been as

stimulating as it could be. Both of our daughters, straight As, honours. Neither of them could write. My oldest really didn't have the skills.

Importance of Goals

Chapter Three explored from a historical perspective, the transition of Powell River from a mill town to a more diversified economy. This transition was precipitated by layoffs at the MacMillan Bloedel mill in the early 1980s, which caught a group of youth now called the "lost generation" off guard. These were the youth who had hoped to work in the mill but lacked alternative goals. This group was conspicuous in Powell River. Many key-informants feel that goals are necessary in giving youth direction, something the "lost generation" lacked. Shawn's father and a union representative commented that many local youth lack goals.

Shawn's father: *There's a lot of kids that have graduated in the last few years and are still wandering around, wondering what they should be doing.*

Interviewer: *Sticking around Powell River?*

Shawn's father: *Sticking around town and taking on these low paying jobs just to put spending money in their pockets, but they really don't know what they want to do.*

President Local 1: *When I left school it was very odd to see someone in their 20s at home with their parents. You were gone by the time you were 20, 21. Now you see kids who are 24, 25, at home with their parents because they haven't got work or a good job.*

Shawn's and Sarah's parents feel that in order to prevent a similar "lost generation" from developing in the 1990s, the school needs to coach students more on formulating career goals. They feel that more quizzing and pushing would help their children decide what they want to do. Both parents are concerned.

Interviewer: *What sort of job do you think the school does for preparing kids for life after school?*

Shawn's mother: *Not very good. I don't feel that they counsel them very much. Or don't really seem to. But some kids need a little more push than others as far as preparing for the future.*

Sarah's father: *The school should quiz them more and let them express what they want to do and then put it into action more as a group.*

These parents feel that without a career goal, young people are at risk of becoming trapped in Powell River just like the "lost generation." In contrast, Debbie's mother feels that

'keeping the doors open' is more crucial than setting long-term career goals. She says the school pressures students *too much* in the setting of goals.

Debbie's mother: I think there's a lot of push from the educators for them to make up their minds what they're going to do quickly and it's stressful for them. You know, they can't do that! They're putting a lot of pressure on them and it's wasted because they just don't know what they want to do.

Interviewer: So they don't really need to know at this point?

Debbie's mother: I don't think they do, as long as they keep their doors open.

Clearly, there is no consensus among parents regarding the degree of pushing or quizzing students require for career goal development. Opinion on the school's ability to prepare students for life after school only highlights the variability of values in students' homes.

Student Jobs

In a study of working class female students, Hamilton and Powers (1990) found that paid employment had a dramatic effect on the ways in which youth conceptualize the labour market. Paid work during the school year is a prevalent feature among Max Cameron students. This section explores several aspects of students' jobs, including factors which motivate them to work, the value they place on work skills and the relationship between youth jobs and school.

The majority of Max Cameron Grade 12 students have jobs or are in the process of looking for one (Table 4.19). Only a small minority of students do not have a job and are not looking for a job.

Table 4.19
Max Cameron Students: Job Status

Job status	Number	Percent
Have job	104	68
Do not have job	30	19
Looking for job	20	13

Source: Survey data 1994

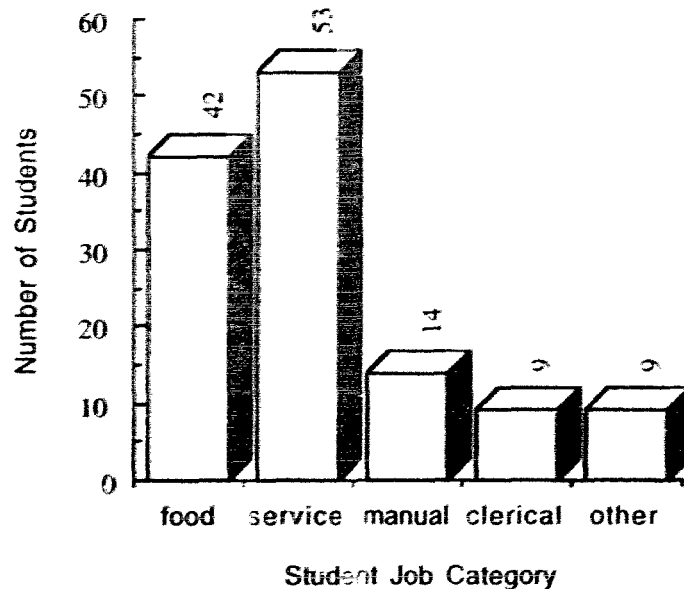
Approximately one third of the students who are working currently hold more than one job. While attending school full-time, students are spending an extraordinarily large amount of time working (Table 4.20).

Table 4.20
Max Cameron Students: Number of Hours Per Week Spent Working

Hours/week	Number	Percent
1-10	20	20
11-20	42	43
21-30	26	27
31-40	7	7
41-50	3	3

Source: Survey data 1994

The modal number of hours worked is 11 - 20 per week. It is astonishing to find that 10 percent of those students who have jobs are working the equivalent of *full-time jobs*, or over 30 hours per week. David and Sarah both fall into this category. David delivers pizzas during nights and on weekends. He works 30 hours a week, sometimes until 1:00 a.m. David appeared to be tired during the interview. Sarah works between 35 and 40 hours a week in the evenings as a waitress. Most working students work variable hours, during weekends and evenings. Students' jobs are broken down into categories, with food service in restaurants distinguished from other services (Figure 4.3).



Source: Survey data 1994

Max Cameron Students: Job Categories
Figure 4.3

A high proportion of students who have jobs work in restaurants, indicating the recent influx of fast food outlets to the locality. The youth labour market is consistently portrayed in the literature as a dismal ghetto for students where they are exploited by employers, paid minimum wage, experience high turnover and learn few or no useful skills (see Gaskell 1985; Hamilton and Powers 1990; Steitz and Owen 1992). Student opinions at Max Cameron indicate otherwise. Students who work are, in general, extremely positive about their jobs. Not only do they enjoy their earnings, but most working students indicated some intrinsic reward in working.

Motivation to work

Students who work or are looking for work cite many reasons for doing so. Not surprisingly, the single most common factor motivating students to work in Powell River is the desire to earn money (Table 4.21).

Table 4.21
Max Cameron Students: Reasons for Working

Reason	Number	Percent
I need the money	106	95
Good experience for future work	76	68
Something to put on my resume	46	41
Fun atmosphere at work	31	28
Family expectations	24	22
Excuse to get out of home	12	11
Many of my friends have jobs	11	10

Source: Survey data 1994

Materialism appeared to be a large factor in motivating students to work. Other non-material factors such as experience, resumes, and a fun atmosphere at work also figured prominently among students' reasons for working. There is consensus in the literature that money is the largest motivating factor prompting youth to seek work (Gaskell 1985; Peters 1987; Ashton 1988; Stern et al. 1990). Luxury spending accounts for a large portion of students' earnings. "Students' motivation to seek part-time work is based on high consumption patterns and the centrality of money to the youth culture found in North America. Students have to work to maintain their lifestyle" (Ashton 1988:10). Key-informants spoke freely about the role of money in their decision to work.

Interviewer: *Why do you work?*

David: *Why? Money.*

Interviewer: *What do you need it for? Luxury things or are you helping your parents out with money?*

David: *Luxury. Myself. My own money. Pocket money. Things like, fixing my car. i need a new motor. My Mustang!*

Sarah says she works in order to offset the financial burden on her parents.

Interviewer: *Why do you work right now?*

Sarah: *Because my parents don't have a lot of money. I buy all my own clothes, I pay for all my own student fees, I pay for my wood in the shop, I buy my own shoes.*

Interviewer: *So it's basically to supplement their income?*

Sarah: *Yeah, because they can't supply me with them. They used to when I was little and it was really hard for them.*

The bleak portrayal of the youth labour market in the literature suggests that work offers youth little satisfaction other than a pay check (Gaskell 1985; Peters 1987). "Wages are low and most pay the minimum wage. The jobs offer little or no chance for advancement and are filled by an almost exclusively teenage labour force, among whom the turnover is high" (Gaskell 1985:215). Findings at Max Cameron show that many students find a great deal of satisfaction in their work, outside of the pay check. Shawn enjoys his job because of its social atmosphere.

Shawn: *I do kind of need the money but I like it there too. It's good to work there.*

Interviewer: *So there's a good atmosphere?*

Shawn: *Yeah. Everybody's so nice down there! It almost makes you sick.*

Ann is an example of another student who finds non-monetary value in her job. She has two jobs totaling 20 hours per week. She works as an attendant at a fitness club and as a cleaner at a hotel. Ann is an 'A' student and is extremely active in extra curricular sports. She describes work as an escape from these activities.

Ann: *Working gives me a sense of familiarity, to always have a place where the same thing is happening all the time. I know it's good to be able to do that. If things are going bad, you know you can always go to work and think, "at least this is the same anyway."*

Interviewer: *That's interesting that you think of work as a haven or an escape...an escape from what?*

Ann: *I don't know. There are a lot of pressures on me. I've got lots of stuff going on in my life. And work, it's like you go there, you do your thing and once your gone, that's it. You don't have a lot of baggage.*

Independence is cited in key-informant interviews as another prominent factor motivating students to work. This finding is supported in the literature. "Students do find value in the jobs they perform. The primary value is the money that they earn. But a secondary value is the independence that they experience at work, even at McDonald's" (Gaskell 1985:215). David is the only key-informant who is not thrilled about his job.

David: It sucks!

Interviewer: Why?

David: Oh, it's not a real good job. It's something to earn money.

Peters (1987) found that youth employment provides students with an element of freedom and independence found neither in the school nor the household. This feeling of freedom is illustrated by Ann's 'escape' at work.

Youth jobs and skills

In addition to money and independence, evidence from the survey questionnaire suggests that jobs are viewed by students as important places to widen their skills. Over half of the sample indicated that work was a place where they had learned relevant labour market skills (Table 4.18). These opinions run counter to the literature in its portrayal of skills in the youth labour market. "The kinds of jobs available to youth often have nothing new to teach after the first few months of initiation" (Hamilton and Powers 1990:259). In spite of this negative portrayal, key-informants who work maintain that jobs help to teach youth valuable skills, like the ability to communicate. Debbie works 20 hours a week as a cashier at a supermarket. She is very enthusiastic about her job where she feels she has learned to communicate.

Interviewer: Can you say that you've learned stuff at work?

Debbie: Yeah. I've learned to communicate better.

Debbie's mother concurs, commenting that work has changed Debbie from a shy to an outgoing person.

Debbie's mother: She loves to work! She used to be the most timid little mousy wallflower kid, didn't she?

Debbie's father: Uh-huh.

Debbie's mother: She wouldn't sit and talk to anybody. If we had people in, she would go to her room. She'd be afraid of people. Working with the public has

brought her right out. She's very outgoing now. She's much better than she was a year or two ago. And working with the public has done that for her.

David's mother and the school employment counsellor refer to David's past behavioral problems at school. David's mother feels that having a job has helped David learn how to interact with adults in a constructive manner. The ability to interact with people is a valuable life skill, and is one positive aspect of youth jobs identified by Peters (1987). "In addition to providing vocational experience, (work) enables the young to deal with people other than family and peers" (Peters 1987:465). Key-informant parents in Powell River also felt that working was good for their children because it instilled a sense of financial responsibility by forcing them to handle their own money. Some parents expressed a slight concern as to whether their children's jobs interfered with their school work.

Jobs and school work

All parents whose children work remarked that they wonder whether these jobs cut into school work. Two parents felt that their children's jobs did not appear at least to cut into their school work, but indicated that the number of hours their children worked was a matter of concern. The mothers of Shawn and David both considered that their sons' jobs were acceptable so long as they were not given any additional hours.

Interviewer: How do you feel about David having a job during high school?

David's mother: As long as it don't interfere with his school, that's fine. If I hear from the school that he's not doing his work, that's finished. He's not to work. But he seems to be doing o.k. in school. I'm going to have to check in the next week or so.

Interviewer: And how do you feel about Shawn working during going to school?

Shawn's mother: It's fine, because he's not been getting very many hours. Not as many hours as he'd like to get.

David confesses that he has trouble finding time to do homework due to his busy work schedule, a glitch which he has unlikely discussed with his mother. He does however maintain a personal policy of *attempting* to come to school. He says that he can finish most of his homework in his shops classes.

Interviewer: *You work 30 hours a week delivering pizza. Does that cut into your school work at all?*

David: *Yeah. Sometimes I don't get my work done, but I do attempt to come to school, like Metalwork, I'll do it in Metalwork. It's just English I have homework this semester.*

Interviewer: *Do you find school demanding at all, time wise?*

David: *Na, not really.*

Although David maintains that he does not find school demanding, he is a low achiever with a 'C+' average. Sarah works 35 to 40 hours a week at a restaurant during the school year, the equivalent of a full-time job. When asked whether this cuts into her school work, she replies, "No! I still get a 'C' average. I've always gotten a 'C' average, even if I didn't have a job. I've just never been really good at school." Stern et al. (1990) found that the more hours a student worked during a week, the lower the mark achievement at school. Although limited, survey evidence indicates that at Max Cameron, there is no relationship between the number of hours a student works and his or her academic achievement.

Marcus is the only key-informant who does not have a job. He is involved in extracurricular sports, community activism and plays in a band. He spoke frankly about his reasons for not seeking a job.

Marcus: *It's just not one of my priorities. I figure after I've finished all that I need to do, I'll work. Once I'm working and stuff, I'm not going to have as much time to play volley ball and soccer and be on student council and all that kind of stuff. So I think I should take advantage of what I have right now. And I don't really need money.*

Students' experiences with work vary. Some students, like Marcus, are not interested in the aspects of independence and freedom many youth find in their jobs, possibly because they already experience independence without a job. Students without jobs and who are not looking for jobs are a minority, accounting for only 19 percent of the sample. Though limited in scope, the survey indicates that the prevalence of paid work among youth appears to impact their ideas about skills and the way the labour market operates. For these reasons, students' experience with paid work presents an important supply-side factor in the formation of labour market expectations.

Summary

Evidence from the survey questionnaire and interviews points to an overall variability among students' course selection and grades. Aspects of Gaskell's theory of vocationalism (1985) are evident at Max Cameron, but rigid classifications cannot be made in terms of relationships between family background and school performance. The patterns which emerge suggest a certain degree of class inheritance, supporting Peck's notion of socialization within the family (1989a). The overall variability of the results highlights the fact that youth are not "monolithic." That is, this research supports the view that, "Any research on youth and employment must recognize that adolescents are not monolithic. They vary in education, experience, social awareness, effectiveness in interpersonal relations, self-identity, as well as social background and job expectations" (Peters 1987:466).

Aspects of vocationalism are evident among Max Cameron students. Survey questionnaire and interview evidence suggests that while some students adhere to a 'distant' logic of the labour market, others adhere to a more 'immediate' logic. Vocationalism is illustrated through students' short-term plans, school program, course enrollment and grades. Relationships between these variables suggest that high achievers are likely to enroll in an academic program and to pursue a 'distant' logic. In this sense, they plan to pursue further schooling after graduation, as is the case with Ann and Marcus. Low achievers are more likely to enroll in a non-academic program and to pursue a more 'immediate' logic of the labour market. Sarah, Shawn and David follow this pattern. Debbie is the anomaly among the six key-informants in this respect. She is enrolled in an academic program but she is a low achiever with a 'C+' average and she plans to continue working as a cashier after graduation.

Students' school performance shows a relationship with fathers' job status, supporting Peck's theory of socialization within the home (1989a). More importantly, students' school performance and course choices demonstrate that a wide variety of

variables, including class, interact to form individual outcomes. The value placed on education within the home has considerable influence in students' performance and expectations. Parents place an extremely high value on education, irrespective of their socioeconomic background or level of education. Blue collar parents see education as essential to their children's labour market success. Interviews with blue collar parents show a dramatic change from Fordism, when a high school education was deemed unnecessary for jobs.

The majority of Max Cameron Grade 12 students work in part-time jobs. Work is seen as a way to earn money and to gain independence, but also represents an opportunity to learn new skills and to escape from the pressures of school and family. Most students indicated on the survey questionnaire that school was a place where they had learned skills relevant to the labour market. Upon reflection, key-informants tended to emphasize the value of practical skills over theoretical skills, thus down playing the school's role in preparing them for life after graduation. Overall, these findings suggest that family, school and work play key roles in shaping students' expectations. These spheres of social interaction provide openings for individual outcomes which do not necessarily adhere to a rigid model of pre-labour market segmentation.

CHAPTER 5

LABOUR MARKET EXPECTATIONS OF YOUTH

Introduction

Max Cameron students show a keen awareness of the changes which have transformed their locality since the Fordist era. Their current expectations reflect aspects of the transition from Fordism to flexibility. This transition is most obviously reflected in the absence of the mill from their labour market expectations. This chapter explores how Max Cameron students conceptualize the changes which have transformed Powell River's labour market, and how they expect it to develop in the future. Students' labour market expectations are assessed from both short and long-term perspectives. Factors motivating students to choose 'school' or 'work' in the short-term are explored, with particular focus on family background. Students' long-term plans reflect a curious mix of class inheritance and individualism, and illustrate the variability inherent to youth shown in Chapter Four. The locational aspect of students' plans is assessed. This provides a window into the peculiar nature of students' expectations in a resource town, where most youth are obligated to leave in order to seek training and education.

This chapter combines evidence from the survey questionnaire and interviews to provide a multi-perspective account of the local opportunity structure in Powell River. Like Chapter Four, simple cross-tabulation tests are used to assess potential relationships between family background and students' expectations (Weinbach and Grinnell 1987). In general, Max Cameron students' labour market expectations vary widely in their degree of formation and adherence to the labour market segmentation model.

Post-Fordism in Powell River

The role of the MacMillan Bloedel pulp and paper mill in the local labour market has diminished both in a functional sense and in the minds of Max Cameron students since the recession of the early 1980s. These changes illustrate the transition of local values in response to changes in the labour market, which itself is in a constant state of becoming.

Massey (1991) draws attention to the inherently dynamic character of localities. The shift from Fordism to flexibility at the mill highlights the differences between three distinct 'generations' of youth in Powell River. Paasi examines generations as mediators of spatial history.

It has been common to put emphasis on class, gender, and other social groupings when outlining new regional geographies. Instead, I will argue for the significance of *generation* as a category which mediates between regions and individual life histories. This is a neglected category which can help us to understand the constitution of certain historically specific social and spatial distinctions (Paasi 1991:240).

The role of generations in mediating local identity is particularly relevant in Powell River where three distinct generations of youth have formed historically specific labour market expectations based on the dominant mode of production. The 'Fordist generation' (1950-1980) tapped into the stable and bountiful source of jobs at the mill. Multiple generations of families followed their parents into the mill, secure in the belief that mill jobs offered good wages and due process of advancement.

The 1980s saw a break from this pattern. The shift from Fordism to flexibility found many local youth without alternative goals. These youth compose the 'lost generation' due to their sense of hopelessness with the elimination of job openings at the mill. The severity and permanence of cutbacks at the mill has forced the 'post-Fordist' generation to shed any realistic notion of future employment at the mill. The 'Fordist generation,' the 'lost generation' and the 'post-Fordist' represent important mediators of local identity and change in Powell River.

Students' Assessment of the Local Labour Market

Max Cameron students assessed the current Powell River labour market (Table 5.1). Their assessment of opportunities for youth is 'average' and symmetrically distributed. Many students who rate the labour market as 'very good,' 'good,' and 'average' qualify their rating with a comment on the limited nature of viable long-term jobs in the locality.

Table 5.1
Max Cameron Students: Rating of Employment Opportunities in Powell River

Rating	Number	Percent
Very Good	3	2
Good	27	17
Average	77	50
Poor	32	21
Very Poor	5	3

Source: Survey data 1994

Approximately equal numbers of students rated employment opportunities as either 'very good, 'good' and 'poor' and 'very poor.' The negative impact of lay offs at the mill seems to have been offset by the influx of fast food chains to the locality. Students' comments reflect a certain degree of resignation towards the new source of jobs. Their perspectives are not particularly favourable.

Survey comment: *The jobs we get are jobs we take only because we have to, not because we enjoy them.*

Survey comment: *Powell River is basically based on the mill, but we are hopefully moving away from it as a main source of employment. A lot of resource based towns are going through the same thing, hopefully we can find alternative job sources.*

Sarah: *If you've graduated, you can stand behind a till all day in a corner store. With all the restaurants in this town, it's really good because all the people that are in school can have after-school jobs. But for people who have graduated who have special skills that they like to use, then this town isn't set for that.*

Debbie rated the job situation as 'good,' but she admits that her labour market experiences may bias her opinion. She says that some of her friends have encountered difficulties where she has not.

Interviewer: *How would you describe Powell River's job opportunities for young people?*

Debbie: *Well, to me, I think it's good. But I've heard from a lot of other people that they think it's horrible. "You can't find anything to work for here." It depends on who you are, I guess, and what you want to do.*

Students rated how they perceive the job situation had changed for youth in the past ten years (Table 5.2)

Table 5.2
Max Cameron Students: Perceptions on Labour Market
Change Over Last Ten Years

Rating	Number	Percent
Improved	58	38
Stayed the same	19	12
Worsened	36	24
Don't know	40	26

Source: Survey data 1994

One third of the sample feels that the job situation has improved, but again, many students qualified a positive rating with a comment on the negative impact of commercial fast food chains on their locality. One quarter feels the situation has worsened.

***Survey comment:** Jobs for youth have been added with the addition of Kentucky Fried Chicken, Robin's Donuts, A&W, etc., recently, but these are not careers, just minimum wage jobs for students. These fast food chains may put family restaurants that have been established for years out of business.*

Marcus is critical of the growth in fast food chains in Powell River. He is suspicious because he feels that mill cutbacks have reduced the spending power of many Powell River residents.

***Marcus:** I think that the job situation has just recently improved, because of the fast food places which make me sick. They're making this whole place into a strip.*

***Interviewer:** Does that concern you, about the future of this community?*

***Marcus:** Ya, I think somebody knows something that nobody else does because they're making more and more cuts to the mill, so you would think that the population would be decreasing and yet we've just got all these new fast food places, which can't run unless they've got a big population.*

These comments show perceptiveness and genuine concern among students for the impact of commercial chains on their community. In general, students regard this growth with suspicion. Even parents seemed divided in their views of the new job opportunities.

***Interviewer:** How have you seen jobs for young people change in Powell River?*

***Shawn's mother:** Well, the last couple of years, it's improved a lot. With all the new stores and restaurants that are just opening up. That's helped the younger ones. And it helps to keep the kids in Powell River for a while longer.*

***Shawn's father:** Ya, but up until 10 years ago, there was always work in Powell River. Because everyone that came out of Max Cameron School was almost guaranteed a job with MacMillan Bloedel.*

The head counsellor pointed out that the influx of new restaurants to the locality does not give youth viable career options.

Head counsellor: *We have Subway, the Doughnut Shop, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and that's o.k. for part-time work, but I don't think there are too many who want to go from slinging chicken part-time to slinging chicken full-time. Some may, and that's great if that's what they want to do. It might mean they want to work here and save money to leave, to go off, to travel.*

Interviewer: *So you're not going to nourish any expectations of getting a full-time job here?*

Head counsellor: *We don't tend to.*

Students indicated how they expected long term employment opportunities to change in Powell River (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3
Max Cameron students: Perception of Long-Term Opportunities in Powell River

Rating	Number	Percent
Improvement	68	45
Stay the same	37	24
Worsen	17	11
Don't know	31	20

Source: Survey data 1994

Many students expect an improvement in the local job situation over the long term (45 percent). Their survey comments reflect a perception that health and tourism present two major areas for potential growth. This is not surprising given the much publicized growth in these industries both within the school and in the locality (Ministry of Regional and Economic Development 1991; Community Futures 1992). They also believe that exurbanization and migration of urbanites to Powell River will contribute to local job growth. Students' survey responses illustrate a general expectation for growth, but that new jobs will not be in the traditional resource sector (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4
Selected Responses to Survey Question: What future changes in long term employment opportunities in Powell River do you anticipate?

Improvement: *More and more services are coming to Powell River.*

Improvement: *It is a growing town and service jobs will increase because a lot of retired people have moved to our peaceful community.*

Improvement: *The town is growing unfortunately at a fast pace. People are moving from the cities up to the north so in the future, employment opportunities will be improved.*

Improvement: *Powell River will grow in many areas; I feel especially in tourism.*

Don't know: Depends if mill continues layoffs.

Worsen: With the decline of the mill, people will and have been laid off. Possibly Powell River will become a home based business town.

Improvement: There are a lot of houses going up, so Powell River is expanding. Fast food places came.

Worsen: I believe too many people for too few jobs.

Improvement/stay the same: With some businesses coming, it may get better, but only for high school kids (franchises).

Stay the same: Community will have to switch from mill jobs (as it down sizes) to jobs in recreation, tourism, etc.

Source: Survey data 1994

The municipality has well-stated plans for growth in tourism and health in particular. Chapter Three explored some of the initiatives currently underway to attract tourists, including revitalization of the waterfront and restoration of heritage buildings in the old town site (Ministry of Regional and Economic Development 1991; Community Futures 1992). The school also promotes the notion of growth in these service industries through educational programs and career counselling, which influence students' expectations. The school actively discourages any expectations of employment in the mill. Reflecting this, not one student cited the mill as a potential source of jobs, not even in the value-added sector of forest product manufacturing. The absence of this factor illustrates the conditioning of students' expectations away from the primary and secondary sectors. Students rated job opportunities for youth at the mill as primarily "poor" or "very poor," which accounts for 63 percent of the sample (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5
Max Cameron Students: Perception of Job Opportunities at Mill for Youth

Rating	Number	Percent
Very good	2	1
Good	5	3
Average	22	14
Poor	58	38
Very poor	38	25
Don't know	27	17

Source: Survey data 1994

A significant number of students simply 'don't know' what the mill has to offer, suggesting that for many (17 percent), the mill is not even considered as a possible source of jobs. The head counsellor believes that students who have family members working at the mill have a more negative perception of job opportunities at the mill than students without family at the mill.

Interviewer: What about kids whose parents work at the mill? Is there a different set of expectations there among those? Are those kids more likely to expect a job here in Powell River?

Head counsellor: I think it's probably the opposite. They know there's nothing here. They see everybody getting cut. I mean, even their dads now, who have been there for 20 years ... they've gotten rid of everybody that they can get rid of and so they know that their jobs are possibly on the line in the next round, whenever that happens to be. So they know that there's no secure job there at all.

The survey results indicate that students who have one or more family members working at the mill are more likely to rate employment opportunities there as 'poor' or 'very poor' than students without family members at the mill (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6
Max Cameron Students: Perception of Job Opportunities at Mill and Having Family Members Who Work at Mill

Family at mill	"very good" to "average"	"poor" to "very poor."
Yes	7	37
No	21	55

$\chi^2 = 4.577$
 $\phi = 0.195$
 $df = 1$
 Sig. at 0.05 level

Source: Survey data 1994

Due to the well-publicized lay-offs and low worker morale at the mill (Hayter and Holmes 1994), students with family at the mill are more aware of the poor job situation at the mill through word of mouth contacts. Although the relationship between perception of jobs at the mill and having family at the mill is statistically significant, the association between these variables is weak (Table 5.6). These results show that only a slightly higher proportion of students without family at the mill are likely to rate opportunities at the mill as 'average,' 'good,' or 'very good.'

David holds a low opinion of job opportunities at the mill even though his father works there as a saw filer.

Interviewer: What are job opportunities for youth like there?

David: Slim. They laid off 130 people last year. So why would they hire more kids?

Shawn, whose father works at the mill, also shows no interest in the mill.

Interviewer: Have you ever hoped to get a job there yourself, at the mill?

Shawn: Not really.

Interviewer: Why's that?

Shawn: Just the way my dad talks about it, my uncles talk, they don't like it there. They're not really interested. So I go, "Why don't you just quit?" and he goes, "Because I've been there too long." And he's got 10 more years before he can retire. So he's just going to stay there.

Many survey respondents and key-informants refer to the mill as a source of pollution and as a necessary evil that the town had to endure for the sake of jobs. Sarah seems to encapsulate this general consensus.

Sarah: It does bring in a lot of money, I'll admit that. Except it brings in a lot of pollution.

Environmental concerns were at the forefront of key-informants' minds when considering the mill.

Interviewer: Do you see the mill as an important part of the economy?

Marcus: Definitely. Which is very sad, but it's true. And I mean, it's disgusting. I just can't stand it.

Interviewer: You can't stand the mill?

Marcus: No. The mill is really polluting. I mean, it stinks. If you're driving through town, it just reeks. And some days, it's intoxicating. You have to roll your windows up. It's just incredible!

Sarah displayed distaste and disapproval of the mill, commenting on its smell and effect on marine life.

Interviewer: Are you aware of what's going on at the mill at all?

Sarah: No. I don't really like the mill. In fact, I hate the mill.

Interviewer: Really? Why's that?

Sarah: Because there's like there's this big huge cloud hanging over the mill all the time. And you when drive over, if you're going to go watch a movie at the theatre or something, you gotta bring a nose plug or put lots of perfume right under your nose, so that you don't have to smell it. Because it's really bad smelling. It does bring in a lot of money, I'll admit that. Except it brings in a lot of pollution.

Survey comment: I don't support the mill.

These views contrast with the view of the mill as a source of stability and employment which was dominant under Fordism (see Southern and Bird 1988). Students indicated whether they would be willing to quit school before graduation if offered a full-time job in the mill (Table 5.7). An overwhelming majority (82 percent) said "no."

Table 5.7
Max Cameron Students: Willingness to Quit School
if Offered Full-Time Job at Mill

Answer	Number	Percent
Yes	8	5
No	125	82
Don't know	19	12

Source: Survey data 1994

Again, this contrasts with the Fordist era in Powell River (1950-1980) when generations of male youth sought jobs in the mill well before graduating.

Head counsellor: They walked in droves(to the mill), especially in Grade 11.

Over a decade has passed since the first wave of permanent 1980s lay-offs. Graduating classes no longer hold false hopes of gaining employment in the mill as did members of the 'lost generation.' David is an example of this new attitude.

Interviewer: If the opportunity was available, would you be willing to quit school and work in the mill if you were offered a full-time job?

David: No. Not in this mill.

Interviewer: Why not?

David: People get laid off every year.

Key-informants' parents who work at the mill say they discourage expectations of finding work at the mill. One union representative said that most mill workers feel that the job situation at the mill is too unstable and that they tell their kids to look outside the community for jobs.

President Local 1: The move over the next ten years seems to be to continue to contract the mill. Continue to make it smaller. Over the next 10 years, I don't see much hope for kids.

Interviewer: How are union families responding to this if they have kids going through the educational system now?

President Local 1: Most are pushing them to look elsewhere, to look out of town.

These findings illustrate a break in the expectations between the 'Fordist,' the 'lost' and the 'post-Fordist' generations.

Short-Term Expectations

Students' short-term expectations indicate what they plan to do one full year from the time the survey questionnaire was completed, in the fall of 1995. This section focuses on Max Cameron youth who plan to either to attend school or to work the year after graduation. Survey questionnaire evidence suggests the existence of a link between students' short-term expectations and family background. The discussion of students' short-term expectations is followed by an assessment of the locational aspect of expectations. An examination of the locational aspect shows quite different migration intentions between students who plan to attend school and youth who plan to work in the short-term.

'School' dominates Max Cameron students' short-term plans (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8
Max Cameron Students' Short-Term Expectations

Expectation	Number	Percent
School/training	88	57
Work	40	26
Both school and work	17	11
Other	9	6

Source: Survey data 1994

Survey results indicate that approximately one quarter of Max Cameron students expect to work one year after graduating. This accounts for less than half the number of students expecting to continue their education (Table 5.8).

Plans for school

Students who expect to pursue schooling in the short-term cite their reasons for favouring this option. Given the enormous campaign by the school to impress upon students the importance of training and education in the labour market, it is not surprising that the majority of students who indicate 'school' in the short-term do so 'to gain job qualifications' (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9
Reasons to Attend School in Short-Term

Reason	Number	Percent
To gain job qualifications	90	87
General interest	31	30
To get away from Powell River	16	15
To meet new people	15	14
Family expectations	10	10
To stay in Powell River	1	1
Other	3	3

Source: Survey data 1994

Students' reasons for attending school in the short-term show that after 'gaining job qualifications,' 'general interest' provides a strong incentive. After 'general interest,' three additional reasons reveal similar frequencies. The frequency with which 'getting away from Powell River' and 'meeting new people' was cited indicates that a small group see school as a means to gain new life experiences.

Max Cameron students indicated where they planned to attend school in the short-term (Table 5.10). Most students who intend to pursue schooling/training plan to leave the locality, accounting for 79 percent of this group.

Table 5.10
Max Cameron Students: Expected Location of Schooling in Short-Term

Location	Number	Percent
Lower Mainland	32	34
Vancouver Island	25	27
Powell River	20	21
Canada, outside B.C.	6	6
B.C.	3	3
Other	8	9

Source: Survey data 1994

Not surprisingly, the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island figured prominently in students' plans. Only one student indicates that he intends to go to school in the short-term so that he can stay in Powell River (Table 5.9). 'Staying in Powell River' is not the primary reason for the remaining 20 percent of the group to attend school in Powell River in the short-term. School and training options in Powell River include high school upgrading, enrolling at Malaspina College in technical or university courses, or apprenticeship with a local journeyman. The employment counsellor maintains that

apprenticeships are difficult to obtain in the locality due a scarcity of journeymen who are willing to train apprentices.

Students planning to attend school in the short-term indicate the type of institution they expect to attend (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11
Max Cameron Students: Institutions to Attend

Institution	Number	Percent
University	39	36
College	30	28
Technical	18	17
High school upgrade	14	13
Other	1	1
Don't know	1	1

Source: Survey data 1994

University rates most highly, accounting for 36 percent of this group (Table 5.11). College rates closely behind university as an option. The next two types of institutions rank well below the top two. These are technical training and high school upgrading, which account for 17 percent and 13 percent of this group respectively. Students planning to attend university account for only 25 percent of the entire sample. They account for 36 percent of the group of students who intend to pursue education in the short-term. This finding is contrary to parent expectations as perceived by the employment counsellor, who feels that the majority of students' parents expect to them attend university. Parents have this expectations, he says, because they believe that a university education will lead to good jobs.

Employment counsellor: *About 85 percent of kids' parents figure they're going on to university. The number one choice for parents in terms of a university education is middle management. Well, 15 years ago, that might not have been a bad choice, but no one's hiring middle management now. It's a dead end job. All those people, even if you've got really high marks, you're still going to be really scrambling under those conditions. So a lot of the expectations that parents have, they push onto their kids. They are not realistic.*

The findings at Max Cameron suggest that either students make decisions independently of parents' expectations or that the counsellor's perception of parental expectations is inaccurate. Only one quarter of Max Cameron students as opposed to 85 percent show an interest in attending university. In spite of the findings at Max Cameron

(Table 5.11), this counsellor's viewpoint of parental expectations is corroborated by the head counsellor. The head counsellor maintains that the education system puts undue social pressure on students to attend university. This has the effect, she says, of alienating students who are incapable of or do not wish to attend university. She feels that other training programs such as trades and technical programs are perceived as being inferior to a university education. She maintains that this perception is a recent development, coinciding with the demise of Fordism, under which trades had more status.

Head counsellor: I've seen a switch where the kids have become less and less hopeful. They say, "Well, Grade 12 isn't even going to do it and I'm going to need some sort of post-secondary." They look at post-secondary as being university.

Interviewer: Not college?

Head counsellor: Not college and not trades. It's as though, "Well, I can't go to university, I'm not smart enough to go to university, I don't have the grades, I don't want to go to university, so I got no place to go."

The counsellors' views are most likely based on personal conversations with students, who may give the counsellors the impression that most students (85 percent) feel obligated to attend university. The survey results indicate that this is not the case at Max Cameron.

Plans for work

Students of Max Cameron who expect to work in the year after graduation account for 26 percent of their class (Table 5.9). Most students who expect to work in the short-term indicated that their choice was based on a financial need. Financial need is cited high above any other reason for working after graduation (Table 5.12). The next most important reasons, 'development of skills' and 'personal preference' pail in comparison to financial need.

Table 5.12
Max Cameron Students: Reasons to Work in Short-Term

Reason	Number	Percent
Need the money	56	89
To develop skills	21	33
Personal preference	15	24
To get away from Powell River	10	16
To remain in Powell River	6	10
Family expectation	1	2
Nothing else to do	1	2
Other	4	6

Source: Survey data 1994

Students who indicate plans to work because they 'need the money' often did not specify what they needed the money for. Many said that working in the short-term would enable them to save money for post-secondary school in the future. But students who plan to work directly out of high school have few skills to offer employers and little work experience. Their lack of qualifications limits their employment opportunities to the peripheral labour market where wages are too low for them to realistically live independently, let alone to save money. Half of the students who already have jobs and plan to work in the short-term expect to retain their current jobs, most of which are in the peripheral labour market.

Hamilton and Powers (1990) perceive a gulf between the life opportunities facing youth who choose to work after graduation and youth who choose to attend school. The authors contend that while youth who go on to further education continue to develop towards adulthood, youth who enter the labour market directly after graduation face difficulties in developing into independent adults.

Rather than a rite of passage, which marks the simultaneous achievement of adult status by an entire cohort of youth, high school graduation is a great divide, separating those who continue their full-time schooling from those who do not. Youth whose education ends with high school, The Forgotten Half, cease to be students without becoming fully adult. Their jobs do not confer adult status: nor do their jobs pay enough to make them financially independent (Hamilton and Powers 1990:243).

This passage is relevant to Max Cameron students who plan to continue working in Powell River after graduation. Pay in the peripheral labour market is too low for a young

person to realistically support him or herself with. Many students who plan to work in the short-term will live with their parents. Shawn's father expresses a viewpoint similar to Hamilton and Powers' (1990). He maintains that youth jobs do not pay enough to enable young people to become independent.

Shawn's father: To maintain a lifestyle, or even to support yourself, you gotta get 10 or 15 dollars an hour. Well, these franchises that are coming in are all paying under 8 buck an hour. It's pretty hard to pay rent, to make everything you need to live with.

While working in the short-term may indeed supply youth with some money, it may hinder their eventual long-term labour market prospects.

Place plays an important role in the formation of students' plans. The proportion of students who indicated 'work' as a means to 'get away from Powell River' was 16 percent, similar to the 15 percent who indicated 'school' as a means to leave the locality (Table 5.9).

Students indicated where they expect to work (Table 5.13).

Table 5.13
Max Cameron Students: Location of Work in Short-Term

Location	Number	Percent
Powell River	43	65
Vancouver Island	8	12
Lower Mainland	5	8
Other	2	3

Source: Survey data 1994

The majority of Max Cameron students who intend to work in the short-term (65 percent) intend to remain in Powell River. This contrasts with the 21 percent who expect to attend school in Powell River. The difference in locational orientation may contribute to the entrenchment of different opportunity structures and development patterns facing the two groups. Gaskell (1985) suggests that youth's work experiences during their school years are sufficiently unsavory to motivate them to get out of the youth labour market. "Despite the positive things that students can say about their jobs, the overwhelming impact that the part-time teenage labour market has on students is to increase their determination to get out of it" (Gaskell 1985:215). Findings at Max Cameron indicate otherwise. Although a large portion of Max Cameron students (44 percent) who have jobs indicate that they do not wish

to keep their jobs after graduation, over 50 percent say that they do wish to keep their job or are undecided (Table 5.14).

Table 5.14
Max Cameron Students' Preference to Keep Jobs After Graduation

Prefer to keep job	Number	Percent
Yes	27	26
No	45	44
Undecided	50	29

Source: Survey data 1994

Student responses indicate that there is some support for Gaskell's view, but the mixed nature of survey results show that this support is highly qualified. Max Cameron students do not show an overwhelming determination to get out the youth labour market, at least not in the short term (Table 5.15).

Table 5.15
Selected Responses to Survey Question: Do you want to keep your job after graduation?

<i>"Undecided. How many jobs can I get right away that pay \$18.00 an hour?"</i>
<i>"No. I hope to move into a self-created job."</i>
<i>"No. I'm going to university."</i>
<i>"Yes. The job is fun and doesn't even feel like work any more."</i>
<i>"Undecided. If there's a better job, I'll take it, if not, then I'll stay till I get one."</i>

Source: Survey data 1994

Students' mixed responses illustrate the heterogeneity of expectations within the school.

Expectations and Family Background

Survey results suggest the existence of a relationship between fathers' job status and students' short-term expectations. A higher proportion of students whose fathers are blue collar workers appear to indicate work as a short-term plan than students whose fathers are white collar workers (Table 5.16).

Table 5.16
Max Cameron Students: Relationship Between Fathers' Job Status and
Students Short-Term Plans

Father's job status	School	Work
Father blue-collar	51	34
Father white-collar	26	5
$\chi^2=5.8$ $\phi=0.224$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		
Source: Survey data 1994		

The strength of association between fathers' job status and students' short-term plans is weak, in spite of being statistically significant (Table 5.16). Peck (1989a) maintains that a process of occupational structuring occurs within the home which causes labour market roles to be reproduced within the family. The reproduction of work roles is achieved through socialization, which, maintains Peck, is an important labour supply-side factor. Clearly in Powell River, there is no steadfast rule whereby youth from blue collar families become ghettoized in blue collar jobs. The survey results indicate a high degree of variability across blue collar and white collar families but point to a greater tendency among youth from blue collar families to choose work in the short-term. This tendency according to Hamilton and Powers (1990) has the affect of truncating their development towards becoming financially independent.

The relationship between students' social class and expectations is supported by several other studies (Peck 1989a; Hamilton and Powers 1990; Burchell and Rubery 1992; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992). Hamilton and Powers (1990) call the group which enters the work force directly after graduation the 'Forgotten Half.' A direct link is drawn by Hamilton and Powers (1990) between social class and labour market attainment.

Because school attainment is highly correlated with parents' education and employment, members of the Forgotten Half are predominantly working-class, while young people who make the easier and more direct transition from college to career are more likely to be middle class (Hamilton and Powers 1990:244).

Some evidence for the pre-market segmentation of youth is evident in Powell River in terms of students' short-term expectations. Survey results suggest the existence of a

stronger relationship between father's completion of Grade 12 and students' short-term expectations (Table 5.17).

Table 5.17
Max Cameron Students: Relationship Between Father's Completion of Grade 12 and Students' Short-Term Plans

Father's education	School	Work
Completed Grade 12	69	22
Did not complete Grade 12	13	16
$\chi^2=9.765$ $\phi=0.285$ $df=1$ Sig. at 0.05 level		
Source: Survey data 1994		

Students whose fathers completed Grade 12 are more likely to plan for school than students whose fathers did not complete Grade 12. In spite of being statistically significant, the association between these variables is weak. The career counsellor attributes students' educational plans largely to parents' school experiences. He feels that parents who have had positive school experiences are more likely to encourage their children to pursue post-secondary schooling. Alternatively, parents who "made it" without a high school certificate or by other means than formal schooling may promote the notion that schooling is unnecessary in finding a successful career.

Counsellor: *Kids of parents who have gone on, parents who have university degrees, or parents who did well in school, see getting more schooling as being the answer. Parents who did not do well in school, and who maybe quit, don't see school as necessarily a springboard into a well-paying job.*

This view corresponds with findings in Chapter Four, which suggest that the degree to which education is valued in the home plays an important role in defining students' educational choices.

Unlike school performance, no relationship is found between gender and students' short-term expectations. The nonexistence of a relationship between gender and expectations coincides with findings by Empson-Warner and Krahn (1992) in a Canadian study. Family background appeared to be an influential factor in youth's long-term expectations.

Long-Term Expectations

Max Cameron students' long-term expectation vary in their degree of formation. Two thirds of the students indicate that they have a long-term career plan, but a significant minority does not (Table 5.18).

Table 5.18
Max Cameron Students: Have Long-Term Career Plans

Have plans	Number	Percent
Yes	99	66
No	52	34

Source: Survey data 1994

This section explores the long-term expectations of Max Cameron students by combining survey evidence with key-informant interviews. Students' expectations are juxtaposed with aspects of family background, illuminating the multi-faceted way in which youth make decisions about the future. In general, key-informants attributed their expectations to their own personal preferences. In several cases though, a striking symmetry unfolds between the student's expectations and their parents' lives. Alternatively, many students are visibly breaking out of a family pattern.

David will probably follow in his father's and brothers' footsteps. David wants to become a pipe fitter. His older brother is a pipe fitter and his father is a saw filer at the mill. David feels that although his father encourages him to pursue entrepreneurialism, he cannot realistically see himself going into business.

David: He tells us, "Don't get stuck working at the mill. It's the worst thing you can do. Get something that's a good job."

Interviewer: So what sort of job is he hoping that you'll get?

David: Real estate, he wants. He wants me to really make a lot of money.

Interviewer: So you're not stuck doing the same thing every day?

David: Ya. Not like a laborer. Like, he says "get somebody to work for you instead. Like a business. Run a business. Get somebody to work for you."

Interviewer: So he's encouraging you not to go into the mill?

David: Ya. It's going to take a lot though for me to get into business. I think so.

David is uncertain of how he will cope after graduation in terms of finding gainful employment.

Interviewer: Are you worried at all about the future?

David: Ya, it's going to be hard. In this world now.

Debbie sees herself eventually becoming a homemaker, and plans to keep her cashier job after graduation. Her mother is a homemaker with some training in accountancy. Debbie's two older sisters are homemakers in Powell River. Debbie's mother had hoped for her to attend university, but is resigned to the reality of Debbie's wishes.

Shawn wants to become a certified auto-mechanic. His father works as a saw filer at the mill and is a mechanic by hobby. Shawn and his father are currently building a car together in their back yard. Shawn says he wants to become a mechanic because he 'just likes cars,' and because his father has 'always had cars around.' Marcus plans to travel and then to attend university, to become trained as a molecular geneticist. He feels that his family's role is to support his ability to make his own decisions.

Marcus: I think just getting the love and just support that's been generated in my family has given me the self-esteem and strength to go forth and do what ever I feel I'd like to. They haven't steered me in a direction.

Marcus' expectations are a mirror image of his parents' lives. His parents travelled extensively as young adults. Both of his older sisters have attended university in the United States. His father is a medical doctor. At the time of the interview, his mother was in the process of researching prospective universities both in Canada and the United States which offered programs in molecular genetics. The question is not whether Marcus will be attending university, as it is implicitly assumed that he will be. The question for Marcus and his family is, 'what university will he attend?'

Sarah is an example of a student who does not appear to conform to family work roles or to traditional gender roles. She wants to become trained as a custom carpenter and to eventually own a cabinetry shop. She says this path is unrelated to her family members' history of working with wood. Her father is a sawyer and her grandfather designed model boats.

Sarah: Nobody in my family ever liked to make tables or anything like that. The only things that came close was my grandfather used to make model boats. But he would glue them together and tack them and stuff. He would never actually make joints or anything. He would send them off to places and they would build

big boats out of them out of his ideas. I don't know where I got it from or why I chose it but ever since Grade 8 when you have to try Metalwork, Woodwork, Sewing and Cooking, you have to take those right? I just took to Woodwork. It just clung to me. I don't know.

Although Sarah's fascination with wood shows an element of family continuity, her goals and current educational choices in school are unconventional. Sarah is the only female in her construction classes and thus does not conform to a traditional gender stereotype as Debbie does. Sarah's desire to own and manage her own business and to do custom work requiring multi-task capabilities contrasts with her father's repetitive job as a sawyer.

Sarah: He stands at the saw all day and just makes shingles. He makes good money. He likes it.

Sarah feels that her own interest in wood design has been the dominant force shaping her goals, not her family, friends or school.

Sarah: I don't think anybody has really influenced me. I knew from about Grade 10 that I wanted to go into woodwork. I don't know. It's just something that I always knew I wanted to do. I don't think anybody really influenced me to do it.

Sarah is perhaps the most focussed among the six key-informants in terms of short and long-term goals. Immediately after graduation, she plans to marry her boyfriend of five years. Ann grew up in a single mother household. Her mother left an abusive husband when Ann was an infant. Ann sees independence from men as integral to becoming a "successful woman."

Interviewer: Do you think your family structure has influenced your desire to move on and succeed?

Ann: I don't know. I think, it's caused me to be a little more independent. Cuz my mom, she works shifts. So we were always left alone and me and my sister had to take over while she was gone. And it was perfectly fine, like there was nothing wrong with her doing that. It's just that we had to adapt to it so we haven't always had two parents around. And ya, I wanna be a successful woman.

Interviewer: Like your mom?

Ann: Ya. I don't want to have to rely on a husband or a man or anything, so maybe subconsciously that's influenced me.

She plans to go to attend university in the sciences. Ann's mother is a registered nurse. Ann acknowledges a great deal of pressure from her mother to become an independent professional. Her mother admits to pushing her daughters to get university educations.

She feels it will give them the same kind of satisfaction that she gets from being financially independent.

Ann's mother: I want them both to get university educations. Even if there's no jobs available when they get out there, I want them to have that satisfaction, you know. Cuz I have a satisfaction. Part of leaving my husband, like I knew, it wasn't a very happy relationship. I knew I didn't have to stay with him. I like that independence and not having to count on somebody. I want them to be able to afford that, I guess is what I'm saying.

Ann spoke about her plans to attend university as if unsure whether this is something she wants to do or whether she is doing this to meet her mother's expectations.

Ann: For now, that's (university) definitely what I think I should be doing.

Interviewer: So your mom's a big support for you?

Ann: Ya. I don't usually talk about it too much but I did bring it up now that my sister's there (university) and she's doing great, she got a bunch of scholarships and it's totally for her. But I think, "Would I be letting you down if it's not me?" Cuz we've always done the same sort of things, my sister and I. So if it turns out I go to UVic and I just hate it, I'm unhappy, depressed and if I want to get something different, she said, "That's fine. It's up to you." She puts a lot of pressure on us, I guess.

Ann sets high goals for herself. In terms of becoming an independent woman, growing up with a single mother appears to have influenced her a great deal. She is pursuing a different education from her mother, but is following closely in her sister's footsteps.

Profiles of the six key-informant students illustrate the interplay between family roles and individual interests in the formation of long-term expectations. In some cases, family background appears to be the dominant force shaping students' goals, as in David's, Shawn's and Marcus' situations. In other cases, students appear to be striking out on their own. Sarah, who defies the gender stereotype, is a fairly clear example of this pattern. These findings illustrate the variability found in other aspects of youth explored earlier such as short-term expectations and vocationalism.

Levin (1985) notes that youth's expectations must be regarded with caution, as they contain elements of fantasy and are subject to change. Indeed, expectations are not the same thing as outcomes. But students' expectations are the best indication of where they are heading in the short-term. Their plans and aspirations are products of past experiences, information flows, family background, abilities, interests and the local opportunity

structure as depicted in Figure 2.1. In addition to an exploration of key-informants, this thesis examines the long-term expectations of several other Max Cameron students based on their survey responses (Appendix B). Selected responses represent female and male students, high and low achievers, students with family at the mill and without, blue collar and white collar family background. Some expectations contain a degree of fantasy and unrealistic optimism. This characteristic may be endemic to youth in general. Overall, most Max Cameron students' expectations show a certain degree of conformity to their families' work roles, yet at the same time, many appear to be breaking out of established patterns. An example of this latter trend is a male student who plans to fish after he graduates. When asked about his long term career plans, he wrote, "Fishing until I get a real job." His father is a mill worker and his mother works as an early childhood educator for the municipality. He has 7 family members at the mill. During summers, he has worked as a commercial fisherman. He is a high achiever in school with a 'B' average. He is enrolled in Enriched English, Biology, Geology, Law, Computer Science and Math 12. He plans to attend university and to enroll in a science program. This student is clearly breaking away of his family's history in the mill by seeking a university education, yet he intends to support himself after graduation as a commercial fisherman.

Students often listed more than one career goal, indicating that they are still unsure of their direction after high school. In several instances, career goals seemed unrealistic given the student's school performance and family background. An example of this tendency is illustrated by a male student who indicated his long term goals as being, "To try to major in criminal law so that if I get injured in football I have something to fall back on."

This male student is a low academic achiever. He is enrolled in Communications 12, Physical Education (P.E.), Acting, Pottery and Computer Drafting, with a 'C+' average. His mother is a social worker and his father owns a local store. His short-term plan is to attend U.C.L.A. and enroll in criminal law and play football. This student's plan

seems slightly unrealistic given the high academic requirements at a prestigious post-secondary institution and the fact that he is a low achiever.

An example of the incongruous career paths students often consider is provided by a female student who indicated that she was interested in going into, "Child care, police officer, or weight training." This Communications 12 student is a low academic achiever with a 'C+' average. She plans to go to Malaspina College in the short-term to take courses in child care or law enforcement. She says she will live "where ever my boyfriend may get a hockey scholarship to."

In spite of the fact that a large portion of the sample indicated what seemed like unrealistic goals, many are focussed and appear to have the necessary school background and motivation to realize their goals. Two examples of focussed students illustrate this combination. One male student writes that he intends "to become a construction worker, hopefully get my own company." This high achieving male student has a 'B' average and is enrolled in English, Math, Woodwork, Drafting, Geology, Geography 12 and Computer Studies 11. He believes he offers trades skills to potential employers. His father is a mill worker and his mother is a nurse. One older brother is a construction worker and one is a store clerk. His father did not complete high school but his mother did. He plans to attend Malaspina College in the short-term. His aspirations appear to diverge from his family's work roles because he plans to own a business.

A female student knows she wants to go into teaching. Both parents work in the education system. She wants to "finish university with at least two teachable subjects. Try and get a job as a teacher or else go back to school and go in for Hotel Management." This high achiever has a 'B' average and is enrolled in English, Literature, Biology, Geography, Acting, Math, French and Computer Science 12. Her mother is a teacher and her father is a school principal. Her older sister is a research assistant for the Ontario Senate. She does not have a job because she says it would clash with school or sports activities. She expects to attend university in the short-term and enroll in an Arts discipline.

The most apparent feature among these students' survey comments is that there are no trends in youth's long-term expectations. There appears to be no relationship between students' clarity of plans and variables like family background, gender, academic achievement or school program. Many students' long-term expectations contain incongruous combinations such as a) criminal law/football, b) child care/police officer/weight trainer, c) animal health technician/artist. They range from the specific, like *"Definitely university. I want to become an accountant"* to the vague *"Fishing until I get a real job"* and *"Working with people."* This suggests that students' long-term plans are still in the formative stages of development. The formation of expectations, according to Levin (1985), is non-linear and is guided by a host of factors. "Far from defining problems, analyzing options, and selecting the optimal solution, people appear to deal with decisions in ways which are intuitive, non-linear, and include multiple variables with shifting and unspecified weightings" (Levin 1985:273). Empson-Warner and Krahn (1992) point to widespread career indecision among youth, before and after graduation. It is apparent from the survey responses that students are thinking of certain issues relating to their future for the first time. Several students comment on the usefulness of the survey for this reason (Table 5.19).

Table 5.19
Selected Open-Ended Comments Relating to Survey

Survey comment: *This survey was good for me. It made me think of some questions that I hadn't thought about before.*

Survey comment: *This survey does get me thinking about what I am going to do once I graduate. I am hoping that I can continue on to college or university or continue learning.*

Survey comment: *I think this survey is interesting, you get a sense of what young people are worried about and what we think of the outcome of opportunities in the future.*

Survey comment: *I think that this is a great idea doing this survey for everyone's information.*

Survey comment: *I think most of us are scared because we don't know what to expect once we are out of high school. Not enough is done in the way of work experience. Good jobs are getting scarcer and I worry about where I am going to be in five years.*

Thank you for taking your time to express our opinions as we don't usually have a chance to.

Source: Survey data 1994

In contrast with the relatively unformed nature of students' long-term plans, most Max Cameron students expressed decisive migration intentions.

Max Cameron Students' Migration Intentions

Most students expressed a preference in terms of leaving or remaining in the locality after graduation (Table 5.20).

Table 5.20
Max Cameron Students' Migration Intentions

Preference	Number	Percent
Leave	79	51
Remain	38	25
Don't know	27	18
Don't care	10	6

Source: Survey data 1994

Approximately one half of Max Cameron students indicate they would leave the locality after graduation. Only one quarter definitely wish to remain. The remain quarter is ambivalent. Non-economic factors such as the natural environment and family opportunities are commonly cited as reasons to remain in the locality. Of the 38 students who wish to remain, most indicated that it was because they 'like Powell River in general' (Table 5.21). Many students cite more than one reason to stay.

Table 5.21
Max Cameron Students: Reasons to Remain in Powell River

Reason	Number	Percent
Like PR in general	25	60
Good for family	11	27
Low crime rate	6	15
Natural environment	5	12
It's quiet	3	8
Like the people	2	5
Job opportunities are good	2	5

Source: Survey data 1994

The low crime rate is cited by six students as a factor motivating them to stay. Five of these students are female. Local job opportunities rated the lowest among reasons to

remain in the locality. Survey comments tended to highlight non-economic factors in students' preference to stay (Table 5.22).

Table 5.22
Selected Responses to Survey Question: If you prefer to stay in Powell River, why?

"I don't like the cities, Powell River has everything I want."
"I like all the recreational things that there are to do."
"Because I would like to raise my family here."
"Because I've adapted to this place and don't want to change."
"Because I grew up here and it's a peaceful town with no violence."
"I don't know if I want to stay. I love the location, the climate, the scenery, but I don't like the pollution or the narrow-mindedness of the people."
"It's a mellow place."

Source: Survey data 1994

Non-economic factors appeared to be prominent also among students who wish to leave the locality. The most common reason students cite for wanting to leave the locality is because 'Powell River has no opportunities' (Table 5.23).

Table 5.23
Max Cameron Students: Reasons to Leave Powell River

Reason	Number	Percent
PR offers no opportunities	21	27
It's boring	15	19
Have to see the world	12	15
PR is too small	11	14
Don't like PR in general	7	9
Don't like the people here	5	6

Source: Survey data 1994

The survey questionnaire does not specify whether 'opportunities' refers to economic or non-economic opportunities and anecdotal evidence suggests that it could be either. After the top category 'Powell River has no opportunities,' three factors are cited with similar frequencies. These are, 'it's boring,' 'have to see the world,' and 'Powell River is too small.' The frequency with which these factors are cited suggests that a sizeable portion of Max Cameron students are simply craving something and somewhere different from Powell River. This sentiment is reflected in several selected survey comments (Table 5.24).

Table 5.24
Selected Responses to Survey question: If you prefer to leave Powell River, why?

"It's a boring little hole and it sucks."
"Because I hate small towns - people never get anywhere here."
"Powell River is a small town full of small minds."
"Because Powell River is boring and there is not enough jobs of interest."
"Would like more adventure, less restrictions."
"I feel it's good to get away as soon as you graduate because I know a lot of people who have stayed around and they feel they can't get out."
"Because I need change and change is good."
"I want to travel and experience different cultures."

Source: Survey data 1994

Students' comments indicate that they are more bored by Powell River than repelled by its lack of career opportunities. Shawn feels isolated in Powell River.

***Shawn:** I don't like it. I'd rather live on the island (Vancouver Island) because you can go to different towns. This way, you feel isolated. You got ferries at both ends, so it feels like you can't go anywhere.*

Seyfrit (1986) surmises that many youth in isolated towns express the intention to leave the locality in order to maintain respect from peers. According to Seyfrit, leaving an isolated locality is seen by many youth as the natural path to take in order to avoid stagnating. This view is apparent in some of the open-ended survey comments, such as "people never get anywhere here."

Many respondents, including key-informants, say that Powell River is too insular. Marcus feels that the local population is too protected from the outside world. This contributes, in his view, to an uneducated and uncaring populace who are interested in maintaining the status quo. This is enormously frustrating for Marcus who is an activist. It is one main reason why he wishes to leave the locality.

***Interviewer:** What do you think about Powell River as a place to live for young people?*

***Marcus:** I don't.*

***Interviewer:** You don't think about it?*

***Marcus:** No. I don't think it's a good place the down side is that a lot of people are really kind of shallow and uneducated because it's so sheltered. People grow up, they go onto the mill, they have kids, they play hockey. You know, it's like a real kinda trend. It's a circle and I think you can get really trapped in it.*

Several key-informants, including counsellors, union representatives and parents described the locality similarly, alluding to its sheltered and insular character. Ann's

mother feels that the local population is ungrateful and 'spoiled.' She does not want her two daughters to return to Powell River for this reason.

Interviewer: What about your girls coming back to Powell River?

Ann's mother: I hope they don't. Not initially anyway. I find people that I went to school with, going to my 25th class reunion, people that have never left here, the ones that got the job at the mill and stayed here and raised a family are very narrow minded. Very critical. You know. They can't see what's above Powell River. Because this is a rich little town. It's a spoiled little town.

Students are encouraged to leave the locality by parents, counsellors and other community members. The head counsellor said that the cost of leaving the locality often prohibits impoverished youth from migrating.

Counsellor: If you get into the poverty cycle, you don't have money to be trotting off to Vancouver, do you? You're stuck. Like I say, you can't even run away from home without six dollars. (The cost for a foot passenger to travel on the first ferry towards Vancouver). Right? I mean, you can't even run away from home. So for kids without money, and without the hope or expectation of money, there's a lot more barriers than if you lived in another place.

Interviewer: Because you are geographically isolated.

Counsellor: Geographically. That has always struck me.

David indicated on his survey questionnaire that he 'does not care' whether he stays in or leaves Powell River. He clarified his response in the interview.

Interviewer: (leafing through survey) You don't care whether you stay in Powell River or not?

David: I put that down there, did I? If I find a good job here, I'll stay. If there's no good jobs and I find one out of town, then I'll go. Where ever the money is to support me, then what ever.

His thoughts reflect a general sense of opportunism, and no particular desire to remain in or to leave the locality. Sarah offers perhaps the most perceptive view on Powell River among the key-informants. She believes its strengths as a small town are also its primary weaknesses.

Interviewer: Do you think Powell River is a good place for kids to grow up? Is it a healthy place to be?

Sarah: Yeah, I think it is. It's healthy in the fact that it's a small town and everybody's close together. Unhealthy, because it is close together.

There is a lot of drinking and drugs going on, because there's nothing else to do. A lot of teenage pregnancies. You have to take a ferry to get away. And in the case of Saltery Bay, you have to take two. So I think it is nice because everybody's close together. There's a lot of friends to meet and a lot of trouble can go on when there's a lot of kids all together (in an isolated town).

Youth are an integral part of community and family life (Marchak 1990; Nelson 1990), and it was expected that their plans to leave the community would be met with resistance rather than encouragement. Survey results and interviews suggest otherwise. These results point to the importance of non-economic factors in shaping students' migration intentions. This tendency is supported in a study of age-specific patterns by Murdock et al. (1984). "Economic factors that once were the dominant determinants of migration have decreased in importance in recent decades ... and similar non-economic factors have increased in importance" (Murdock et al. 1984).

Summary

Students' long-term labour market expectations are still in the formative stages of development at the beginning of Grade 12. In general, students' long term goals show little adherence to class boundaries, gender stereotypes or parents' expectations. It appears from the survey questionnaire results that beyond the short-term, it is simply too early to evaluate the relationship between students' plans and their family background. Short-term expectations did illustrate links to family background, most notably to fathers' job status and attainment of Grade 12. These findings partially support Peck's (1989a) theory that socialization within the home contributes to a process of occupational structuring. Elements of occupational structuring can be seen in the homes of some key-informants including David, Shawn and Marcus. These three students expressed expectations which closely resembled their parents' backgrounds. In other cases, students were stepping out into new territory. Sarah is such an example.

Contemporary Max Cameron students clearly mark a break with previous generations of local youth. The transition from Fordism to post-Fordism has triggered a new set of labour market expectations which exclude the mill. Contrasting to the 'Fordist generation' and the 'lost generation,' the 'post-Fordist generation' views the mill as an environmental culprit, not as a source of jobs. The new 'post-Fordist generation' is critical of the changing nature of Powell River's economy. While fast food outlets are the largest

source of jobs for Max Cameron students, students expressed concern for the impact these chains have on their community. Findings indicate that students' migration intentions are based largely on non-economic factors, suggesting that labour market considerations play less of a role than students' desire to experience a different place.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Powell River youth have clearly moved through three distinct stages of development during the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism. The first and perhaps the most historically prominent group of Powell River youth grew up under Fordism, when labour market options within the locality were relatively straight forward. The mill provided a stable secure source of jobs for youth and a source of stability for the community in general. The school system reflected this aspect of stability, for the school curriculum remained relatively unchanged during the Fordist period in Powell River and in North America in general (Marshall and Tucker 1992). In a general sense, the school system had no need to develop during the Fordist period because the labour market offered prospects both to youth who succeeded in school and to youth who did not.

The beginning of the transition from Fordism to flexibility during the early 1980s dramatically changed the opportunity structure for Powell River youth. Cutbacks at the mill signalled wider industrial change on a more general scale, creating in Powell River a group of youth who became 'lost' in terms of labour market options. Max Cameron Secondary School has responded to local industrial restructuring by becoming more flexible and more demanding in its curriculum. In a flexible labour market, skills are mandatory for all youth, regardless of their orientation towards academic or vocational programs. Max Cameron School recognizes this, and has visibly moved towards raising the local skills structure among Powell River youth. Contemporary students at Max Cameron hold no false hopes of a return to the stability and security enjoyed by youth under Fordism. Expectations of the post-Fordist generation of Powell River youth are developing independently of the mill, illustrating a clear break with both the Fordist and 'lost' groups of the past.

Labour Supply Factors

Labour supply factors identified in Figure 2.1 are explored in this thesis as they relate to students' preparation for work. According to Peck (1989a), labour supply factors have the power to shape the career aspirations of youth and ultimately the conditions under which they will make their labour available. Primary labour supply factors identified by Peck (1989a) include socialization within the home and the school. The role of family is assessed in this thesis from several angles. In addition to the roles of family and school, several additional labour supply factors indicated in this model (Figure 2.1) are examined. These include the local opportunity structure, information flows, past experience, individual abilities and personal interests. The peer group is not explored in-depth although it likely influences students' considerations.

Assessing 'family background' as a labour supply factor in the context of segmentation theory proved to be a complex undertaking. In several ways 'family' appeared as a basis for segmentation within the school and in students' expectations. This was apparent in the statistically significant but weak relationships between Max Cameron students' educational choices, school performance and family background. In one important way, 'family' appears to influence youth across all aspects of socioeconomic background. The value placed on education within the home is high in all six key-informants' households. This tendency reveals a marked break from the Fordist era, when the labour market was more forgiving to youth without a high school education.

Max Cameron School reveals a cross-section of students who appear diverse in terms of Powell River's population. Students represent blue collar and white collar households, high achievers and low achievers, and mixed expectations. Students clearly show variable orientations towards school programs, be they academic or vocational in focus. Survey findings and key-informant interviews reveal that students' orientation in school in some ways reflect their family background. That is, students who come from white collar households tend to dominate the academic stream, while students who come

from blue collar households tend to dominate the vocational stream. There was no evidence of a rigid bifurcation of students at Max Cameron Secondary School based on family background though.

The local opportunity structure of Powell River has changed since the decline of Fordism. Highly paid summer jobs in the mill have disappeared for Powell River youth. With the transition from Fordism to flexibility, Max Cameron students have become highly involved in part-time paid work during the school year. Students' jobs are influencing how students conceptualize skills development and labour market dynamics. Because of this influence and the high educational value which students place on their jobs, students' jobs offer segmentation theory a new labour supply-side factor still largely unexplored in the literature.

Multiple labour supply-side factors intersect to produce unique expectations among youth. Additional supply factors identified in this thesis include personal interests, information flows, past experiences, peer groups and abilities. Obviously there are more labour supply-side factors than are described here, but time and space restrict the scope of this study.

Vocationalism

Max Cameron students appear to adhere to a vocational logic as outlined by Gaskell's (1985) theory of vocationalism. Students tend to choose their Grade 12 courses based on future labour market considerations. The degree to which students have conceptualized the link between their high school education and their eventual labour market entry varies. Some students like Debbie for instance, take certain courses in order to 'keep their doors open,' without any definite plans to use the skills or credentials earned in those courses. Other students like Sarah, David, Ann, Shawn and Marcus take school courses with a clear idea of how these courses directly relate to their future career goals.

Gaskell (1985) describes vocationalism among students in terms of the 'distant' and 'immediate' logic of the labour market. Students' short-term expectations provide a basis

for determining the type of vocationalism students adhere to. At Max Cameron, it appears that most students who intend to pursue schooling in the short-term are enrolled in academic programs. According to Gaskell's model of vocationalism, this group follows a distant logic of the labour market. Their courses, school programs and short-term plans reflect a consideration for distant labour market rewards, as opposed to immediate rewards directly after graduation. The majority of students who intend to work in the short-term are enrolled in non-academic programs and according to Gaskell, are adherents to a more immediate logic of the labour market.

While a general distinction between students adhering to a distant and immediate logic is apparent at Max Cameron School, several key-informants' expectations reveal the complexity of vocationalism. Shawn is an example of a student who is enrolled in a non-academic program which contains several shops courses. His short-term plan is to work after graduation. According to Gaskell's model, Shawn appears to be an example of a student following the immediate logic of the labour market. When taken one step further, the distinction is not so clear. After one year of working, Shawn intends to enroll in a Mechanics program at a technical college, and to eventually become a certified mechanic. This long-range planning suggests a more distant logic as opposed to the shortsightedness implied by Gaskell's immediate logic of the labour market (1985). Survey findings and key-informant interviews reveal that although most students adhere to a vocational logic, a simple dual model of immediate and distant logic is inadequate in explaining how students conceptualize the link between school and the labour market. Many students appear to adhere to both or to neither.

Parents of key-informants support the vocationalism among their children. During interviews, it became apparent that parents play an active role in helping students decide which courses to take in their Grade 12 year. Debbie, David, Marcus and Shawn all said that they discussed their course electives with their parents before registering for them at the end of Grade 11. This finding suggests that parents play an important role in determining

which type of school program students pursue during their high school education. The value of education in the household becomes a prominent feature in the type of vocationalism students adhere to.

Institutional Thinness

Max Cameron Secondary School and other local institutions in Powell River exhibit what Peck refers to as 'institutional thinness' within the context of institutional adaptation to labour market dynamics (Personal Communication with Peck 1995). Thus, a limited bureaucracy has enabled the local education system to respond effectively to the shift from Fordism to flexibility. The relatively recent development of school programs illustrates alertness and agility within the institutional framework. Collaboration between the school and the Canada Employment Centre is an example of 'institutional thinness.' Collaboration is facilitated by the close personal relationship between the employment counsellor at the school and the programs officer at the Canada Employment Centre. Peck implies that small towns favour 'institutional thinness' precisely because their size fosters greater personal interaction between workers in different institutions, compared to large urban contexts where institutions tend to be more insular and bureaucratic.

Max Cameron has eliminated a branch of the 'shops' wing which became obsolete with the decline of Fordism. Vocational courses are being elevated to include theory, in an attempt to bridge the gulf between vocational and academic course work. The school places more emphasis on experience-based learning than in the past in an attempt to reach students who are not adequately stimulated by classroom learning. Work experience is becoming widespread, and in the year following the survey questionnaire, is mandatory for graduation. Several initiatives within the school address the needs of students considered to be at-risk of dropping out.

In terms of becoming more experience-based, Max Cameron Secondary School appears to be ahead of the Ministry of Education, which has only recently announced province-wide changes to the high school curriculum. Recent policy initiatives in the

British Columbia Ministry of Education aim to address the apparent gulf between what students learn in school and what is needed in the labour market. Work experience for Grades 11 and 12 will be mandatory in the fall of 1996, and beginning in Grade 9, students are required to have a personal learning plan. The Ministry hopes that the new initiative will make the education system more inclusive for the students who are not academically oriented and who do not plan on attending university.

For the first time, educators say, the 70 per cent of students whose strengths are not in the areas of pure academics will get the respect they deserve.

'We've been emphasizing the college-prep courses,' says B.C. Teachers' Federation president Alice McQuade. 'Now we're going to spend some time with those students who, for whatever reason, aren't going on to university' (Vancouver Sun:A1 Sept. 23, 1995).

It appears that Max Cameron anticipated the need for a shift well ahead of the Ministry of Education. The foresight and initiative exhibited by the Powell River school suggest that the education system is adaptive to labour market dynamics at a local level. Clearly geographical scale influences the ability of institutions to respond to labour market dynamics. While Max Cameron attempts to address the needs of students who are not planning to pursue further schooling after graduation, post-secondary education is strongly promoted as a means to improve students' opportunities. Students are told repeatedly of the importance of skills and training to labour market success, in addition to the importance of being flexible and having the right attitude during a job search. With the promotion of skills and attitude and flexibility to students, it seems unlikely that even the most 'clued out' youth will leave school wholly unprepared for the demanding flexible labour market.

The importance of practical skills was emphasized by youth and parents. Youth felt that their most useful skills were applied skills, not abstract theoretical skills. This perception may be the result of the school's own campaign to prime youth for labour market demands, which place a higher premium on good communications skills than on well educated employees.

According to the B.C. Business Council, employers are looking for people who have good communications skills, a positive attitude and flexibility -

attributes that, in fact, may be best gained outside (school). In a recent survey, council members ranked 'well-educated' number 14 on a list of 15 characteristics desired in a new employee (Vancouver Sun:A4 Sept. 23, 1995).

Abstract skills like literacy and numeracy are necessary for learning more applied skills. Workers must be literate and informed in order to make sound judgements and good decisions. This point was not highly appreciated by most of the students. Even Marcus, who plans to attend university, is an example of this attitude.

Interviewer: Do you think the school does a good job at giving you skills for after high school?

Marcus: It gives me useful skills for going into college. I don't think it gives you useful skills, if for instance, all of a sudden I got put out and I had to live on my own and support myself. I don't think it's really prepared me for that at all. It's more trivial than practical.

This attitude shows more shortsightedness on the part of students than a short-coming of Max Cameron Secondary School.

Changing Nature of Youth in Resource Towns

Powell River is in many ways typical of British Columbia forest industry-based towns undergoing restructuring. Youth are being forced to reassess their labour market expectations in light of the transition from Fordism to flexibility. In addition to labour market considerations, youth are faced with migration decisions which ultimately affect their educational, training and employment opportunities. In Powell River, post-secondary opportunities have expanded to include full technical programs and first and second year university transfer courses. These programs assist local youth and older residents to gain skills and qualifications which earlier required a move to Vancouver or to other localities on Vancouver Island. The provision of training and educational opportunities within the locality allows for greater numbers of youth to remain in the isolated resource town while going to school.

While improving and widening the local skills structure benefits Powell River residents and employers, youth are looking beyond the locality for life experience, something that is not found in a classroom environment. Survey evidence and interviews

with key-informants indicate that regardless of the post-secondary provisions made within the locality, a large portion of Max Cameron students feel bound by the locality's isolation and intend to move away after graduation. Non-economic factors play a strong role in influencing youth's migration decisions (Murdock et al. 1984; Seyfrit 1986; Machlis et al. 1990), a point overlooked in several resource town studies which assume that economic factors are the dominant factor (Marchak 1990; Weeks 1990).

Life experience is recognized as an integral part of the learning process by Powell River residents. Several key-informants including a school counsellor, key-informants' parents, the Canada Employment Centre programs officer and union representatives emphasize the need for youth to leave the locality in order to grow up. For many students, migration is seen as part of becoming an adult. The demographic nature of resource towns continues to change, with the influx of an older age cohort and the migration of youth contributing an aging population profile (Ministry of Government Services 1994).

Future Research

This thesis discusses students' lives from both personal and social perspectives. While students' expectations provide a useful indication of labour market behaviour, especially in the immediate future, actual outcomes will differ somewhat. In this regard, a longitudinal study of Powell River youths' career paths would provide a greater understanding of how labour supply factors such as family, school and the local opportunity structures interact to form labour market outcomes. A longitudinal study would also help to understand the ambiguous relationship between expectations among youth and actual labour market outcomes. Studies comparing high school students' labour market expectations to actual outcomes have contributed to an understanding of this relationship (Hamilton and Powers 1990; Empson-Warner and Krahn 1992), but none have addressed this issue in the context Canadian resource towns undergoing the transition from Fordism to flexibility. This period of dramatic change in Canadian resource towns presents geography with unique research opportunities.

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APPENDIX A

Selected Student Responses to the Survey Question: Do you have any long term career plans? If yes, what are they?

"To become a registered nurse for the maternity ward."

This female student has a heavy academic course load, including English, Chemistry, Biology, and Calculus 12. She has a 'B' average. She has lived in Powell River all her life. Her father is a rigger for the mill and her mother is a store clerk. She has 7 family members working at the mill. She works 21 hours a week and plans to attend Caribou College in the short-term. This student's expectation diverges from her family's work roles, because she is seeking a professional qualification, something which no member of her family appears to have.

"Scientific research on space and astrophysics."

This female student is enrolled in English, Chemistry, Physics, Geology and Math 12. She has a 'B' average. Her father works for the navy and did not complete high school. Her mother is a homemaker. She has the equivalent of a full-time job, with two part-time jobs totalling 31 hours a week. She plans to work in the short-term.

"Entrepreneur. Start up my own business, maybe be an actuary."

This male student is a high achiever with an 'A' average. He is enrolled in English, Biology, Calculus, Math, Business Management and Computer Studies 12. His father has a blue collar job as a linesman working for B.C. Tel. His mother is a teaching assistant. Both parents completed high school. He has two part-time jobs totalling 20 hours a week. He plans to attend university in the short-term.

"Animal health technician and/or artist."

This female student is a low academic achiever with a 'C+' average. She is enrolled in English, Biology, Art, and Drawing 12. Her father is an optometrist and her mother is a clerical worker. She works up to 20 hours a week at two part-time jobs and plans to upgrade at Max Cameron Secondary School in the short-term. This is another example of an example of an incongruous combination.

"To become a barber."

This male student is a low academic achiever with a 'C+' average and several vocational courses including Drafting 11, Woodwork, Metalwork and Mechanics 12. He is also taking English and Math 12. His father works on the ferries and his mother is a store clerk. Both parents completed high school. He works 10 hours a week and plans to attend vocational college in the short-term.

"Become a Major League Superstar."

This male student has a 'C+' average and is enrolled in Math, English, Geography, Geology, Western Civilization, P.E. and Art 12. His father works for the mill and his

mother is a full-time homemaker. His mother did not complete high school but his father did. He does not have a job because he says it would clash with his school and sports activities. His short-term plans are to attend college in the United States and play baseball. The location of his post-secondary education "depends on who I get drafted by in the 1995 Major League Draft." His plans are both idealistic and perhaps slightly unrealistic given his lack of reference to alternative paths in the off chance that he is not drafted.

"Start a little shop. I would like to tie-dye things, and maybe have a sex shop."

This female student has a 'C+' average and is enrolled in English, Biology, Geography, Art and Math 12, Computer Studies and Pottery 11 and Foods 10. Her mother is a full-time homemaker and her father is a mill worker. Her father did not complete high school but her mother did. She is currently looking for a job. Her short-term plans include working and travelling. She also wants to "take a few short photography courses" at Malaspina College in Powell River. At the end of the survey she writes, "I'm not sure what I want to do after school, but I do have some ideas. I'll just have to try them out and if they don't work, then I'll have to try other things. I would also like to do something related to forestry." This student's expectations are still unformed and combine incongruous career aspirations.

"I would like to go into athletics and medical care."

This female student has a 'C+' average and is enrolled in English, Math, Art, Spanish and P.E. 12, and Spanish and P.E. 11. Her mother runs a day care at home and her father works for the municipality in an unspecified occupation. Both parents completed high school. She works 24 hours a week at a fast food restaurant and her short-term plan is to attending university on Vancouver Island and enroll in an athletics or medicine program.

"Go to vocational school and try to become an engineer."

This male student has a 'C+' average and is enrolled in English, Geography, Construction and Computer Science 12, and Drafting 11. His father is a mill worker and his mother is a dishwasher at a hotel. Both parents completed high school. He is currently looking for a job. He plans to attend technical college in the short-term and take a certificate in civil engineering technology. This student's goal contrasts with his father's work role.

"Working with people."

This female student has a 'C+' average and is enrolled in English, Geography, Geology, P.E., and Math 12, and Spanish and Computers 11. Her mother is a teacher and her father is a "municipal supervisor." Her older sister is a hair dresser. Both parents completed high school but her sister did not. She has 6 family members who work at the mill and believes employment opportunities for youth at the mill are "average." For the short-term, she expects to attend college or university and enroll in psychology. Her long-term goals are unformed.

"Definitely university. I want to become an accountant."

This high achieving female student has an 'A' average and is enrolled in English, Math, Literature, Geography, and Western Civilization 12. She is also taking courses in Clothing and Textiles and Applied Accounting at an unspecified grade level. Her father is a

mill worker and her mother is a clerk at Wal-Mart. Both parents completed high school. She works 9 hours a week as a receptionist. She has 3 family members working at the mill and believes employment opportunities for youth at the mill are "poor." She plans to attend university in the short-term in the Lower Mainland and get a Commerce degree. This student expresses a degree of certainty which is uncommon among the sampled population. Her certainty contrasts with the vagueness of the previous student's plans. She is making a dramatic break with her family's work roles.

APPENDIX B

Part A: Personal and Family Background

Please fill in the following information:

1. Name: _____

2. Age: _____ years.

3. You are: (please mark with an X) ___ Female ___ Male

4. Address (street and mailing if different)

5. Birthplace _____

6. How long have you lived in Powell River? _____ years.

7. Birthplace of parents:

a) mother or female guardian _____

b) father or male guardian _____

8. How long have they lived in Powell River?

a) mother or female guardian _____ years

b) father or male guardian _____ years

9. How many brothers/sisters do you have and what are their ages?(include step brothers/sisters)

a) ___ brothers; ages ____, ____, ____, ____

b) ___ sisters: ages ____, ____, ____, ____

Part B: School Work

10. Please check the Grade 11 and Grade 12 courses you have taken and are currently taking and list your electives below:

Grade 11

___ English/Communications

___ Math

___ Social Studies

Science: ___ Biology ___ Chem ___ Phys

Electives:

Grade 12

___ English/Communications

Electives:

Part B: School Work (...continued)

11. Why did you choose these particular electives? (Check as many reasons as apply to you.)

- Interest
 Career preparation
 University/college/training school requirement
 Easy course
 Other

If you chose *other*, please describe. _____

12. Is there a course (or courses) that you would like to take but currently are not offered at school?

- Yes No

If yes, indicate the course(s):

13. Please check your overall Grade 11 grade/percentage: (If you don't know exactly what it is, check your nearest guess.)

- A 86 - 100%
 B 73 - 85%
 C+ 67 - 72%
 C 60 - 66%
 C- 50 - 59%
 D 40 - 49%
 E 39 - 1%

14. How will your grade/percentage affect your career choice? (Please check the appropriate line.)

- Positively
 Negatively
 Won't affect it
 Not sure

Part C: Skills

15. What skills do you believe you offer an employer? (Please check as many as you think appropriate.)

- writing
 typing
 computer skills
 public speaking
 clerical
 accounting
 drawing
 trades
 serving the public
 cooking

other If *other*, please list these skills? _____

Part C: Skills (...continued)

16. Where did you develop these skills? (please check appropriate lines. If you check more than one line, please indicate where each skill was learned.)

- School
- Work
- Home
- Other If *other*, please describe: _____

17. If you answered school in the above question, what were the specific courses where you developed these skills?

Part D: Family Work Experience

18. Indicate the employment status of your parents or guardians and *older* brothers and *older* sisters, including step brothers/sisters: (check appropriate lines and write in information for the sections on employer, occupation, and location.)

Mother/female guardian

- full-time
 - part-time
 - full-time homemaker
 - retired
 - unemployed
 - other
- If *other*, please describe: _____

What is her occupation? _____

What firm does she work for? _____

Where is this? _____

Older sister 1

- full-time
 - part-time
 - full-time homemaker
 - retired
 - unemployed
 - other
- If *other*, please describe: _____

What is her occupation? _____

What firm does she work for? _____

Where is this? _____

Father/male guardian

- full-time
 - part-time
 - full-time homemaker
 - retired
 - unemployed
 - other
- If *other*, please describe: _____

What is his occupation? _____

What firm does he work for? _____

Where is this? _____

Older brother 1

- full-time
 - part-time
 - full-time homemaker
 - retired
 - unemployed
 - other
- If *other*, please describe: _____

What is his occupation? _____

What firm does he work for? _____

Where is this? _____

Part D: Family Work Experience (...continued)**Older sister 2**

- full-time
 part-time
 full-time homemaker
 retired
 unemployed
 other

If *other*, please describe: _____

What is her occupation? _____

What firm does she work for? _____

Where is this? _____

Older sister 3

- full-time
 part-time
 full-time homemaker
 retired
 unemployed
 other

If *other*, please describe: _____

What is her occupation? _____

What firm does she work for? _____

Where is this? _____

Older brother 2

- full-time
 part-time
 full-time homemaker
 retired
 unemployed
 other

If *other*, please describe: _____

What is his occupation? _____

What firm does he work for? _____

Where is this? _____

Older brother 3

- full-time
 part-time
 full-time homemaker
 retired
 unemployed
 other

If *other*, please describe: _____

What is his occupation? _____

What firm does he work for? _____

Where is this? _____

Part E: Family education and training status

19. Indicate the education and training status of parents or guardians and *older* brothers and *older* sisters, including step brothers/sisters:(please check the appropriate line).

Mother/female guardian

- some high school
 completed high school
 some apprenticeship
 completed apprenticeship
 some technical/vocational school
 completed technical/vocational school
 some community college
 completed community college
 some university
 received undergraduate degree
 received graduate degree
 don't know
 other If *other*, please describe: _____

Father/male guardian

- some high school
 completed high school
 some apprenticeship
 completed apprenticeship
 some technical/vocational school
 completed technical/vocational school
 some community college
 completed community college
 some university
 received undergraduate degree
 received graduate degree
 don't know
 other If *other*, please describe: _____

Part E: Family education and training status (...continued)**Older sister 1**

- some high school
 completed high school
 some apprenticeship
 completed apprenticeship
 some technical/vocational school
 completed technical/vocational school
 some community college
 completed community college
 some university
 received undergraduate degree
 received graduate degree
 don't know
 other If *other*, please describe:
-

Older brother 1

- some high school
 completed high school
 some apprenticeship
 completed apprenticeship
 some technical/vocational school
 completed technical/vocational school
 some community college
 completed community college
 some university
 received undergraduate degree
 received graduate degree
 don't know
 other If *other*, please describe:
-

Older sister 2

- some high school
 completed high school
 some apprenticeship
 completed apprenticeship
 some technical/vocational school
 completed technical/vocational school
 some community college
 completed community college
 some university
 received undergraduate degree
 received graduate degree
 don't know
 other If *other*, please describe:
-

Older brother 2

- some high school
 completed high school
 some apprenticeship
 completed apprenticeship
 some technical/vocational school
 completed technical/vocational school
 some community college
 completed community college
 some university
 received undergraduate degree
 received graduate degree
 don't know
 other If *other*, please describe:
-

Older sister 3

- some high school
 completed high school
 some apprenticeship
 completed apprenticeship
 some technical/vocational school
 completed technical/vocational school
 some community college
 completed community college
 some university
 received undergraduate degree
 received graduate degree
 don't know
 other If *other*, please describe:
-

Older brother 3

- some high school
 completed high school
 some apprenticeship
 completed apprenticeship
 some technical/vocational school
 completed technical/vocational school
 some community college
 completed community college
 some university
 received undergraduate degree
 received graduate degree
 don't know
 other If *other*, please describe:
-

Part F: Job Experience

20. Do you have an active résumé? Yes No

21. Do you have a job now? (Please check the appropriate line.)

Yes No Looking

If you answered "no," please proceed to question # ³¹~~30~~.

If you answered "yes" or "looking," please proceed to answer the following questions (#21 - ³⁰~~29~~).

22. Do you have more than one job? Yes No

23. Is/are these jobs part-time or full-time? (Please check the appropriate line for each job.)

Job 1 is Part-time Full-time

Job 2 is Part-time Full-time

24. How many hours a week do you work approximately? _____ hours/week.

25. What time of the day do you usually work? (please check the most appropriate line.)

morning

afternoon

evening

night shift

variable shifts

other If *other*, please describe _____.

26. What kind of job(s) do you have? (please check the appropriate lines.)

food, beverage

childcare

accommodation

personal services (e.g. hairdressing, landscaping, cleaning.)

sales

construction

manufacturing

trades-apprenticeship

mechanical

clerical/financial/computers

sport and recreation services

transportation

education

health

farming

other

If *other*, please describe: _____

27. Name the firm(s) that you work for.

Part F: Job Experience (...continued)

28. How did you get your job(s)? (Please check the appropriate line.)

Personal contacts/friends

Advertisement

Business application form

Work experience

Family

School contact

Created it myself

Other If *other*, please describe: _____

29. If you have a job(s) or are looking for one, why? (please check as many as apply to you.)

need the money

an excuse to get out of the home

good experience for future work

so I can put something on my resume

fun atmosphere at work

many of my friends have jobs

family expectations

other

If *other*, please describe: _____

30. Do you want to keep this job after graduation? (Please check the appropriate line.)

Yes No Undecided

Please explain: _____

31. If you do not have a job, why not? (please check as many as apply to you.)

not enough time

no interest

had a bad experience with a former job

don't need the money

can't find one, have given up

clashes with school/sports activities

clashes with family responsibilities

other

If *other*, please describe: _____

32. What could realistically prevent you from completing your Grade 12 this school year?
(Please check as many as apply to you.)

Nothing could realistically prevent me from completing Grade 12 this year.

Not enough credits

Provincial exams

Family matters

The offer of a full time job

Work commitments in general

Acceptance into another program

Illness

Relationship

Loss of interest

Other If *other*, please describe: _____

Part G: The Powell River Pulp and Paper Mill

33. Have you ever worked in the Powell River pulp/paper mill? (Please check appropriate line.)
 Yes No (If you answered "no," go to question # 36.)

34. If yes, what was your job? _____

35. What were the dates of your employment?
 Start date _____ End date _____

36. How many people in your immediate family have worked in the mill, for any period of time, including yourself? Please circle appropriate number

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

37. In your opinion, what are job opportunities like for youth at the pulp/paper mill? Please circle the most appropriate word.

very poor poor average good very good don't know

38. If the opportunity was available, would you be willing to quit school and work in the mill if you were offered a full time job? (please mark the appropriate line.)
 Yes No Don't know

Part H: Choices and Plans

39. What do you plan/hope to be doing in September 1995? (please check the most likely option.)

- a) School/Training If you check 'School/training,' go to section a) School, #40, below.
 b) Work If you check 'Work,' go to section b) Work, # 43, below.
 c) Travel If you check 'Travel,' go to section c) Travel, # 50, below.
 d) Other If you check 'Other,' go to section d) Other, #51, below.

a) School

40. If your answer is *school/training*, why are you choosing this option? (Please check the most appropriate line.)

- To gain job qualifications
 General interest
 Family expectations
 Nothing else to do
 To meet new people
 To get away from Powell River
 To stay in Powell River
 Other If *other*, please describe: _____

a) School (...continued)

41. To the best of your knowledge, please indicate what kind of school you will be attending:
- high school upgrade
 - apprenticeship
 - technical/vocational school
 - community college
 - university
 - don't know
 - other If *other*, please describe: _____

42. Please fill in the following information to the best of your knowledge about the school you hope to attend in September 1995:

School _____
 Location _____
 Program _____

b) Work

43. If *work* is part of your plans for September 1995, please indicate the reason for choosing this option. (Choose as many as apply to you.)

- need money
- personal preference
- develop skills
- family expectations
- nothing else to do
- To get away from Powell River
- To stay in Powell River
- I will be supporting someone else besides myself
- Other If *other*, please describe: _____

44. Please indicate the type of job you are looking for: (check the most appropriate line.)

- food, beverage
- childcare
- accommodation
- personal services (e.g. hairdressing, landscaping, custodial)
- sales
- construction
- manufacturing
- trades-apprenticeship
- mechanical
- clerical/financial computers
- sport and recreation services
- transportation
- education
- health
- farming
- other If *other*, please describe: _____

b) Work (...continued)

45. What do you think your chances are of finding the job you want in September 1995? (please circle most appropriate answer.)

very poor poor average good very good don't know

46. Have you started looking for a job? Yes No

47. If you answered "no" to the above question, please indicate when you will start looking for a job: _____

48. Where will you look for this job? (Please check the most appropriate line.)

Powell River

Sunshine Coast

Lower Mainland

Vancouver Island

Other Please indicate specific location if you checked *other*. _____

49. Do you have any idea who your employer will be? (Please check appropriate line.)

Yes No If yes, who? _____

c) Travel

50. If *travel* is part of your plans for September 1995, what do you intend to do once you return from your travels?

d) Other

51. If your plans include activities *other* than school, work, or travel please describe. (activity, location).

Part I: Career Plans

52. Do you have any long term career plans? (please check the appropriate line.)

Yes No

53. If yes, what are they?

Part I: Career Plans (...continued)

54. If you do not have long term career plans, why not? (Please check as many as apply to you.)

just don't know what I want to do

unaware of jobs available

not ready to make a choice yet

I won't find a job, so who cares?

Other If *other*, please describe: _____

55. Are your parents aware of your career plans? (Please check appropriate line.)

Yes No Don't know Not applicable

56. Do they support your goal? ie. do they encourage or discourage your career aspirations or are they neutral? (check the most appropriate answer)

Mother/female guardian

encouraging

neutral

discouraging

does not know about your plans

Father/male guardian

encouraging

neutral

discouraging

does not know about your plans

57. How does the rest of your family, including your relatives, feel about your career choice? (check the most appropriate answer)

encouraging

neutral

discouraging

does not know about your plans

cannot generalize, because there are differences of opinion among family members

Part J: Where to Live?

58. If possible, would you prefer to stay in Powell River? (Check the most appropriate line.)

Yes No Don't care Don't know

59. If you answered yes, why?

60. If you answered no, why not?

61. If not Powell River, then where would you like to eventually settle?

Sunshine Coast

Lower Mainland

Vancouver Island

Other

Please indicate specific location if you checked *other*. _____

Part K: Where to Live? (...continued)

62. Do you think your choice of career will allow you to stay in Powell River? (please check appropriate line.)

Yes No Don't know

Part L: Opinion

63. How would you rate employment opportunities in Powell River? (Please circle most appropriate answer.)

very poor poor average good very good don't know

64. In your opinion, how has the job situation for youth changed in Powell River over the last ten years? (Please check the appropriate line.)

improved
 stayed the same
 worsened
 don't know

Comments: _____

65. What future changes in long term employment opportunities in Powell River do you anticipate? (Please check the appropriate line.)

improvement
 stay the same
 worsen
 don't know

Comment: _____

66. Please use the space below to add any additional comments you may have relating to this survey.

Your participation in this survey is most appreciated. Together with student interviews, these surveys will form a major section of my Masters thesis. I will be sharing the results of the survey with your class once I have organized the data. Thanks again for your support!