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Helpers and Heroes, Hurdles and Highs: A Humanistic Autoethnographical Reflection on Working Class Student Experiences

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Abstract

This research sought to answer the question of what helps working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program. An autoethnographic method was employed to systematically analyze my story, one of being a working class person navigating the higher educational system, compare the results to existing psychological research, and generate new themes, and ideas in the hope of ameliorating the experience, and increasing the likelihood of success for others. Themes, conclusions and implications for students were presented.

Dedication

For my parents, and my life partner, who encouraged this pursuit and provided the support needed to realize a dream.

Acknowledgements

To my family, thank you for everything. I could not have done it without your help, understanding and support.

To the members of my community, thank you for everything. I could not have done it without you.

To the Faculty members, those who have challenged and encouraged, listened and helped, thank you. Each of you have played an important role in my growth and in fulfilling a dream.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Ellis (2004) defines autoethnography as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experiences, in order to understand cultural experience." In keeping with Ellis's definition, I seek, through autoethnography, to critically reflect on my personal experiences as a working class post secondary student, both in demotivation and withdrawal and in perseverance and accreditation, as a means of shedding light on and critically examining the psychological scholarship on working class student's experiences in that role.

Also, in keeping with humanist ethics, as described by Kurtz (2000) the founder of the International Academy of Humanism, I will seek to frame all my experiences with the utmost respect to the first principle of humanism. In doing so the "dignity and autonomy of the individual" (Kurtz, 2000, p. 31) both in demotivation and withdrawal and in perseverance and accreditation will be maintained by respecting the "liberty of thought and conscience, the free mind and free inquiry, and alternative value systems" (Kurtz, 2000, p. 31) of the author and his perceptions at various temporal points of inquiry, from a perspective of contemporary academic success. Maslow, (1943) a prominent humanistic psychologist opined that if we are to see the needs of individuals in a society we must turn to those whose needs have not yet been sated. As a successful graduate student contemporarily, I can turn to my own recollections of past experiences as an economic and social underdog, and critically examine them to increase the depth of psychological understanding possessed in regard to those who struggle to succeed in post-secondary study despite evidence of aptitude.

Statement of the Problem

The broadening income gap between upper and lower socio-economic classes is among the most significant social problems facing humanity today, both domestically and internationally. While efforts have been made by researchers to describe the strengths and challenges of students from lower socio-economic classes in university there is a lack of data on personal experience of success. It is with the intent to contribute factors associated with the success of adult working class students in university to the literature, in the hope of improving the likelihood of other, future working class student's success that I undertook this thesis.

The year before I was born an influential ethnographer Willis (1977, p. 1) posited that "the difficult thing to explain about how middle class kids get middle class jobs is why others let them. The difficult thing to explain about how working class kids get working class jobs is why they let themselves." From a perspective of unimagined academic success in pursuit of a career teaching social studies and family studies, success that enabled unanticipated admission to study applied psychology in schools at the graduate level, I will reflect on my psychology during periods of academic demotivation and withdrawal as well as in perseverance and accreditation. In doing so I will reflect on how I let myself become academically demotivated, which led to the very working class labour described by Willis, labour that I strived to avoid through academics, and how a resolution to that fate unexpectedly prepared me to return to study, persevere and become accredited. The experiences of the working class students Willis studied were strikingly similar to my own decades later, and an ocean away.

I began school a year early. I was excited, and a little nervous about attending school. My neighbourhood friends were a year older, and I would miss them if left behind. My parents, both coming from working class roots had settled in a small agricultural and industrial South Western

Ontario city, Woodstock. For context, there are roughly the same number of citizens in my home town as there are full time students at the university I attended. My father having earned an undergraduate degree in psychology, my mother a college certificate eased my nerves, and in doing so had instilled in me a vision of school that resembled embarking upon an educational voyage at sea, with ships not led by captains, but by teachers, ones who had dedicated their lives to helping the children in their vessel to learn all about themselves, and the world that surrounded them. They were born during the height of humanistic psychology during the mid 20th century and were presumably influenced by that and the cultural shift taking place in the 1960's. Preschool was very much like they described, exciting, educational, an adventure with new activities and people. A rotation of parent volunteers acted as teacher's assistants. Arts and crafts supplies were plentiful.

While my parents extolled, and I absorbed, the benefits of higher education, both for personal growth and for providing economic opportunities, success in higher education has not in and of itself bore sustained economic benefits, or upward class mobility for my family. This did not come from some erroneous assumptions or inability to navigate the system, it came from market trends largely beyond our control. The degree in psychology my father earned made the options of entry level positions in social service and graduate school available to him. A plea for economic help from his parents though, who had fallen on hard times, despite my grandfather enjoying a career in city politics and in practicing the law, meant that the former option, between turning his back on his potential, or conversely to the plea for help from his family respectively, was the lesser of two evils, and thus chosen.

My grandfather on my father's side had attended the same university as I had, earning instead a degree in law, and began his career, not as I imagine the young law students today

envision their careers, ensconced in corporate opulence, but in the midst of the economic depression of the 1930's, in a small agricultural and industrial community. This meant having to take whatever his community could afford to pay in return for services rendered. During a period of life when most are gaining an economic foothold my grandfather gained political and social capital. Support of an initiative allowing alcohol to be served in restaurants for the first time, an initiative he believed to be not only impending, but also to the benefit of local business owners, and the will of his constituents earned the ire of local religious leaders in the late 50's. They responded with a successful telephone campaign to prevent the re-election of 2 like mindedly pragmatic counsellors. I understand that my grandfather was quite disillusioned, not so much with the members of his community, who he continued to serve, respecting the electoral process and accepting the expression of their collective will, but more deeply with the church that chose to conspire, and stand against its loyal member. His wife worked as both a domestic engineer and as a cook in a local psychiatric institution.

My grandmother on my mother's side worked as a cook stationed overseas in World War II, and later in various institutional settings, as well as working as a farmer. Her husband, who she met during the war did not attend university as my other grandfather had, instead weighing his options and electing to enlist in World War II, at 17 years of age. He would serve in the air force, re-enlisting for a second tour as a tail gunner in a Lancaster bomber, a position we were told while visiting a museum that houses a functioning example of the bomber, had a one in four chance of death on each mission. Electing to re-enlist for a third tour with the crew that had grown quite loyal to each other over the 41 missions they had survived, he was met with the news that they were out of work, peace had been declared. He then worked as a teacher in a

small northern community while his wife ran the farm, and later reenlisted, this time as an officer.

My father had prior to enrolling in university been employed at the same large psychiatric institution his mother had, just outside of our community, adjacent to our local conservation area, and could reasonably expect upward mobility within that organization contingent on credentialing. While this avenue was technically still available, and obtained with the undergraduate psychology credentialing earned, the credentialing was not sufficient in sustaining employment in the context of a shifting market place wherein staffing numbers were dwindling concurrently with patient numbers, as many transitioned from institutional living into community living, supported predominantly by part time staff. Part time, and precarious work in social services would be the only positions available in lieu of additional graduate credentialing, and were insufficient in supporting a family. My mother supported us by working part time as a cashier in a grocery store, finding the college certificate far less effective at procuring secretarial work than she had been led to believe it would be. Employed in retail until the final decade of employment, wherein industrial labour, while sacrificing health, provided greater pay, and the ability to afford some 'extras' like a new couch set. My father supplemented part time social service work with part time work in an arcade, providing quarters in exchange for bills. Worked on an employment insurance funded work crew in a supervisory role due to work experience at the institution. He drove a taxi cab, providing transportation to the community, a position that would come to eclipse social work in revenue generated, warranting a move to that field of work in lieu of what higher education had been in preparation of. Years later my father sought and obtained a position delivering mail for Canada Post, taking on a commute of an hour and a half each way to Toronto so that a full time position, and the health benefits that would bestow his

family could be obtained more quickly in a context of higher staffing numbers and turnover rates in comparison to our comparatively small local postal office. After a decade of commuting, a transfer to the local postal office was obtained, and that position held until retirement. This would be our foray into the lower middle class. In the last decade of employment, when he wanted to be able to afford some 'extras' in life, like fulfilling the dream of owning a 63 Plymouth Valiant, an endeavour that resulted in purchasing a west highland terrier named Frosty, he sought and obtained part time social work in addition to the postal carrier position he was employed in.

First grade went down hill. The classroom teacher I encountered there employed what I would later know as a strict authoritarian style of teaching. She yelled, slammed rulers on desks, and allowed somewhat of a 'Lord of the Flies,' survival of the fittest atmosphere to develop amongst students. Those who answered quickly and accurately were rewarded with praise; contemplation, and inaccuracy were admonished verbally, and nonverbally by teacher, and classmate alike. Gym class was managed in a similar fashion, each day beginning with a run around the building, an activity I struggled with. I could not catch my faster peers despite my efforts to do so, and eventually elected to fall back and support a peer whose struggles in that regard were greater than my own. My parents assured me of my ability, of the importance of education, of perseverance, but I did not find a conducive atmosphere. I adapted, made friends, conformed to expectations and built confidence. Third grade went down hill again. We had moved 2 miles away as the bird flies, but worlds away in classroom environment. The speed and quick wit I had honed in what I now knew to be the wrong side of the tracks was of little use, and at times an impediment to my academic success. I struggled to adapt, improvements waxed and

waned, but while adaptations never facilitated a sense of acceptance from teachers or academic peers, they did grant me enough success to be accepted into higher education.

It was difficult for me to translate my interests and aptitude into a major, or program of study. My favourite subject was visual art, followed closely by the humanities, and feedback from computer testing provided by the school advised me that based on my responses, a career in counselling or social work was suggested. Drawing on my own experiences with psychological, social and economic issues, the assurances of trusted others that those experiences would help me to effectively help those in need, and believing that to be a more economically viable option than art based on my perceptions of the job market, I focused my efforts thusly. One thing was certain, I wanted to make a positive impact on the world around me and was motivated to do so as a life's work, a career.

Once there however I was unable to navigate the system successfully, enrolled in and withdrew from 3 collegiate programs and 1 university program, having never honed the skills of a successful student, or the belief that I could, or should change the study habits that had provided me some success. I could recognize more successful students and their behaviours but my attempts to approach or emulate them were unsuccessful. They seemed to enjoy the very activities I found either tedious or exhausting, and I erroneously equated that to an inborn quality that they possessed and I lacked. I was too embarrassed to approach faculty for help even when I recognized the need. The attempts that I did make seemed to fall on deaf ears. It was a depressing situation, and I vacillated between internalizing and externalizing the causation, but the necessities of life precluded endless contemplation or further formal study.

I toiled in industrial labour for years before returning to school, the work ethic I learned there, amongst other things helped me to become the successful graduate student that I am today.

If this were merely a personal trouble, one occurring, as described by sociologist Mills (1959) within the individual, and the individual's capacities, it would remain largely hidden within my memories and a carefully constructed resume. However, when I have shared these memories amongst working class individuals I have been surprised at how common the experience of trying, but withdrawing from post secondary study prior to accreditation was. Reflecting on my experiences in the context of academic success studying both psychology and sociology has resulted in several important epiphanies. Specifically, in regard to how working class individuals misguidedly approach the hurdles of post secondary education, rely on the advice of similarly misguided individuals purporting to be helpers, fail to identify and approach educational heroes, and as a result fail to experience the educational highs that make the post secondary educational experience motivational in and of itself.

It was my hope that when I returned to my home town to complete the Bachelor of Education practice teaching requirements my experiences would serve to inspire high school students to succeed where I had failed. I had come full circle and thought that if I could reach any students of the same class, or socioeconomic status as myself, students sitting in the very desks and working from the very text books that I had decades earlier would be a good place to start. This was more difficult than I had imagined. The value of lessons learned to self notwithstanding, students seemed to gravitate towards the hurdles that I was unable to mount historically and not to the contemporary highs that would follow once these hurdles succumbed to sustained and focused effort. What makes this a societal issue, one described by Mills (1959) as a public matter in contrast to a personal trouble, and therefore a problem worthy of study is the prevalence of this experience amongst working class adults in the community I grew up in. It is common there to have some college or university experience but not be accredited. More

concerning is the devaluation of post secondary study entirely and resultant lowered life course expectations amongst young people despite their aptitude for and interest in academics, or in employment that will certainly require academic accreditation. These devaluations and expectations are strikingly similar to those described by Willis (1977) nearly 40 years ago, when studying working class boys in the final years of secondary schooling and beyond.

Also, in the context of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) legislation and the like increasing the number of potentially eligible applicants; an extended economic downturn coupled with the ever increasing automation of unskilled and semi skilled labour decreasing the labour options available without accreditation, likewise increasing the number of potentially eligible mature or adult working class applicants; and the increasing need for post secondary institutions to recoup revenues lost from public sector disbursements through private revenue, specifically tuition, there is a potentially numerous population of incoming students who, like myself may be at risk of withdrawing prior to accreditation, and an incentive to attract and retain a larger segment of this potentially numerous population to post secondary study.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the current study is to share my story, one of being a working class person navigating the higher educational system, to systematically analyze how that story relates to the psychological research, and in doing so generate new themes, and ideas in the hope of ameliorating the experience, and increasing the likelihood of success for others. In critically reflecting on my personal experiences as a working class post secondary student, both in demotivation and withdrawal and in perseverance and accreditation, this study will shed light on and critically examine the psychological scholarship on working class student's experiences in that role. In doing so this research will seek to raise awareness of a rarely spoke of, or studied

student population and to inform the praxis of working class students at risk of withdrawal, and in doing so contribute to alleviating the broadening income gap.

Research Question

What helps working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program?

Operational Definitions

Helpers is a word I will use to describe people who have been present in a specific time or place in my life who have provided me valuable inspiration, advice and support in regard to a specific time or place in my educational journey.

Heroes is a word I will use to describe people who have through their published research or autobiographies provided valuable omnipresent inspiration, advice and support in regard to my educational journey.

Hurdles is a word I will use to describe obstacles to accreditation that are outside of the explicit curricular requirements of the institutions providing post secondary education.

Highs is a word I will use to describe highly enjoyable experiences of educational excitement. As a teacher I would describe them as teachable moments, as an autoethnographer a recognition of things clicking when they previously had not, as a humanist a sensation of growth, or a transcendence of self, or as Maslow would describe them, peak experiences.

Working class labour is primarily unskilled or semi skilled manual labour exchanged for an hourly wage. It is labour which is often largely or completely devoid of intrinsic motivation or autonomous decision making and provides little if any social capital beyond the working class sphere.

The working class is an arguably ill defined group of people engaged in working class labour on a full time or part time basis. Those who are unemployed are often categorized amongst the working class as well.

In an effort to operationalize the working class for the purposes of this study significant familial income benchmarks were sought provincially and federally. When a 30% tuition reduction (OSAP.GOV, 2010) was introduced by the Ontario provincial government following the latest election cycle students whose familial income exceeded $155,000 were ineligible, and as such will not be considered working class for the purposes of this study. At the Canadian federal level this roughly coincides with the second highest Canada Revenue Agency (CRA, 2016) tax bracket of 4, a median cut off of sorts, which applies to income exceeding $140,388. While this measure refers to individual income as opposed to familial income it provides some furtherance to the task of operationalizing the working class, at least in reference to provincial and federal budgetary and legislative decisions. Families and individuals with yearly income exceeding these amounts are deemed by provincial and federal legislators to not be in sufficient need to be granted considerably lesser tuition costs when their children attend post-secondary schooling, or considerably lesser rates of taxation than those families and individuals whose income falls short of that amount.

The median family income in Canada falls far short of that amount at $76,000, as does the median individual income at $27,600 (STATSCAN, 2011) suggesting that the average Canadian family and individual is in need of assistance or relief in regard to the affordability of tuition costs and in their contribution to the public coffers by way of income tax.

Glassdoor (2017) reports that Canada Post letter carriers currently employed on a full time basis earn wages averaging $51,970 per year. Glassdoor (2017) reports that cashiers in

Canada earns wages averaging $22,000 per year. If my parents were currently employed in the positions they worked the majority of their working lives in, our family would be working class, as defined for the purposes of this study in respect to falling bellow the aforementioned median income, and engagement in working class manual labour. They have since retired, and as they are relying on a pension and savings for income, and I have been engaged in higher education for 7 years, our family income is currently far less.

Class and socioeconomic status are terms used in the delineation and study of societal groups. Class is more commonly used in European contexts and is measured more qualitatively in comparison to socioeconomic status, which is used more commonly in North American contexts and is measured more quantitatively.

Demotivation is the waning of motivation that was once present in an individual, in this case the motivation to be academically successful and the underlying motivation to be economically successful through that endeavor.

Perseverance is the continuation of an activity, post secondary study in this case despite the difficulty experienced, or the hurdles encountered.

Withdrawal is the discontinuation of post secondary study prior to completion of the tasks required for graduation.

Accreditation is the bestowing of documentation by a post secondary institution confirming an individual's successful completion of the tasks required for graduation.

Limitations

The thesis parameters will encompass the process of selecting a major or course of study in my senior year of secondary school, enrollment in, demotivation and withdrawal from said study, a decade of unemployment, underemployment and industrial labour, reenrollment,

perseverance and success, through to the commencement of the present study. The present study will be limited by my ability to recollect the events that transpired, my historical perspective of them, and the potential for memories to be skewed, as well as the accessibility of artifacts to assist in that endeavor.

Autoethnography has been selected as the methodological framework for the current study because it positions the researcher as participant observer to research from within, in contrast to other methodologies that purport to study from more objective stances. My position as a participant observer within the working class allows me to study a "culture's relational practices, common values and beliefs, and shared experiences for the purpose of helping insiders (cultural members) and outsiders (cultural strangers) better understand the culture" (Maso, 2001 as cited in Ellis, 2011, p. 3).

Reliability as applied to autoethnography is largely a concern of narrative honesty, specifically whether the events could have transpired as described, and whether the author believes they happened as described (Ellis, 2011). This autoethnographer will strive for the utmost of narrative honesty while writing, but will not purport to recollect with absolute accuracy.

Validity as applied to autoethnography is largely a concern of coherence, specifically whether the events are effectively narrated, and that the narrative is useful, specifically in terms of improvements to communication with unlike others or to the lives of participants, readers or the narrator (Ellis, 2004). This autoethnographer will strive for the utmost of coherence and usefulness while writing, but it will ultimately be the responsibility of the reader to determine if the product is sufficiently coherent, or valid in this regard.

Generalizability as applied to autoethnography, is largely a concern of narrative impact, (Ellis, 2011) specifically whether the content reaches the reader sufficiently. This autoethnographer will strive to make the unfamiliar familiar in an effort to ensure that the present study will be generalizable to the reader's experience, or the experience of others who are familiar to the reader.

Design of Study

This autoethnographical study combines autobiographical and ethnographic (Ellis, 2011) elements that are typical of autoethnography with a systematic literature review that is less typical of autoethnography. The inclusion of this literature review will ground the current study within psychological scholarship and will allow the author to compare and contrast the autoethnographic data to the existing psychological literature.

The autoethnographical elements of the current study will primarily utilize a personal narrative approach, but will include aspects of a reflexive approach in keeping with Ellis's (2011) description of these designs. The principle focus of the personal narrative will be on the academic experiences of the author, but will also include some aspects of personal life, specifically those aspects that relate to academic experiences. The focus of the reflexive approach will be on the changes this author has experienced transitioning from demotivation and withdrawal to perseverance and accreditation and the epiphanies that have resulted from these changes.

Significance of the Study

This thesis is being undertaken in order to contribute to the academic understanding of working class student experiences, both in demotivation and withdrawal, as well as in perseverance and accreditation despite the difficulty and challenge faced. The purpose of doing

so is to help others anticipate and recognize the challenges they are at risk of facing and to support students in achieving success despite them.

Autoethnographic writing can also be a therapeutic exercise for the author as the autoethnographer's critical analysis of personal narratives can "make sense of ourselves and our experiences" (Ellis, 2011 p. 6) and the publication of these narratives can provide an academic voice to those who have felt without one (Boylorn, 2006, Willis, 2004) previously.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

It is necessary to incorporate theoretical, ethnographic and empirical research sources to inform the current study, its methodology and to frame interpretations of the narrative data obtained. This necessity arises from the focus of the current study, (what helps working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program) a recognition of a relative dearth in psychological scholarship to that effect, and the understanding that a replication or furtherance of said scholarship in the same vein would not be conducive to the pragmatic conclusions this study strives for.

The triangulation of data sources is a qualitative technique espoused by Patton (2002) for its corroborative power. This power is especially valuable to the current study as it is one that is largely unfamiliar to social science researchers, those studying psychology in particular, both in the perspective the topic is broached from, and in the autoethnographic methodology utilized. Ellis (2011) described the personal narrative (the data source for the current study) as particularly controversial for traditional social science researchers. The utilization of corroboration is intended to alleviate some of that controversy, especially for those reviewing the work, but also for the benefit it will bestow when writing and interpreting admittedly subjective and relativistic narrative data.

The inclusion of a theoretical basis is valuable to a single case or autoethnographic study such as this one because it addresses a key concern regarding the methodology, its generalizability. The generalizability strived for here is analytic, in contrast to statistical, and the theory selected constitutes a working hypothesis (Cronbach, 1975) for the current study. The justification for selecting Maslow's theory of human motivation (1943) is three-fold. First, the theory is an influential psychological theory, enduringly so, that will serve to ground the current

study in the field of psychology, in keeping with this autoethnographer's program of study, applied psychology in schools. Second, the theory of human motivation is humanistic and decidedly positive in nature, describing a motivation within all humans to satisfy their needs and fulfill their potential. This is conducive to interpreting the existing literature, much of which is anticipated to be relatively pessimistic and less than ideally pragmatic for the aim of the current study, to help working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program. Finally, as an autoethnographer I identify strongly with the humanistic perspective Maslow (1943) has utilized during research and theory building. This is in line with both my use of the autoethnographic method and my values. Maslow interjects self into research, relying on self identified heroes deemed to be self-actualized for biographical analysis and to inform the theorists own self actualization, and in providing the results of said analysis seems to inform of a "culture's relational practices, common values and beliefs, and shared experiences for the purpose of helping insiders (cultural members) and outsiders (cultural strangers) better understand the culture" (Maso, 2001 as cited in Ellis, 2011, p. 3) as is the intent of the current study. Maslow doesn't speak of insiders and outsiders per se, but of those who are self actualized or self actualizing and those who are not.

The inclusion of an ethnographic basis is valuable for the current study as it provides both ethnographic data and theoretical guidance for the current autoethnographical study. The justification for selecting the ethnographic work of Willis (1977, 2004) is three-fold. First, the period of study coincides with the life of this autoethnographer, having been born a year after the original publication, and having decided to return to university from full time industrial employment 2 years after the later publication. Second, the age and socioeconomic class of the participants studied coincides with the focus of this autoethnography, the senior year of

secondary school and beyond for working class students. Finally, a review of this study into "how working class kids get working class jobs" (Willis, 1977, p. 1) is done with the intention of identifying factors, or hurdles in the language of the current study, that demotivate working class students and increase their risk of withdrawal prior to graduation. This is done for the purpose of providing insight into how these hurdles can be navigated and potentially profited from. The British context of the ethnography is a limitation to the current study, but a limitation that was deemed acceptable in the context of competing alternatives, the best of which was conducted geographically closer in America by Weis (1990) but with junior high school students, not adults.

The inclusion of an overview of the literature pertaining to the current study is valuable in assessing the current psychological scholarship, which is fundamental to the furtherance of said scholarship. While it has been mentioned above that there is a dearth of scholarship in the same vein as this study, to assist working class post secondary students, there is relatively more abundant scholarship directed towards policy makers, post secondary institutions, administrators and their staff that can assist the aim of this study in a redirected and combinatory fashion.

Theoretical

Maslow (1943) is best known for the hierarchical arrangement of universal human needs that make up much of the theory of human motivation. A human may experience deficiencies in multiple needs that motivate behaviour, but this theory posits that the human will focus on the lowest of these needs first and foremost. A human will be most motivated to satisfy any physiological needs (breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion) that exist, before moving on to satisfy safety needs, (security of: body, employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property) before moving on to satisfy love/belonging needs, (friendship, family,

sexual intimacy) before moving on to satisfy esteem needs, (self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others) respectively. Maslow (1943) also posits that a human deprived of a basic need such as food for long enough could foreseeably change their outlook on life in general, perhaps viewing a time or place with plentiful food stuffs as utopian with little or no regard for more than the satisfaction of that need. Conversely, a human who's experience of deprivation is relatively short may experience a resultant increase in resilience to future deprivations.

The theory (Maslow, 1943) states that consistent satisfaction of the lowest 4 needs can facilitate a transcendence from a state of deficiency management to a state of being. Doing so can lead a human to be motivated to satisfy the highest of needs, the self-actualization needs (morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts) that may have alluded conscious awareness prior to sufficient relief from deficiency. Satisfaction of self actualization needs, or the need to fulfill one's human potential, requires that a human engage in the pursuit that they are inherently suited for. Maslow (1943) offers as an example, amongst others, that a painter must paint to self actualize.

Education then, at least in terms of the process of self actualization or of fulfilling one's potential seems unlikely unless deficiencies in physiological, safety, love/belonging and esteem needs are met to a sufficient degree and consistency. The idea of sufficiency is key however as Maslow (1943) posits that a need must only be sufficiently satisfied, not completely satisfied before the next highest need enters conscious awareness and is motivating. A hungry human's stomach does not have be completely full before envisioning the satisfaction of one's safety needs for example. Also, a human may value esteem to a greater extent than love/belonging when experiencing deficiencies in both needs despite the contradiction to their hierarchal

relationship. Maslow (1943) opines that such a valuation may be less of a contradiction, and more a means to an end if a human's attempts to satisfy love/belonging needs have been sufficiently thwarted, and one has concluded that the satisfaction of esteem needs such as confidence or achievement are necessary to satisfy their love/belonging needs. Likewise, a human who is inherently creative may experience an idiosyncratic drive to create, to paint for example despite the deficiencies experienced. One cannot create indefinitely however, as physiological needs will eventually emerge into conscious awareness to preserve the life of the creator. A considerably less dire situation is the human who's needs have been habitually satisfied so much so that they neglect the maintenance of their lower needs. These lower needs will eventually emerge into conscious awareness when a sufficient level of deprivation is met, the extent of which is thought to be dependent on one's tolerance of frustration. Frustration tolerance may be increased through early and consistent gratification, conversely through limited experiences of deprivation, or if in furtherance of one's values or ideals, in martyrdom for example. In furtherance of education however, the development of frustration tolerance may be of limited or episodic value though, since education is an endeavor benefitting from optimal functioning sustained over years.

It would seem that if a working class individual were to embark upon post secondary study they would be served first and foremost, as anyone would, by achievement and maintenance of sufficient satisfaction in any need deficiencies present prior to study, a situation Maslow (1943) concedes is rare amongst society at large. Perhaps though, if a working class individual were to identify values or ideals sufficiently important to them that are served by persevering academically they could better tolerate frustration, maintain their motivation to succeed despite the hurdles they encounter. This begs a line of 'how to' questioning though in

terms of targeting behaviour towards becoming self actualized, or of identifying values or ideals, the service of which are a furtherance to self actualization. Maslow concedes knowing relatively little about the self actualized or self actualization at the time of publishing, citing lack of clinical and experimental data available in 1943.

By 1954 though Maslow had identified enough self actualized and self actualizing people to offer a list of characteristics of self actualizing people (Maslow, 1954 p. 153-174):

more efficient perception of reality and more comfortable relations with it; acceptance of self, others, and nature; spontaneity, simplicity and naturalness; problem centering as opposed to ego-centered; the quality of detachment; the need for privacy; autonomy, independence of culture and environment; continued freshness of appreciation; mystic and peak experiences; a feeling of kinship with others; deeper and more profound interpersonal relations; the democratic character structure; discrimination between means and ends, between good and evil; philosophical, unhostile sense of humor; self-actualizing creativity; resistance to enculturation, the transcendence of any particular culture.

Maslow (1954) concedes that the effort to define characteristics of psychological health will not satisfy conventional expectations in terms of reliability, validity or sampling. Also, conceding the fruitlessness of an effort to identify self actualizing college age participants amongst a pool of three thousand, which yielded only 1 participant and 12 potential future participants. Maslow (1954) concluded that perhaps self actualization was not possible for society's young adults as it was for older participants at that time.

By 1962 though Maslow (1962) had redefined self actualization as an episodic experience, in contrast to an eventual all or nothing state of being, and described these episodic

experiences as being peak experiences, expanding upon and coalescing previous findings in regard to self actualization and mystic or peak experiences respectively. Such experiences can come at anytime, to anyone, and bring with them much of what had previously been found to be the characteristics of self actualizing people. Being that self actualization is now known as a matter of degree, in contrast to a binary proposition, the lived histories, insights and important growth experiences of a great variety of people can inform self actualization. Those who are thought to have achieved a state of self actualization can now more accurately, and pragmatically be described as those who experience it more frequently, intensely and perfectly than most people. Maslow concluded that these experiences are idiosyncratic, despite conceding an interplay between inherent interests and environmental opportunities, but that the conscious awareness of an idiosyncrasy could occur individually or conversely within a therapeutic relationship.

Ethnographic

In the influential ethnography Willis (1977, p. 3) offers the quandary "the difficult thing to explain about how the middle class kids get middle class jobs is why others let them. The difficult thing to explain about how working class kids get working class jobs is why they let themselves." The project utilized case study, interview, group discussion and participant observations of working class boys during their final 2 years of secondary school, and the first 6 months of work. The Lads, an accepted self-referential name, their parents, peers, teachers, school administrators and later, co-workers and employers were sources of information. The focus of the ethnography is the Hammertown case study. A study of 12 male friends who are members of a school counter culture attending Hammertown Boys School in England, a group and setting selected to typify the working class.

Willis (1977) concluded that the Lads studied defined their labor power and made decisions about how to apply it in respect to their own subjective definitions of it, and of their perception of opportunities to apply it. An alignment in thinking with that of working class adult males employed in entry level industrial labour positions was observed, one that Willis thought to be conducive to their eventual entry into that type of employment. A distinct contrast in thinking to those in the middle, and upper classes was also observed by Willis, particularly in their definitions of their teachers, the school administrators, and those classmates who conform (conformists) to the definitions of teachers and school administrators. A distinction Willis thought to be a hindrance to a conformist's entry into industrial labour. These definitions created amongst the working class boys were deemed by Willis (1977) to be a significant contributing factor in the reproduction of aspects of the working class culture that direct members toward a work place and lifestyle that, while initially rewarding becomes enslaving.

In an explanatory effort the ethnographer (Willis, 1977) found socioeconomic class based factors contributing to the maintenance of the school counter culture. Many of the conventions of school counter culture are similar to the conventions of industrial labour facility culture, and quite different from the conventions of school conformist culture. A distinguishing convention of school counter culture, or the informal group, is that practice is thought far more important than theory, and practical knowledge a pre-condition of other knowledge, a thought which extends from school counter culture throughout the working class. School conformist culture, or the formal group does not make this distinction. The informal group attempts to gain informal control over the formal processes of work as they have done in school. Those in the school counter culture tend to hold the same views of masculinity, conformists and those who incriminate others as the workers in the industrial facilities do, easing their transition into

industrial employment These views are distinct from those held by the formal group, conversely hindering their transition.

The informal group studied by Willis (1977), is an element of working class culture, comprised here of the Lads, that is characterized by autonomy. The informal group is posited as the "base unit" of this culture where subjective definitions are created. The formal group studied by Willis is an element of middle and upper class culture, comprised here of the conformists, institutional administrators and staff, that is characterized conversely by conformity. Incriminating others to authority is prohibited universally amongst the informal group, the Lads call it "grassing" while staff call it telling the truth. This is an example of how the Lads define things in fundamentally different terms within the informal group. The main goal of "dossing, blagging and wagging", terms that can be roughly translated to sleeping, lying, and skipping for the Lads is the preservation of personal mobility. In doing so the informal group unintentionally creates a symbolic and physical space that enables resistance to the perceived intention of the institution, which is to make them work. Having a laugh, and being able to make others laugh is a defining characteristic of the Lads. It represents an escape, which consolidates the group during shared behaviour, and establishes and maintains a hierarchy within the group.

Opposition to authority and rejection of the conformist, also elements of school counter culture were studied in the Willis (1977) ethnography. The boys studied questioned and resented teachers elevated hierarchal position relative to them. They valued having a laugh, adhering to adult fashions, pursuing adult social relationships, and the excitement of disregarding rules and authority in general. The conformists have bought into the system and demand something of it, sacrifice having a laugh to derive profit from the system. The Lads eschew profit from the system for esteem outside of, or above it. They feel superior to the conformists, particularly in

the sexual realm, but also in terms of smoking, paid work outside of school, and drinking, where they feel on par with teachers, or as authorities themselves. Their teachers are observed by Willis to seemingly agree, if only in private with the Lad's assertion of adultness and experience.

The prevention of boredom and the promotion of excitement is a goal Willis (1977) found to be very important amongst the Lads. In furtherance of that goal, fighting, and the talk of fighting brought the most excitement and most distinguished the Lads from the conformists. The Lads sought out activities where they were at risk of violence, adult night clubs for example, that the conformists did not. This is a form of power over the conformists for the Lads, as knowledge is for teachers. The addictive cycle of anticipation, action and refraction adds to the reinforcement they derive amongst the informal group from asserting their masculinity. Assertion accomplished through thrill seeking behaviors including the violent exhibition of physical supremacy, and in establishing honour through the exhibition of willingness to take risks, and to stand up for one's self and one's allies. This honour is of little or no value outside of the informal group however as these activities are shunned by conformists and teachers alike.

Also in an explanatory effort Willis (1977) identified institutionally based factors contributing to the maintenance of the school counter culture. The social divisions between the Lads and conformists had become solidified by the end of school, supported by a policy allowing friendship groups to eat lunch together in class rooms, but arising out of the need for friendship, by chance, or by being called for. A familiar explanation was conveyed to Willis by school staff, that a few troublemakers are followed by weaker, misguided others. Willis, however sought an institutional explanation and found that teaching is formally thought of as a fair exchange of teacher knowledge for student respect, with knowledge being the rarer and more valuable of the commodities. This discrepancy in value places the teacher at a higher hierarchal position. The

Lads were observed by Willis to reject this hierarchy however, and in doing so reject the more important exchange of knowledge for credentials (meaning credentials for better employment later in life that are exchanges the conformist accept and profit from). Willis offered as further explanation that "one of the most oppressive forces in the institution is the belittling and sarcastic attitude of some teachers" (Willis, 1977, p. 77) observing "a genuinely and strongly held conservative ethic concerning the organic, harmonious society" (Willis, 1977, p. 69) as evidenced by a senior teacher's comment (Willis, 1977, p. 69) "There must be hewers of wood and drawers of water." Willis concedes the seemingly fixed nature of class division, and the role of public education, despite the assertion of John Dewey, an early educational reformer that it is "a mechanism for creating an egalitarian society" but challenges the simplicity of explanations offered by radical Marxist thought with an argument relying on social psychology. In contrast to merely being acted upon by societal pressures, the Lads Willis studies exhibit agency in producing an oppositional ideology that reproduces class division.

Institutional factors contributing to class division were also observed in association with the implementation of a national mandate (Willis, 1977) to provide vocational guidance services to current students and employment services for those transitioning to work based on a purportedly objective meritocracy. Regardless of the quality, its traditional or progressive nature, careers teaching, and advice was observed by Willis to be ineffective and rejected in a similar fashion as school itself. Staff messages were dismantled and redefined by the Lads on their own terms in respect to working class culture. The Lads rejected the value of qualifications, rejected the formal route for the informal one. They saw a simpler, easier route to the same ends that their experience allowed them, a route unavailable to the conformists. While Willis found that the Lads didn't foresee school preparing them for work as the school staff did they did foresee a

continuity of sorts. They anticipated the same relation to authority, the same friends, and continually discriminating against the conformists. The Lads did not choose between jobs based on any intrinsic criterion that the school staff could recognize or understand. Willis found that they seemed to believe that all choices meant labour, that there is little difference where that labour takes place, and that work is inherently unlikeable. The Lads desired a work place that reflects and supports their cultural values, and chose based on compensation and the potential for having a laugh.

After departing the educational institution for the world of work Willis (1977) found that all the Lads had found work. After a year many were working in a second or even a third job and a few were unable to find work. The culture that directs them to this work also eases the transition into it. In speaking with the Lad's superiors Willis found that the Lads were preferred to conformists in manual labor and semi-skilled positions, unlike in the school environment, as they accepted the power structure of the industrial facility as well as their position in it, and have something to say for themselves. They were accepted socially there in a way they hadn't ever experienced in school.

In conclusion Willis (1977) found that the despite questioning the value of academic credentials in improving the quality of prospective employment, the Lads did indeed recognize that an individual could profit from buying into the system. The job market though, and success in general was seen as a zero sum game. When an individual gains an opportunity, it is lost for the group. Willis observed the Lads making decisions about how to apply their labour power during the invincibility of youth that they could likely never recover from. The short-term allure of paycheques, clothes and going out quickly turns into long term commitments of home and family that will all but preclude them from taking on unpaid schooling. Willis speculated that in

the coming decades trends in the job market, particularly automation and the standardization of manual labor, will exacerbate the difficulties experienced by the Lads and those like them by reducing the number of the working class jobs they seek, and the potential to gain informal control over the formal processes of work respectively.

As the 25th anniversary of the publication of the Willis (1977) ethnography approached the author was asked by editors Dolby and Dimitriadis to review, comment on and make sense of research that had stemmed from the author's original publication as it pertains to modern times. Based on this Willis (2004) concluded that significant changes in the job market had occurred as expected, in the United Kingdom where the original publication was researched and, perhaps particularly in the United States, to the detriment of the working class. Over half of the manufacturing jobs had been eliminated, as had a slightly greater proportion of workers holding trade union memberships. Those who can find employment in the manufacturing sector, and many remain highly motivated to do so, face an ever-present threat of plant closure. Alternative employment opportunities emerged but are problematic for the working class Willis opined. Employment in the service sector pays much less than the manufacturing sector, and the highly paid tech sector requires a degree of academic accreditation the author thought made it an all but an irrelevant option for those of the working class displaced by these trends in the job market. Despite this erosion of economic opportunity, an erosion described by the author as post-industrial in the vein of the post-agrarian erosion of agricultural opportunity, the young working class choose not to identify themselves through class culture, preferring instead to self identify through their brand label consumption. Complimentary market led trends toward individuation have furthered the structural changes taking place, and in doing so have given credence to the hypothesis that this is merely a personal trouble and not a societal problem of subjugation.

Willis (2004) contends that there is a deepening oppression of those who exchange their labor power for an hourly wage, but in crisis the author sees some new opportunities emerge. Traditional class boundaries have blurred, as have gender boundaries, while obscuring the subjugation of the working class from sight, this has also provided new avenues for class mobility. Working class individuals can procure a commodity once only available to elites, and in doing so distinguish themselves culturally. Working class individuals can also provide a commodity to elites, one once only available to the working class, and in doing so distinguish themselves economically. They can do so by way of their own individual choice, in contrast to having traditional class distinctions imposed upon them, a choice that can be transformative, but potentially damaging if misguided or merely unlucky. Racial and ethnic oppression, particularly in the United States adds to structural oppression, but ethnic membership, according to Willis can provide means for survival and expression. One means of expression is the ethnographic method; a method espoused by the author as providing a desperately needed bottom up perspective in a field dominated by the study of top down process such as globalization, downsizing and restructuration. A method that can connect the cultural commodities, the informal meaning making, and the lived experience of the working class with the formalities of academia. The author contends that once an avenue into post secondary education is found, working class students can autonomously appropriate and appreciate a world that is conducive of expression, mental development and knowledge acquisition.

Literature Search

A search of the PSYCinfo data base was performed to obtain an overview of the existing literature pertaining to the current study. The search was limited to contemporary articles published no earlier than 2001, that were peer reviewed and published in academic journals.

Pertinent search terms "higher education", "post-secondary", "poverty", "low income", "working class", and "socioeconomic status" were employed and yielded 389 results. An initial sorting of articles as either relating to, or not relating to the current study resulted in the removal of 213 articles from the search results. An additional sorting of articles as either North American/European, or not North American/European yielded 60 articles with North American/European origins of publication. Of these articles, 4 meta-analyses, and 38 empirical articles were retained due to the inherent power of this type of analysis, and due to the alignment of article content to the method of systematic review (sorted into internal strengths and challenges, and external strengths and challenges) of the current study respectively. A systematic review of said literature was then performed whereby articles were sorted into emerging themes.

Meta-Analyses

Sirin, (2005) Richardson, Abraham and Bond, (2012) and Robbins et al. (2004) conducted meta-analyses of articles reporting correlates of academic achievement. Sirin found a medium to strong correlation with socioeconomic status moderated by unit, source, socioeconomic status measure range, and type of achievement measure, school level, minority status and school location. Richardson, Abraham and Bond (2012) found medium sized correlations with 4 non-intellective constructs, (need for cognition, academic self-efficacy, grade goal and effort regulation) with self efficacy being the strongest correlation found in the study, stronger than traditional measures of intellect such as high school GPA. Robbins et al. found a moderate correlation between academic goals, self-efficacy, and related skills with college retention, the highest of which, self-efficacy found to be more predictive of college outcomes than either socioeconomic status, or traditionally predictive correlates such as standardized achievement results and high school GPA. Rubin (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of 35 studies

reporting correlations between student socioeconomic status and social integration in higher education, and found while controlling for gender, progress in study, and measurement of class, that working class students were less integrated than their more affluent classmates.

Empirical Articles

      Internal Strengths.

      Education as instrumental. Higher education can be instrumentally beneficial for working class students in terms of class mobility, class consciousness, (Bullock and Limbert, 2003) facilitating greater access and personal growth, and for academia, in terms of sharing their stories (Adair, Brown, Clark, Perez-Cotrich, and Stanfield, 2007) within their respective institutions of higher education.

      Adair, Brown, Clark, Perez-Cotrich, and Stanfield (2007) studied and extol the story telling capacity of students who are poor single mothers, and the value in them doing so, both to the story teller and to academia, in terms of breaching boundaries, their personal reinvention, and in providing alternate lived experiences and meaning making largely missing from academia respectively.

      Bullock and Limbert (2003) studied the perceptions of their social class and the prospective for upward social mobility amongst low income women within an educational training program, finding respondents perceived education as a means to middle class entry, and that the causes of social class to be structural (not individual) and unjust in nature, suggesting the potential for class mobilization.

      Confidence and commitment. For working class students, confidence in one's ability to succeed in and gain from higher education, manage risk, hold a pragmatic vocational focus or a

socially conscious focus is conducive to engagement in, and commitment to that endeavor, which is beneficial to success therein, as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Collier, Gilchrist, and Phillips (2003) analyzed national data from working and lower middle class British adults, and found that students who intended on enrolling in university were influenced by; belief in their ability, preference for university over paid labor, personal valuation of credentials, and personal growth motivation.

Cilesiz and Drotos (2016) analyzed interview data collected from urban, high poverty, mid western American students, finding that students perceived higher education as bestowing multiple rewards, and involving multiple risks, but risks that can be strategically minimized.

Lehmann (2009) analyzed interview data obtained from working class students attending a Canadian university, and found that the significant financial investment they made in their education had encouraged an orientation towards utility and vocation that assisted them in their studies, despite the perception that such an orientation is problematic.

Stuber (2011) analyzed interview data obtained from white, working class students who are the first of the family to attend college, in regard to their adjustment to, and understanding of their experiences in college, and found that three quarters of participants reported either having little experience of marginalization or of having overcome the experience and derived motivation to influence change from the experience of it.

Internal Challenges.

Caught between two worlds. Working class students who attend higher educational institutions must negotiate relationships with people and institutions across socioeconomic class lines while maintaining supportive relationships within their families and communities. This is associated with a sense of not belonging in either locale, identity and motivational issues, and the

employment of ineffective protective strategies as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Jones (2005) analyzed working class student's experiences of upward mobility, and found that women reported a sense of separation from family, a feeling of guilt associated with the privileges they had obtained, a feeling of pride in working class membership but shame in the presence of elites that contributed to not feeling at home in either locale.

Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, and Darnon (2017) compared the psychological challenges faced by low and high socioeconomic status university students, and found that low socioeconomic status students experienced identity management, self perception and motivation issues that their more affluent peers did not.

Keane (2011) compared the behaviours of undergraduates enrolled in an Irish university who were provided access to the institution to those who gained entry through traditional means, finding that those who were provided access exhibited behaviours that tended to distance themselves from others, suggesting that these behaviours limited the capital they were able to obtain there despite the self-protective intentions of said behaviours.

Do not belong in higher education. Working class students have difficulty fitting in to higher educational institutions, becoming distanced in terms of their dress, responsibilities and preference to perform paid work, and their own valuation of their academic accomplishment as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Archer, Hollingworth, and Halsall (2007) analyzed interview and discussion group data and found that the decisions of urban working class youth relating to their display of personal style contributes to the stability of their marginalized social positions despite their intentions of procuring value and worth through these decisions.

Collier, Gilchrist, and Phillips (2003) analyzed national data from working and lower middle class British adults, and found that students who did not intend on enrolling in university had cited alternate responsibilities and a preference for paid labor as key factors in the decision making process.

Delaney and Farren (2016) analyzed survey and interview data obtained from distance studies graduates in an Irish university, selected based on findings indicating the constituents of this population are likely from lower socioeconomic classes, and have delayed enrollment due to class based reasons. Findings indicate that these students, despite enrolling in order to bolster their long term employability, chose lower status alternatives, and had not only the task of convincing others of their employability, they had to convince themselves of the value their accomplishments had in that respect, which can be a slow process of external and internal negotiation.

Don't seem to want to belong in higher education. Working class students seemingly have little desire to fit in to educational institutions, as they have the lowest educational aspirations and hold seemingly contradictory values as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Berrington, Roberts and Tammes (2016) examined the intersectionality of class, ethnicity and gender in regard to the aspirations of British youth in regard to higher education, finding the lowest aspirations amongst working class white boys, and offering as explanation that the class, ethnicity and gender of these students has a cumulative effect which discourages aspiration.

Canaan (2004) studied the learning related discourse of working class university students in Britain, finding a contradiction within their adoption of neo-conservative and neo-liberal

values, specifically finding a contradiction between assessments of who should succeed in university and the espousal of socially democratic principles.

External Strengths.

Formal support. Working class students can obtain support for their higher educational aspirations from community groups, as well as research supported interventions and programs as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Bloom (2009) analyzed interview data obtained from low income student mothers enrolled in a community based organization designed to assist them in balancing and managing the demands they face, finding that education that is instrumental to upward social mobility presented within a supportive community, with academic encouragement was important for their success.

Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, and Darnon (2017) compared the psychological challenges faced by low and high socioeconomic status university students, and found 3 interventions with potential to increase the achievement and improve the experience of lower socioeconomic status students.

Stephens, Brannon, Markus and Nelson (2015) identify the characteristics of interventions that have been successful in alleviating some socioeconomic class related discrepancies in higher education participation and achievement, finding successful programs focused first and foremost on individual and structural barriers to success.

Informal support. Working class students can obtain support for their higher educational aspirations from encouraging peers and parents as evidenced by the following article.

Diemer and Li (2012) analyzed longitudinal survey data of low income students enrolled in post secondary study, finding that parents and peers encouraged post secondary perseverance

and expectations of education, and suggesting the importance of said encouragement in degree attainment.

External Challenges.

Costs/debt to attend. Working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with the costs of higher education, specifically in regard to incurring both economic and symbolic debts in that endeavor, as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Kim (2007) analysed national survey data to study student debt relative to degree achievement in American institutions, and found that higher student debt in the first year was related to lower probability of degree achievement for low income students, despite the intention of student loan programs to assist in that endeavor.

Loveday (2015) analyzed data obtained from working class employees of a British university project, and found that due to the understanding that higher education was instrumental to upward mobility, working class university students incurred a symbolic indebtedness to the institution that their more affluent classmates did not.

Systemic and stable inequality. Working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with systemic and stable inequality, specifically in regard to access, competition, social stratification, social services, national and institutional trends and policies, higher risk/reward ratios and a lack of group mobilization, as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Astin and Oseguera (2004) analyzed national data and found that access to the majority of American colleges and universities was unequal in terms of socioeconomic strata, and more so

than at any other time in the last 30 years, coming largely at the expense of middle strata students.

Bastedo and Jacquette (2011) sought explanation for the increased stratification of higher education and found that despite improvements in low income student achievement since the 1970's, stratification remains stable due to even greater improvements in high income student achievement during the same period.

Brooks (2003) argues against the assumption of homogeneity of class in terms of academic decision making, finding through a longitudinal qualitative study that an interaction between friends and family explains academic decision making best, and that one's hierarchal position in a high school friendship group is often consistent with the position they occupy in higher education suggesting that those who suffer from social stratification will continue to do so.

Charles (2006) reviewed the book Shut Out: Low-Income Mothers and Higher Education in Post-Welfare America, and found that the 1996 policy directing recipients of government assistance to seek paid employment first and foremost ignores the real prospects of finding employment that will deliver one from poverty, and issues faced by women seeking a degree in that effort.

Clawson and Leiblum (2008) examined national data, focusing on a single case study conducted at the University of Massachusetts, and found that national and institutional trends, rescinding needs based assistance in favour of purportedly meritocratic based assistance, and increased reliance on private revenue streams including tuition respectively have come at the expense of working class student enrollment.

Reay (2002) analyzed the narratives of mature college students at a British inner city institution, a population and setting selected to explore the effect of national policies in encouraging the participation of non traditional students, and found that despite the noble intentions of said policies, they have contributed to the difficulty experienced by non traditional students, and that class, while mediated by ethnicity and gender, is influential in the transition to higher education.

Silva (2016) reviewed Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood, a new stage of life related to economic and cultural changes taking place, finding confirmation that poor and working class youth did in fact define adulthood, self worth and achievement in a normative fashion, and suggesting the finding brings to light the discrepancy in opportunity and risk experienced by poor and working class youth.

Walpole (2003) analyzed longitudinal data from a national survey of American college graduates, and found that students with low socioeconomic status backgrounds did not receive the attention they needed from policy makers to be successful, citing a "lack of group identity and political mobilization" (Walpole, 2003, p. 45) as an explanation.

Family/political/social resources. Working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with access to family/political/social resources, specifically in regard to competition, information retrieval, gender and class effects, and disproportionate enrollment in option limiting programs, as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Bathmaker, Ingram and Waller (2013) analyzed educational success strategies employed by working class and middle class British families, finding middle class privilege in terms of

access to and accrual of valuable capital and in response to educational competition, compounding social inequality.

Brown, Wohn, and Ellison (2016) analyzed interview data and found that low income American youth have less information readily available to them in regard to higher education, finding specifically that they were less likely to have reliable informants in their home and while capable of access, they faced challenges in retrieving said information online.

Evans (2009) referenced a contemporary ethnographic study conducted in a British inner city secondary school focusing on the effects of gender and class on higher educational aspirations, finding that working class students felt less entitled to access institutions of higher education, and that working class women's aspirations were further dampened by gender specific responsibilities within the family.

Parekh, Killoran and Crawford (2011) analyzed data obtained from the Toronto District School Board and the Ontario Ministry of Education, and found that low income students and those whose parents were not university educated were disproportionately enrolled in programs or special education classes that limit their post secondary options.

Lack of research. Working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with a lack of research supporting that effort, specifically in regard to the tendencies of researchers to study isolated segments of the population more so than the whole group, and representativeness more so than experience improvement or achievement, as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Fisher and St John (2008) reviewed the book Economically and Educationally Challenged Students in Higher Education: Access to Outcomes, and found that it highlighted a key deficiency within the literature pertaining to working class students, specifically that there is

a tendency amongst researchers to isolate a specific group of working class students for study purposes, suggested that deficiency hinders our understanding of the challenges faced, and provided a model for further study.

Irizarry (2015) introduces an issue of Equity & Excellence in Education focused on increasing the achievement of marginalized populations in higher education, while reporting an increase in diversity on campuses, the author concedes a deficiency in research literature aimed at improving the experiences and achievement of said marginalized populations.

School climate. Working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with the climate of the schools they attend, specifically in regard to adjusting to the institutional context, structural and institutional inequality, negative perceptions of their perspectives and learning preferences, and a mismatch between cultural norms, as evidenced by the following articles respectively.

Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, and Darnon (2017) compared the psychological challenges faced by low and high socioeconomic status university students, and found that the institutional context played a role in the achievement gap, and the inception and continuation of psychological barriers faced by low socioeconomic status students.

Quinn et al. (2006) analyzed national data to explore the disproportionately low university participation and achievement rates amongst white working class British men, and found that difficulty with and withdrawal from study was influenced by (Quinn et al. 2006, p. 735) "structural inequality, discursive frames and institutional practices," and needlessly negative evaluations of their masculinity, and by misinterpreting their admiration of informal learning as threatening to the goals of lifelong learning respectively.

Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson and Covarrubias (2012) proposed and tested a theory that the social class related discrepancy in achievement at American universities could be explained by a mismatch between independent and interdependent cultural norms, finding that the independent culture of university contributed to the difficulty and poor performance experienced by first generation students who benefitted from more interdependent cultural norms.

Conclusion

Maslow's (1943, 1954, 1962) theory of human motivation and self actualization provided a theoretical basis for the current autoethnographic study, addressing a key concern regarding the methodology, its generalizability. The theory selected also constituted a working hypothesis (Cronbach, 1975) for the current study, one that grounded the current study in the field of psychology, in keeping with this autoethnographer's program of study, applied psychology in schools. The theory of human motivation has provided a humanistic and decidedly positive frame for interpreting the existing literature, much of which was anticipated to be relatively pessimistic and less than ideally pragmatic for the aim of the current study, to help working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program. Finally, the theories inclusion supported the use of the autoethnographic method and my values.

Willis' (1977, 2004) original ethnography and subsequent revisiting of the topic provided both ethnographic data and theoretical guidance for the current autoethnographical study. The ethnography selected constituted a source of ethnographic information pertaining to humans of an age, and socioeconomic class, living within a temporal period of study that coincided with, and was therefore informative of the current study. The review of this study identified factors, or hurdles, that demotivated working class students and increased their risk of withdrawal prior to

graduation, and in doing so informed the navigation of said hurdles, and the potential to profit from them for the purposes of the current study.

The overview of the literature pertaining to the current study provided an assessment of the current psychological scholarship and in doing so the opportunity to contribute to the furtherance of said scholarship. A review of meta-analyses revealed that academic achievement was medium to strongly correlated with socioeconomic status, (Sirin, 2005) and that non-intellective constructs (Abraham & Bond, 2012) more strongly correlated with achievement than traditional predictors of success, self-efficacy (Abraham & Bond, 2012, Robbins et al., 2004) in particular. An additional meta-analysis (Rubin, 2012) revealed that working class students were less integrated than their more affluent classmates. The empirical articles obtained aligned well with the method of systematic review (sorted into internal strengths and challenges, and external strengths and challenges) of the current study. Themes emerging from a systematic review of said literature revealed a number of important things.

The first being that higher education can be instrumentally beneficial for working class students in terms of class mobility, and class consciousness, (Bullock and Limbert, 2003) facilitating greater access and personal growth, and for academia, in terms of sharing their stories (Adair, Brown, Clark, Perez-Cotrich, and Stanfield, 2007) within their respective institutions of higher education.

The second being that for working class student's confidence in one's ability to succeed in and gain from higher education, (Collier, Gilchrist, & Phillips, 2003), manage risk (Cilesiz, & Drotos, 2016), hold a pragmatic vocational focus (Lehmann, 2009) or a socially conscious focus (Stuber, 2011) is conducive to engagement in, and commitment to that endeavor, which is beneficial to success therein.

The third being that working class students who attend higher educational institutions must negotiate relationships with people and institutions across socioeconomic class lines while maintaining supportive relationships within their families and communities. This is associated with a sense of not belonging in either locale (Jones, 2005), identity and motivational issues (Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, & Darnon, 2017), and the employment of ineffective protective strategies (Keane, 2011).

The fourth being that working class students have difficulty fitting in to higher educational institutions, becoming distanced in terms of their dress, (Archer, Hollingworth, & Halsall, 2007) responsibilities and preference to perform paid work, (Collier, Gilchrist, & Phillips, 2003) and their own valuation of their academic accomplishment (Delaney, & Farren, 2016).

The fifth being that working class students seemingly have little desire to fit in to educational institutions, as they have the lowest educational aspirations (Berrington, Roberts, & Tammes, 2016) and hold seemingly contradictory values (Canaan, 2004).

The sixth being that working class students can obtain support for their higher educational aspirations from community groups, (Bloom, 2009) as well as research supported interventions (Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, & Darnon, 2017) and programs (Stephens, Brannon, Markus, & Nelson, 2015).

The seventh being that working class students can obtain support for their higher educational aspirations from encouraging peers and parents (Diemer, & Li, 2012).

The eighth being that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with the costs of higher education, specifically in

regard to incurring both economic (Kim, 2007) and symbolic debts (Loveday, 2015) in that endeavor.

The ninth being that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with systemic and stable inequality, specifically in regard to access, (Astin, & Oseguera, 2004) competition, (Bastedo, & Jacquette, 2011) social stratification, (Brooks, 2003), social services, (Charles, 2006) national and institutional trends, (Clawson, & Leiblum, 2008) and policies (Reay, 2002), higher risk/reward ratios (Silva, 2016) and a lack of group mobilization (Walpole, 2003).

The tenth being that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with access to family/political/social resources, specifically in regard to competition (Bathmaker, Ingram, & Waller, 2013), information retrieval (Brown, Wohn, & Ellison, 2016), gender and class effects (Evans, 2009), and disproportionate enrollment in option limiting programs (Parekh, Killoran, & Crawford, 2011).

The eleventh being that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with a lack of research supporting that endeavor, specifically in regard to the tendencies of researchers to study isolated segments of the population more so than the whole group (Fisher, & St John, 2008), and representativeness more so than experience improvement or achievement (Irizarry, 2015).

The twelfth being that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with the climate of the schools they attend, specifically in regard to adjusting to the institutional context (Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, & Darnon, 2017), structural and institutional inequality as well as negative perceptions

of their perspectives and learning preferences (Quinn et al., 2006), and a mismatch between cultural norms (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012).

These are important contributions to the current discussion despite being exclusively directed towards policy makers, post secondary institution administrators, and their staff as they are informative in a redirected and combinatory fashion. Incorporating contributions from a variety of sources utilizing a variety of methodologies has provided an opportunity for the triangulation of data with the ethnographic data of the current study, a qualitative technique espoused by Patton (2002) for its corroborative power.

Together this literature review indicates a need for the current study's question, and for its methodology. The question of the current study (what helps working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program) is warranted by this review's confirmation of the dearth in psychological scholarship to that effect. This confirmation is both content based as described above in terms of the internal and external challenges faced by working class students, as well as quantity based, in terms of the content and focus of the available research. Articles describing working class challenges far out number (27/11) articles describing working class strengths. There are 8 describing internal challenges in comparison to 6 describing internal strengths. There are 19 describing external challenges in comparison to 5 describing external strengths. The autoethnographic methodology of the current study is warranted due to the understanding that a replication or furtherance of said scholarship would not be conducive to the pragmatic conclusions this study strives for. The autoethnographic methodology allows the incorporation of personal experiences as a means of shedding light on and critically examining the psychological scholarship on working class student's experiences in that role, done so as a means of pragmatically assisting in that endeavor. The focus of said scholarship is, as described

above directed solely towards policy makers, post secondary institution administrators, and their staff. Ellis (2011) espoused the production of autoethnography for its potential to reach a broader readership rarely in receipt of academic scholarship, in this case working class students, due in part to its accessibility, which is conducive to influencing change, and therefore conducive to the intent of the current study.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Autoethnography

Ellis (2004, p. 1) defines autoethnography as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experiences in order to understand cultural experience." This methodology has arisen in part from the ethical concerns (Ellis, 2011) of some social science researchers. These concerns, as described by Ellis pertain to the disparate effects that traditional research, both in process and in product, can have on researched and researcher. The well being of the former is often of lesser concern than the well being of the later in the short term as a direct result of participation in research, and in the long term as an indirect result of the publication of said research. Ellis espouses autoethnography, a methodology that attempts to address these concerns both in process and through product. It does so by recognizing the potential influence of research on the researched, consequently the value of eschewing the pursuit of objectivity in favour of acceptance, and accommodation of subjectivity. This recognition is addressed in the short term by the ethical and socially conscious insertion of self as participant researcher, and in the long term by informing the production of a meaningful and accessible text. In keeping with Ellis's definition, I seek, through the process of autoethnography, to critically reflect on my personal experiences as a working class post secondary student, both in demotivation and withdrawal and in perseverance and accreditation, as a means of shedding light on and critically examining the psychological scholarship on working class student's experiences in that role. In doing so I seek to recontextualize the findings with conclusions and implications to help working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program.

While autoethnography can vary greatly in terms of process and product, (Holman Jones,

2008) certain examples, such as the personal narrative are particularly controversial (Ellis, 2011) for social scientists in the absence of an accepted analysis or the literature review included above. This methodology places the participant researcher and their autobiographical information at the forefront of research, a decidedly subjective endeavor, but one Ellis (2004, p.46) espouses for its capability to "invite readers to enter the author's world and to use what they learn there to reflect on, understand and cope with their own lives." The purpose of doing so in the current study is to help working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program and in doing so contribute to alleviating the broadening income gap, which is in alignment with Holman Jones (2008, p.765) assertion that "the point of creating autoethnography texts is to change the world."

Autoethnographic Method

According to Ellis (2011) the autoethnographic method combines the study of self (auto) and culture (ethno) into a systematic research and analysis methodology (graphy) that Holman Jones (2008) described as owing an indebtedness to creative arts, communications and social science faculties for its methodological practices. The selection of the precise practices for the current study were in consideration of the tenets of autoethnography, (Ellis, 2004, Holman Jones, 2008) while being cognizant of the pragmatic aims of the current study and the faculty in which it was produced. This consideration and cognizance led to the adoption of an autoethnographic methodology outlined by Creswell (2004) for the flexibility of the design. A design that lends itself to the expedient identification of emerging themes and epiphanies (Ellis, 2011) that can be compared and contrasted to the existing psychological scholarship in furtherance of said scholarship. This is in contrast to other designs that were considered, such as the ones employed

by Willis (1977, 2004) that, while boasting depth and breadth, are far less amenable to psychology than they are to anthropology for example.

Purpose and design. The purpose of the current study was to critically reflect on my personal experiences as a working class post secondary student, both in demotivation and withdrawal and in perseverance and accreditation, as a means of shedding light on, and critically examining the psychological scholarship on working class student's experiences in that role. The current study posed a question: what helps working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program? This research sought to inform the praxis of working class students at risk of withdrawal and to raise awareness of a rarely spoke of or studied student population, helping them graduate and in doing so contribute to alleviating the broadening income gap.

Creswell (2004) outlined 4 steps for an autoethnography: 1. Identify the study purpose and a design conducive to the realization of that purpose. 2. Specify what data is to be collected and how it is to be collected. 3. Analyze the data as per the aforementioned design. 4. Report the results of the aforementioned analysis.

Data collection. In keeping with the steps outlined by Creswell (2004) the following steps for data collection were developed. 1. Graphic organizers (8 ½ / 11 inch printer paper quartered into sections labeled helpers, heroes, hurdles, and highs) produced raw narrative data in line with the roots of the methodology for each chapter of my life. 2. Each graphic organizer was used to create a narrative for each chapter. 3. Each narrative was mined for expected and emerging themes in line with the methodology of the current study. 4. These themes are shared as results in an abbreviated and concise narrative from the perspective of contemporary success, focusing on the epiphanies experienced therein.

Reflecting on my experiences in the context of academic success studying both psychology and sociology has resulted in several important epiphanies that are informative of the current study. Specifically, in regard to how working-class individuals like myself misguidedly approach the hurdles of post secondary education, rely on the advice of similarly misguided individuals purporting to be helpers, fail to identify and approach educational heroes, and as a result fail to experience the educational highs that make the post secondary educational experience motivational in and of itself.

The autoethnographic elements of the current study primarily utilize a personal narrative approach, but include aspects of a reflexive approach in keeping with Ellis's (2011) description of these designs. The principle focus of the personal narrative was on the academic experiences of the author, but also included some experiences of employment, lack thereof and of the author's personal life, specifically those aspects that relate to academic experiences. The focus of the reflexive approach was on the changes this author has experienced transitioning from periods of demotivation and withdrawal to contemporary perseverance and accreditation, and the epiphanies experienced therein.

In keeping with the purpose of the current study the thesis parameters encompassed the process of selecting a major or course of study in my senior year of secondary school through to the present study. My ability to recollect the events that transpired and my perspective of them was assisted for the purposes of the current study by site visits to locations of learning, labour and life, period and contemporary photographs, educational and workplace artifacts, introspective meditation, acrylic painting, writing poetry, and from reminiscing with trusted helpers.

Participant. I was 38 years old when this study officially commenced. Unofficially though, the question what helps working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program has been an underlying query through the entirety of my most recent foray into higher education. I voluntarily left full time industrial employment at 30 years of age, sacrificing full time employment, retirement savings, and what would have been a down payment on a first home to fulfill a dream. It was always my dream to return to higher education, and succeed. The chaos and uncertainty of the economic downturn of 2008 provided a symbolic push in that direction and an ongoing relationship with Employment Insurance via a job sharing program eased the transition to no income and total reliance on savings and loans. It could be argued that my family was well within the middle class during a brief period wherein both my parents and myself were employed full time in working class labour. Our combined incomes across 2 generations living in the same modest home provided enough income to enjoy some "extras" like the aforementioned new couch set, and the education I am currently engaged in, but I was unfulfilled, and further, manual labour was not only precarious, it was taking a toll on my health. Also, living with my parents was not a permanent solution to employment and economic uncertainty. Knowing that leaving my position within the company meant another worker would be able to keep their position, meant that a small service had been rendered to a member of my community by way of my exit from industrial labour, and my pursuit of a dream. Success therein would render another.

I dreamed of a fulfilling career, one that was rewarding in and of itself. I dreamed of being a social studies teacher, one that better prepared students for life in general, and for higher education specifically than I was. I was confident in the ability of my future students, but was less so in my ability to do better for them than was done for me. To bolster confidence, and to

inform future practice I paid close attention to my professors and teaching assistants, sought their advice, chose independent research topics for their potential to impart personal and professional growth and saved educational artifacts and documents relating to those endeavors. Those artifacts and documents, originally saved to bolster confidence and to inform future practice assisted in the current study by eliciting memories. Ultimately though, the realization that my contemporary success had far more to do with what I had been doing than what had been done for me, led me to wonder how I would advise my younger self, or others of a similar class, or of a similar socioeconomic status as myself in regard to successfully persevering and becoming accredited.

The present study is the culmination of that dream, and part of a broader study that will continue independently following the successful defense of this thesis. In an effort to organize my reflections temporally the aforementioned graphic organizers were produced for each of the following chapters of my life: preschool, kindergarten, elementary school 1, elementary school 2, middle school, secondary school, part time employment, college 1 drug and alcohol counsellor, full time summer employment, college 2 social service worker, college 2 general arts and science, university 1 bachelor of arts in psychology (3 year), unemployment and underemployment, full time industrial labour, undergraduate degree (honors double major psychology and sociology), graduate degree (bachelor of education with distinction social studies and family studies), domestic engineering and underemployment, and graduate degree (master of arts in the field of applied psychology in schools). These graphic organizers are affixed to standard hole punched 8 ½ / 11 inch notepads with perforated sheets wherein the narratives were written. Chapters preceding the process of selecting a major or course of study in my senior year

of secondary school were solely for introductory purposes and were not included as data in the study.

   Data analysis. The analysis of the narrative data was performed in keeping with the Creswell (2003) supplied outline for doing so. Various chapters of my life provided a variety of sources to collect data from, assisted by recollection of past helpers, heroes, hurdles and highs for analysis, both in demotivation and withdrawal and in perseverance and accreditation. The variety of sources also provided an opportunity for an additional layer of anonymity, in that the institution associated with the narrative data remains nameless, as well as any helpers that were mentioned therein. Following the completion of data collection analysis was performed utilizing the following steps. 1. Preliminary data analysis began with the examination of the entirety of said data for expected and emerging themes. 2. Themes deemed pertinent to the current study were retained and labelled in keeping with their narrative content. 3. Pertinent themes were then examined for conceptual overlap (Creswell, 2003) and combined if deemed conducive to parsimony. 4. Then, from a perspective of contemporary academic success, the narrative was condensed and retold, focusing on the themes mentioned above in keeping with the goal of the current study which was to help working class students at risk of withdrawal persevere and graduate from their program. That retold narrative is the result of the current study.

Chapter 4 – Results

The aforementioned autoethnographic data collection and analysis process resulted in the identification of 4 themes pertinent to the current study. The first theme is the compromise of long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment. The second theme is that economic issues have strained relationships in the classroom and within student residences and these experiences have been ostracizing. The third theme is that OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully. The fourth theme is that working-class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education as well as success therein.

A compromise of long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment

Compromise is a word that is used according to the Oxford Living Dictionaries (2017) primarily as a noun but also as a verb, and primarily with positive, cooperative connotations but also with negative sacrificial connotations. The verb usage with negative sacrificial connotations is of importance to this theme, defined as to "expediently accept standards that are lower than is desirable" (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2017) as it most aptly describes the narrative data in regard to the decision-making process engaged in when considering competing higher educational alternatives. I had dreams of being an artist, of following in the footsteps of the Group of Seven, and Emily Carr, but they all had benefactors and resources to finance their educational growth and ensure their economic futures respectively. I faced the burden of short term economic realities and the long-term ramifications of student debt and did so without any

tangible reason to believe that educational growth would in and of itself ensure economic

stability, or the ability to service the debt accumulated therein.

> *An art teacher had encouraged my commitment to and pursuit of visual art in*
> *higher education. I wasn't a prodigy, something I thought a perquisite of success.*
> *I didn't know anyone who was gainfully employed as an artist in my community. I*
> *looked within, art could be something I returned to.*

While admittedly relegating the dream of being an artist to a vague plan for a distant and

potential hobby the alternative route, dependent on a teacher's willingness to accept me into a

classroom already at capacity, was a positive one. It was instrumental in furtherance of an

already present alternative academic interest and success therein instrumental in securing

admittance to higher education.

> *A social studies teacher had helped me, had granted me access to the class*
> *despite lack of room and in doing so stoked an interest with higher educational*
> *options, not like visual art, but an interest none the less…I could see employment*
> *opportunities in my community… I thought a career in social services would be*
> *more attainable and satisfy my drive to help others and make a positive impact on*
> *the world.*

Perception is a noun, the secondary usage of which is according to Oxford Living

Dictionaries (2017) defined as "the way in which something is regarded, understood, or

interpreted." It is of importance to this theme as it most aptly describes the narrative data

regarding the subjective evaluation of short term economic realities engaged in when making

decisions in regard to higher education. My perception was limited by a propensity to minimize

short term economic expenditures and the risk of financial loss, believing these concerns to be

paramount to the pursuit of a dream. University was perceived as costlier than college and high-

quality housing perceived as costlier than low quality housing. I chose thusly.

> *I perceived college as inferior to university, and had since a teacher had*
> *discouraged me from enrolling in any tech courses, describing the college stream*
> *as beneath me. I was accepted into my "back up" university despite failing to*
> *fulfill the OAC requirements, but opted for college, fearing that I would be found*

out, and expelled, time and money wasted, never having enquired if I could have made it work.

My parents and I scrambled to prepare... There was little choice in affordable accommodation… A basement apartment, a 35-55 minute bus ride to and from school, living under an intrusive, menthol cigarette smoking family.

Potential is a word that is used according to the Oxford Living Dictionaries (2017) primarily as an adjective but also as a noun. The noun usage, defined as "latent qualities or abilities that may be developed and lead to future success or usefulness" (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2017) is of importance to this theme. It is so as it aptly describes the narrative data regarding the very thing that is lost when engaging in a decision-making process regarding a long-term investment in higher education that is based on compromise and an option limiting perception of short term economic realities. Had I remained in the program I would have needed to enroll in and complete a summer course. This necessity was to rectify an administrative error whereby I was not enrolled in said course within the school year, and my inability to successfully obtain access thereto. I thought that I had potential and found some encouragement of this, but it was far less tangible in my mind than the short-term expenditures and risk involved.

I made a friend who encouraged me to stay. I just couldn't imagine being able to afford it.

A theme of compromising long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment was identified in the narrative data. This involved relegating the pursuit of dreams, both of art and of university due to perceiving a dearth of employment opportunities, and an inability to afford potentially losing the upfront costs of the costlier institution respectively. Once enrolled I was unable to secure a full course load. Fearing the additional cost of summer session rent and tuition, expenditures that that would have served to compensate for the partial course load, or

alternatively the impending financial loss I would sustain if I continued to argue my case beyond that time wherein a refund of fees was available, I withdrew, OSAP repaid in full.

Economic issues have strained relationships in the classroom and within student residences and these experiences have been ostracizing

As a child, I slept on a 'Peanuts' pillow case emblazoned with the motto 'Happiness is being one of the gang' and have always recognized the emotive and later the instrumental value of fitting into the classroom environment. Narrative data suggests however that there has been considerable confusion on my part as to what was an effective means of fitting in. One mandatory course purported to be assistive in that domain and I was to be the first male to share in that context due to alphabetical ordering. I had conferred with my male and female classmates seeking advice, written and disposed of a handful of drafts and was as prepared as I felt I could be. My efforts were to no avail, perhaps diminished by being more prone to privacy and stoicism than sharing and emoting, and by the context created by those who had shared so deeply and effectively before me.

> *I had a class wherein my 55 classmates introduced themselves in such depth and with such ease that it still boggles my mind. I was nervous, and uncomfortable, stumbled on my words, and felt that I was unnecessarily interrupted and criticized for the way in which I spoke of myself. I wasn't used to sharing in such a way, and wondered what happened to no interruptions while others are sharing, and express yourself in your own words. My attempt to share did not elicit the positive and welcoming response I had hoped for.*

Recognizing my failure to ingratiate myself with the faculty of said course, and some of my classmates via my initial introduction, I applied that which was recommended to me in the past. Effort, persistence, and critical thinking. I had heard a great deal about the value of developing critical thinking skills, applying them to course content, and displaying the product of said endeavor. I intended to capitalize on what I had thought was some in depth critical thinking

in regard to the economic realities of the working class. I had also thought my financial

investment in tuition, books and rent implied dedication, as the amounts were significant to me.

> *It seemed like I was the only one who raised their hand when the class was asked if we would skip class the following day if we were to win the lottery this evening. I couldn't imagine anyone was really being honest. I suspected afterwards that the question was really a matter of implied dedication. My defense based on the alleviation of immediate personal needs and the potential to alleviate those of many more fell on deaf ears. I felt ostracized from the group.*

The lottery question was in my mind purely an economic question but I realized

otherwise soon after being summoned to a meeting with a faculty member to discuss my

response. The faculty member suggested that I leave the program and opined that policing was a

career more suited to me. I disagreed, being unwilling to contribute to the incarceration of those

who are economically underprivileged at disproportionately high rates. I later found my

classmates very willing to do so however.

> *I found myself in a civil liberties seminar, showing my disagreement with the prevailing opinion, reminded of past experiences in kind, but now armed with enough academic knowledge to argue my point of view, and perhaps that of the economically underprivileged students in the case studies we were discussing. I felt that the civil liberties lawyer appreciated my point of view, but that it distanced me from my classmates.*

Despite experiencing difficulties, I successfully made a few friends in class and thought

that ingratiating myself to them would solidify those bonds and that success in the endeavor

would be instrumentally beneficial to the expansion of social capital and indirectly beneficial to

academic success.

> *I made attempts to fit in via accepting the advice of classmates in regard to my glasses, hair and attire, relying on what seemed like an omnipresent credit card drive on campus to finance the costly, and ultimately fruitless effort.*

While my efforts in this regard were ultimately fruitless in the context of higher

education, I had learned from my mistakes. If I was to academically benefit from my experiences

I would have to use them selectively and predominantly in alignment with the experiences of my

classmates.

> *I thought that sharing my experiences of independently overcoming past academic difficulties with limited economic resources would be valued as I valued those experiences my classmates shared of formally helping others overcome theirs, but I both misspoke, and was misunderstood, and felt overall that these experiences distanced me from my classmates.*

Failing that I made attempts through association.

> *I paid to join a club as a means of forming the kind of instrumental and supportive fraternity like bonds I had read about and seen in film. It was not to be. It seemed like everyone already knew everyone, that their bonds were already formed elsewhere, and that I had little to add to their conversations anyway, often about experiences that were economically distant from my own.*

Failing that I avoided that which I felt uncomfortable and distancing and gravitated

towards that which I felt comfortable and embracing.

> *I avoided the cafeteria as much as I was able, opting to return home for lunch, finding it too loud, and uncomfortably laden with appeals for donations to fund extracurricular activities and trips to relax in between classes. I felt that distanced me from those with common teach-ables. When I did use the cafeteria I found myself most comfortable with those who would be tech teachers.*

Student residences were another opportunity to form the kind of social bonds that could

lead to realizing social capital, that which would be instrumentally beneficial to academic

success via late night study sessions, cue card quizzing and the like. Narrative data indicates that

economic issues strained these social relationships and that I failed to capitalize on that

opportunity.

> *Rent went unpaid. The lease was amended so that my room mates wouldn't suffer financially if I wasn't able to pay the rent. The paper work was anonymous of course, as I was assured of by phone before the meeting by the landlord, but I thought that everyone knew. I suspected that the amendment was likely initiated by a concerned roommate that already knew.*

I had gained some experience in dealing with financial matters and in deciphering contractual obligations but was unprepared for the disruption that the addition of an initially generous, but ultimately financially negligent wealthy roommate would pose.

> *A wealthy roommate whose room was next door to mine often arrived disruptively and departed likewise, bills ultimately unpaid, owing increasingly substantial amounts until we had no choice but to launch a campaign to contact his parents, which was complicated by the staff employed in their home who served as gate keepers. I was ultimately successful in the campaign, but this contributed to difficulties in my student residence.*

A theme of economic issues having strained relationships in the classroom and within student residences and of being ostracized by these experiences has been identified in the narrative data. In an effort to ingratiate self to others I have shared aspects of self, displayed critical thinking, improved upon the conveyance of critical thinking, joined a club, took to those who seemed to take to me, made contractual concessions and took on an arduous but ultimately successful telephone campaign, but did so in vain. My efforts did not elicit the positive and welcoming response I had hoped for.

OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully

I had been forewarned that the application process involved in procuring assistance in financing one's higher education through the OSAP program was difficult. Confidence was bolstered by attending an information session in a neighbouring community and from experience successfully processing personal income tax returns with paper and pencil. Analysis of narrative date however indicates the existence of a theme of finding significant difficulty in accessing OSAP services that purportedly exist to provide support for student access and success.

> *It seemed like my fellow OSAP/student card/registration line waiters took to the process naturally while it took a toll on me.*

> *We sent my OSAP application in as early as possible via priority post. We later learned that these applications were held unprocessed until the term began, and*

due to the added labour involved were less favoured in comparison to those applications received directly from the institution. This caused a delay and complications that were difficult and time consuming to resolve. I couldn't convince anyone of reason, neither could my mother. The MPP in my parents riding came to our assistance and 'flagged' my file, releasing my funds.

I had a line of credit to bridge any gap in OSAP funding that had now come to be expected, but was denied entirely, meaning that I was unable to pay my tuition, and eventually withdrew on that basis, with more debt, and no credentials.

On campus student services have been available to me but narrative data indicates that they have been difficult to access successfully, including academic counselling, temporal concessions, writing support services as well as written feedback regarding my course work. I was unsuccessful in my appeal to academic counsellors or a professor.

...the comparison of timetables indicated that despite full time admission I was only enrolled in a part time course load... My pleas and paperwork were not sufficient in persuading academic counselling or one professor who would not grant me access.

Also, while having access and some familiarity with computers, narrative data indicates that while using one in the context of those who were more adept in their use I failed to ask for more time when it was available.

I had a computer at home, and had some experience using and maintaining it, but in the context of entering data amongst a group of university classmates I felt the difference in ability, and succumbed to my perception of it, eventually refraining from raising my hand to indicate that I was not finished.

Also, while having access to writing support services and written feedback, narrative data indicates that while utilizing these resources in the context of written course work I was unable to derive value from them, and in a panic relied on a personal appeal to a teaching assistant.

I panicked when I realized that my plan to address my writing weakness was unsuccessful when my first writing assignment was returned with a mark of 55% and I gained very little insight into what when wrong from the written comments. I am so very lucky that the TA was willing to go through my work and tell me how she would have organized and presented my thoughts and insights, which she assured me were valuable.

A theme of OSAP and various other student services having been very difficult to access successfully has been identified in the narrative data. While having access to OSAP, academic counselling, academic support services, temporal concessions, writing support services as well as written feedback regarding my course work, I was unable to access and utilize them successfully. **Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education, and success therein**

Working class labour is primarily unskilled or semi-skilled manual labour exchanged for an hourly wage. Analysis of narrative data for themes has indicated that working class labour has provided an impetus for informal learning. It has done so largely through necessity in the context of the procurement of said working class labour.

> *I had interviewed for many part time jobs… I found success in the interview process*

Also, in the maintenance of sufficient health therein as to maintain the ability to hold these positions.

> *I suffered from aches and pains in my back and hands I attributed to my summers in construction and at the textile plant… (also) repetitive movement strain (shoulder/hand) from full time assembly work.*

The prescribed anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving medication irritated my stomach lining. In time, the pain in my stomach would come to eclipse the preceding pain and necessitated behavioural modification.

> *I was diagnosed with a pre-ulcerative condition, was concerned that I wouldn't be able to afford medication, work without coffee, and was relieved that my Dr. provided me samples knowing I was only working sporadically, and advice on how to amend my diet. I took the advice, and did my own research, already attributing a great deal of the problem to a poor diet and too much coffee, and did not need to return for more medication.*

Analysis of narrative data indicates that working class labour has also provided opportunity for informal learning, largely through necessity, in the context of hierarchal role acceptance.

Part time jobs were more difficult to hold than I had imagined. I didn't take well to being the brunt of senior staff and owners mocking humour. I didn't take well to my role.

Also, in the valuation of an ally in a greater hierarchal role.

A peer provided access to the position, and assistance in keeping it and in doing so an opportunity to learn how to do so for myself.

Analysis of narrative data indicates that working class labour has also provided social capital, largely by chance, in the role of an employee amongst coworkers.

I had been lifting weights with the intention of building size and strength but despite the size and strength I had gained I was still the smallest and weakest man on every crew I was assigned to that summer. I had virtually no construction experience, and learned that the highest risk on a job site is from being crushed. I gained respect by working beyond my physical capabilities.

Also, in the role of a working-class friend amongst peers.

I was lucky… The summer I spent at the foundry was more than enough evidence of my capacity and willingness to endure it (physical, dangerous work)… I gained grit and social capital amongst my working class peers.

Analysis of narrative data indicates that working class labour has also provided economic capital. It has done so by design.

I was sufficiently scared after an entire week of safety training, a prerequisite of being permitted inside the foundry... (but) I earned the highest hourly wage I ever would.

Also, in one way or another.

I cleaned, landscaped, dug holes, moved furniture for friends and asked nothing in return but was always paid in one way or another.

Analysis of narrative data indicates that working class labour has also assisted in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein. It has done so through providing valuable lessons via overwork, exhaustion and peak experience.

> *The value of decreased debt load notwithstanding, it paled in comparison to the value of what I would later learn was a peak experience wherein I could see everything standing between myself and success, and clearly what I needed to do to get where I wanted to be, university.*

Also, through experience in a systematic and regimented industrial setting.

> *I knew that success in university would be as difficult or more than the transformation in my body and health… I knew if I applied myself in a systematic factory like regiment in university (as I had in the transformation in my body and health) nothing could stop me.*

A theme of working class labour having provided the impetus for informal learning in the context of the procurement of said working class labour, and maintenance of sufficient health therein has been identified in the narrative data. Also, identified within this theme is the provision of opportunity for informal learning, in the context of role taking and hierarchy. Additionally identified are the provision of social and economic capital amongst coworkers and peers, as well as the derivation of assistance in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the autoethnographic narrative data collection and analysis process. It did so in a narrative fashion, first presenting themes of demotivation and withdrawal, then later a theme of perseverance and accreditation. The first theme presented was the compromise of long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment. The second theme was that economic issues have strained relationships in the classroom and within student

residences and these experiences have been ostracizing. The third theme was that OSAP and

various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully. Finally, the fourth

theme was that working-class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal

learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to

higher education and success therein.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

This study sought to answer the question of what helps working class university students at risk of withdrawal graduate from their program. The autoethnographic method was employed in this endeavor. This method, wherein narrative data is mined from my story of being a working-class person navigating the higher educational system involved systematic analysis of my own narrative data for themes. This was done as to allow for these emerging themes to be compared and contrasted to the psychological research. The purpose was to generate new themes, and ideas in an effort directed towards improving the experiences of other working-class students as well as increasing the likelihood of their success, and in doing so contributing to alleviation of the broadening income gap.

Summary

The autoethnography resulted in the identification of 4 themes pertinent to the current study. The first theme is the compromise of long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment. The second theme was that economic issues have strained relationships in the classroom and within student residences and these experiences have been ostracizing. The third theme was that OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully. The fourth theme was that working-class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education, as well as success therein.

Examination for conceptual overlap. Preliminary analysis of narrative data resulted in 6 themes. An additional analysis intended to identify conceptual overlap revealed that 2 pairs of themes had considerable overlap. The theme of economic issues having strained relationships in

the classroom and within student residences, and the experience of feeling ostracized as a result was initially identified as 2 themes. The first segment of this theme was of not fitting in within classrooms due to economic issues, the second was of not fitting in within student residences due to economic issues. These themes coalesced around the common elements of not fitting in due to economic reasons. The theme of working class labour having provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein was likewise initially identified as 2 themes. The first segment of this theme was of the provision of informal learning that assisted in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein. The second was of the provision of social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education. These themes coalesced around the common elements of the provision of resources valuable in preparation for higher education and success therein.

The first theme presented was the compromise of long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment. The words compromise, perception and potential are important to this theme. It was a compromise of a dream of art for an interest in social sciences, as well as a dream of university for a perception of a greater potential for short term economic viability in college.

The second theme was that economic issues have strained relationships in the classroom and within student residences, and these experiences have been ostracizing. Initial introduction, the unexpected ramifications of sharing honestly, or of sharing an economically grounded argument, attempts to reconcile the perception of not fitting in, finding comfort in association, contractual liability and bill collecting are important to this theme. Specifically, each is an

element of a narrative wherein I have made efforts to fit in within higher educational spaces, that the results of which have been contradictory to that effort and have in fact been ostracizing.

The third theme was that OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully. Preparation, initial difficulty, attempted improvement in method of access, reaching out to a political representative, refusal of expected funding, and the inability to access expected full course load, temporal concessions, or support services are important to this theme. Specifically, each of these is an element of a narrative wherein despite relevant skills, prior preparation, and learning from experience, there has been considerable difficulty in successfully accessing relevant services.

The fourth theme was that working-class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein. Finding success through practice, adapting to physical labour, finding a way to continue, accepting a role, valuing an ally in a greater hierarchal role, respect for exertion, respect for grit, sacrificing safety for wage, time and effort for reciprocity, gaining an unexpected reward of clarity, as well as a systemic method for success are important to this theme. Specifically, each is an element of a narrative wherein the necessity of procuring and maintaining paid employment provided both impetus and opportunity to informally learn lessons that would be assistive therein by design, and assistive in preparing for a return to university and success therein, largely by happenstance.

Comparison of Autoethnographic Results to Literature Review

The comparison of autoethnographic results to that of the literature review will be conducted systematically and in respect to the order that themes were presented. The process will proceed as follows for each theme. First, a question of whether there is a basis for comparing

thematic data to the theoretical basis of the current study, likewise the ethnographic data, the review of meta-analyses, and the review of empirical articles, is posed. Affirmative answers will warrant proceeding. Second, a question of what is the basis for comparison is posed. All answers will warrant proceeding. Finally, a question of how the thematic data is comparable is posed. Answers will comprise the content of this section.

A compromise of long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment. The compromise of a dream of art for an interest in social sciences, as well as a dream of university for a perception of the potential for short term economic viability, medium and long term economic stability.

First is the comparison to the theoretical basis (Maslow, 1943) of the current study, the theory of human motivation, comprised largely of the hierarchical arrangement of universal human needs. There is a theoretical basis for comparing thematic data. This theme suggests an inability to foresee a reliable means of satisfying a safety need (security of employment) through the pursuit of art. Instead, an interest in social sciences is foreseen as a more reliable means of satisfying said safety need. Additionally, it suggests an inability to foresee a reliable means of satisfying another safety need (security of body) while in university, through paying fees and rent for example. Instead, college was foreseen as a locale wherein said safety need could be satisfied more reliably. Also, in comparison to the characteristics of self-actualizing people, this theme suggests an element of "problem centering as opposed to ego-centering" (Maslow, 1954 p. 153-174) in that there was an assessment of the economic problems at hand, the financial risk they involved and in doing so a conscious decision to set aside an element of self, the drive to create art. Finally, in comparison to the characteristics of self actualization (Maslow, 1962) this

theme suggests that there was a recognition of a penchant for a creative pursuit, which is a characteristic of self actualization, but that it fell short of what could be described as an ideal peak experience.

Second is the comparison to the ethnographic data (Willis, 1977) reviewed for the current study. There is an ethnographic basis for comparison. Ethnographic data describing a working class cultural convention, one wherein practical knowledge is thought more important than theoretical knowledge is comparable to thematic data suggesting that practical knowledge, in this case the foreseeable means of satisfying the aforementioned safety needs, was more important than pursuit of theoretical knowledge, such as others who had succeeded in art or at university with limited economic resources. Next is the comparison to the review and comments (Willis, 2004) made about research that has stemmed from the ethnographer's original publication. There is an ethnographic basis for comparison. Ethnographic data purveying the observation that working-class individuals can provide a commodity to elites, and in doing so distinguish themselves economically is comparable to thematic data suggesting that the pursuit of art was not foreseen as reliably producing a commodity valuable enough to warrant its pursuit.

Third is the comparison to the review of meta-analyses. There is a meta-analytic basis for comparison. The review of meta-analyses revealed that academic achievement was medium to strongly correlated with socioeconomic status (Sirin, 2005) and that non-intellective constructs (Abraham & Bond, 2012) more strongly correlated with achievement than traditional predictors of success, such as self-efficacy (Abraham & Bond, 2012, Robbins et al., 2004) in particular. This revelation was comparable to thematic data suggesting compromises made largely due to socioeconomic or class related factors, also a dearth of intellective concerns, and an inability to

foresee a reliable degree of self efficacy specifically in meeting short, medium and long term economic responsibilities.

Fourth is the comparison to the review of empirical articles. The finding (Berrington, Roberts, & Tammes, 2016) of the review, that working-class students seemingly have little desire to fit in to educational institutions as they have the lowest educational aspirations is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests the lowering of educational aspirations, from dream to interest, from university to college. The finding (Kim, 2007) of the review, that working-class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with the economic costs of higher education is also comparable to this theme. This theme comparably suggests that economic costs are a significant factor in higher educational decision making, which have influence on educational aspirations based on the perception of their affordability. The finding that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with systemic and stable inequality, specifically higher risk/reward ratios (Silva, 2016) is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests a cognizance of risk/reward ratios, specifically of expenditures, or risk, university being costlier than college and therefore riskier, and employment, or reward, art perceived as less predictable than social services, and less likely to be rewarding.

Economic issues have strained relationships in the classroom and within student residences and these experiences have been ostracizing. I have made efforts to fit in within higher educational spaces, the results of which have been contradictory to that effort and have been perceived as ostracizing.

First is the comparison to the theoretical basis (Maslow, 1943) of the current study, the theory of human motivation, comprised largely of the hierarchical arrangement of universal

human needs. There is a theoretical basis for comparing thematic data. Thematic data suggesting a desire to fit in, and efforts to that effect are comparable to a motivation to satisfy esteem needs, specifically respect by others. Also, in comparison to the characteristics of self-actualizing people (Maslow, 1954) the thematic data suggests lacking a characteristic, the acceptance of others. However, possession of 3 characteristics including autonomy, independence of culture and environment and resistance to enculturation, were evident in failing to accept the validity of a counter argument in the context of a culture of seemingly unanimous disapproval. Further, thematic data suggests lacking another characteristic, that of transcendence of any particular culture, in that the result of said defence was ostracising, not transcendent. Finally, in comparison to the characteristics of self actualization (Maslow, 1962) thematic data suggests that there is a progression towards characteristics of self actualization, but also lack of others, and that the experience falls short of what could be described as peak experience.

Second is the comparison to the ethnographic data (Willis, 1977) reviewed for the current study, specifically cultural and institutional factors that contribute to withdrawal from education. There is an ethnographic basis for comparing thematic data. Thematic data suggesting that the ultimately fruitless efforts to ingratiate self to others, efforts that were largely informed by practical experience, were aligned with ethnographic data in observation of the working class cultural convention of thinking practical knowledge a pre-condition of other knowledge. The fruitlessness of the effort is aligned with the ethnographic finding that those outside of the working class do not agree with this pre-condition. Also, thematic data suggesting disagreement with the prevailing opinion is comparable to the ethnographic finding of opposition to authority amongst the working class, in that a defense was the chosen a method of resolution, not an acquiescence to authority. Also, thematic data suggesting the defense was misinterpreted and

elicited unwanted career advice is comparable to the ethnographic findings of a belittling and sarcastic attitude amongst some teachers towards working class students with careers advice being ineffective and rejected respectively.

Next is the comparison to the review and comments (Willis, 2004) made about research that has stemmed from the ethnographer's original publication. There is an ethnographic basis for comparing thematic data. The ethnographic findings of significant changes in the job market, and that working-class young choose to identify themselves through brand label consumption are comparable. The thematic data comparably suggests that the economic capital derived from the student job market fell short of reliably financing higher education, which is in line with the finding of a decline in that market. This theme also suggests an attempt to ingratiate self through expenditures on aesthetics, comparable to the finding that working class young choose to identify themselves through their brand label consumption. Also, the ethnographic finding that working-class individuals can procure a commodity once only available to elites, and in doing so distinguish themselves culturally, is comparable. This theme suggests that the consumption of aesthetic services and products was fruitless in distinguishing self, at least in the manner hoped for, potentially in contrast to this finding. Also, the ethnographic finding that once an avenue into post secondary education is found, working class students can autonomously appropriate and appreciate a world that is conducive of expression, mental development and knowledge acquisition is comparable. This theme, in contrast, suggests difficulty in said autonomous appropriation and appreciation as well as in expression that has been ostracizing, and has hindered mental development and knowledge acquisition therein.

Third, is the comparison to the review of meta-analyses. There is a meta-analytic basis for comparing thematic data. The meta-analysis (Rubin, 2012) revealed that working class

students were less integrated than their more affluent classmates. This revelation was comparable to thematic data suggesting that efforts to ingratiate self to others did not elicit the positive and welcoming response hoped for.

Fourth is the comparison to the review of empirical articles. The finding from the literature review (Jones, 2005, Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, & Darnon, 2017, Keane, 2011) that working-class students who attend higher educational institutions must negotiate relationships with people and institutions across socioeconomic class lines is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests difficulty in negotiating relationships with people in the classroom and in student residences across socioeconomic class lines. The finding that working class students have difficulty fitting in to higher educational institutions, becoming distanced in terms of their dress, (Archer, Hollingworth, & Halsall, 2007) responsibilities and preference to perform paid work (Collier, Gilchrist, & Phillips, 2003) is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests difficulty fitting in within classrooms and fruitless attempts to do so through dress, as well as being ostracized by economic responsibilities that in turn necessitate paid work in contrast to the finding (Collier, Gilchrist, & Phillips, 2003) of a preference to perform paid work. The finding that working class students seemingly have little desire to fit in to educational institutions, as they hold seemingly contradictory values (Canaan, 2004) is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests that efforts to ingratiate self in the classroom, specifically in displaying unique critical thinking have been misguided, and likely seemed to be displaying contradictory values to those who agreed with the prevailing opinion. The finding that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with systemic and stable inequality, specifically concerning social stratification (Brooks, 2003) is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests that efforts to ingratiate self in

the classroom have been hindered by economic issues, and that the experiences have been socially stratifying. The finding that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations associated with the climate of the schools they attend, relating both to negative perceptions of their perspectives and learning preferences (Quinn et al., 2006) and to a mismatch between cultural norms (Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, & Covarrubias, 2012), is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests that the climate of the classroom is such that efforts to ingratiate self by sharing a unique perspective, and the informal learning it bestowed, have likely been perceived negatively, as the efforts have proven counterproductive and the experiences ostracizing. Further, the working class cultural norm of valuing practical knowledge as a prerequisite of other knowledge is a mismatch to the cultural norms of the classroom.

OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully. Despite relevant skills, prior preparation, and learning from experience, there has been considerable difficulty in successfully accessing relevant services.

First is the comparison to the theoretical basis (Maslow, 1943) of the current study, the theory of human motivation, comprised largely of the hierarchical arrangement of universal human needs. There is a theoretical basis for comparing thematic data. Thematic data suggesting a difficulty in accessing OSAP is comparable to a difficulty in satisfying physiological needs (food) and in satisfying safety needs (security of body/shelter) within the context of living in student residences while enrolled in higher education. Also, thematic data suggesting a difficulty in accessing academic support services is comparable to a difficulty in satisfying esteem needs (self-esteem, confidence, respect by others) within the context of failing to ask for consideration or of failing to access services despite them being available. This comparability stems from lack

of self-esteem and confidence in the thematic data, evidenced by a misguided attempt to maintain anonymity amongst more adept computer users when more effective means of amelioration were available. Also, in comparison to the characteristics of self-actualizing people (Maslow, 1954) there is no basis for comparison. The thematic data suggests that the satisfaction of the lowest 4 needs was not sufficient as to facilitate any transcendence from a state of deficiency management to a state of being wherein the characteristics of self-actualizing people could be realized. Finally, in comparison to the characteristics of self actualization (Maslow, 1962) there is no basis for comparison. The thematic data suggests that the satisfaction of the lowest 4 needs was not sufficiently complete as to facilitate any transcendence from a state of deficiency management to a state of being wherein the characteristics of self actualization could be emulated.

Second is the comparison to the ethnographic data (Willis, 1977) reviewed for the current study. There is an ethnographic basis for comparing thematic data. Thematic data suggesting an unwillingness to access services despite them being available is comparable to the ethnographic finding that working class culture is characterized by autonomy. Comparability stems from the belief in the value of autonomy in and of itself, in this case value deemed more valuable than the services that admitting vulnerability could deliver. Next is the comparison to the review and comments (Willis, 2004) regarding research that has stemmed from the ethnographer's original publication. There is no identifiable ethnographic basis for comparing thematic data.

Third is the comparison to the review of meta-analyses. There is a meta-analytic basis for comparing thematic data. The meta-analytic (Rubin, 2012) revelation that working-class students were less integrated than their more affluent classmates is comparable. The thematic data suggests a failure to access academic services that is comparable, in that the misguided attempt

to maintain anonymity amongst others is evidence of a recognition of difficulty integrating but fell short of a recognition of their affluence.

Fourth is the comparison to the review of empirical articles. The finding (Jones, 2005, Jury, Smeding, Stephens, Nelson, Aelenei, & Darnon, 2017, & Keane, 2011) that working class students who attend higher educational institutions must negotiate relationships with people and institutions across socioeconomic class lines while maintaining supportive relationships within their families and communities is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests that difficulty in successfully negotiating OSAP, presumably across socioeconomic class lines, necessitated an appeal to an elected representative by a family member in their local community. The finding (Kim, 2007) that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with incurring economic debt is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests the need to incur OSAP debt to fund higher education, and that this necessity caused difficulty while enrolled therein. The finding that working class students experience disparate difficulty in pursuing their educational aspirations that is associated with systemic and stable inequality, specifically concerning access, (Astin, & Oseguera, 2004) competition, (Bastedo, & Jacquette, 2011) and social stratification, (Brooks, 2003) is comparable to this theme. This theme suggests difficulty associated with accessing OSAP and various other services valuable in maintaining access to the institution, a recognition of competition, and of its effect on social stratification.

Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein. The necessity of procuring and maintaining paid employment provided both impetus and opportunity to informally learn lessons that would be

assistive therein by design, assistive in preparing for a return to university and success therein, largely by happenstance.

First is the comparison to the theoretical basis (Maslow, 1943) of the current study, the theory of human motivation, comprised largely of the hierarchical arrangement of universal human needs. There is a theoretical basis for comparing thematic data. Thematic data suggesting an impetus for informal learning is comparable to a motivation to satisfy physiological needs, (breathing) safety needs, (security of body, employment, resources, health) and esteem needs (confidence, achievement, respect of others) in the context of the procurement of working class labour, maintenance of sufficient health therein, hierarchal role taking and provision of social and economic capital respectively. Also, in comparison to the characteristics of self-actualizing people (1954) the thematic data suggests an initial lack of the characteristics of self-actualizing people. The satisfaction of the lowest 4 needs was not sufficient as to facilitate any transcendence from a state of deficiency management to a state of being wherein the characteristics of self-actualizing people could be realized. Conversely, the thematic data suggest that the satisfaction of those lowest 4 needs did become sufficient to facilitate transcendence from a state of deficiency to a state of being, in that a peak experience was realized. Finally, in comparison to the characteristics of self actualization (1962) thematic data suggests an episodic realization of the characteristics of self actualization, in that a peak experience was realized. While episodic, the thematic data suggests that the experience is of assistance in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein. Further, suggesting that success therein was assisted by a lesson derived from that experience, that my dreams could be accomplished if I approached them in a systematic and regimented, factory-like manner.

Second is the comparison to the ethnographic data (Willis, 1977) reviewed for the current study. There is an ethnographic basis for comparing thematic data. Thematic data suggesting the impetus for informal learning is comparable to the ethnographic observation of the working-class convention that practice is more important than theory. In the context of the procurement of working class labour and maintenance of sufficient health therein, practice is more important than theory. Also thematic data suggesting the provision of social capital amongst coworkers and peers is comparable to the ethnographic observation that working class participants are more accepted socially in the world of industrial work than they were in school and more so than their classmates that were more accepted in school. Next is the comparison to the review and comments (Willis, 2004) made about research that has stemmed from the ethnographer's original publication. There is an ethnographic basis for comparing thematic data. The ethnographic finding that ethnic membership can provide means for survival and expression is comparable to thematic data suggesting membership in the working class has provided an impetus to learn the means of survival therein, and success in doing so has provided for a return to university and success therein in part through reliance on, and the expression of lessons learned.

Third is the comparison to the review of meta-analyses. There is a meta-analytic basis for comparing thematic data. The meta-analytic revelations that academic achievement was medium to strongly correlated with socioeconomic status (Sirin, 2005) and that non-intellective constructs (Abraham & Bond, 2012) more strongly correlated with achievement than traditional predictors of success, self-efficacy (Abraham & Bond, 2012, Robbins et al., 2004) in particular is comparable to the thematic data. The thematic data comparably suggests that working class labour has assisted in the preparation for a return to university, and has provided a sense of self-efficacy, and that it has assisted in achievement of success therein.

Fourth is the comparison to the review of empirical articles. The finding that higher education can be instrumentally beneficial for working class students in terms of class mobility, and class consciousness, (Bullock and Limbert, 2003) is comparable to this theme. This theme comparably but retrospectively suggests that working class labour is instrumentally beneficial for working class students in terms of preparation for higher educational success, and perhaps that success therein is in assistance of class mobility. The finding that for working class students confidence in one's ability to succeed in and gain from higher education (Collier, Gilchrist, & Phillips, 2003), manage risk (Cilesiz, & Drotos, 2016), hold a socially conscious focus (Stuber, 2011) is conducive to engagement in, and commitment to that endeavor, which is beneficial to success therein is comparable to this theme. Thematic data suggests that this most recent higher educational foray was one undertaken with preparation and confidence, experience managing risk and in pursuit of teaching, a socially conscious career, and a desire to share lessons learned in that pursuit, likewise for socially conscious reasons.

Conclusions

The comparison of autoethnographic results to that of the literature review was conducted systematically, and in respect to the order that themes were presented. The process was the same for each theme. First, a question of whether there is a basis for comparing thematic data to the theoretical basis of the current study and likewise for the ethnographic data, the review of meta-analyses and the review of empirical articles was posed. Affirmative answers warranted proceeding. Second, a question of what is the basis for comparison was posed. All answers warranted proceeding. All answers will warrant proceeding. Finally, a question of how the thematic data is comparable was posed. The content of this section, particularly the comparability found, provided an avenue for generating new themes and ideas in an effort

directed towards ameliorating the experience and increasing the likelihood of success for others and in doing so, contributing to alleviation of the broadening income gap.

The generation of ideas will be conducted systematically and in the order that themes were presented. The process will proceed as follows for each theme. First, a question of whether there is a basis for generation of ideas within comparisons of thematic data to the theoretical basis of the current study, the ethnographic data, the review of meta-analyses and the review of empirical articles, is posed. Affirmative answers will warrant proceeding. Second, a question of what idea is generated is posed. Finally, a question of how the generation can further psychological scholarship and in doing so ameliorate the experience as well as increase the likelihood of success for others is posed. Answers will comprise the content of this section.

First is the theme of a compromise of long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment. There is a basis for generation of said themes and ideas within comparisons of thematic data to the theoretical basis of the current study, likewise the ethnographic data, the review of meta-analyses, and the review of empirical articles. The idea generated by this comparison, for this autoethnographer is the limiting nature of a subjective perception. I perceived heroes, artists such as Emily Carr as having benefactors and resources that enabled them to pursue art. I did not look deeper. Had I done so I would have found that despite Emily Carr receiving a significant inheritance the inability to manage these finances amongst heirs resulted in a need to support the ongoing endeavor through teaching. Further, had I done so I would have found that other heroes, such as artist Robert Bateman, and author Stephen King were educated, and employed in teaching while pursuing their own creative art as hobby. Each of them in time found that their hobby had eclipsed their profession both in compensation, and in

drawing their attention, warranting a transition to that endeavour. Likewise, I perceived insurmountable difficulty in affording university, and in affording the expense of an unexpected summer session. I did not look deep enough. Had I done so I would have found that affordability issues could be ameliorated, but admittedly not eliminated, through employment, financial literacy, and effective domestic engineering. Also, had I pursued the dream as hard as I imagined the hurdles in its path, I may have obtained it, and baring that, I would have profited from the pursuit, in one way or another.

Second is the theme that economic issues have strained relationships in the classroom and within student residences and these experiences have been ostracizing. There is a basis for generation of said themes and ideas within comparisons of thematic data to the theoretical basis of the current study, likewise the ethnographic data, the review of meta-analyses, and the review of empirical articles. The idea generated by this comparison, for this autoethnographer is that the economic issues encountered were indeed stressful, but the misguided handling of these issues, both in the classroom and in student residences were paramount to their inherent nature in the experience of ostracism. Had I kept my focus on the paramount task at hand, perseverance in higher education, success therein, and the eventual bestowing of credentials upon successful completion, and not to supportive tasks like fitting in that were ultimately fruitless, I may have avoided demotivation and withdrawal from study.

Third is the theme that OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully. There is a basis for generation of said themes and ideas within comparisons of thematic data to the theoretical basis of the current study, likewise the ethnographic data, the review of meta-analyses, and the review of empirical articles. The idea generated by this comparison, for this autoethnographer, is that I had both a sense of entitlement,

in terms of OSAP funding, and a sense of disentitlement, in terms of academic services, and that both were a detriment to my success in higher education. Had I known that OSAP would be unreliable at best, I would have worked in industrial labour full time in contrast to merely during the summer in preparation for that eventuality. I would have accumulated economic capital in that endeavour and saved more in preparation for higher education. Likewise, had I known how common it was for my classmates to be accessing academic services and that doing so helped them succeed, I may have done so as well.

Fourth, is the theme that working-class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein. There is a basis for generation of said themes and ideas within comparisons of thematic data to the theoretical basis of the current study, likewise the ethnographic data, the review of meta-analyses, and the review of empirical articles. The idea generated by this comparison, for this autoethnographer, is that the necessity of procuring and maintaining paid employment was assistive in preparing for a return to university and success therein, largely by happenstance. Had I known the benefits this labour would bestow, I would have either pursued that labour or emulated the behavioural modifications this labour provided the impetus for before enrolling in higher education. These behavioural modifications involved improvements to financial decision making and to domestic engineering, specifically pertaining to health maintenance. Learning how to make these behavioural modifications came largely from disseminating textual data obtained free of charge from the Woodstock Public Library, a resource that has always been at my disposal, and is so in many communities.

Implications

The conclusions of this section provided an avenue for generating new ideas in an effort directed towards ameliorating the experience, increasing the likelihood of success for others and in doing so contributing to alleviation of the broadening income gap. The generation of said ideas will be conducted systematically. The process will proceed as follows for each theme. First, conclusions will be reiterated concisely. Second, implications for student success in higher education will be conveyed.

First is the theme of a compromise of long term potential primarily due to the perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential rewards of long term investment. The conclusions of idea generation within this theme are regretful, in that compromise was not indeed necessary but based on a limited perception of possibilities. The implication for students is that the dogged pursuit of a dream is a rewarding process regardless of the outcome, and that all avenues of increasing the affordability of pursuing that dream should be investigated. These avenues are wide ranging, within the system, in terms of official support, and outside of the system, in terms of employment, financial literacy, and effective and efficient domestic engineering.

Second is the theme that economic issues have strained relationships in the classroom and within student residences and these experiences have been ostracizing. The conclusions of idea generation within this theme are regretful, in that the pursuit of relationships was arduous and ultimately fruitless. While narratives of advantageous relationships proliferate the media, thematic data suggests a narrative of misguided attempts to obtain said associations exists as well. Thematic data conversely suggests that relationships within my community and within institutions that were supportive of academic progression were established and maintained. The

implication for students is that while it is beneficial to have supportive relationships in higher education, the benefits they bestow are only worth so much expenditure of time and effort. Students should focus more on their studies than their relationships.

Third is the theme that OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully. The conclusions of idea generation within this theme are regretful, not as much for not possessing knowledge regarding the unreliability of OSAP funding, as that knowledge was obtained unconventionally through trial and error, and understandably so, but more so with a sense of disentitlement in terms of academic services that I knew were available. Thematic data suggests that while navigation of the OSAP system can be arduous and a distraction from studies it can also provide the very access needed for credentialing. Also that a sense of autonomy can be a detriment to academic success, particularly when a valuation of autonomy interferes with reaching out for support. The implications for students is that all avenues of increasing the affordability of higher education should be investigated, and that support should be sought, and if it is not forthcoming, reach for support elsewhere, and repeat until forthcoming.

Fourth is the theme that working-class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have assisted in preparing for a return to higher education and success therein. The conclusions of idea generation within this theme are regretful, in that receipt of the benefits this labour would bestow, benefits that were available to me within the job market and within the Woodstock Public Library, could have assisted me in preparing for initial forays into higher education. These benefits are found both in the enhancement of the ability to take care of health and likewise in the enhancement of the ability to apply prolonged effort in a systematic and regimented, factory-like manner. The

implications for students are that they should become adept at both taking care of their health, and in applying themselves in a systematic and regimented, factory-like manner. It is implied by thematic data that the ability to do so for a prolonged period of time is assistive in preparation for higher education. If industrial labour is unavailable as an avenue to do so, or if it is for some reason unwanted, prepare in kind.

The research implications, or what future research should be done is as follows. A replication of the current studies research question and methodology would be valuable for confirmatory and generalization purposes. An expansion of the current studies research question and methodology with a focus group, or multiple interview based study would likewise be valuable for confirmatory and generalization purposes. An encouragement of autoethnography, or barring that, an allowance of the endeavor by institutional leadership will be valuable as a means of fulfilling partial fulfillment of course requirements for unique populations, and in furtherance of the existing literature.

Limitations

The present study was limited by my ability to recollect the events that transpired, my historical perspective of them, the potential for memories to be skewed, as well as the accessibility of artifacts to assist in that endeavor. The study was likewise limited by an exclusively North American context, my enrollment in social sciences disciplines exclusively, and by an exclusively male perspective.

Reliability as applied to autoethnography is largely a concern of narrative honesty, specifically whether the events could have transpired as described, and whether the author believes they happened as described (Ellis, 2011). This autoethnographer strived for the utmost of narrative honesty while writing, but will not purport to recollect with absolute accuracy.

Validity as applied to autoethnography is largely a concern of coherence, specifically whether the events are effectively narrated, and that the narrative is useful, specifically in terms of improvements to communication with unlike others or to the lives of participants, readers or the narrator (Ellis, 2004). This autoethnographer strived for the utmost of coherence and usefulness while writing, but it will ultimately be the responsibility of the reader to determine if the product is sufficiently coherent, or valid in this regard.

Generalizability as applied to autoethnography is largely a concern of narrative impact, (Ellis, 2011) specifically whether the content reaches the reader sufficiently. This autoethnographer strived to make the unfamiliar familiar in an effort to ensure that the present study will be generalizable to the reader's experience, or the experience of others who are familiar to the reader.

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Table 1

Narrative Data Analysis

Meaning Unit/Quote	Code	Theme
An art teacher had encouraged my commitment to and pursuit of visual art in higher education. I wasn't a prodigy, something I thought a perquisite of success. I didn't know anyone who was gainfully employed as an artist in my community. I looked within, art could be something I returned to.	Compromised potential for employment exemplars	The compromise of long term potential primarily due to my perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential of long term investment.
A social studies teacher had helped me, had granted me access to the class despite lack of room and in doing so stoked an interest with higher educational options, not like visual art, but an interest none the less…I could see employment opportunities in my community… I thought a career in social services would be more attainable and satisfy my drive to help others and make a positive impact on the world.	Compromised potential for perception of probability	The compromise of long term potential primarily due to my perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential of long term investment.
I perceived college as inferior to university, and had since a teacher had discouraged me from enrolling in any tech courses, describing the college stream as beneath me. I was accepted into my "back up" university despite failing to fulfill the OAC requirements, but opted for college, fearing that I would be found out, and expelled, time and money wasted, never having enquired if I could have made it work.	Less risk, less reward	The compromise of long term potential primarily due to my perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential of long term investment.
I had interviewed for many part time jobs… Once I found success in the interview process these part time jobs were more difficult to hold than I had imagined. I didn't take well to being the brunt of senior staff and owners mocking humour. I didn't take well to my role. Pizza was a different story, I enjoyed process and product. A peer provided access to the position, and assistance in keeping it and in doing so an opportunity to learn how to do so for myself.	Learning from experience	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I perceived a dearth of employment opportunities near where I was living and questioned my ability to obtain and hold employment without an insider. Travelling to and from Woodstock for work was burdensome but I needed the money… I remember an uncomfortable feeling when entering the city	Compromised time for perception of probability	The compromise of long term potential primarily due to my perception of short term economic

limits in either direction… like my transmission was searching for a gear and couldn't quite find it.		realities being paramount to the potential of long term investment.
I enjoyed landscaping…the enhancement of skills, improvements in efficiency… the visual reinforcement of a job well done and the ability of a job well done to be an effective advertisement. It was physically difficult but having your best friend as your boss helps ease the adaptation to the labour	Learning a trade	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
It seemed like my fellow OSAP/student card/registration line waiters took to the process naturally while it took a tole on me. The happiness of being included in conversation soon evaporated when the comparison of timetables indicated that despite full time admission I was only enrolled in a part time course load… My pleas and paperwork were not sufficient in persuading academic counselling or one professor who would not grant me access.	Difficulty accessing administrative services	OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully.
My parents and I scrambled to prepare after a late admission. There was little choice in affordable accommodation. A basement apartment, a 35-55 minute bus ride to and from school, living under an intrusive, menthol cigarette smoking family. I questioned my resolve in the face of a cold winter waiting for the bus. Also, sharing a kitchen with an intrusive family was an uncomfortable living situation where a microwave in my bedroom and Chef Boy R Dee became my friends.	Compromised living conditions to mitigate risk	The compromise of long term potential primarily due to my perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential of long term investment.
I made a friend who encouraged me to stay. I just couldn't imagine being able to afford it.	Compromised potential for perception of possibility	The compromise of long term potential primarily due to my perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential of long term investment.
I had been lifting weights with the intention of building size and strength but despite the size and strength I had gained I was still the smallest and weakest man on every crew I was assigned to that summer. I had virtually no construction experience, and learned that the highest risk on a job site is from being crushed. I gained respect by working beyond my physical capabilities.	Physical effort and acceptance of inherent risks earns respect	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.

The man who trained me was missing fingers on both hands, lost on the very job he was training me for. I wasn't ever proficient, merely sufficient at the job, being quite concerned about losing fingers, and ultimately being successful, heading the man's warnings… I gained insider knowledge relating to a well publicized quality and safety issue and social capital amongst the Car Group.	Learning mitigates inherent injury risks	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I was sufficiently scared after an entire week of safety training, a prerequisite of being permitted inside the foundry. I hoped to work in the area dominated by females, running the machines that had once crushed a man to death in an area of the plant that 'required' respirators to be worn at all times. I feared that I would work in the area pouring 3000 degree molten metal, not be up to the task, and be critically injured. I was lucky. I gained grit and social capital amongst my working class peers, and earned the highest hourly wage I ever would.	Taking risky work to fund education	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
We sent my OSAP application in as early as possible via priority post. We later learned that these applications were held unprocessed until the term began, and due to the added labour involved were less favoured in comparison to those applications received directly from the institution. This caused a delay and complications that were difficult and time consuming to resolve. I couldn't convince anyone of reason, neither could my mother. The MPP in my parents riding came to our assistance and 'flagged' my file, releasing my funds.	Learning from OSAP experience, falling short	OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully.
Rent went unpaid. The lease was amended so that my room mates wouldn't suffer financially if I wasn't able to pay the rent. The paper work was anonymous of course, as I was assured of by phone before the meeting by the landlord, but I thought that everyone knew. I suspected that the amendment was likely initiated by a concerned roommate that already knew.	Room mate relationships strained by economics	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.
I had a class wherein my 55 classmates introduced themselves in such depth and with such ease that it still boggles my mind. I was nervous, and uncomfortable, stumbled on my words, and felt that I was unnecessarily interrupted and criticized for the way in which I spoke of myself. I wasn't used to sharing in such a way, and wondered what happened to no	Classroom sharing ostracised	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.

interruptions while others are sharing, and express yourself in your own words. My attempt to share did not elicit the positive and welcoming response I had hoped for.		
It seemed like I was the only one who raised their hand when the class was asked if we would skip class the following day if we were to win the lottery this evening. I couldn't imagine anyone was really being honest. I suspected afterwards that the question was really a matter of implied dedication. My defense based on the alleviation of immediate personal needs and the potential to alleviate those of many more fell on deaf ears. I felt ostracized from the group.	Classroom sharing ostracized	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.
I made attempts to fit in via accepting the advice of classmates in regard to my glasses, hair and attire, relying on what seemed like an omnipresent credit card drive on campus to finance the costly, and ultimately fruitless effort.	Consumption to fit in	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.
I had difficulty maintaining motivation in college after being accepted to my 'first choice' university as a 'mature student' feeling like university was where I was meant to be.	Compromises are worthwhile long term	The compromise of long term potential primarily due to my perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential of long term investment.
A wealthy roommate whose room was next door to mine often arrived disruptively and departed likewise, bills ultimately unpaid, owing increasingly substantial amounts until we had no choice but to launch a campaign to contact his parents, which was complicated by the staff employed in their home who served as gate keepers. I was ultimately successful in the campaign, but this contributed to difficulties in my student residence.	Room mate with means, supported by those without	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.
My health was poor. I suffered from aches and pains in my back and hands I attributed to my summers in construction and at the textile plant. I suffered respiratory problems I attributed to the after effects of trying to fit in by abstaining from using the 'mandatory' respirators at the foundry, and to the piles of drywall dust I uncovered in the vents of our residence that I cleaned	Health effects of working class membership	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.

up without considering complaint, feeling for those who had rushed to get these residences finished in the heat.		
As much as I was proud of being accepted to university publicly, privately I was unsure that I should have been, or deserved to be. I was embarrassed. I didn't reach out for help when I could have.	Feeling I was undeserving	OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully.
I had a computer at home, and had some experience using and maintaining it, but in the context of entering data amongst a group of university classmates I felt the difference in ability, and succumbed to my perception of it, eventually refraining from raising my hand to indicate that I was not finished.	Felt embarrassed and undeserving and hid	OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully.
I paid to join a club as a means of forming the kind of instrumental and supportive fraternity like bonds I had read about and seen in film. It was not to be. It seemed like everyone already knew everyone, that their bonds were already formed elsewhere, and that I had little to add to their conversations anyway, often about experiences that were economically distant from my own.	Paid membership dues didn't reap the rewards	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.
I had a line of credit to bridge any gap in OSAP funding that had now come to be expected, but was denied entirely, meaning that I was unable to pay my tuition, and eventually withdrew on that basis, with more debt, and no credentials.	Financially indebted	I have found great difficulty successfully accessing OSAP and various other student services.
There seemed to always be some work available, often temporary, difficult and dirty, but the summer I spent at the foundry was more than enough evidence of my capacity and willingness to endure it. I was very lucky to be able to obtain employment through informal conversations in that coffee shop amongst those peers.	Work provided social capital which provided work	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I was diagnosed with a pre-ulcerative condition, was concerned that I wouldn't be able to afford medication, work or socialize without coffee, and was relieved that my Dr. provided me samples knowing I was only working sporadically, and advice on how to amend my diet. I took the advice, and did my own research, concurrently attributing a great deal of the problem to	Digestive issue and diet improvements	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.

poor diet and too much coffee, and did not need to return for more medication.

I cleaned, landscaped, dug holes, moved furniture for friends and asked nothing in return but was always paid in one way or another.	Asked to help, always rewarded	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I felt like I lived in another world while commuting, working nights and such long hours that I knew were a detriment to health and longevity, but the rapid decline in debt was worth it.	Compromised all for finance and future	The compromise of long term potential primarily due to my perception of short term economic realities being paramount to the potential of long term investment.
The value of decreased debt load notwithstanding, it paled in comparison to the value of what I would later learn was a peak experience wherein I could see everything standing between myself and success, and clearly what I needed to do to get where I wanted to be, university.	Physical exhaustion delivers mental clarity	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I was alarmed that the affliction was often life long, and one most often suffered by the elderly and those with severely diminished immune systems. Ultimately, supplementing antioxidants (lutein and NAC) and omega 3, 6, 9 and occasionally using a commercial eye lid cleanser was more effective and less burdensome than relying on antibiotics and surgery.	Homeopathic prevention/treatment	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I had to relinquish the material handler position which had provided relief from the strain of repetitive movement following my colonoscopy and confirmation of my internal hemorrhoid. Ultimately, the addition of fibrous whole grains and vegetables to my diet was more effective than medications in alleviating my digestive issues, and exaggerating my university excel experience in an interview provided me a quality inspector position which	Skill set preserve health	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.

alleviated the repetitive movement strain and provided me with experience, and an insiders perspective.

I had put in all the leg work, quit smoking, ate, supplemented, and trained my way from the underweight BMI category, or too low to be healthy to the overweight category while maintaining very low body fat, ultimately settling in the healthy range, and had read progressively challenging books on personal finance, psychology, society, politics and economics, saved and invested in preparation for the economic downturn, and my return to higher education. Now is the time. I did all the prep, I took all the steps.	Did all the prep	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I avoided extra fees, such as the $150 penalty imposed for paying tuition in installments, and when it would come time to apply for OSAP in the following years I would be prepared to face the now expected hurdles with relative ease, this time armed with financial literacy and detailed financial records, including that of repayment.	Employed financial literacy	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I panicked when I realized that my plan to address my writing weakness was unsuccessful when my first writing assignment was returned with a mark of 55% and I gained very little insight into what when wrong from the written comments. I am so very lucky that the TA was willing to go through my work and tell me how she would have organized and presented my thoughts and insights, which she assured me were valuable.	Learn from past mistakes, confront deficiencies	OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully.
I knew that success in university would be as difficult or more than the transformation in my body and health,…I knew if I applied myself in a systematic factory like regiment in university nothing could stop me.	Systematic factory approach	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I found myself in a civil liberties seminar, showing my disagreement with the prevailing opinion, reminded of past experiences in kind, but now armed with enough academic knowledge to argue my point of view, and perhaps that of the economically underprivileged students in the case studies we	Informally learned economic realities distance me	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.

were discussing. I felt that the civil liberties lawyer appreciated my point of view, but that it distanced me from my classmates.

I avoided the cafeteria as much as I was able, opting to return home for lunch, finding it too loud, and uncomfortably laden with appeals for donations to fund extracurricular activities and trips to relax in between classes. I felt that distanced me from those with common teachables. When I did use the cafeteria I found myself most comfortable with those who would be tech teachers.	Refusing financial support distanced me	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.
I was able to gain access to an elective course designed to accompany the regular course work of would be art teachers. I was accepted in part because of my work experience, and found it comforting that this part of my life was an asset there. I found a level of acceptance among those art teachers I wouldn't find anywhere else.	Work experience academic asset	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I had difficulty adjusting from feeling financially independent to dependent on my partner, but establishing and improving upon the garden plot, salvaging and improving upon found solid wood furniture, maintaining our home, and preparing our meals allowed me to feel less dependence and more partnership, solidifying our bond.	Application of work place skills	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I assured my peers of my decision to pursue graduate school, and myself in the process. I had accepted a degree of risk, but was confident in my ability to thrive with little economic resources while studying, and later prosper with little economic input due to working class skills and financial literacy respectively.	Acceptance of school as a financial risk	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I can fill the substantial vegetable needs of my partner and myself for nearly half the year and have leftovers to share with my community from an 18/20 foot garden plot, $20 in seeds, time I used to spend at the gym, and a free composter here at our apartment. It does cost time, but it's profits are tax free and income not penalized by OSAP.	Working skills provide	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have

		prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.
I thought that sharing my experiences of independently overcoming past academic difficulties with limited economic resources would be valued as I valued those experiences my classmates shared of formally helping others overcome theirs, but I both misspoke, and was misunderstood, and felt overall that these experiences distanced me from my classmates.	Sharing my experiences distanced me	Economic issues have strained my relationships in the classroom and within student residences and I have felt these experiences ostracizing.
I was relieved to be able to take a LOA from study in order to support my parents emotionally and instrumentally while my mother was ill, but I was disappointed to read within that policy that had I needed a semester to earn money to support them in financial crisis, like my father had for his parents, I would not be granted the same allowance.	Relief and disappointment in policy	OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully.
OSAP cut me off after my first year of graduate school, conveyed to me that 'interest free' status was not truly interest free, making the endeavor considerably more expensive, from my perspective unfairly so.	OSAP cut off/ non interest free	OSAP and various other student services have been very difficult to access successfully.
Health issues, including a lung infection, a persistent post infection cough that scared my lungs, as well as spasms in my neck, back and hips, have interfered with my higher education. Ultimately, homeopathic remedies, supplementation, increasing my water intake, daily meditative breathing and yoga practice as well as hot and cold shower therapy have been more effective in preventing and treating my symptoms than prescribed medications.	Health issues and home remedies	Working class labour has provided both impetus and opportunity for informal learning, as well as social and economic capital that have prepared me for a return to higher education, and success therein.

WILLEY A. B. DOW

CURRICULUM VITAE

Education

University of Western Ontario

Master of Arts (Applied Psychology in Schools)   September 2015-Present

Bachelor of Education (Distinction: Social and Family Studies)   September 2013-April 2014

Bachelor of Arts (Honours: Psychology and Sociology)   September 2009-April 2013

Academic Awards

Faculty of Education Entrance Scholarship

Administered by the University of Western Ontario

The Professor Mark R. Cole Award in Experimental Psychology

Administered by Huron University College

Major Papers

Helpers And Heroes, Hurdles And Highs: A Humanistic Autoethnographical Reflection On Working Class Student Experiences. Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Western Ontario

August 2017

Resistance to Impulsivity and Temporal Discounting in Canis lupus familiaris. Major Research Project in Behavioural and Experimental Psychology, Huron University College

April 2013