Honoring What They Say
Part II: The UBC Experience

The First Nations House of Learning at UBC was the first site to be involved in piloting the process model, that is, in the adaptation of an impact assessment procedure that involved the use of survey and focus group methodologies. This section of the report contains a brief description of First Nations education at UBC, outlines the methodology used in piloting the process model, and presents the substantive findings. Works cited appear in Part VIII, following the Review of Literature.

First Nations Education at UBC

Individuals from a number of First Nations had attended the University of British Columbia from its early days. However, it was not until 1974 that the program of First Nations education at UBC was established: the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP). A number of other programs, including the Native Law program, were initiated during the next decade; in 1987 the First Nations House of Learning was established as a vehicle to draw together, increase, and give greater visibility to the First Nations presence on campus.

The First Nations House of Learning is not merely an academic home for First Nations programs, but is rather an entity that coordinates existing efforts, stimulates new initiatives, gives support, and serves as a liaison between First Nations communities, students, and the University.

The mission of the First Nations House of Learning is to work toward making the University's resources more accessible to BC's First Nations peoples and to improve the ability of the University to meet the needs of First Nations. The House of Learning is dedicated to quality preparation in all fields of postsecondary study, with quality education being determined by its relevance to the philosophy and values of First Nations. The House of Learning

seeks direction from First Nations communities through consultation meetings and workshops held throughout the province.

In keeping with the spirit of these goals, the objectives of the House of Learning are:

- to facilitate the participation of First Nations people in a wide range of study areas by providing information and support services;
- to expand the range and depth of program and course offerings within the faculties, schools, and institutes at UBC related to needs identified by First Nations people and communities in BC;
- to identify and promote research that would extend the frontiers of knowledge for the benefit of First Nations;
- to increase First Nations leadership on campus;
- to explore the possibility of founding an international component for the advancement of First Nations people everywhere; and
- to establish a Longhouse on campus to enhance access and support services for First Nations students.

The last objective was accomplished in May 1993 with the Official Opening of the First Nations House of Learning Longhouse on the site of the university's original arboretum to which trees came from the four directions over 50 years ago. The Longhouse in its setting of international natural beauty truly belongs to First Nations: every stage from determining an architect to selecting furniture was done by committees of Elders, students, staff, and faculty.

The Programs: A Brief Description

NITEP. In 1969 a small group of First Nations educators formed the BC Native Teachers' Association. The creation of a Native teacher education program was one of five priority areas identified by members of the Association at the time of its creation, and five years later the NITEP program was established in cooperation with UBC.

At present NITEP is similar to the basic elementary education program offered at UBC. NITEP students take the same compulsory education courses and have identical graduation requirements. Two of the NITEP courses (First Nations educational history and issues in First Nations pedagogy) are open to students campus-wide. In addition, NITEP requires extra seminars and field placements during the first three years, which provide opportunities to observe and participate in a variety of school settings.

The first two years of NITEP are offered through regional field centres, which enables students to remain in their communities and with their families and to understand education from the perspectives of their home communities. A field centre coordinator provides counseling, instruc-

tional, and administrative services. UBC faculty travel to the field centres to teach education-related courses.

First Nations Law. The First Nations Law program began at UBC in 1976 when the faculty initiated an affirmative action program to facilitate the admission of First Nations applicants to the Faculty of Law. Since that time the faculty has played a leading role in increasing the numbers of First Nations lawyers in Canada and in addition has been a leader in teaching, researching, and writing about First Nations law and legal issues. The Law Faculty currently offers six courses related to pertinent issues and rights of First Nations peoples.

The First Nations Law Program strives to make the law school experience relevant and to meet the students' needs and objectives. Not only is the First Nations perspective included in some regular law courses at present, but it will be even more pervasive in the future. The program requires three years of full-time study, with a bar exam and a one-year articling (apprenticeship) to follow before admission to the Bar of British Columbia.

Ts"kel. In 1984 the Ts"kel graduate program was initiated in the Faculty of Education to respond to the needs of the graduates of the NITEP program who were employed as principals or in other leadership positions. These students voiced a need for graduate studies opportunities that would address administrative and First Nations educational concerns, challenges, and issues. The first group of students helped the faculty to develop some of the First Nations courses and also named the program. Ts"kel is a Halq'emeylem word meaning Golden Eagle. To many First Nations the eagle symbolizes great achievement and accomplishments.

The Ts"kel program, originally offered in educational administration, required the completion of core courses in First Nations issues and educational leadership, as well as satisfying the requirements of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at UBC. In a few years First Nations students in other departments requested a program like Ts"kel. At present Ts"kel has expanded from the master's to the doctoral level and includes students in the following departments in the Faculty of Education: Social and Educational Studies, Centre for Curriculum and Instruction, and Educational Psychology and Special Education.

Health Care Professions. The most recent program to be initiated is the First Nations Health Care Professions Program, begun in 1988. This program is an interventive and supportive initiative designed to attract First Nations students to the health professions, to support First Nations students enrolled in the sciences and health professions, and to assist the health science disciplines in creating programs responsive to First Nations needs. The program has been active in recruitment of high school students, identification of potential health care professions students on campus, academic counseling, a Summer Science program and Synala

Honours Program for high school students, course development, and for the creation and sponsorship of a Native Health Research Database.

At the initiation of the program, no First Nations students were enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine and very few in other health sciences faculties and schools. By 1989 there were four students and that number had increased to 19 by 1991. As active recruitment of high school students continues, numbers will continue to swell.

Piloting the Process Model: Methodology

The Survey Questionnaire

Construction. It was important to decide whether to design a relatively short questionnaire with restricted-choice responses that could be scaled. The motivation to do so comes from the knowledge that:

- data that are at least ordinal make for more straightforward generalization of findings;
- restricted-choice responses are easier to answer and so may provide for a higher return rate; and
- open-ended text questions are both more difficult to answer and much more difficult, expensive, and time-consuming to analyze.

It was decided that the research questions required a balance in clear favor of open-ended, narrative-response items. This is because the research questions are complex and to find that complexity in the responses we would have to ask those who responded to provide:

- explanations of contexts for coming to UBC and studying there;
- recollections of situations that affected their progress;
- descriptions of their perceptions and attitudes; and
- retrospective assessments about how well their UBC experience prepared them for their further education and work.

We did not want to impose descriptive categories on the participants in the job we asked each of them do.

A first version of the questionnaire was developed at a research team workshop. It was piloted with six graduates who gave comments and recommendations, and some items were modified on that basis. In general the design imperatives of Sudman and Bradburn (1982) were followed in question construction and questionnaire design.

The modified version, a five-page questionnaire with six forced-choice items and 17 open-ended items, was mailed to 216 First Nations graduates of UBC in December 1992. Graduates were identified from records at First Nations House of Learning, through review of other University records, and by snowballing, asking graduates from different eras if they could identify others. Questionnaires were sent to all known First Nations graduates. Anonymity of participants was promised and maintained.

After an initial assessment of returns, a second mail-out of questionnaires to nonrespondents was made, along with follow-up telephone calls

to all nonrespondents whose telephone numbers were known. The final number of returns, 67, gives a return rate of 31%.

The questionnaire and the cover letter inviting response are included in Appendix A.

Analytic issues. The decision to depend most on narrative-response questions committed the research team to a painstaking analytic process in which the first step would be to determine what salient descriptive categories and meaningful distinctions the participants appeared to employ in their retrospections. The second part of analysis was the documentation of both variability (i.e., range) and uniformity (i.e., relative incidence of a "value") within those categories. The second part of analysis provides a test of the descriptive adequacy of that first analytic step, generalizing the descriptive categories.

In addition, the dependence on narrative response sets the tone for the entire project and defines a perspective for interpreting this discussion of findings. Because of the way most research questions in education are framed, we are inclined to look at incidence of a particular value as definitive of the finding. In this report it is important to note what proportion of the group has a common response or comment. Equally important is the range of responses. When we document that one or two participants made a similar observation, it is as important a finding as the report that, for example, 50% or 95% made a similar observation. Modal responses are no more important than solitary responses.

The return rate and the open-ended nature of the questions dictate another caution in interpretation of responses and in inference. The return rate of 31% is comparable to other return rates in First Nations university graduate follow-up studies (e.g., Wilson, 1983, where a mailed questionnaire in Wisconsin to 214 First Nations university graduates brought a 27.8% return rate). We have to ask, What does nonresponse mean? and whether unknown selection factors for initial identification of the population should qualify any inference about a general population of First Nations graduates.

Return rates are highest (a) with shorter questionnaires; (b) with restricted-choice questionnaire items; and (c) with homogeneous populations. Our questionnaire would require the better part of an hour to complete if done cursorily, with a preponderance of open-ended questions, sent to a population from more than 30 different First Nations people who graduated in a variety of faculties over a 38-year period—surely a heterogeneous population.

There is no assumption whatever about parametric inference to a population of First Nations UBC graduates; this is not a serious problem because it is not an implied objective of the research question. It is a problem only if the propensity to couch educational and social science research questions in terms of formal parametric, survey, factoral, or deterministic design terminology creates misunderstanding and misinter-

pretation of the results reported here. In this context it is valuable to recall that the research objectives in this part of the project were:

1. to identify all possible First Nations recipients of UBC degrees; and
2. to ask them to focus on their own experiences, to provide information that allows for generalization about (a) the relationship between their university education and employment; (b) factors leading to successful graduation; and (c) identification of barriers or problems experienced during their student years, with discussion of how those barriers were overcome.

Thus the body of data from which we generalize includes text responses from 67 people who have successfully completed at least one degree at UBC. None of the responses is entirely cursory. The people who responded obviously reflected on what they wrote. It took commitment on their part to respond. We consider we have a rich resource, a data source created by almost one third of the identified graduates, in which they reflect on our questions of research interest. We are bound, then, to explore that corpus for its nuances, its specification of explanatory context, and its intent. We believe that the respondents' commitment is evidence of a First Nations value of sharing for community benefit. In accordance with our own First Nations values we respect entirely the legitimacy and validity of the testimony they have provided through anonymous questionnaire.

The descriptive categories that the participants gave us suggest areas for exploration of more precisely focused questions, using research designs that would allow parametric inference or more clearly relational, possibly deterministic, statements. Another research area implied from this project is to ask similar questions about barriers, problems, and success factors of people who did not graduate.

Analysis. Text responses were transcribed and maintained in computer files. Responses to forced-choice items were entered into files readable by the SPSS statistical analysis program and those results were tabulated. Text responses were coded and marked using the TextBase Alpha computer program, the conventions for coding being established as noted in connection with each question separately.

As noted below, for some cases responses were assigned to nominal categories, and tests of association with the following variables were performed: age at first entry, year of first entry, gender, competence in a First Nations language, faculty, degree, source of funding, and assessment of adequacy of funding. Tests of association were performed on contingency tables created by cross-tabulating all the categories named above with all other items that allowed for tabular aggregation and generalization.

We were particularly interested to see if response values would differ by gender, source of funding, faculty, and period of attendance. The latter was particularly interesting given the changing demography of First Nations postsecondary attendance in the 1980s, radical policy changes that

made funding much more difficult to obtain in the mid-1980s, and increasing band administration of postsecondary funding accelerating in the mid-1980s. We created two cut-off points, 1980 and 1985, and performed tests of association with all other categories based on dividing the group into "before" and "after" both 1980 and 1985. No statistically significant association was found, and the only apparent tendency was toward more band-administered funding during later periods and a tendency toward admissions at a somewhat younger age, closer to high school graduation. These are obvious trends of which everyone associated with First Nations postsecondary education is aware.

The discussion of the findings is organized for the most part in the order of the questionnaire items. The salience of the findings is communicated most eloquently by examples of what the participants wrote; for several items quotations from the responses are shown without additional comment.

The findings are described in considerable detail to reflect some of the richness of the information that the respondents gave us. A summary of the data is provided at the end of this section (following the detailed presentation of the focus group findings).

The Focus Groups

Composition and arrangements. The participants for the focus groups were selected by responses that accompanied the questionnaire and divided into three groups:

1. those who lived near Vancouver;
2. those who lived near Kamloops; and
3. those who agreed to be interviewed but lived too far away, and the expense to bring them in would have been too great; letters were sent requesting a telephone interview on May 14, 1993.

Before setting up the focus groups the research team spent a great deal of time formulating the questions.

An initial consideration for formulation of the questions was *What pattern or range of responses to the questionnaires can we ask people to deal with in a focus group; what range and explanatory context for response might be useful to us?* One characterization of the questionnaire responses was that participants remembered a kind of contradictory response, both alienation from and affiliation with UBC. In this context they had both good and bad memories of the place and their experiences there. This dictated one of the focus group questions. Others were formulated to address the interests of the Ministry of Advanced Education with regard to the relationship between employment and education and success factors or barriers.

The initial set of questions was piloted with six graduate students to test their use in context, and they suggested changes in question order in which the team members concurred.

The final set of focus group questions were:

1. It has been said that students have mixed feelings toward UBC—that they feel intellectually challenged, have a chance for achievement, and feel joy, while at the same time have feelings of frustration and disappointment. Do any of you have such feelings and could you explore those feelings with us?
2. Thinking back over the time since you graduated, what is your fondest memory of UBC, the most positive memory? Thinking back over the time since you graduated, what is the worst, most negative experience you had at UBC? Which is the most predominant? How do you feel now?
3. Now I would like you to think about your UBC experience in connection with your job. How did UBC prepare you for your job? How did UBC fail to prepare you for your job? How would you describe the relationship of your UBC education to your employment? What in your present job have you had to do that you were not trained to do at UBC?
4. What changes would you like to see made to make UBC a better learning experience for future First Nations students? What could we do to instigate these changes? How do you see these changes being brought about?

The Vancouver focus group discussion was convened at the Longhouse on the UBC campus on April 17, 1993, with seven participants (10 had said they could attend). The boardroom was pleasant, with comfortable chairs and a comfortable temperature. Lunch was provided from noon until 1 p.m., and the meeting got under way at 1:15 p.m. The group was responsive and the information flowed in apparently random order from one participant to another. The discussion was tape-recorded and later transcribed.

The discussion covered some emotional issues. All participants were treated with respect for themselves and for their feelings. A feeling of acceptance and belonging was in the group. It met for four hours.

The Kamloops focus group met May 15, 1993, with 10 participants. The meeting was held in a former Indian residential school building, which triggered many memories because several of the participants had attended school there and others had attended residential school in similar surroundings. The room was huge, with extremely high ceilings. It was very warm and the chairs were uncomfortable. The people came in over a period of time, with some arriving before lunch, some during, and some after lunch. Some arrived after the meeting had begun. Three visitors were also present.

The group in Kamloops were older than the Vancouver group, although several might have attended UBC at the same time as the Vancouver group, and this is one of the differences between the nature of the discussions. Many of the Kamloops group spoke of their residential schooldays, of the demeaning and discriminatory treatment they received.

They related these experiences as the beginning of their awareness and confrontation with racism; they spoke of how it continued at UBC, especially in anthropology classes. Many of the Kamloops people came with detailed written information that they checked off from time to time to be sure that all their points had been included in discussion.

Analytic strategies. As described above, the entire proceedings of each focus group were tape-recorded and transcribed by a member of the research team. The results of the two groups were analyzed differently in order to test two strategies for their utility in a First Nations context.

The analytic procedure used with the Kamloops focus group was organized according to the three goals of the project as a whole. Within each of the three goals a framework of themes was created as the transcripts were analyzed. More specifically, each statement made by a participant was categorized by asking the general question "What is this statement an example of?" For instance, consider the statement: "NITEP could have given us a more realistic view of ... teacher interviews ... when I went to my first interview I was really shocked ... they were all Indian people but the questions ... were all ... DIA questions ... like ... what would your year plan be for grade 3/4." On reflection it seemed that this statement was an example of a *perceived inadequacy in UBC's education program.* It was classified as such; if this particular category had not previously existed it was created.

The method used to analyze the transcription of the Vancouver focus group concentrated on the contextual aspects of the participants' discussion. It is integrated with the report of the findings of that group because it was felt it would be best understood if merged in that way.

Once again, the findings are reported in considerable detail. A summary of the results, integrated with those of the questionnaire, is at the end of this part of the report.

The Telephone Interviews.

Of the 12 people who were contacted for telephone interviews, successful connection was made with only five for formal interview. They were asked the same questions that had been formulated for the focus group discussions. Their responses were examined for theme and context and are reported below.

The Questionnaire Findings

This subsection of the report is quite lengthy, primarily because of the richness of the data and the number of open-ended questions. The variables discussed in each of the five divisions include:

The graduates and their programs: timelines, faculties, fields of study, degrees, gender, age, First Nations identification, First Nations language competence.

Beginning a university program: work before entering university, entering UBC, basis for admission, academic preparation, application, admission and registration, the first few months at UBC.

Being there—attending UBC: funding, problems, responsibilities, factors credited for success, UBC as an institution (helped/discouraged).

After UBC—in retrospect: after graduation (work experience), did UBC prepare its graduates well? Expectations of UBC (how met), UBC's general influence.

The First Nations-UBC interaction: First Nations culture (influence on UBC experience), impact of UBC on First Nations culture and identity.

It is important to realize that, although the interaction between First Nations culture/identity and UBC is discussed in a separate section, the importance of First Nations culture cannot truly be separated from any aspect of the UBC experience. It is merely placed separately for clarity of discussion. This fact will become evident as the findings are read.

The Graduates and Their Programs

Timelines. The participants represent a continuity of First Nations students on campus since 1955. The dates of participants' programs overlap, of course. We have calculated the overlap to represent the number of participants in this study who were on campus during five-year periods as follows. The distribution indicates a fairly even representation over the past 22 years (Table II.1).

Another way to conceptualize the span of time over which the participants generalize is to look at the distribution of years since last graduation. This measure also tells us something about the retrospective span between last graduation and the filling in of the questionnaire (Table II.2).

The faculties. The faculties in which they were enrolled are shown in Table II.3, which also indicates the number of participants who completed more than one program. First programs may be diploma or certification programs so second, third, and fourth programs are not necessarily equivalent to postgraduate work. (Note that four people did not specify the faculty in which they completed their first program.) Almost half the participants (31) have completed more than one program at UBC; nine have completed three programs; and seven have completed four.

Fields of study. Identification of individuals might be possible were we to tabulate majors and concentrations precisely. Fields of study are indicated by distinguishing between baccalaureate and postbaccalaureate programs, then classifying the majors and concentrations reported by the participants according to relative frequencies (Table II.4).

Degrees. Table II.5 indicates the distribution of degrees and certificates represented in the group of participants.

Table II.1

Period	*Number of Study Participants on Campus*
1955-59	1
1960-64	1
1965-69	4
1970-74	16
1975-79	24
1980-84	27
1985-90	23
1990-93	16

Gender. Forty-seven women and 20 men responded to the questionnaire (i.e., 70.1% of the respondents are women; 29.9% are men).

Age. Table II.6 shows the ages of participants (a) when they first entered UBC (though combinations of missing values for the responses from which these were calculated produces a fairly high missing-values figure); and (b) their current ages. The modal age at entry was 18, the median 23. Modal current age is 46, the median 39.9.

First Nations identification. Fifty-three graduates (79.1%) said that they identified with a particular First Nation; nine (13.4%) said they did not, and five (7.5%) did not respond to that item on the questionnaire. All of the respondents, however, described their First Nations ancestry in terms of a band, a nation, or a linguistic group. The responses total more than 67 because several participants stated descent or affiliation with more than one First Nation.

Conventional descriptions of First Nations affiliations are often ambiguous because there are many different conventions in the naming of groups. For example, Sto:lo people have been classified as Salish, Coast Salish, Cowichan, Halkomelem, or by subgroup of Sto:lo people, but the boundaries are different with each term. We employ the general distinctions used by the participants themselves as they responded to the question, "What is your First Nations ancestry?" Twenty-nine First Nations are represented. The number in parentheses indicates the number of people who represent that particular nation.

Table II.2

Years Since Last Graduation	*Number of Participants*
0-2	12
3-5	13
6-8	12
9-11	4
12-14	11
15-17	4
18-20	1
21+	7

Table II.3

Faculty	*Program*			
	1st	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*
Agriculture		1		
Arts	5	2		
Commerce	1			
Education	52	27	9	6
Human Services	1			
Law		1		
Medicine				1
Nursing	2			
Social Work		1	1	

First Nations from the East and South. Among the graduates several First Nations are represented whose national homeland is not on the Pacific Coast. Nine nations in that group are Cree (5), Metis (2), Peigan (1), Ojibway (1), Dakota (2), Oneida (1), Mohawk (2), Micmac (1), and Maya-Mam (1). From east of the Fraser River Valley but still from present BC homelands, the nations represented are Interior Salish (3), Okanagan (6), Thompson/Nlakapmux (8), and Secwepemc (8).

First Nations from the North and West. The westernmost nations represented are Kwakwaka'wakw (2) and Haida (4). Other western nations are Tsimshian (5), Heiltsuk (3), Nishga (5), Haisla (2), and Gitksan (5). Coast Salish nations represented are Coast Salish (further unspecified, 2); Sto:lo (4); Cowichan (2); Nuxalk (1); and Squamish (1).

Table II.4. Majors and areas of concentration in baccalaureate programs

More than 10 participants	anthropology, primary education
Between 5 and 9	Canadian studies, psychology, Native education and Native studies, language arts education, elementary education, reading education
4 or fewer	English, history, sociology, linguistics, mathematics, physics, political science, creative writing, special education, science education, curriculum, early childhood education, English as a second language, transportation, nursing, social work, plant science, human services, recreation

Majors and areas of concentration in succeeding programs

More than 10 participants	educational administration
Fewer than 10 participants	education, adult education, social and educational studies in education, guidance, community education, elementary education, English as a second language, counselling psychology, secondary education, language arts education, Native human services, human nutrition, philosophy, law, health sciences

Table II.5

Program:	*1st*	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*	*Total*
Diploma	6	13	4		23
Baccaluareate	55	8			63
Master's	3	10	7	2	22
Doctoral				3	3

First Nations from the North and East. The Nations represented are Carrier (3), Wet'suwet'en (1), Tlingit (1), and Tsek'ehne (1).

A note on the basis for identification. We asked the participants to specify the people, village, lineage, band, or other First Nations group with which they most closely identify. Twenty-eight respondents identify most closely with a specific band, and most of them specify the name of that band. Twenty-four respondents identify with a more generally defined First Nations group (e.g., Tsimshian, Metis). For four respondents the band and First Nation are equivalent (e.g., Squamish); two respondents identify with a lineage within the band; one respondent identifies most closely with the village; and eight respondents did not provide a basis for identification.

First Nations language competence. Twenty-six respondents (38.8%) said that they speak or understand a First Nations language; another 10 (14.9%) said that they had qualified competence in a First Nations language; and 30 (44.8%) said that they did not have competence in a First Nations language. Four of the graduates are competent in two First Nations languages, and another four have some qualified competence in a second First Nations language.

The languages represented in the group, with the number of respondents who have some competence in the language shown in parentheses, are Maliseet (1), Mohawk (1), Cree (3), Blackfoot (1), Maya-Mam (1), Okanagan (4), Nlakapamux (7), Shuswap (2), Hal'qemeylem (4), Seabird (1), Squamish (1), Kwakwala (1), Tsimshian (1), Haisla (1), Huupachesuth (1), Heiltsuk (2), Nishga (5), Gitksan (2), Wet'suwe'ten (1), and Carrier (2).

Table II.6

Age	*At First Entry*		*Current Age*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
18-20	20	29.6		
21-25	13	19.5	1	1.5
26-30	10	15.0	5	7.5
31-35	5	7.5	10	15.0
36-40	5	7.5	17	25.5
41-45	1	1.5	19	28.5
46-50	1	1.5	6	9.0
51-70	1	1.5	7	10.5
Missing	11	16.4	2	3.0

Beginning a University Program

Work before entering university. A large number of participants, 41 (62.1%), had worked in a field related to their field of university study, whereas 25 (37.9%) had not. One individual did not respond to this questionnaire item.

Education and child care were the fields in which they had had most experience. Ten of the respondents had had experience as teachers in schools or in adult education facilities, and another four had worked as long-term substitute teachers. Eight had been teacher aides, and an additional two had had experience as volunteer teacher aides. Five had been day care workers with young children, and four had worked as summer camp child care workers or counselors. Four had been home-school coordinators. Two had worked as library aides, and the fields of coaching, school bus driver, and school janitor were each mentioned by one person.

Experience in counseling and social work was reported by six respondents: one had been an alcoholism counselor, two had been social workers, two had been social worker assistants, and one had been a social work volunteer. One participant had worked as a volunteer in a hospital. In addition, three persons worked in the related fields of administration, program planning, and public relations, and another three had worked as researchers. One of the teacher aides noted that he or she had also had a job doing archival research and in the process began to spend "a lot of time with elders—gathering and listening to their life experiences."

Entering UBC. Everyone responded to the question "How did you first hear about UBC?" though one participant simply noted that he or she did

How some first heard about UBC

I saw an ad in a local newspaper.

The principal of the band school I subbed at encouraged me to register—the NITEP secretary is from my home town as well!

Through promotional literature and visitations to our community by Verna Kirkness.

A close friend was attending and she continually urged me to apply.

My father attended UBC.

Both of my parents attended UBC.

Through the high school counselor.

Via the proverbial "moccasin telegraph."

I first heard of NITEP and its programs from my employer who motivated and sparked me to continue with my education.

High school career days.

Older brother who attended in '73; then through Jo-ann Archibald.

General knowledge: UBC is one of the major features of Vancouver and Southern BC. The programs, I specifically inquired about at the university.

1983 brochures about NITEP.

not remember his or her first knowledge of the university. Several of the participants noted multiple sources of initial knowledge.

Workers in education who were not formally associated with UBC programs were an important source of information: schoolteachers, principals, or counselors were cited by 13 participants; Indian Affairs counselors by two; others were adult education teachers (2), and participants' employers (2). Four participants found out about UBC programs while they themselves were working in schools or in some capacity in education.

Individuals told others about UBC. "Word of mouth" was cited by five participants. Students and former students were sources of information for their children, siblings, other relatives, and friends, as 12 participants cited those sources.

Public knowledge was another source of information. Two said that public awareness of the university was the source of knowledge, and one participant said that the fact that a NITEP Centre existed in town made him or her aware of UBC opportunity.

NITEP recruitment strategies were important for a substantial number of participants: 11 participants first heard about UBC programs through promotional literature, pamphlets, posters, newspaper advertisements in First Nations newspapers, or television announcements about NITEP. Seven participants said that their first source of information was through individual contact with a person representing NITEP, and six participants became aware of UBC through presentations about the program in their communities.

Reasons for choosing UBC. The responses to this question relate (a) to the institution (i.e., its programs, institutional characteristics, or unique opportunities); or (b) to a participant's personal characteristics. All but one participant specified at least one reason for deciding to come to UBC, 28

Some participants' reasons for choosing UBC that refer to the institution

Geographical location in relation to my residence. Also, its history program had a good reputation.

It was the closest and best available.

Wanted to be a teacher: NITEP program.

Because they host NITEP and I needed the support NITEP offers.

Off-campus centre in Terrace made the transition easier.

Family housing available and support seemed evident.

[UBC] offered a Native teaching program.

The collection of the UBC Museum of Anthropology. I was yet unfamiliar with it.

It had the best administrative program in Canada.

Support system, and UBC had a First Nations perspective in the program.

The fact that NITEP had field centres and Native studies.

Its history program had a good reputation.

Some participants' reasons for choosing UBC in personal terms

My daughter and the impact it would have on the future.

To do something worthwhile in this lifetime was the main reason.

Keen interest in education—furthering my education; better life style; always wanted to be a teacher.

I knew it was a goal I could achieve.

Because of the political situation of indigenous peoples I realized that the key to First Nations liberation is education.

I felt a need for more education that would lead to a more meaningful career.

It was a transitional period in my life; my children were getting older and it was time to do something different. I entered NITEP because I wanted to be with aboriginal people and because I wanted to learn.

provided a single reason, and 38 gave multiple reasons. A total of 98 responses were given by the 67 participants, 57 (58.2%) in terms of institutional characteristics, and 41 (41.8%) in personal terms.

It is important to remember that when the number of participants citing a particular reason is noted this does not imply a hierarchy of reason or even an accurate picture of motivation to attend, but rather an indication of range of reasons.

Institutional characteristics. The most common reference was to a specific program or field at UBC: NITEP (15), NITEP field centres (6), Ts'kel (3), social work (2), or history, administration, nursing, and museum resources (1 each). One participant came to UBC to work with a particular professor. Seven participants chose UBC because of its location, and five cited the high reputation of UBC as a reason for seeking admission. Six participants were attracted to UBC because First Nations support services were available; six said that the opportunity to pursue studies in First Nations issues along with other First Nations people was the reason they chose UBC. Two cited the availability of student housing.

Personal characteristics. Eleven respondents expressed their motivation in terms of vocational aspiration, and seven explained their motivation in terms of their desire for scholarship. Four participants spoke of their own positive self-assessments: they realized that they had the ability to succeed at UBC. Another four spoke in terms of personal improvement as a reason for attending. Three participants noted simply that their reasons were personal, the result of personal desire or aspiration. Three people remembered their concern for others as a motivation.

Basis for admission. The bases for admission to UBC were as shown "admission on some other basis," for example, university transfer program from a community college or other university. Some gave details about their formal schooling ("one credit course short of receiving a high school diploma," "Grade VIII at [name of school]," and "Completed

Grade VII at [name of Indian school] in '67; didn't cut the mustard during integration process of '68," see Table II.7).

Academic preparation. Table II.8 details percentage responses of participants' self-assessment of preparedness for university-level work in nine academic areas. Confidence was highest in reading and English, lowest in second languages, and moderate in essay writing, science, exam writing, and mathematics.

The questionnaire invited comments about academic preparedness and 45 of the 67 respondents provided them. Though 58% of the comments were about lack of preparedness, 33% focused on sources of academic strength. We assessed the association between academic preparedness in all areas and dates of first entry to university, age at first entry, and bases for admission; as with the other tests, the cross-tabulated values revealed no significant association.

For some (5 respondents), beginning university after having been away from studies was a problem. Four people commented that schools had not prepared them for university study, and two made the same observation about community colleges and satellite programs. The largest category of comments (9) had to do with how to remedy any self-defined academic deficit through application and work.

Sources of academic preparedness were attributed to school (1), community college (2), parents or elders (3), and existing support services (3). Seven respondents attributed preparedness to personal characteristics such as a love of reading. Five people remarked on First Nations languages, that is, that they should be accepted as second languages or that it was more difficult to achieve academic preparedness for second-language

Table II.7

Secondary school graduates	21.5%
Adult basic education or GED	13.4%
Mature student admissions	31.3%
Admitted on some other basis	19.4%
Missing	14.4%

Table II.8

Skill Area	*Adequacy of Preparation*		
	Good	*Fair*	*Poor*
Reading	62.7%	28.4%	9.0%
English	50.7%	32.8%	16.4%
Humanities	37.9%	47.0%	15.2%
Exam Writing	32.8%	35.8%	31.3%
Study Skills	31.3%	38.8%	29.9%
Essay Writing	29.9%	31.3%	38.8%
Mathematics	30.8%	40.0%	29.2%
Science	26.2%	35.4%	38.5%
Second Language	16.1%	33.9%	50.0%

Some participants' comments about their preparation for university work

I was weak in every area and had to work twice as hard in all areas.

Although I graduated from Grade 12 I had been out of the system for many years and curriculum had changed drastically by the time I entered UBC. I should have gone to college before starting NITEP.

It was difficult to gauge what each professor expected—consistency in class standards. Basic skills were lacking, yet I'd completed two years at campus satellite thinking my writing and other skills were okay. In retrospect the professors in first and second years should have been more closely aligned with those at UBC.

I thank my parents for the way they raised me. Having a Grade 7 education and a great desire to learn enabled me to extend what I did know to what I wanted to know.

Always loved to read and learn on my own.

Language [vocabulary development and word usage] has been an ongoing task; I believe this is due to being ESL.

In [a named high school] you are automatically put into the general program.

I would say curiosity and determination to know are what drove me to NITEP and to stay in NITEP. My lack of study skills and exam writing skills sometimes made my life rather stressful.

students. The academic areas replicated the list to which they were asked to respond, but one respondent added statistics as an area in which there should be some preparation.

Application, admission, and registration. An open-ended question read: "Please comment on how you felt about your application, admission and registration (for example, information or assistance you received or failed to receive; any difficulties, etc.)."

Twenty-eight (41.8%) respondents reported positive experiences in those areas generally; seven focused on the application process, nine on the admissions process, five on registration, and seven wrote of all those processes as positive. Twenty-three respondents (34.3%) were neutral about all the processes, wrote of their mixed responses to the processes, or found the processes unremarkable. Fourteen (20.9%) reported negative experiences in those processes (five about admissions, five about registration, and four about their negative response to application, admission, and registration). Two participants (3%) did not respond to this question.

Of the 67 participants, 23 mentioned the support they received during the processes as crucial, and several remembered individuals associated with NITEP, FNHL, or Ts"kel who had been particularly helpful.

Four people said they had received wrong information or had failed to receive important information, which had had a negative effect on their programs, about funding, transfer credit, or the applicability of specific programs; and two were disappointed that they had lost credits in transferring between institutions.

The first few months at UBC. We asked people to respond to the open ended question "My first few months at UBC were ..." We adopt two

Some comments about application, admission and registration

I was very happy to be accepted into the program. A coordinator was in town to help me fill out the application accordingly; I really appreciated that.

Very, very good. One of the interview questions I recall: "Do you have family support?" This is now one question I ask adult students.

Bev, Val, and Terry were all extremely helpful in expediting my application. Communication was professional, friendly, and FREQUENT. I may have backed out if it hadn't been for this tremendous support.

I remember the NITEP application form, the interview with the coordinator, and the fact that I had to write a short essay on "why I wanted to be a teacher." All three of those criteria were relevant and made me feel that I was applying to a Native program, and that the program screening really applied to me.

Due to the distance I had difficulties filling out the forms.

methods of reporting the general response. All but one person responded to this item. Twenty-eight (41.8%) remembered the first few months in clearly negative terms (e.g., from the graduate of a faculty in which there are few First Nations students: "Confusing, discouraging, and isolating. When people were helpful (staff and peers) I felt they were very patronizing. They couldn't interact with me on a basis of equality. I was a novelty because I was a First Nations woman"; and another: "Very scary, lonely and I spent a lot of time wondering if I was in over my head. I definitely did not feel confident about being a UBC student."

Nineteen (28.3%) remembered their first few months in neutral or mixed terms, for example, "Wet, lonely, homesick, broke and also exciting as I met new students [NITEP and non-NITEP]": and "Frightening, busy—the program was heavy in terms of a full load but the work was manageable." Another 19 (28.3%) remembered the first few months in clearly positive terms, for example, "Fun, challenging, stimulating, exciting" and "Like opening new doors, a new world of learning, which I loved very much."

Another way to characterize the general response is to look at the kinds of adjectives that are used to typify the experience, and the relative incidence of each. The most common adjective was *exciting*; 17 participants used that term. Other terms in decreasing order of occurrence were *scary* (10), *hectic* or *busy* (10), *lonely* (9), *homesick* (8), *overwhelming* (7), *confusing* (6), *lost* (4) and *difficult* (4). The following terms were each used two or three times: *afraid, alienating, challenging, confident, culture shock, frustrating, full, a shock, stimulating,* and *traumatic.* Other terms, each used once, were *boring, fun, depressing, discouraging, enlightening, exhilarating, fantastic, humbling, intimidating, isolating, meaningful, nervous,* and *stressful.* Negative adjectives occurred just over 70% of the time.

Table II.9

Assessment of Funding Level	*Number Responding*	*Percent*	
Adequate	14	21.5%	
Barely Enough	21	32.3%	
At Subsistence Level	23	35.4%	
Below Starvation Level		7	10.8%
Missing Observations	2		

Being There: Attending UBC

Funding. Four levels of adequacy of funding were presented to participants in a restricted-choice questionnaire item, and the responses by participants show that funding was a problem for many (Table II.9).

In the open-ended item that asked participants to tell of the biggest hindrances to their successful completion of university, 13 (19.5%) noted financial problems.

Most of the participants had multiple sources of funding while they attended university. Table II.10 shows (a) the number of people who used funding from each named source and the percentage of the 67 participants using that source of funding; and (b) the number of people who had received funding from that source who said that funding from that source had been adequate.

Comments by some participants specified their other sources of funding: family, that is, spouse, parents, in-laws, and so forth (9); part-time work (7); First Citizens' Fund (3); and one each self, loans from friends, subsidized accommodation, and exchange favors. One participant said, "I sold my little house on the reserve to supplement my student funding."

The level of support received from bands differs by band, and eight recipients of band funding commented that the level of support they had received from the band was unreasonably low, lower than from other sources or other bands, and one student mentioned that she or he had only had that level increased after threatening to quit in the last year. Two participants noted the adequacy of band funding and commented on their gratitude to the band. Four band-supported participants mentioned that one of the difficulties was that the formula used to estimate living expenses did not account for the high urban-Vancouver cost of living, a

Table II.10

Source	*Had funding from this source*	*Funding from this was adequate*
Band	48 (71.6%)	19 (33.3%)
DIA	25 (37.3%)	8 (33.3%)
Bursary	32 (47.8%)	20 (69.7%)
Loan	34 (50.7%)	14 (67.7%)
Scholarship	13 (19.4%)	8 (73.7%)
Other	19 (28.4%)	11 (73.3%)

comment echoed by DINA-supported participants from out of province. One participant in a five-year program could not get band funding for the last year because of the band's supposition that all university programs were four-year programs.

Also, programs differ in costs of books and supplies, and the DINA-derived formula for funding paid for only a quarter of the books needed by one participant. Two participants reported other policy problems: a graduate student said that he or she "fell between all the cracks" in eligibility for funding, and another recent graduate said that Canada Student Loans applications were rejected because of his or her supposed eligibility for band and First Nations bursary funding. As troublesome as low levels of funding is the pattern reported by four participants of frequent delays or consistent irregularity in receipt of cheques: the stress caused by this was reported in graphic terms.

We anticipated that because of changes in eligibility criteria in the mid-1980s and a large-scale change to band administration of funds during the late 1980s, there would be a difference in patterns of funding over time. Except for the fact that a larger proportion of students were band-supported in the late 1980s, the patterns (i.e., of adequacy, statement of problem) remained similar over time.

Problems. In an open-ended item on the questionnaire we asked for a retrospective assessment: *The major problems and/or obstacles I faced at UBC were ...*

The first generalization about the responses is in the agency of the problem (i.e., where does the problem or impediment arise?), which produces a remarkable finding: more than half the participants (34) focused on some personal characteristic (e.g., poor study habits, lack of time management, an emotional reaction to stress, etc.). Eight included institutional structures or other people as "problem" in their description, though they dealt as well with a personal issue as problematic, 17 focused entirely on an external, institutional problem as an issue. Most participants listed more than one problem: consequently, the total number was 170, far greater than 67 (the number of respondents). Two did not respond.

The number of responses in each category are given in parentheses after the naming of the category but it would be a mistake to interpret incidence of a problem as indicating the relative magnitude of a problem. This categorization is based on the recollection of 67 "successful" UBC students. There may well be students who left UBC because of the intractability of any of the areas.

Personal issues or characteristics (98)

Family responsibilities: (e.g., single-parenthood) (4) though more are implied under the heading of *Financial problems*).

Financial: these range from despair and preoccupation over financial difficulties to having no money to pay for required typing, to having no money for "extras" (16).

Emotional: loneliness (5), and in addition, difficulty in living far from family and home (5); difficulty in adjusting to urban living (3); difficulty in understanding "the system" (5); lack of confidence or poor self-esteem (7); stress (2), depression (1), fear of failure (1); identity and state-of-change situation, life-situations: "identity crises" (2); coming to grips with First Nations identity (2); stress due to having to make crucial life and career choices (4); personal problems (e.g., addictions) (2); time management skills; setting of priorities (9).

Logistics problems: difficulty in finding appropriate housing (4); transportation to campus (4); difficulty in finding appropriate day care (2).

Academic and conceptual areas: lack of skills (e.g., research, library, and computer skills; study skills; exam writing skills; reading and writing skills) (14; an additional 3 said "lack of general academic skills"); difficulty with some concepts introduced in courses (3).

Institutional characteristics (62)

Deficiencies: information and communication, for example, with regard to course requirements (2); counseling (before NITEP, FNHL: 2; current: 1); tutorial support (1); day care (2); housing (1); accuracy in student record keeping (2); number of library resources for required courses (1); computer facilities (1); First Nations resources (2).

Characteristics: impersonal (5); large and alienating (4); conservative (4); "philosophically" foreign, alienating (4).

Teaching staff: inaccessible, aloof or unreasonable (2); (some) focus on participant as First Nations person (i.e., as spokesperson (4); quality of teaching is disappointing (1); (some) are racist (7).

Explicit First Nations issues: institutional lack of respect for First Nations cultures or misappropriation of cultural authority (6); racist incidents, individuals (8).

External factor problems: (10) family problems, interpersonal or marriage relationship breakdown, family tragedy (7); First Nations internal politics (1).

Other responsibilities. The way the participants conceptualized the other responsibilities is drawn from an open-ended item, so the terms and categories are not mutually exclusive. The most common responsibility was family, mentioned without modification by 17 of the participants. Another nine participants were specific that it was the extended family that they saw as a responsibility; 19 named children and eight named spouse or partner as the family responsibility that coexisted with the responsibilities of university life. The dimensions of family life that were mentioned specifically were finances (7), budgeting (2), day care (2), housing (2), the maintenance of a home (3), and recovery from family trauma (2).

The next most common citation of responsibility was in volunteer community work (11 participants); another six participants mentioned cultural responsibilities in their communities.

Eight cited part-time work as a responsibility. Other responsibilities named by the participants were in the areas of general finances (3), peer relationships (2), adapting to change (2), and the maintenance of emotional or personal stability (2).

Factors credited for success. Two questions asked participants to focus on support and success factors while at UBC. The first is an open-ended completion item: *The most support I received at UBC came from ...* and the second is a forced-choice item using categories shown immediately following. Table II.11 shows the number of participants who checked each item in the second column, with percentages of the total sample shown in the third.

The focus of the open-ended item is on the amount of support. In those responses the strong tendency to credit First Nations sources of support is even stronger; professors, staff, and counselors emerge as a category; and perhaps most important, there is a clear pattern of response that focuses specifically and positively on NITEP and Ts'kel.

The distinctions that participants make in an open-ended item do not allow for equivalence in distinctions between cases (i.e., when a participant names peers as the source of most support, it is not the same order of distinction as "other First Nations students" or "students in my faculty"). Thus in tabulating responses we have been true to the distinctions made by the participants. A total of 137 items named sources of support, 119 of which specifically focused on either First Nations people, First Nations institutions, or UBC First Nations agencies. Among the latter, NITEP (or Ts'kel) was named 84 times. Several people credited specific individuals.

The importance of NITEP particularly requires comment: though in response to another item, one participant noted a perception that NITEP services were available only to NITEP students, it is clear from responses to this item that NITEP has been important beyond its programmatic mandate, because the students from other faculties were as likely as NITEP education graduates to name it as a source of support.

The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of participants who named a specific source. *FN* refers to terms that were specifically marked as First Nations or were associated with a First Nations agency.

Table II.11

The things that really helped me get through were:

Family	58	86.6%
Friends	52	77.6%
General Student Services at UBC	4	6.0%
First Nations Student Services at UBC	39	58.2%
Employment Opportunities at UBC	5	7.5%
Community Social Services	4	6.0%
Other Factors*	9	13.4%

*NISU (student organization), community, and people at home (2), self-reliance (3), Elders)

- *Other students* (29 total, 19 FN, 10 other); NITEP students (8), First Nations students (11), students in participant's faculty (3), other students (4), peers (3).
- *Professors* (11 total, 5 FN, 6 other); NITEP professors (3), First Nations professors (2), other professors (6).
- *Counselors* (18 total, 14 FN, 4 other); NITEP counselors (12), on-campus counselors (4), off-campus counselors (1), DIA counselor (1).
- *Staff* (39 total, 39 FN, 0 other); NITEP staff (17), NITEP support staff (3), NITEP coordinators (4), specific NITEP and Ts"kel named personnel (10), Ts"kel advisors (3), House of Learning staff (1), First Nations student services (1).
- *Family and community* (27 total, 26 FN, 1 other); family (18), NITEP family (5), friends at home (1), community and band (2); community social services (1).
- *Other* (3 total, distinctions not relevant); spiritual help, self (3).
- *Place* (9 people mentioned a place, the NITEP hut, as the most important source of support).

UBC as an institution. Another aspect of success factors and barriers is UBC as an institution. We asked: *Would you comment on how UBC as an institution helped and/or discouraged you (for instance, the administration, the faculty, the rules).*

Seven participants did not respond to this item; the responses of 22 participants were predominantly or wholly positive; 25 were predominantly or wholly negative; and 13 included both positive and negative statements as shown in Table II.12 and in the following pages. There were a total of 59 negative statements, and 44 positive ones.

To facilitate interpretations of the responses to this item, extracts and phrases are categorized below. Our overall interpretation of the responses can be summarized "There are some problems, as might be expected, but on the whole, participants remember the institution in both positive and negative terms."

Two participants who had been at UBC in the early 1970s and again in the 1980s compared their experiences: they said that the institution was much more cognizant of First Nations issues, the institutional climate was better, during their later period of attendance. However, there was no

Table II.12

Category of Comment	*Negative*	*Positive*	
General characteristics of the institution		24	8
The administration	6	6	
Rules and regulations	5	1	
University services	4	3	
The teaching staff in general	5	7	
Comments applied to "some" staff	4	1	
Comments about specific departments	8	4	
Comments about First Nations departments	3	14	

systematic relationship between date of attendance and direction of comment (negative or positive) for the group as a whole.

As might be expected from reports of personal experience, a number of comments by different respondents are directly contradictory.

The university as an institution

- *Positive:* fair; helpful; characterized by people who are helpful; cognizant of the special needs of First Nations communities and First Nations people; less bureaucratic than the federal government; incredibly flexible; flexible if the communication is mediated in writing; flexible—it takes personal situations into account.
- *Negative:* impersonal; characterized by people who are cold, distant, uncaring; big, overwhelmingly large; cold, not sensitive to First Nations perspectives; deficient in adequate resources (literature, research base, library holdings) in First Nations issues; hypocritical with respect to professed values; an institutionalization of mainstream values, so epitomizes the problems of mainstream society; dismissive, uninformed about First Nations people and issues; elitist (aloof to students and First Nations people); conservative; embodies some racism; difficult; inflexible.

The administration of the university

- *Positive:* did a fine job of creating programs and administering programs and regulations; is flexible; recognized First Nations Elders, with respect; started the Longhouse; is more than helpful in responding to inquiries and concerns; gave preferential treatment to participant for fear of his or her "loud mouth."
- *Negative:* discourages more often than assists; is impersonal, not understanding; is distrustful; is difficult to understand; was inconsiderate in the manner in which tuition was raised; should appoint more First Nations staff.

The regulations of the university

- *Positive:* did not discourage the participant.
- *Negative:* do not account for mature students with families; had to be followed without reason; were in some cases totally unrealistic and unnecessary; were there to be tested by the students; in the case of regulations about transferring from other institutions were a problem.

Comments about university services

- *Positive:* housing was affordable; the university recognized the special needs of First Nations students in housing; a good orientation was provided.
- *Negative:* housing management was difficult; academic counseling was hard to get; there was no good orientation to new students about programs and services; parking was too expensive.

Comments about teaching staff

The teaching staff in general

- *Positive:* were very good; helpful in terms of assignments; were (the vast majority) supportive; were supportive in that they had high expectations; provided recognition and acceptance of First Nations persons and issues, and had high expectations; did not discourage First Nations students.
- *Negative:* lacked knowledge about First Nations; were not impartial; had preconceived ideas about Indians; (in the 1970s) did not encourage pride or acceptance of First Nations people; had commitments to their jobs and careers, not to students.

Some staff

- *Positive:* were positive about First Nations students and issues; gave great personal support during trying times.
- *Negative:* were totally negative; were hypocritical: complained about the system but supported it entirely; were prejudiced; did not care about individuals; were not supportive.

Notes about specific departments

- *Positive:* Graduate advisor in SEDS very helpful, supportive; Educational Administration faculty helpful, encouraged good performance; AAEH faculty helpful and encouraging; Education faculty was excellent, supportive, informative.
- *Negative:* Educational Administration more opinionated than others about First Nations issues; some anthropology professors were racist; some anthropology professors were indifferent to First Nations issues; several anthropology professors clung to their theories despite First Nations counterclaims; graduate advisor (Language Arts) was not helpful; did not have a positive relationship with student; advisor (in Education) discouraged student during difficult situation in practicum; history professor was callous, dismissive, demanding, when student dealt with tragedy; professor actively discouraged student from focus on First Nations issues; provided support and information for "mainstream" issues.

Courses and curriculum

- *Negative:* Courses were too big; there was little allowance for individual interaction with professors; scheduling (in Nursing) meant little flexibility for electives; did not address First Nations issues; institutionalized racism in the curriculum.

First Nations programs and departments

- *Positive:* NITEP was a positive influence, just through its presence on campus; association with NITEP was positive; NITEP provided a sense of pride and acceptance; the staff in NITEP were very helpful; NITEP staff were very supportive during personal difficulties; NITEP provided the personal aspect; main institutional orientation was to

NITEP, not to "UBC"; Ts'kel was a positive presence on campus; Ts'kel provided positive support in terms of acquiring skills, learning; Ts'kel staff was personally very supportive; Faculty associated with Ts'kel was very helpful; Ts'kel had a positive effect in its home academic department; FNHL provided a positive First Nations presence at UBC; FNHL was of great assistance with the UBC bureaucracy.

- *Negative:* NITEP procedures for registration were counterproductive, slow; meant courses were inaccessible; NITEP provided wrong information in counseling; incurred an extra year; during the early period of Ts'kel it did not have the staff or experience to provide the needed support.

After UBC: In Retrospect

After graduation: Work experience. The questionnaire asked: *Please share some of the highlights of your work experience since your last graduation from UBC.*

Only five (7.5%) participants noted any difficulty in finding employment. Their cases appear to be unusual in terms of the others' experience and so are described here to indicate the nature and extent of the difficulties. The greatest degree of problem cited was the case of one very recent, very specialized graduate from Arts who worked in an urban setting in a temporary position in a field related to his or her university education and then went through a period of underemployment. One participant, prepared in two fields, found work in education but would have preferred

Comments on work experience

Working within Native organizations within my community, hence working with my people; experiencing a student's victory.

Taught for four years in an urban Native school, two years in an inner-city school.

Principal of a locally controlled school for three years; now a consultant for a public school division.

Native adult education instruction (2 years); curriculum developer (1 year)—wrote and developed a curriculum for grade 4; Native Indian Studies sessional instructor at university; coordinator of First Nations education and college administrator.

Articled with Canada Department of Justice; ... private law practice since that time.

Research scientist.

Worked for two large companies (planning department, designing computer systems).

Research for [School Board]; worked as a First Nations resource person for [School District]; I've taught grade 2 for 4 years and now have a split 2/3. I've worked closely with First Nations Youth as a counselor.

my work experience has been exceptional. I would do it all again. Even though NITEP is an elementary program my teaching experience has been all secondary humanities. I became a secondary vice-principal [then seconded to work with government], and am now a district principal.

the other field of specialization. Another participant, now describing high job satisfaction, spoke of "great difficulty getting a decent job." One education graduate says the difficulty is more of a disappointment in that "despite my professional accomplishments ... I'm still not perceived [as being] on par with white colleagues; I feel like a glorified aide." The only other person to cite difficulty, an employed teacher, noted problems with the employer.

By far the most (62 participants, 92.5%) noted no difficulty in finding suitable employment in the field in which they had studied. More nearly typical is the response from another teacher "Very easy to find employment: in fact, it's 'hard' to remain unemployed."

Almost all the research project participants pursue careers in the field in which they studied at UBC. The most general strategy for assessing consistency between "field of university education" and "career path" is by faculty purview, that is, to ask "Are the graduates working in fields for which the faculty in which they studied usually prepares people?" and by that method of assessment only four participants changed fields. All three had degrees in education, but one worked in health administration, one in publishing, and one in municipal administration. In terms of comparing specific specializations, there were more changes of field: an elementary reading specialist works as an addictions counselor, a magisterial graduate in educational administration became a civil servant and consultant, a Canadian studies major in education works as a counselor, and a businessperson changed to a completely different industry, field, and position, but still in the world of business. The questionnaire responses probably give a minimum estimate of such changes.

What is most remarkable about comparing the specializations in which people were trained and their descriptions of what they have since done is the way people expand their work horizons to include such a variety of activities and interests. Representative of those many cases is the education graduate who has worked as an elementary schoolteacher, principal, program coordinator, consultant, curriculum developer, and adult education instructor. Again, because the information was not specifically requested, it is impossible to say how many graduates have developed multiple areas of competence and work in their fields, but the fact that 34 (50.8%) of the participants described their work in terms of this diversity indicates that the pattern is common.

Postgraduate education is a route chosen by 20 (30.3%) of the graduates.

The fields in which participants described their activities are varied. Were we to have distinguished career path for the participants from faculties other than education, individual participants might be identifiable. Instead, in order to demonstrate the variety of fields of work the participants reported we have focused on the 55 people who graduated from the Faculty of Education. The fields shown in Table II.13 are men-

tioned as major areas of work during the postuniversity career. (Note that the categories are not exclusive, some people probably including "curriculum development" and "program planning "under "educational administration"; and the field of "teaching" covers a large territory. Because people have changed positions and have current positions that involve multiple fields of competence more than 67 fields are listed.)

The 12 participants who have never been associated with the Faculty of Education report the following fields: self-employment, health care, health care administration, law, administration, research, planning and development, consulting, publishing, counseling, teaching, civil service, museology and archival work, and politics.

We did not ask specifically if participants worked in First Nations or with First Nations issues, yet almost two thirds of them (44, or 65.7%) volunteered that their work was with First Nations people, in First Nations communities, or with First Nations issues.

Did UBC prepare its graduates well?

The question was *As you look back, how well did your UBC program prepare you for your career? Please be as specific as you can.*

Only two participants failed to respond to this item. Three general categories of response are "positive comment," "negative comment," and "comment that includes both negative and positive aspects of programs." Generally positive comments typified 43 (64.2%) participant's responses, whereas 12 (17.9%) focused on aspects of their programs that in retrospect they evaluated negatively. Both negative and positive aspects were included in the responses of another 10 (14.9%) participants.

The responses fell into five categories:

Content areas: skills, knowledge, perspective, intellectual development;
Organizational areas: administration and planning;
Personal growth areas: adaptability and self-confidence;
Practical experience areas: practical experience in application of skills and knowledge;
First Nations issues.

Table II.13

Teaching	43
Educational administration	21
Program development	6
Consulting	5
Planning and development	4
Research	4
Curriculum development	3
Counselling	2
Publishing	2
Politics	1
Civil service	1
Self-employed	1

Comments about employment

The highlights are many. But perhaps the spotlight is on my children and my students. The impact of being a Native and being a friend or relative to everyone in my community makes a difference—it gives my people the power to believe they can be whatever they want. I have witnessed students who repeatedly stated "I can't" and because they were surrounded by their own people and by people who believed in them, they changed their "I can't" to "I'll try."

I have met the challenges of administrator of [a specific school]. I especially like it because 95% of the students enrolled are First Nations. I have the freedom to take risks, make changes to meet the needs of the students.

I moved back to my reserve community and am here to stay, working with my people in education, social development, economic development, and land claims. [Currentlyinvolved in intergovernmental negotiations.] My life goal however is to implement in our traditional territory a land use board which will make all people and all things equal, based on sharing, caring, respect, and honor.

I am a recent graduate but already there has been a change in how I see myself and the work I do. I now work for [postsecondary institution] and plan to move on. I feel I have the knowledge and skill to do so.

Positions in field since graduation: assistant executive director of community service facility; executive director, research director, chief administrative officer.

Taught grade 1 for two in a Native community; with assistance of local school district developed an adult education centre in home community.

UBC's program directed me toward a career, rather than preparing me for it.

Examples from the various areas follow.

Skills. One participant detailed his or her work in coordinating a counseling program and in general program administration, as well as work in curriculum development in adult education, and related specific skills used in those jobs to specific skills gained in graduate courses in Education Curriculum and Instruction. The development of writing skills at university was remarked on by one participant; communications and research skills were remarked on positively by others. The development of analytical skills was mentioned by several participants as well. To one nurse, the important thing about the program was that "you actually learn specific skills that you will use in the work force" (though that person added, "I feel less well prepared in terms of skills than those nurses who have graduated from a college program").

Another teacher said that many of the skills acquired at university for teaching were in fact not useful: "Teaching is way different!" wrote the participant, and continued, "For example, math: you have to come up with ways that work for those kids. All kids aren't the same! The textbooks at university were not current. I don't think I ever referred to any notes or plans I may have made. Weird!" Though not directly speaking about skills, another teacher agreed: "Unfortunately, the courses were outdated."

Eleven of the participants focused on skills they had learned at university and positively evaluated that experience. On the other hand, four participants mentioned skill areas in which they thought the university had been deficient. In addition to this example, the skill areas they mentioned as lacking were (a) interview skills; (b) general teaching skills (i.e., "As a teacher [I was prepared adequately]; but what I have learned [and the specific skills I have acquired] stem from my job"; and (c) skills associated with evaluating and using the Whole Language approach to teaching.

Knowledge. Specific knowledge areas were the most commonly cited in the positive comments. For example, one participant was thankful for the good advice about electives received during course registration and program planning, because those courses had broadened knowledge areas and "helped me obtain a secondary teaching assignment." Twenty-one participants commented positively about knowledge gained at university related to their subsequent employment, whereas five commented in negative terms. The positive comments were almost all in general terms, but the negative comments were often quite specific. For example, a graduate student commented about knowledge gained in courses: "Course work had little bearing on what I'm doing now. I completed a thesis in order to increase my knowledge related to [my field of study]—this learning was largely self-directed." One teacher listed a number of perceived omissions and wrote in large letters "[University] did not prepare me for band-operated school politics; there should have been more seminars on Native learning styles, Native curriculum development, stereotypes, discrimination." Content areas that were mentioned as deficient were career awareness, sex education, education about substance abuse, and knowledge about testing and evaluation, specifically oriented toward First Nations children. Some knowledge areas are difficult to define; one participant commented on knowledge area deficiencies:

> Although a BEd degree was useful it still wasn't the background required for working primarily in adult education where there is a great need for well qualified Native professionals. The BEd didn't prepare me to face some of the shocking social conditions and issues faced by many in our community.

One teacher who highly evaluated the methods courses and practicum experience said, "the theoretical and academic part of the program tried to force only one way—one view—which is a farce."

Perspective. One participant commented simply: "My university education set the course, or basis, for the rest of my life." Another positive "perspective" comment follows:

> UBC did not prepare me to deal with students who had no belief in what they were and what they can do; it did not prepare me to teach a Grade VI student at a Grade II level. But by attending UBC my beliefs changed from what I thought I couldn't do to what believed I can do. UBC might not have prepared me for my challenges; however, by attending and graduating from UBC, it gave me the power to meet any challenge. And isn't that all we need?

The 16 comments on changing perspective were uniformly positive, such as the participant who said the Ts'kel program helped him or her "develop a vision of First Nations education" and the participant who wrote, "My contact with aboriginal faculty and students helped reshape my understanding of the world and the way I articulate my ideas." No one commented on having incorporated a negative perspective, but some were reactive to what they perceived to be a perspective that is antithetical to First Nations perspective:

> UBC represents mainstream society's values, the foundations of which are competition, individuality, materialism and nonspirituality. In order for humanity as a whole to survive we must rid ourselves of those selfish values in favor of cooperation, community, holism and respect for all life. UBC did not prepare me for my job, but my job happened because of UBC.

Organizational areas: Administration and planning. This is an area of preparation in which the negative comments slightly outnumber the positive six to four. Among the education students two main areas of deficiency noted were classroom management and long-term (i.e, year-long) planning, though education for short-term planning came in for favorable comment and the education practica were noted as being helpful in preparation for classroom management.

Personal growth areas: Adaptability and self-confidence. Thirteen people commented very positively about growth of self-confidence and increased adaptability as a result of university study, and five made negative comments. The negative comments related to training in adaptability (e.g., "UBC did not prepare me for modifying some school subjects") or to an initial failure in self-confidence in the early days of employment. One participant relates deficiency in this area to the practicum: "there is not enough time for building teacher-student relationships, not enough self-determined time before being given evaluations for practica."

One individual, however, remarked that the UBC experience "prepared me academically for my various career changes," and explicit reference to increased self-confidence appears in five people's responses.

Practical experience areas. This is the only area in which negative comments are substantively greater than the positive ones. Five people commented positively about the effect of their university-related practical experience on their preparedness for their professions, but 12 commented negatively. "I was given a lot of practical experience, which I think is crucial to being a teacher," wrote one, echoing another's "Because of the number of practica offered in NITEP, I felt comfortable with being the classroom." Three of the five positive comments about practica specifically named practica associated with NITEP.

A graduate from the early years wrote, "When I first started teaching I felt very angry that my BEd program did not practically prepare me for teaching (i.e., discipline, practical management); NITEP had not started yet." Graduates from recent years can be just as negative about practical

experience, however, and more than half of their comments relate to practical issues of classroom management and discipline. Another practical issue raised by several participants had to do with dealing with individual differences among students. One remarked, "They should have spent more time informing us of the realities of actually getting into, working in, and surviving in quite a ruthless system—both in public and band schools." There were mixed comments from graduates of both Commerce and Nursing that the preparation for practical, everyday working was good in some areas and not in others.

First Nations issues. Seventeen respondents noted the area of First Nations issues as important in evaluating the connection between their education and their work; 12 credited their university experience as having a positive effect and five made comments that reflected negative evaluation of the university's approach to First Nations issues. "Attending UBC gave me pride in myself as a First Nations person" was a theme reiterated by several: it is important to note that the focus was on the process of attending, and not on UBC as an institution. NITEP and Ts'kel programs were singled out for the usefulness of knowledge areas and perspectives regarding First Nations issues. Similarly, the negative comments here relate to content areas; for example, one person commented that the reality of First Nations community life had not been portrayed accurately at university.

Expectations of UBC

An even more general retrospective question was *How well did UBC meet your expectations?* One respondent wrote: "Good question! I'm not sure at this point if I had any clearly defined expectations of UBC but I certainly had expectations of myself. I think it is difficult, but necessary, for students to be able to articulate expectations of bureaucratic institutions like UBC."

Of the 63 respondents to this question 41 answered in positive terms, even though one said that expectation was that it would be "big and scary" and added, "It was." Thirteen participants said that UBC had failed to meet their expectations and seven were neutral in their responses. Most of those (27) who responded with positive comments answered the question in general terms, as did three of those who said UBC failed their expectations.

Nine of the more specifically oriented positive evaluations focused on the area of intellectual and academic challenge or personal growth, and one person registered disappointment in that area. Only one person spoke positively of course content in this area, whereas two were disappointed in the nature and scope of the courses. Only one person commented on the teaching staff, and that was in positive terms. Companionship with peers and the social aspects of university life were mentioned positively by four people, whereas four commented positively about support services: two specified that it was NITEP support they positively evaluated in contrast to general university support services. One person focused positively on

preparedness for professional employment, whereas two said they thought their program content had been deficient in that area. One person said that expectation of employment as a result of study at UBC had not been met. One participant commented that the university had been a very human-oriented and comfortable place, but two mentioned that area as one of disappointment. Another negative evaluation was in the area of costs.

UBC's Influence

An important summary question asked for broad retrospection: *How has your experience at UBC influenced you in general (both personally and as a member of your community)?*

Many of the comments echo those described above, but nevertheless an eloquent statement of the way UBC influenced these First Nations graduates comes from simply reading what they said. Some graduates felt the influence pervaded their whole lives:

> My university education set the course or basis for rest of my life.
>
> It gave me confidence and strength to acknowledge myself and my colleagues: I am a valuable resource. I am happy to do so anywhere.
>
> It has enabled me to cross bridges I would not have dreamed of crossing.
>
> I have been pursuing my career further, being enrolled in the Master's program. I did not ever think I could or would reach this far.
>
> I'm humbled by the experiences I collected there. Others have higher expectations of me than before I left.

Others spoke of the broadening effects of their education:

> I believe I am more open minded and willing to listen to other viewpoints. I am more understanding of my people and of people in general. I am more interested in worldly affairs (and this does not mean Diana and Charles—take time to laugh!). I am more

Some comments about expectations

> At the time, I guess [it met my expectations], although I felt I had to meet the university expectations rather than the university meeting mine.
>
> Not many European-descendant professors knew about First Nations. I felt I knew more about my culture first hand, but white professors trivialized my knowledge because it was not obtainable from libraries, not written.
>
> When it was all over I felt that all that I had gained was a piece of paper and a three-year void in my life. To be truthful, I didn't know what to expect. Now, I expect that the experience should touch people—all people.
>
> UBC met expectations through having programs such as NITEP and Ts'kel, where I was able to meet other First Nations individuals in social and academic settings.
>
> I loved my university experience! However I felt ill prepared for teaching ... I had a few experiences with racist individuals and many experiences with cross-cultural insensitivity. But I learned much and met many fine human beings. I value the knowledge, skills, and friendships gained.
>
> My expectations of UBC were that it would challenge me, give choices and opportunities, and it did.

encouraging. I see, hear, viewpoints other than Native: I learned about the Japanese, the Ukrainians and other groups. Wow! To learn that other cultures shared many of our experiences!

It has changed me; I've grown up (somewhat). I remember stating at a tea social at UBC that sitting among a group of professional Native people, as I was, was like I was graduating alright, but also like I was just learning how to crawl. Today I don't have red knees like before, and I'm taking better care of myself.

Some were more specific:

Going to UBC has provided me with many more options.

My experience at UBC has given me more credibility in the community (i.e., academic) and has given more confidence in my work.

It has taught me to keep trying as hard as I can; also that I am a very hard worker.

I feel more confident, as I achieved well academically despite my family responsibilities and financial difficulties.

It made me see the value of meeting objectives.

It increased my interest in learning.

I made a lot of lifelong contacts, figured out how the world worked, and realized, once I left, the work was only just beginning.

For some, UBC strengthened First Nations identity:

UBC. I was able to speak [my own language] in a university class because others were speaking their own Native First Nation's language; [going to UBC influenced] by assisting me to form my educational philosophy with the education- into-culture process; it allowed me to meet First Nations educators and to listen, learn, and act on visions to better myself.

Personally, UBC allowed the opportunity to make new First Nations friends and to share experiences of other First Nations community concerns and issues.

UBC has given me degrees to be proud of, pride in myself as a person and knowledge that I can share with those who care to listen—knowledge about my history and background—and a vision to work toward.

It has made me look at myself as a First Nations person and as a result has given me an identity and a purpose which I was not aware of before.

Many comments connected personal growth and growth in professional competence with aspects important to First Nations people:

I'm proud to be a UBC graduate personally because I'm still a minority who has made it. I am able to critically analyze issues and answer my critics intelligently and with historical evidence; the issues are usually of a First Nations nature. I'm confident with my competence to do whatever I want to do. My education will give me the skills.

It opened my eyes to the influence that institutions like UBC have on social attitudes and ways of thinking and perceiving; for instance, in the area of Canadian history and Indian-White relations, what is taught is the Eurocolonial interpretation of this relationship. The other half of the equation is believed to be nonexistent because it is not written down in history books. The ability to be objective is highly valued in the study of history, yet how can this information, when so onesided, be considered objective and therefore acceptable to the First Nations learner. The contradiction is too great; this exhibits disrespect to the knowledge that exists with First Nations culture and the to the experiences of the First Nations learners who live in the culture. As First

Nation students then we have to take responsibility for correcting this contradiction, for as a student in this setting, we are both learner and teacher. So in direct response to your question yes, my identity is reinforced and strengthened because I have to defend it against a "value" of another culture.

With regard to First Nations aspects, some feel that they act as role models, and wish to encourage university attendance in others:

My experience at UBC has influenced me a great deal both personally (I have a better quality life, I appreciate people around me and I love studying and learning) and in the community. In the community I love to help people, to encourage people around me all the time. My community has expanded as well. It is no longer confined to the parameters of our tribal territory. It now encompasses all First Nations people—and non-First Nations people as well.

I found that my experience at UBC was very rewarding. It caused me to grow personally. I could do what I set out to do. I believe I've been a role model for some students.

I became a role model for student/community members. That gave me the realization I could do a lot for the community; it gave me a desire to excel and to continue to go to school, to encourage others and my children.

A number of other refer to "giving back" to others, to community support and service, and to furthering First Nations peoples:

Personally it is a real accomplishment, one that I am proud of. So far I am still the only university graduate who has returned home and I feel the community members support me!

My experience at UBC made me more conscience of my roles and responsibilities as a member of society. I am now clear about where I fit into the community and how to go about getting what I want and need as a member.

Having a university education plus work-related experience really has unlocked the door for me to be active and committed to the progress of our people, in our process of reclaiming and regaining our pride in who we are, our history and our land.

It has given me the courage to continue the struggle to strive for excellence in Aboriginal Education.

I am now working for my people in my home town. Also, I work with bands [in a large region of the province]. I have brought my skills home.

Not everyone felt positive. However, compared with the number of positive comments, the negative ones are infrequent. Some comments were ambivalent:

It reinforced me in seeing myself as a human being with a profession—not just a "professional," but a person who has empathy and caring for those I live and work with; I was disappointed in the attitude of some of those I dealt with in administration who would rather "deal" with me than "relate" with me.

A college degree tended to bolster my self-confidence. The community tends to look on a holder of such a degree with a bit more deference. I'm not sure if that is good or bad.

I have to watch my use of the English language so that others don't think that I am being pretentious. Many expectations and responsibilities like that are placed on me because of my education. I've developed a research and knowledge creation

consciousness, as well as a recognition of the place of ideology in knowledge creation theory building.

One was overtly hostile:

I feel angry—and I have discussed with my partner as we are both students—that we became too cognitively centered. We lived inside the language of inscription rather than in lived experience. We became unbalanced beings and we have discussed how or what we will take, or make, to get out of the university—or rather, the academic boundedness of student life. We analyzed how our outdoor life had virtually disappeared.

Some felt that UBC was less important to them than NITEP:

I am proud to admit that I was at UBC; however, I first say that I was in the NITEP at UBC.

NITEP has influenced my direction since graduation. I have thought of my university experience in terms of NITEP and have thought of UBC as irrelevant. My support and social contacts were NITEP-based and related. I attended "UBC" classes and identify "UBC" in that way (i.e., going to class).

UBC, itself, has not had much of an influence personally and in my community. I have drawn my strengths, goals, and attainments through myself, my family, friends, and the staff of NITEP itself.

Others experienced racism and prejudice:

I am a recognized professional. As such, [one is treated] really well. But as a First Nations individual it is still difficult to feel [one's self to be] an acceptable person within the field. I still feel as though I have to constantly prove myself and my capabilities. I have not yet received a whole year's teaching assignment. I have only been working on a contract basis. Every day I still face the negative attitude other professionals and parents hold toward Native people. This is a continuous struggle because they seem to have these preconceived ideas that seem to never go away. Personally, UBC has taught me how to be critical of the world around me, be it positively or negative. I am educated and remain educated about the issues concerning First Nations, therefore I am an advocate and voice for our people.

NITEP is viewed by our school board as being a compromised program with less credibility than the regular program; more 'PR' is needed to counteract this.

In summary, despite some ambivalent and negative impact, UBC generally had a profound positive influence on the First Nations graduates who responded to the survey, not merely in the areas of education or employment, but in a far more pervasive way. As one graduate stated:

I could write a book about how my experience at NITEP and Ts"kel has influenced my life. It has been great! What I have gained I am able to return. That's the beauty of it. The expression I like that describes the feeling is "My Heart Soars."

The First Nations-UBC Interaction

First Nations cultures. The importance of First Nations cultures in the university experience is demonstrated in the responses to an open-ended question that asked the participants to complete the phrase: *My First Nations culture influenced my UBC experience by ...*

The responses to this item were for the most part complex. However, two respondents said that their First Nations culture had "no effect" and six others declined to answer. One said "not sure." The other 59 wrote in terms that demonstrated that their perception and experience of First Nations was central to their university experience.

Responses typically fell into at least two of the three major categories of response: action and expression; family and community; and internal characteristics.

Action and expression (30). First Nations culture/identity provides the imperative:

- to make choices of faculty, program, and courses;
- to make choices of topics for exposition or study within courses; choice of research area; choices of topic for development of teaching units;
- to explain First Nations perspectives to others, to acknowledge the culture to others; to accept a responsibility to educate non-Aboriginal people about aboriginal perspectives; to help others understand a First Nations perspective;
- explicitly, in classes or with individual professors, to ensure that the First Nations perspective was there; to argue if need be to break down negative stereotypes; confidently to ensure that what information is presented about First Nations issues is accurate;
- to demonstrate by example to others the spiritual nature of First Nations cultures; to exemplify through action a more humanistic approach to learning; to teach by example about the diversity among First Nations;
- by example to demonstrate respect for others, no matter how they might demonstrate their ignorance.

Family and community (30). Two families were described here: those of origin, and the UBC family/community.

Their families of origin gave them:

family support and identity;
my family gave me traditional values;
my parents gave me determination and perseverance;
my family made me see I come from an ancestry of winners and doers;
their example gave me determination to hold up my family's name.

Their communities gave:

involvement with Elders;
a basis and place for spirituality and prayer;
commitment to persevere for the benefit of the community, to help out in First Nations situations;
through meeting cultural responsibilities in my community my identity and commitment was built;
I realized that leaving home for a while to bring something of benefit back to the community has been a long-standing cultural pattern;
that the university reinforced my connection to my community; my work, and gave me support.

The UBC family/community was a place to:

> live, share, and love, in a new-found UBC First Nations family;
> made me feel at home with other First Nations people;
> drew me to other aboriginal students, among whom I made friends;
> gave me role models among First Nations people at NITEP;
> allowed me to show respect, kindness, and appreciation to staff, friends, students, peers, and Elders;
> reinforced the value of sharing within the community, being aware of community.

Through community, one participant realized that "the honor of one is the honor of all."

Individual (43). First Nations culture gave them:

- *Identity:* identity; focus, centre; sanity; ability to believe in myself; pride; the foundation for personality, character, and career; and a sense of uniqueness (not always a comfortable experience).
- *Power:* strength; the ability to work and complete tasks; my culture's propensity for innovation; commitment to positive change during times of adjustment; support, seeing me through, being there; sponsorship, encouragement; perseverance and commitment to succeed in university; strength to face discrimination; and patience with others.
- *Attitudes:* motivation to succeed; determination to succeed; ability to know we create our own reality; knowledge of dependence-interdependence; knowledge of accountability to others; the realization that education is important to our people's survival; the desire to know more about my culture and roots; a hunger for knowledge and enlightenment; curiosity, the drive to push ahead; and commitment to contribute to the community.
- *Cognitive strength:* influences my thoughts, values; provides me an ability to think critically; gave me new ideas to bring to my work at university; provided evaluative criteria for knowing how to choose what is good in a challenging situation; My culture gives focus to my efforts and plans; realization of common First Nations values in different First Nations traditions; a critical perspective on theory; and a critical perspective on applications of theory.

Impact of UBC

We asked specifically in another question: *Did UBC as an institution have any impact on your First Nations identity? If so, what?* Eleven said that UBC had no impact on their First Nations identity, and most of those answers were simply "no." Three people did not respond to this item, but 53 described the effect of their experience at UBC on their identity as First Nations people. Those descriptions were all in positive terms, but not all responses reflected positively on the institution.

Several people were specific about the agency of that effect. For example, 13 people said that it was NITEP where that positive effect on identity was realized, two said in was due to their involvement at the FNHL, and

two mentioned work with the Native Indian Student Union. Three students compared NITEP and its positive effect in that regard with the university at large, like the graduate who remembered "No. NITEP and First Nations House of Learning did." Another nine participants were quite specific that it was the First Nations community on campus, and not the institution, that had a positive effect on their identity as a First Nations person. One person wrote simply: "The NITEP students." Two others wrote:

> I don't know if UBC had an impact upon me but the people, many of them students, did. I am now aware of my identity in a much deeper and more satisfying way than I was when I arrived at UBC.
>
> The presence of so many First Nations students has helped to reinforce my sense of self-identity. I don't feel so lost [as I did at another university].

Consistent with responses to other questions were both positive and negative references to professors, courses, and institutional structures in general that had some influence on individual's First Nations identity.

Five people responded in terms of their realization of what First Nations people have to offer society and the university.

> When the House of Learning was being created I was proud to know that I could actually affect the architectural design of building. The elements of wood, water, and sky eventually became the focus of the structure. In time this structure will help future students to realize the dynamic and balancing contributions that First Nations have made to education. It makes me more determined than ever to work in areas where First Nations will be proud of the unique heritage, through their beautiful cultures.
>
> I found that I was always proud to state my nation and tribe in NITEP and UBC classes. I sang my traditional songs at numerous NITEP/FNHL functions and was glad I had those opportunities. When in non-First Nations classes I often was able to clarify some of the misconceptions stated in class—even when I was met with criticism from professors.

The participants offer some important insights into how for many people First Nations identity evolves and changes during a program of university studies. No single term captures the process accurately, but the term *legitimacy* incorporates two aspects of the process in that it involves both public perception or group attribution of value on one hand, and identity of the individual, with reference to a defined group, on the other. The insight that the participants have given us involves a process of response to the expressed or perceived perceptions of others and a concomitant personal incorporation of identity. The participants express an affirmation of identity as First Nations people with respect to values expressed by others about First Nations people and First Nations belief systems that are negative and positive, accurate and stereotypic, affirming or denying. We have categorized those as "perceptions of confirmation" or "perceptions of challenge."

Examples speak more coherently; with respect to challenge: "Yes. It forced me to resolve and solidify myself because the focus [at university]

was to pick apart any culture that was not 'white' or 'mainstream.' [As a result I became] a better defender of First Nations people and issues." As other respondents stated,

> In many cases I was made to speak on behalf of First Nations in general. Many courses required me to establish defensible positions on many issues. [The respondent goes on to say that he/she thought that this was a "generally good, positive impact" on personal identity.]
>
> Yes, as an institution UBC only created a conviction in me that they need some change in attitude more akin to First Nations philosophy, and less bureaucratic. I found it so refreshing to come to the [NITEP] hut and feel myself restrengthened in order to go out and face the often "unrealisitics" of UBC.
>
> It made clear for the me the breadth and depth of ignorance among the "educated" elite with regards to aboriginal peoples' histories, cultures, politics, economics, and so forth. Their ignorance in this age of information reminds me of how little they are concerned with social justice in their front yards. I came home knowing how little aboriginal people mean to most Canadians. However, I also know how much can be achieved when Canadians act out of fear and self interest.
>
> I was the one who initiated interest in my First Nations identity, otherwise there would have been no accommodation made by the university. Anthropology classes objectified and depersonalized First Nations.
>
> Yes! Very much I felt empowered and proud to say "I'm Blackfoot; my language is important." I felt that my people's culture was validated—because it had been subtracted from the school curriculum.
>
> Early years—no. [In the] humanities there was a negativity to First Nations which made me identify more as a First Nations person.

Compare those statements with these, which we have generalized as "confirmation":

> It had a positive impact on me as a First Nations person; several instructors—First Nations and non-First Nations—helped me to realize the enormous treasure I have in my First Nations cultural heritage.
>
> The fact that [UBC] recognized us as unique persons who could contribute to UBC made us feel welcome and comforted there; they never begrudged (I hope!) any of the services to First Nations programs.
>
> Yes, in some instances, it reaffirmed what I knew, made me proud to be who I am. It also taught me that the oppression I experienced as First Nations person was world-wide, and it was systemic (and still is); and that all efforts toward positive change are extremely valuable, both among our own people and others.
>
> The NITEP program definitely influenced me as a First Nations person. I appreciate the cultural courses offered. I also took several anthropology courses that I enjoyed.
>
> Yes—I learned more about other cultures in my anthropology courses which helped strengthen my ties with my own.

At this point in the report, we would like to honor Floy Pepper, the Elder on our research team. Not only did she give us the benefit of her experience throughout the project, but her wit and wisdom made her a highly respected member of the team. Her useful description of focus groups follows. Her wise words on racism are found in Part V.

The Focus Group: An Introduction

Focus groups present an alternative means of obtaining information from people. This discussion is divided into two parts: What is a focus group and how does it work? and How to conduct a focus group interview and skills needed by the interviewer.

What is a Focus Group and How Does it Work?

Focus groups are used in research to provide information as to why people think or feel the way that they do. Group interaction allows for greater insight into why certain opinions are held and provides information that can be helpful to the planners or decision makers. "Focus groups are valid if they are used carefully for a problem that is suitable for focus group inquiry" (Krueger, 1988, p. 41).

What is a focus group? "A focus group can be defined as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately seven to ten people by a skilled interviewer" (Krueger, 1988, p. 18).

The discussion is held in a relaxed, comfortable manner as the participants share their ideas and perceptions. For many people talking in an atmosphere of mutual understanding stimulates thinking. The participants of the group are selected because they have certain knowledge and understandings in common that relate to the topic to be discussed. The focus group is intended to promote self-disclosure among its members.

The atmosphere of the group provides opportunities for emotional and intellectual participation and reassurance that one is not alone in one's thinking. The problems they have faced or are facing and the tasks they perform seem lighter and more solvable when ideas, aspirations, successes, and anxieties are shared. This does not often happen with other forms of discussion. The participants may find that there are a number of facets to the same topic. In such a discussion all have the right to say what they think. Everyone is equal and treated with respect. There are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view, for example:

> Please share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. We are just as interested in negative comments as positive comments, and at times the negative comments are the most helpful.
>
> We have invited people with similar experiences to share their perceptions and ideas on the topic. You were selected because you have things in common that are of particular interest to us. (Krueger, 1988, p. 25)

What are the characteristics of a focus group? A number of characteristics are typical:

1. Focus groups are usually composed of seven to 10 people. The size must be kept small enough for everybody to have the opportunity to share insights but large enough to provide a variety of perceptions.

2. Focus groups are composed of participants who are similar to each other and who have the same kind of common factors. It is preferred that the participants do not know each other very well and do not know the interviewer; however, this is not always possible.
3. Focus groups can provide data to the researcher. Focus groups have a narrow purpose to determine the perceptions, feelings, and manner of thinking as consumers about the product, service, or opportunity of the particular topic under discussion. Focus groups are a way to provide helpful information of management prior to launching a new endeavor. They are not intended to develop consensus, to decide on a definite plan, or to make a decision about a planned course of action.
4. Focus groups can give qualitative data that provide insights into the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of its members. This is achieved through the medium of open-ended questions. The participants influence others and are influenced by others.
5. Focus group discussions are carefully predetermined and sequenced, based on an analysis of the situation. The interviewer uses predetermined, open-ended questions that appear to be spontaneous but that have been carefully developed and arranged in a natural, logical sequence. Attention is placed on understanding the thought processes of the participants.

What is the relation between focus groups and quantitative methods?

1. Focus groups can be used to proceed quantitative methods. Focus groups can provide insights into special problems that may arise. Focus groups can pinpoint critical questions, help to develop a logical sequence of questions, and may provide a wider range of choices.
2. Focus groups can be instituted at the same time as quantitative procedures. This permits the researcher to confirm findings and obtain breadth and depth of information.
3. Focus groups can be used after quantitative procedures. Questionnaires give a great deal of data, whereas focus groups can give interpretations and meaning to the information. Quantitative needs assessments alone are often incomplete.
4. Focus groups can be used independently and are helpful when insights, perceptions, and explanations are important.

> Focus groups can be used before a quantitative study, during a quantitative study, after a quantitative study, or independent of other methodological procedures. The decision of using a methodological mix is often made in the planning stages at the beginning of the study. In some situations, however, the researcher may consider incorporating a quantitative study after conducting focus group interviews, especially in situations where focus groups have revealed unexpected results that need further confirmation. (Krueger, 1988, p. 40)

What are the advantages of focus group interviews?

1. The technique is a socially orientated research method capturing real-life data in a social environment.

2. It has flexibility.
3. It has high face validity.
4. It has speedy results and is low in cost (Krueger, 1988 p. 47).

What are the limitations of focus groups that affect the quality of the results?

1. Focus groups afford the researcher less control than individual interviews
2. Data are difficult to analyze.
3. Moderators require special skills.
4. Differences between groups can be troublesome.
5. Groups are difficult to assemble.
6. Discussions must be conducted in a conducive environment (Krueger, 1988, p. 48).

How to Conduct a Focus Group and Skills Needed by the Facilitator

Conducting a focus group interview has three phases:

1. Developing a written plan (developing the questions);
2. Conducting the interview (learning interviewer skills and selecting the participants);
3. Analyzing and reporting the results of the collected data.

Background information is needed in order to develop a plan, which should include:

1. Why should a study be conducted and who will use the information?
2. What types of information are of importance and what kind of information is needed?
3. Who wants the information and why is the information needed?

A written plan should include the procedures to be followed, whether a task force will be involved, a timeline, and a proposed budget. A plan is like a map; it shows where you are going and how to get there. It assists the researcher to think through the process in a logical manner, allows feedback from colleagues and decision makers, and ensures that adequate resources and time will be available to obtain the needed information. Consideration should be given to developing both a chronological plan and a fiscal plan for the project.

> A chronological plan should contain the following elements: dates, steps, persons responsible, people assisting, and comments. The chronological plan presents a timetable of the sequence of steps as well as identifying the tasks to be completed by various individuals.
>
> The fiscal plan is a project budget summary that complements the chronological plan and provides additional insights as to the amount of time, effort, and expenses that will be required. (Kreuger, 1988, p. 58)

What is the art of asking questions? Asking the right questions is probably the most difficult technique in conducting focus group interviews. As previously stated, the interviewer uses predetermined, open-ended questions that appear to be spontaneous, but that have been carefully developed and arranged in a natural, logical order. Quality answers are directly

related to quality questions. Quality questions require forethought, concentration, and background knowledge.

Open-ended questions reveal what is on the interviewee's mind. They tend to give the interviewer a clearer idea of what the interviewee is thinking rather than what the interviewer suspects is on the interviewee's mind. Brainstorming with colleagues on the task force can be helpful in obtaining a range of possible questions.

1. Questions should flow in a logical sequence.
2. Key questions should focus on the critical issues of concern.
3. Use probe or follow-up questions.
   Examples:
   Think back _____,
   What did you like best about _____?
   How did you feel about your experience at _____?
   We are asking people to share their ideas and opinions on _____?

The interviewer should be familiar with the two techniques of the five-second pause and the probe. The five-second pause is used after an interviewee's comment,which often prompts additional points of view.

The probe is often used when people make vague comments and there is need for clarification or to elicit additional information. "Would you explain further?" "Please describe what you mean." "Could you give an example?"

What kinds of questions does the interviewer avoid?

1. Closed-ended questions.
2. Questions that can be answered by Yes or No.
3. Limit the use of *Why* questions.

"Interviews are focused by providing participants with consistent and sufficient background information and by presenting the question in context" (Krueger, 1988, p. 68).

What skills should the interviewer (moderator) have in order to conduct an effective focus group interview?

To be an effective discussion leader requires considerable self-assurance, spontaneity, and inner freedom. These qualities permit the leader to function without fear or concern for personal prestige and allows one to be comfortable with oneself, and able to make mistakes without feeling threatened. A leader who is warm, outgoing, and friendly is usually successful in giving each member of the group a feeling of being accepted and understood. Along with warmth and friendliness, flexibility in establishing relationships with other people is essential.

The interviewer should be familiar with group processes, have training and experience in working with groups and group dynamics. The leader must also have a sense of timing, to be able to link the feelings and thoughts of group members and be able to sense the group atmosphere and to help bring about change if necessary. In an nonthreatening atmos-

phere, the interviewees will have the satisfaction of developing free expression, maximum communication, and friendly relationships. The leader must be alert to detect feelings and attitudes that are implied but are not expressed and able to use gentle encouragement to help group members to express their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes more clearly.

An effective moderator must be a good listener, be able to communicate clearly, and have background knowledge of the topic of discussion in order to place all comments in perspective and follow up on critical areas of concern. He or she must have the discipline of listening and thinking simultaneously, which means being free from distractions, anxieties, or pressures that would limit the ability to think quickly and clearly.

Additional moderator skills are (Krueger, 1988, p. 90):

- Be well rested and alert for the focus group setting.
- Practice introduction without referring to notes.
- Remember questions without referring to notes.
- Be cautious to avoid head nodding.
- Avoid comments that signal approval, that is, "excellent," "great," "wonderful."
- Avoid giving personal opinions.

The interviewer must have a past-present-future time perspective throughout the discussion—he or she needs to remember what has already been discussed, what is currently taking place, what is the next question or topic of discussion, and what it will mean when finished.

What is the place and use of an assistant moderator?

> The moderator is primarily concerned with directing the discussion, keeping the conversation flowing, and taking minimal notes. The notes of the moderator are not so much to capture the total interview, but rather to identify future questions that need to be asked. The assistant, on the other hand takes comprehensive notes, operates the tape recorder, handles the environmental conditions and logistics (refreshments, lighting, seating, and so on), and responds to unexpected interruptions. (Krueger, 1988, p. 74)

The assistant moderator is a valuable asset to the process. The assistant can ask additional questions, probe responses in more depth, take care of all interruptions, and is extremely helpful in performing the postmeeting analysis of the interview.

How do you begin the focus group discussions? One of the aims of the type of focus group discussion under consideration is freedom of expression and spontaneity. However, a certain amount of clarifying of procedure is necessary to let the group know what is acceptable and what may be expected.

Krueger (1988, p. 80) lists this pattern for introducing the discussion:

1. The welcome.
2. The overview and topic.
3. The ground rules.
4. The first question.

Time can be saved if the interviewer clarifies the purposes for which the group has come together and suggests methods by which these purposes may be achieved.

What are ways to analyze focus group results? The task of analysis is to prepare a statement about what was found in the group, a statement that emerges from and is supported by available evidence that is repeated and is common to several participants. It is important to identify those opinions, ideas, or feelings that repeat even though they are expressed in different words and styles.

In the analysis process one looks for trends and patterns. Where themes that are addressed by several members emerge, this should be noted. Any area of strong disagreement should also be recognized. The feelings that seem to be attached commonly to a theme or point is another aspect of analysis that can be discussed. If there is a listing of several points under one major point, these should be listed as part of the analysis. Finally, sometimes a review of the progress and order of appearance of ideas over the time of the group or in counterpoint to one another may be a part of the analysis.

There are several ways to analyze focus group data. The constraints are these:

1. Refer to the research question, above.
2. Refer to the objective of focus group interview:
   to find a range of opinion and a range of expression about the things that relate to the research question; and to describe a context for understanding that range.

The research questions motivate a thematic analysis along the following lines. As far as possible the participants' own words should be used as descriptors in the analysis of the interview. In addition, three subsidiary research questions should be:

1. Have we asked this group the right questions to find out range and context?
2. Are there areas/factors/feelings that we omitted?
3. Did our questions assume a construct for relating UBC experience (positive and negative) to post-UBC life experience that the participants' implicitly or explicitly react to?

Analysis takes the following form, reviewing both (a) the records kept by moderators and others; and (b) the record of the focused interview itself.

Describe the following

1. Size of group;
2. Composition of group: describe the group in terms of its homogeneity; what do the participants have in common; in what ways are they different?
3. Sequence of activities of the meeting with the group: how do they enter; what activities took place before the group meeting began?

4. Spatial arrangements: where did the group meet; how was the group arranged physically in the meeting room?
5. What steps if any were taken for the release of inhibitions about participation? Did some participants talk more than others? What general questions were asked?
6. What steps if any were taken to broaden the range of responses?
7. What steps if any were taken to activate forgotten memories in the group?

Describe the topical sequence of the session. Look for topic change in the record of group discussion. Make a topic-change diagram. Go back over the record and, off to the side of the topic change sequence, note implicit topic if it is different from explicit topic. (This can be contextualized as well by referring to notes to see if there is anything that should be commented on from before the session began.)

Range of topic/range of statements. Go through the record and, using the participants' own words, with reference to each topic note the range of opinions expressed by the participants.

Identify themes. Name the themes; this is a description of why the topics are or are not coherent, why they follow from other topics. What is the range of themes? Are themes/topics repeated in different contexts, and at different points?

Context for understanding. The participants will either explain or imply why they have expressed a particular topic. This may be evidenced by what is implied by the context in which a topic or theme was brought up by a participant. The analyst should at this point have some understanding of what the participants saw as important enough to remark on and why.

Go back over the research question. Compare the range of topics with the research question; address the question using all sections of the analysis.

Validity. These procedures are undertaken independently by at least two analysts, so there is an attempt to improve construct validity by triangulation of analyst. By using the participants' own words, and by referring to the contexts for topics, there is a good relationship between face validity and construct validity. The record of sequence of topics acts as a means of looking to the internal logic, the conversational coherence of the discussion, to check validity.

Refer to the moderator's records to see if anything about the conduct of the group can be seen to have oriented the discussion to any other perspective but the research question.

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to reporting the results of a focus group. Most of the choices about how to portray the research have already been made during the course of the research: whether the research was exploratory or hypothesis testing, whether the level of moderator involvement was intended to produce structured or unstructured

discussions, and whether the analysis relied on ethnographic or numerical summaries of the data.

> Too much quotation gives the report a chaotic stream-of-consciousness flavor, whereas too much summarization is not only dry but also deprives the reader of even the indirect contact with the participants available through their verbatim statements of their perspectives. (Morgan, 1988, p. 70)

Focus Group Findings (Kamloops)

The findings from the analysis of the Kamloops focus group are presented, for each of the three goals. The suggestions for enhancing the UBC programs may be found after the discussion of each goal. General comments may be found after the list of participants' suggestions for enhancing the UBC programs. A summary is provided at the end of this section.

Findings by Goal

Goal A: To explore the relationship between education and employment among the graduates

The 41 comments by the participants about the outcomes of their postsecondary educational experiences focused on three areas: preparation for job requirements (14), enhancing the whole person (16), and increasing awareness of First Nations and of oneself as a First Nations person (11). Most of the comments were positive; however, seven of the comments about preparation for job requirements focused on inadequacies.

It is interesting to note that, despite the relative lack of discussion about the direct relationship between employment and education, all 10 of the participants were employed in their area of study (education for the most part), several in leadership roles (principal, superintendent, area principal, etc.). It seems, then, for these people, that employment closely related to their area of postsecondary education is a given.

Preparation for job requirements. Of the 14 comments in this section, one half addressed perceived inadequacies in the programs, whereas the other half spoke of the utility of the postsecondary programs.

All seven "inadequacy" comments pertained to the belief that training in education should have been more realistic. The following statements include the various aspects mentioned:

> There should have been more training in unit plans ... because you know, when I first interviewed ... [and was] working in the district ... they were looking really strict with us ... they wanted more details.

> It didn't teach me how to work in a band school ... how to use community resources ... how to approach elders ... how to teach the culture.

> I knew all the academics, I knew the methods, but I didn't know a lot of the skills, the basic life skills.

> [there was no information about addiction, abuse, etc.] ... if you learn to deal with this sort of thing you become aware of it ... and you go teaching ... you'll have a better idea of what's happening to that child ... back then we never talked about it.

> How to prepare yourself ... for the community ... you can take criticism from non-Native people but when it comes from Native people it can be so devastating ... you have to try to get it back into perspective.

The comments on utility of training focused on the acquisition of practical skills, of academic knowledge and of metacognitive skills. The teaching practicum was seen as valuable by four participants. With regard to the value for acquiring practical skills, one person stated:

> I remember when I started teaching, throwing my hands up and saying now what do I do ... it was going back to all those practicums that ... remembering them all ... how they organized their work and how they organized their centers ... and so ... the practicums ... they have to have enough experiences to draw on.

With regard to academic learning and metacognition, a participant observed:

> For preparing me for my job ... it was the foundations courses and understanding that ... any course is a foundation for anything else ... and you are responsible for your own learning ... that's what I learned ... if I want to be a quality administrator or a quality teacher than I need to go out and seek some other things that (were) lacking in the program.

Another person noted that, with regard to metacognitive skills:

> On the whole I developed an integrated resource ... I haven't really ... appreciated [it] until this last little while ... I've been doing curriculum development and ... talking about different books and authors and ... I just take it for granted that people know a lot of this information is out there and a lot of people don't.

A final comment was on the importance of classmates: "throughout the years we [classmates] remembered one another ... networking is important ... it's helpful in social areas as well ... who you know is important."

Enhancing the whole person. A number of participants experienced deep personal growth as a result of their postsecondary experiences:

> [Before UBC] I was curled up, not feeling too good about who I was ... also I didn't quite feel I knew who I was ... and after attending the NITEP program ... and working ... it was ... like ... the rose has bloomed ... that's what it was like for me.

> I'm living a dream ... I'm living my dream ... like something I dreamed about and I don't need to struggle any more ... I'm living it now.

> In a broader sense ... the experience ... was really the greatest help to me ... to round out my life ... it made me a more complete person ... helped me cope with being an equal citizen ... an equal member of the human race.

One aspect of this growth is an increased sense of personal self-acceptance, efficacy, and power: "Without university training, the university atmosphere, that I went through ... I wouldn't have been able to do the things in my life that I've been able to do."

As one person stated, "It was a different perspective we got ... through UBC and the different connections we had with people ... we can let ourselves off the hook ... to be comfortable with [your] experience and not to beat ourselves up."

The resulting increase in confidence is seen at work:

> [I have] the confidence now to handle any situation, whatever it us ... my first week of being an administrator ... I went, had to be on the roof ... I had to suspend one student on the second day ... I had to get drinking water into the whole building ... it was just horrendous ... but what got me through was that confidence again ... I'm the one who went through the training.

This aspect applies to private life as well: "It gave me confidence in ... meeting ... a major challenge in my life and ... I beat that challenge."

Yet another effect is the growth of the love of learning: "It just opens that door ... so you want to seek more knowledge and get excited and ... hooked on life itself and that you're great ... it's wonderful."

A general benefit is a better life: "[At UBC] you learn to grow and when the commitment is there ... the commitment of becoming ... of having a better life style."

Finally, university experience broadens horizons: "Some of the places ... findings ... people ... other cultures ... taking that information and looking at my own ... it opened my mind."

Increasing awareness of First Nations. Postsecondary education in a First Nations-oriented program has a profound effect on identity as a First Nations person: "I really found my identity and I know who I am ... I'm true to that person ... all of that came from university."

This effect may include healing:

> It really connected me back to the culture, to my spirituality ... and to get ... my language again ... I was repressing emotions and when I went to university ... there were other people there that took pride ... in themselves ... we were validated as Native people ... and somehow the language came out ... I wasn't able to speak it before ... [but] I spoke it from when I was born until I was six ... there was a releasing of that.

It may mend family breaches:

> The Native studies I had, I learned an awful lot through there ... learning our history validated some things I heard at home ... I thought gee you know my dad told me all these things and I didn't believe it was true ... so I guess that validated my family.

It may enable people to have a broader point of view: "It certainly focused me from thinking about myself, me ... to see the big picture ... the philosophy of Native people ... and turning that around into what I believe in today."

Finally, it may help the person to achieve inner peace:

> One of the very first times I was introduced to the drum was at university ... in my community nobody used it ... and I remember, those button blankets and ... the dance and I was just in awe, you know ... it was like coming home ... it opened the door.

Goal B: To identify factors leading to successful graduation

The 23 comments by the participants about the "success" factors fell into two areas: support from each of a number of sources (21) and feedback from non-First Nations instructors (2). The comments about support focused primarily on contributions by members of First Nations people and programs (17 of 21 comments). In keeping with the topic, all comments were positive.

Support. Support from First Nations people came from the programs and staff at the university, from fellow students, and from other members of First Nations. The caring, family atmosphere of the NITEP program and the First Nations instructors and staff were major factors. In fact, the program, its staff, and fellow students were, in the words of one participant, instrumental in changing how she saw herself:

> I found knowing the program was there ... that people were there to support you ... it was like being me is right ... you grow and have the confidence and the self-esteem and the pride and understanding about yourself as a Native person and being accepted and being valued.

The presence of First Nations teachers allowed for a more open educational climate: "having First Nations teachers gave me the freedom ... to explore and discuss the different issues and different levels ... that was ... a really positive experience for me."

So did the student seminars: "the seminars we had ... the NITEP seminars ... I found them very good, it gave us a chance to share ... our experiences and where we're at, what we sort of felt, things like that."

Solidarity among students was an important factor:

> In Ts'kel we were in it together ... there's a lot of men with a lot of opinions about education ... in [a department] ... boy, having six of us in there was really a plus ... I really felt there was strength in numbers.

A common metaphor for NITEP and the NITEP students was that of the family: "to me NITEP was an extended family, a family that I had ... I guess ... reconnected with ... it was ... a support system."

It was an active support system, caring and loving and fun:

> My fondest memory is the grouping ... the [NITEP] family ... being accepted as ... you were ... I had my family helping me, I mean the students ... they weren't going to leave me on my own in math ... it gives you the confidence to carry on.

As another participant stated:

> I guess the best thing for me, the thing that dragged me through the university, was the family atmosphere ... we didn't always behave but at least we misbehaved in a group so there were no fingers pointed ... someone saying come for supper ... come on over ... it was family.

Diversity added to the richness of the atmosphere:

> I hooked into the role models ... that really helped ... I remember meeting somebody [who] was really wanting to bring a language back and ... she talked about how they were doing it ... and that really gave me courage ... I thought well we can do that ... so I learned that down here ... meeting the people, learning about their communities and their strengths.

The remote centres were important to two participants. As one of them stated,

> I guess the flexibility of NITEP and the coordinator ... at times really helped me ... [the PE methods] was one of the ones that they said you can only get at UBC winter session ... but the coordinator who was ... here at that time set it up so I could get the credits right here with a PE instructor.

The active presence of Elders matters:

> It's things like ... listening to elders ... I just think about the elders ... that guy, Simon, Simon Baker, I remember watching him so proud, him and his rattle ... he had his rattles ... sets it for generations ... he knew the impact of the language, too.

Practical support from family members may be important:

> I have a sister who lived on campus and I would stay with her and I was able to bring my kids with me ... I could bring my kids ... and walk back and forth to my classes ... that was really positive.

Support can also be directly healing: "it was fortunate that we had ... the healing circle ... something had happened to me ... in my earlier years and I didn't realize that I had carried it with me all this time and it was really ... um, failing."

Of the four comments about support from non-First Nations sources, two pertained to fellow students and two to counselors at UBC. One person observed: "[As mature students] we ... learned to ask some younger person ... to ask some kind looking person to hold us by the hand," while another noted that a chance meeting had been meaningful: "I went down to summer school and ... met a really old lady ... she started saving money and was going to university ... I always think of her and think that's what I want to be ... learning is lifelong."

Both comments about counseling services were related to providing empathy and insight:

> We put up a notice for students over 35 ... [we felt] incapable of doing this work ... feel too dumb to handle this ... the women had a counseling place ... we would sneak through the back door ... [she said] come in, you're a man but there's only one of you ... I said I've got 20 others behind me ...well, she knew what we were going through ... it just brightened us up.

> This counselor had reminded us that ... in your work, your previous work, whenever you had a problem ... you go to the key person ... we got the encouragement from her ... to go to the key source, the key person ... most helpful.

Feedback from professors/supervisors/sponsor teachers. In addition to the comments regarding support, two statements were made about other aspects of success. Both were about non-First Nations instructors. For instance, one person stated: "In terms of the supervisor's own feedback [in education], most of the time it was very positive and helpful."

Goal C: To identify barriers to success and how graduates overcame them

The 47 comments by the participants about the barriers and problems over one half focused on racism and discrimination past and present (24). The other two areas included relocation, financial, and family problems (10), and program/academic areas (13). Many of the comments were painful reminders of the many ways mainstream society has failed the First Nations of Canada.

Racism and discrimination past and present. Seven comments in this category pertained to difficulties with individuals including principals, supervisors, and sponsor teachers:

> In my practicum ... the teacher was ... a veteran teacher, she'd been teaching for quite a number of years ... it wasn't by her choice to have a practicum student and it wasn't by her choice to have a Native student and it wasn't by her choice to have a Native student from a Native program ... and then she told me, yep, you do deserve a class I but I never ever give a class I.

However, students appeared to have the most difficulty with anthropology instructors (4 comments of the 7). The problems focus on the instructor's expectations of failure in First Nations students, a failure by the instructor to accept the validity of the First Nations student's own experiences, and the insistence of the non-First Nations instructor on the validity of his or her own knowledge. For example, one participant stated, "The professors ... were the ones that were saying you couldn't make it in their class if you were a Native person ... what could you do ... what are you doing here, why are you here, you're not going to pass anyway."

A second person said, "In anthropology ... a Native anthropology course ... I was doing quite well ... and I didn't pass ... I answered the [final] test from my perspective ... as a Native person and ... I didn't do very good."

The remaining aspects of racism and discrimination that the participants mentioned included educational discrimination and its effects (6 comments), the legacy of general racism in the past (7), and the effects of tokenism and stereotyping (5).

One profound effect of educational discrimination is an unrealistically low evaluation of one's own ability: "When I first graduated from high school, I thought that ... going to university was something I could never do ... I didn't think that I had that kind of ... that validity, I guess."

In part this effect was caused by residential school experiences: "Coming from the residential school setting ... where you're, you know, always put down, you can't be good, you can't be smart, you might as well ... even going into a program ... was threatening."

Another effect of educational discrimination is low skill levels. As one participant observed, "like most Indians, I was channelled into an easy program ... and of course I left all my academics ... I had to go back and take an extra year."

For a number of participants the legacy of the past was primarily an emotional one. One aspect was the lack of awareness of being First Nations: "There was ... a whole lot of the emotional aspects that needed to be dealt with ... not being aware of being Native or having any Native studies ... it was simmering and we needed to deal with all of that."

As one person began to learn about First Nations issues and history, she stated, "I always felt guilty about it because as you're learning about your history you feel angry ... and that's where we needed a counselor."

The past has a long reach into present academic activities:

> I decided to write a paper on suicide ... some of the people I was going to school with ... there had been suicides in their families recently ... some of my peers were contemplating suicide at that time ... I was dealing with my own experience as a teenager ... contemplating suicide with several of my friends committing suicide ... I couldn't really talk to the others ... so I went to one of the counselors.

With regard to tokenism, one effect is that all First Nations people are assumed to be cultural experts: "Here I [had] just been to school learning about Natives ... I'd never tell a teacher that I didn't know anything about Natives ... because I was a Native person."

A second effect is that programs for First Nations peoples are assumed to be second class: "The most difficult time ... was ... when you think ... [they said it's] a watered-down program, you know people said we're not up there and yet it's been proven how many times [that it is equivalent]."

Such effects are part of the enduring legacy:

> I don't know how you ever get over it ... don't know how you ever get through that ... I quit having dreams of failing only 15 or 20 years ago ... gosh, maybe later ... it's hard to see through, you know ... the things that we had to live through ... in 1958 ... my landlady put me on the voter's list ... I almost had nightmares again about [voting] ... you're Indian, you voted ... shame, it's illegal, that really bothered me.

Relocation, financial, and family difficulties. Of the 10 comments in this area, five were about financial difficulties, three referred to the effects of moving to the city, and the remaining two spoke of family problems.

The move from a community-based rural setting to "fast-moving" urban Vancouver can be quite traumatic:

> When I think about going to Vancouver ... I had ... just moved ... we were in class for three days ... and we all had to sit in a circle ... we were having circle and we talked ... and I said, I've been here for so long and I just want to go home, I miss my home ... I was in tears.

One effect of moving is to split up the family, which in turn may cause economic problems:

> When we had to move to Vancouver... it broke our family up ... and that was quite tough for me ... but what ended up happening was that he put his job on hold for a couple of years ... that meant less income for us for a couple of years.

The effects of financial problems meant that some people could not complete their educational goals:

> Once ... we'd started enjoying learning at the university level ... our monies ran out and we had to go home ... the first time was back in 1958, I spent four years ... I had to wait until 1981 before I returned for another year ... and ... I had to come home ... I was broke.

Others had trouble with the forms required for financial aid: "I did find [funding] difficult ... I would apply to First Citizens ... sometimes they kept wanting me to fill out a new application ... and time would be getting close ... so that added stress a lot."

For one person, the move broke up the family: "it was about a month before we could ... before we could see my son's dad again and that was really hard on our son too ... that was really difficult."

For another, the problems were ongoing: "I had difficulties with home life, nothing to do with academic, but with home life because of going to school, I think ... so I had to grit my teeth and grin and bear it and carry on."

Program/academic areas. The 13 comments pertaining to this area covered a wide range of topics. Most dealt with frustrating aspects of the university context:

> In terms of lesson planning ... too much detail was expected to a degree that you're pretty near asked to make this lesson work according to what you had written ... it wasn't child-centered ... you weren't given the opportunity to really get to know the kids.
>
> I really felt the dependency on the coordinator ... and the coordinator I found tried to make sure that the students weren't too dependent on you ... [so they] could learn how to do it.
>
> [We were overconfident] ... we didn't understand the political scene ... and all of the external forces ... that shaped things ... we just wanted things ... like getting students involved in decision making and those things ... we tested. We didn't know a happy medium.
>
> In terms of the UBC seminars ... which dealt with things like unions ... you felt so rushed, you didn't really have a lot of time to absorb the content.
>
> Something we, I, never learned anyway was why am I taking all these courses, like I never connected lesson plans with methods ... like it took me two years to figure that one out ... so ... there were a lot of communication problems, things where we actually should have sat around a table and talked about it ... you sort of go groping in the dark hoping that you can get there.
>
> The worst time ... was English 200 ... it was an awful bloody course.
>
> I specifically asked to have a teaching experience on the Reserve ... that was quite a hassle ... [needed] to get permission from UBC or whoever they get permission from.
>
> Once I went [to Vancouver] it seemed like the marking system was altogether different ... I was doing A+ ... I go down there and I wasn't doing A+ ... for whatever reason ... I didn't appreciate that.

Two participants commented on a more general challenge, that of acquiring basic skills for university survival, one for the mature student, the other more generally:

> For the mature student, especially those who have had no experience with ... college work ... faces, oh ... almost a double learning situation ... they have to learn the technical things, how to get books from the library, how to use ERIC ... format of papers ... also ... the way the work load comes at you ... the learning curve is different for the mature student.
>
> I wished I had basic life skills, problem solving, communication, how to ask questions, who to go to ... and other skills, study skills, how to write essays.

Suggestions for Enhancement of UBC Programs

Twenty-three suggestions were made by the participants in one of two categories: structure and content. As noted below, 20 of the 23 were structural.

Structure. In education, two participants suggested changes in orientation be made. "I'd like ... longer practicum periods ... giving the teacher and the student more option as to when they want to see the supervisor ... the teacher's opinion given more weight (in marking)," stated one person; the other would like the faculty to "sort of redirect the training in more of the actual needs of what you're going to be doing in a classroom." A third person said, "it's important that the practicum experience starts right from the very beginning ... for the first two months of being a student."

Eight comments were made about the need for counseling services for a number of perceived needs, including alcohol and drug counseling, English, math, and study skills as well as the transition to academic life (3 comments) and dealing with home life problems and with more general emotional difficulties (3 comments). With regard to the last area, one participant said that, at the university, "I felt ... that, for one thing, I wasn't given permission to express my emotions ... coming from residential school ... there was a need to deal with the emotional aspects," and another stated, "I had contradictions ... those held me back ... if I had been able to deal with those things along the way I would have been a better teacher."

An increase in the First Nations visibility and presence were suggested by four participants. One felt that it would be desirable to "have a whole list of First Nations students available" to anyone interested, whereas the other believed that UBC should "have more First Nations teachers because that's where I had a lot of personal growth in terms of confidence and being conversant with First Nations issues." More First Nations administrators were suggested as well, and one comment pointed out: "the NITEP model ... has been absolutely excellent ... it's made an immense contribution to learning for our people ... this concept has to be expanded ... especially in the sciences."

Two suggestions regarding financial aid were made: first that NITEP graduates fund a bursary, and second, that bursaries be made available for people who are "just getting excited about learning, to stay an extra year that way." A third suggestion, a way for graduates to become involved, was: "maybe a student in school now ... be paired up with grads ... who can advise on things."

Finally, two comments regarding awareness of First Nations issues and traditions span the division between structure and content. One participant stated, "there should be at least some Native awareness ... in the faculty ... students ... [should] bring this to attention on a personal level with the ... instructor," whereas the other addressed the need for a broader base of experience among the faculty: "I got the feeling [many profs] had never been off campus... [UBC] is a great place to come and learn, for

gaining knowledge and things like that ... but sometimes ... we should go to the bush and get a little wisdom."

Content. Of the three comments in this area, two addressed curriculum. One was general: "looking ... at philosophy of education in BC, [it] is ... more child-centered ... so the university student ... the NITEP student's experience ... should be student-centered," whereas the other was specific, suggesting that courses in computer process skills be regularly offered.

The final comment takes us from the university into the wider world of the community and the school:

> Racism should be ... addressed at the community level ... the Native people first have to focus on ... how racist we are toward other groups and from there ... how other groups are racist to us ... at my school you hear a lot of racist remarks ... it comes right from the home.

General Comments

The transcript gives the general impression that the participants were for the most part open. However, as one member said, "I find [it] difficult ... to talk about the weaknesses of NITEP ... it's ... like saying something bad about your mother."

Because many First Nations students are older than the average, factors such as leaving their families, financial pressures, and so forth may weigh more heavily on them than on many non-First Nations students. In addition, problems may be caused by the First Nations student's need to fulfil ritual or spiritual duties, other family obligations, and so forth.

In the participants' discussion one factor often leads to another; this is probably not solely a product of the participants' thought processes, but also a reflection of the real-life chain of events. For instance, for one person the decision to relocate to Vancouver and to attend UBC led to nuclear family separation and then to financial difficulties, when the stress of separation became too much to bear for herself and her child. Consequences of decisions are important factors in success.

To what extent are the barriers and difficulties discussed a function of individual, discipline-based and/or institutional racism? In some of the examples it is clear that racism is the major factor, whereas in others the picture is more obscure. For example, is a principal who refuses a key to the school to a First Nations student acting out of racial prejudice, or is the major factor a personal policy extended to all student teachers (a prejudice against student teachers, perhaps)?

Focus Group Findings (Vancouver)

Individual contributions to focus group topic. It is important to find out whether any participant monopolized the talk or directed the topics. A rough measure can be had by looking at amount talked (i.e., number of words) and at the relative number of times an individual initiated a statement. For this group, the facilitator's total spoken input (direction, redirection, statement, query, etc.) was less than 1,000 words. The facili-

tator's role required her to initiate more statements than the others, but those statements were logistic (e.g., recognizing a speaker) and not strategic (e.g., directive of topic) except in the four cases when the focus group questions were restated. Table II.14 shows that all participants talked more than the facilitator.

This comparison tells us that the facilitator did not monopolize the talk and that there are no disproportionate differences between participants. Participant 6, for example, though he or she spoke the second least of all the others, initiated statements more than all but one other participant. This measure says nothing about value of a contribution: the participant who spoke the least was a pivotal speaker, and there was a qualitative difference in the nature of the interaction during his or her turn at talk.

Range of topic and explanations of context. Further analysis consisted of looking at the ranges of topics that were brought up in this group, with that range expressed in terms of a specific explanatory context. The mechanical means for doing this was to use the computer cut-and-paste program Textbase Alpha to mark topic changes on the transcript, to state the topic and to state what the larger context for that topic was. Then these were mechanically displayed and compared, so that generalizations could be made. Topical changes were plotted. The text was then read for observation of implicit topical projections. This is important because of the use of implication in First Nations protocols for polite discourse.

This may signal a fundamental difference between First Nations groups and other groups in both the conduct and analysis of focus groups. Focus groups are not meant to come to consensus, yet one discourse strategy in most First Nations cultures is to go to consensus, to find the level of generalization at which there is consensus in a discussing, sometimes dissenting, group. Disagreement is often signalled (a) by explicitly stating a superordinate context wherein there is agreement, thus putting a new perspective on that agreement; (b) by implying disagreement but not stating it as such; or (c) explicitly, with an expression of respect for another's viewpoint. *Explicit disagreement, although not unusual, is an extremely strong statement, and even when there is explicit disagreement there is the understanding of and respect for the other's autonomy of action. First Nations discourse is oriented toward "mutual thinking."*

Table II.14

	Amount Spoken	*Number of Statements Initiated*
Facilitator	100%	36
Participant 1	324%	9
Participant 3	324%	7
Participant 4	316%	9
Participant 5	223%	7
Participant 6	164%	10
Participant 7	152%	4

There was no explicit disagreement between participants in the focus group. There were implicit disagreements that had the effect of contributing to a level of generalization whereby a consensual statement could be made from the total. An example follows in response to a query about the relationship between study at UBC and subsequent career experience.

1. A first participant made a positive statement about the teaching practica in NITEP and subsequent classroom management.
2. Another participant focused explicitly on the lack of practical application of courses that were supposed to have been practice-oriented (and we paraphrase the implicit meaning: "with respect, perhaps you should not imply that the courses really do prepare an individual well for work").
3. Yet another participant began by saying that university study, for him or her, was by definition not to be evaluated in terms of relationship to a career (an implied disagreement with the other two speakers); then described a number of courses that had been foundational to his or her own career practice (i.e., logically inconsistent, but validating the first speaker), followed by examples of how real career preparation comes on the job and has only the most tangential relationship to university training (a validation of the second speaker), and ending with the encompassing statement that scholarship and love of learning—personal characteristics—are common to both the university experience and career growth.
4. A consensual statement was thus created, though not formally stated, and was affirmed by the whole group. The process of affirmation comes from the observation that subsequent discourse takes that statement as a premise: statements are made that affirm its validity by treating it as an a priori. This statement might be paraphrased or made explicit as follows.

   The university experience is a participatory one (i.e., not an "institution-client" relationship), and instead of looking at linear cause and effect (e.g., "the university prepared me") a person should look to personal characteristics, volition, and interaction (e.g., "I actively approached my field, in university and afterwards").

The point is that this is reached by a series of implicit disagreements that contribute to a consensual, though explicitly unstated, evolving (i.e., not "final") statement.

The Good and the Bad: How Do They Feel About UBC?

The facilitator opened the session as follows:

> Today we'll be hearing some of our memories that you had at UBC, good and bad, and talking about your education in general. To begin with, it's been said that many of the students have felt ambivalent at UBC, have felt educationally challenged, and have felt a certain amount of joy at attending here, but at the same time they've had some feelings of frustration and disappointment. I'd like to begin today by asking you to share with us any such feelings that you have, so that we can describe those feelings to

other people who come after you. If you'd like to talk about your feelings, at least as far as UBC is concerned ...

The seven graduate participants spoke in sequence but sometimes broke in to affirm, amplify, or validate another participant's statement. There was a remarkable consistency in response to this first query; all participants spoke of:

- their experience in terms of their own First Nations identity,
- individual identity as a member of a First Nations community, and
- the tension between, on the one hand First Nations identity, First Nations perspective, and First Nations authority; and on the other university orthodoxy, individual and institutional challenge to First Nations identity, and the exercise of racism.

This consistency of address was imposed neither by the facilitator's question nor by the sequence of responses (i.e., a first speaker's theme being taken up and amplified by the others), because some of those who spoke last had prepared their comments before the meeting began.

In this group the discussion was predominantly about racism and the memory of its experience on campus. However, that discussion was in the larger context of a generally positive assessment of the experience of having gone to UBC.

The topics discussed in the groups are listed below, in relation to its discourse context. The positive aspects of the participants' experiences at UBC were:

- Institutional climate in the context of support;
- NITEP in the context of support, relations with other-than-Education students, public perception, strengths in preparation for teaching, individual identity;
- Ts'kel Program in the context of support, entry and program choice/definition;
- Characteristics of First Nations scholars in the context of program choice in the subcontext of motivation for entry.

The contexts in which racism was mentioned or discussed included:

- Racism in the context of the individual's experience in counseling prior to entry; the K-12 system generally and the need for programmatic change in education; the definition of issues within academic traditions, instructor-student interaction;
- Instructor-student interaction in the subcontext of lecturing, interpretation, and validation of "legitimacy"; evaluation of student performance; instruction in the subcontext of textbooks, exams, sexism, classism in allocation function of educational system, institutional climate, and interpersonal relationships within a profession.
- The nature of racism (i.e., covert, subtle) in the context of instructor authority; interpersonal interaction; personal predispositions of instructors; the "authority" of the disciplines of anthropology and English; and institutional climate and institutional policy.

- Lack of respect in the context of authority and legitimacy of a perspective, especially First Nations, interpersonal interaction.

With a single exception, discussed in Part V, none of the specific examples of racism is provided here. Every participant brought his or her own responses to racism in the contexts noted above to the group discussion as examples of a major factor that, in retrospect, characterized the UBC experience. They expressed these things to each other as in a safe place. When the examples are isolated they appear to be just that, isolated incidents of discrimination, and this was manifestly not the intent of the participants. The only way to represent this section of response accurately would be to provide the total transcript of the focus group session.

We reiterate their statements: deeply discrediting perspectives, opinions, and stereotypes based on racial/cultural identity are common experiences of First Nations students before coming to UBC and at UBC. They range from interpersonal to institutional, and are particularly intractable when (a) they are subtle but inescapably there; (b) they discredit through appeal to an academic justification as though self-evident; (c) there is no avenue for speaking back or healing a situation.

The consensual statement may be stated this way:

> A First Nations person attending UBC has to deal with issues of individual identity vis-à-vis (a) the First Nations community of which they are a part, (b) the academic community, and (c) processes of legitimization of knowledge that both the academic and First Nations communities incorporate. Those processes may be generalized in macrosystemic terms, but they are acted out between people, face-to-face. Because of systemic racism, this can be a painful process. The pain is personal and individual, yet a shared phenomenon. The processes are effected in a social context in which the balance of "legitimacy" is accorded the "authority," the people with the power in this context, the instructors. The exercise of racism is personal and transpersonal as well: it is personal and individual at one level (i.e., perpetrated in individual action) and shared (i.e., its systemic pervasiveness may make well-meaning individuals unconsciously "racist."). First Nations students should be prepared to face this when they come to campus.

Preparation for career. The second question by the facilitator was: *I'd like now for you think about your experience at UBC in relationship to your job. How did UBC prepare you or not prepare you for the job you presently hold?*

Some responses to that question focused on venue, place, and atmosphere:

- NITEP in the context of practicum in the context of preparation for teaching (i.e., NITEP's more extensive practicum was seen as positive);
- "family" relationships in NITEP in the context of: field centres at NITEP in the context of: support in the context of: aspects of good preparation at university;

In other words, one good aspect of preparation was the First Nations community, the First Nations program, that created a good place to learn.

Participants brought up topics that focused on the areas where they did not feel that UBC had prepared them well:

- job stresses in the context of: lack of preparation at university;
- explaining goals and processes to First Nations parents in the context of: lack of preparation at university;
- "mainstream" educational theory in the context of poor preparation at university for First Nations educational venues;
- the social context of teaching in the context of things not covered in courses;
- intensification of responsibility focused on teachers in the context of things that university does not prepare one for;
- planning and administration in the context of misrepresentation of university course focus (i.e., "planning and administration" is really only "administration");
- misrepresentation of course focus in the context of community versus institutional concerns (i.e., institutional interests were in fact the focus);
- self-direction in definition of issues in the context of thesis work versus course work.

The building toward consensual statement here includes focus on the individual as agent in his or her own education, retrospectively evaluating course work, thesis work, and theory as deficient in certain contexts, particularly in the context of application to community realities.

One positive relationship made explicit was in the matter of the formal credential, related both to the information one has access to through university study and the formal credential that legitimates it:

- acquisition of specific information base in the context of acquisition of formal credential;
- formal credential in the context of confirmation of self-confidence;
- formal credential in the context of authority to "speak up," to speak out.

A consensual statement for this set of relationships might be that the acquisition of specific information, resulting in formal credentials, both confirms the individual's self-confidence and gives the authority to speak about such matters.

Positive relationships were drawn between university and career. The flow of discussion was as follows:

- curriculum and instruction courses in the context of things that made participant a good teacher;
- the study of curriculum theory in the context of things that made participant a good teacher;
- course work, the study of theory in the context of study of abstract things that prepare an individual to learn on the job;
- general curriculum preparation in course work in the context of preparation for adaptability to other kinds of work, even outside education;

- processes of discovery, information, in the context of transferability of information and skills to other areas (specifically in science and anthropology);
- research skills in the context of areas of good preparation at university;
- university work in the context of career orientation versus scholarship orientation;
- applied work in the field in the context of the application of theory to the process of working for constructive change in the field;
- usefulness of possible course in critical thinking in the context of institutional inertia and change.

This discussion was used as an example of building to consensus as discussed earlier. This collection of topics represents part of the building to consensus. What it leaves out is the place of the individual in making a continuing education. The participants are building to a statement that all of the UBC experience, if a person has been proactive and engaged in learning, can form a basis for continued learning.

The final summary statement adds to this: *Adaptability of general knowledge, theory to articulating a First Nations perspective on issues, in the context of synthesis of traditional knowledge with university knowledge, in the further context of individual and societal change.*

And then *confidence* was invoked again to point back to the individual. The participants are collectively speaking back: the place that UBC has in preparation is not one of linear causality ("UBC gave me the following ..."), but a richly contextual, holistic statement: "At UBC I became engaged in a specific inquiry, a critical process of reflection, assessment, self-objectification, and the acquisition of skills. I continue that now and can describe it holistically, not in terms of 'factors'."

Recommendations for change

A third question addressed by the group was: *What changes would you like to see made, in order to make UBC a better working place, with better experiences for future First Nations students?*

The recommendations of the participants must be read in the context of all the foregoing.

Support for students

- emphasis on counseling services "to take away pain," to help students do what they can to survive (e.g., existing peer support programs to deal with culture shock are a good idea);
- make students aware that First Nations House of Learning is not just for education students.

Preparation of students for learning and for survival

- preparation of future students in home communities before they come to UBC;
- the nature of the latent racism at UBC;

- notice that UBC is a highly secularized environment where talk about love and respect is not legitimated, but rather is a place where ideas are objectified and analyzed;
- notice that UBC is (in First Nations terms) a secularized, out-of-balance system;
- introduction to instrumental enrichment learning, thinking about thinking, in an effort to get away from the cut-and-dried presentation of "material" and "information" presented as authoritative statement;
- general introduction to linguistics in order to see the structure of English, in order to understand Western society; to objectify "reserve" English;
- objectify Western learning styles so people understand them;
- provide study, research skills during first three months in a program;
- teach writing skills at all levels, in connection with reading;
- encourage students to share their knowledge (i.e., not to be passive recipients of knowledge);

Institutional changes

- change institutional climate to deal with problems with racism;
- establish better links between colleges and university;
- establish better links with reserves;
- take advantage of distance education delivery;
- enter partnerships with open learning agencies;
- provide day care facilities for children on campus because concern for children weighs so heavy on the minds of student parents;
- better provision of supplementary funding through Canada Student Loans;
- appoint more First Nations professors on staff, especially in the fields of sociology and anthropology;
- mandate First Nations staff in changing the nature of Native studies, which is still articulated from an outdated European point of view;
- mandate First Nations staff to teach about racism;

UBC and personal changes

The last question that had been formally prepared was: Would you like to share some of your feelings about the way that UBC influenced your feelings about yourself and your culture?

The participants did not spend much time on this question, but their responses were to the point. The consensual statement might be articulated as one of a dynamic between "challenge to" and "confirmation of" self, with First Nations identity an integral aspect of both challenge and confirmation. The challenge can be devastating.

The tenor of the challenge is exemplified in the way one participant began, "My first experience with UBC stunk!" He or she said that coming to UBC as a professional, a graduate student, was humiliating: it was a "debilitating experience," in that he or she was "patronized and criti-

cized" to the point where he or she "lost my bearings." The participant felt "silenced" through a "massive attack on self-esteem," that "everything I did was in some way poked at," that supposed deficiencies (e.g., the use of metaphor and others figures of speech in writing) were objectified by supposed mentors as being the product of an "oral culture."

The confirmation is a function of the support of, and reference to, a First Nations community of support. It comes through family, the First Nations family at First Nations House of Learning, and (this is implied) through the ancestors' strength. They said, "[I realized] I wasn't alone. That realization built my confidence. Now I can now speak out." The UBC experience "made me feel stronger about my culture." It gave strength to confront racism and courage to speak up in order to change things. One said that the UBC experience "directs me back to my community and to traditional teachings" and that he or she is now "feeling a lot better about being Indian."

One spoke of being an exemplar for his or her own children in the manner in which things are dealt with. Being physically distant from the accustomed spiritual support circle of home, the participant "developed the spiritual side of myself praying ... I had to learn to pray for myself. [Now] I still have to take it back to my family and community."

Some spoke of the UBC experience as a place where they learned about other cultures and "got rid of a lot of anti-white racism," learned to recognize racism in school. The personal experience of overcoming racism gave possible direction in overcome larger-scale, systemic racism.

What to do about racism

A final question was generated situationally by the facilitator, as appropriate the tenor of the afternoon's discussion: *When I look back at the notes I've written it seems that we've talked a lot about racism, so I want to pose a question here. How can we effect change in the faculty; how can we help students prepare to handle the kind of racism they'll face? I know that there aren't easy answers, but we have to start somewhere.*

The participants rapidly generated a series of suggestions, which appear in Part V as part of "Recommendations."

Telephone Interviews: Findings

Of the 12 people who were contacted for telephone interviews, successful connection was made with only five for formal interview. When asked about their best memories from UBC days the respondents included graduation itself as a best memory, excellent professors, helpful and supportive staff, the First Nations people they met at UBC, the support of people at NITEP people, and the unity of NITEP. Worst memories included adaptation to Vancouver after moving from a smaller locale, confrontation with a rude professor, another professor without empathy or understanding for personal trauma, and finding accommodation.

They reflected positively on NITEP's preparation: "NITEP helped me to be a good teacher"; and one person credits UBC's preparation for a position at a major Canadian university. They said, however, that UBC did not prepare them for working in band-operated schools and suggested better communication links be established between NITEP and the bands. Teacher education at UBC did not prepare them for teaching multigrades. One thought that there should be better preparation for dealing with "disclosure and abuse." Other recommendations for improvement included the suggestion that perhaps First Nations House of Learning should reach out more to other departments, that UBC should actively teach First Nations language, and that the focus of inquiry in academic study should be defined as a study of the relationship between practice and theory.

First Nations identity was reinforced in the support system of the family atmosphere among First Nations people at UBC. The UBC reinforced what one participant knew about his or her culture, and another said that, already strong in the culture, UBC had no influence in that area, either positive or negative. Another said that at UBC "I became more proud of who I am."

A Summary of the Findings

The summary of the UBC experience is organized as follows: first the process model is discussed, then the substantive areas (i.e., participant characteristics, their experiences at UBC, success factors, barriers and the employment/education relationship).

The process model. It appears that the process model as first used at UBC has some potential for revealing information about the substantive interests of the Ministry (the goals of the present study). However, low return rates, longer than usual return times, and the need for frequent personal contact to ensure returns are factors that should be taken into account in planning future applications of the process model. These may be a function of the particular characteristics of UBC; however, cross-validation is desirable before change in the process model is made. Other issues are discussed in Part V under "Issues, Reflections, and Recommendations."

The participants. Most of the questionnaire respondents had attended UBC during the past generation (i.e., the past 22 years); the majority were graduates of the Faculty of Education. Of the 111 diplomas and degrees represented in the group of 67 respondents, master's and doctoral degrees accounted for 25. About 70% of the respondents were women; the median age of all respondents was 40 years. They identified most closely with a large number of First Nations from across North America. Just under 40% were "competent" in a First Nations language.

About two thirds of the group had worked in a field related to the area of their university study. About one third were admitted as mature students; reasons for entering were about evenly divided between institu-

tional (e.g., program offered) and personal (e.g., desire to learn). The respondents' perceptions of their preparedness revealed strengths in English and reading, weakness in math, science, and second languages and intermediate levels in essay, exam, and study skills. About three quarters of the respondents found the application, admission, and registration procedures to be positive or neutral experiences: 23 participants mentioned "crucial" support they had received from NITEP or Ts"kel. About two thirds of the group felt that UBC had generally met their expectations.

Success factors. In response to two items about sources of support, the graduates saw a clear division between family, friends, and First Nations student services and other UBC and community services: of 137 named sources, 119 specifically focused on First Nations people, institutions, or UBC First Nations agencies (especially NITEP and Ts"kel, which appear to have impact beyond their program mandates). This perception is reinforced by the number of times First Nations student services were seen as facilitating or encouraging success. Non-First Nations services appear to be of limited impact as success factors. The focus group participants clarified this general statement: *The presence of First Nations teachers allows a more open educational climate,* as did the student seminars; the NITEP and House of Learning "families" functioned as a caring, loving support structure; the diversity among staff and students and the presence of Elders were also important, as was the practical support (e.g., tutoring) they provided.

It is clear from the questionnaire responses that the participants' First Nations cultures had a major impact on their UBC experiences, virtually all which was positive. The participants' cultures provided the imperative to choose programs, courses, and topics to actively ensure the presence of a First Nations perspective and to demonstrate the nature of First Nations culture and values. Their families and communities of origin gave them support, identity, values, determination, and commitment; on an individual level it gave them identity, power, a number of positive attitudes, and cognitive strengths. Being strong with a First Nations culture, then, constituted a major success factor for the questionnaire respondents.

Barriers. The first barrier may be the respondents' initial perceptions of the university: about 70% of the questionnaire respondents recalled their first few months at UBC in negative or neutral terms; about the same percentage of the adjectives they used to describe that experience were negative as well (e.g., *scary, lonely*). How serious a factor initial discomfort is must vary with the individual, but it appears that the majority of First Nations respondents do not feel positive in the first few months. Aspects of entry that the focus group participants mentioned included the shock of relocation from a rural First Nations setting to an urban white one. Relocation sometimes splits up families for months or years; the presence of one family member in university can cause difficulties at home that may be intractable.

A second barrier is lack of funding or inadequate levels of funding. Just under 80% of the questionnaire respondents reported "barely adequate" funding or below: most funding came from DIA or bands, and it was this funding that was seen as inadequate much of the time (two thirds as compared with about one quarter to one third for other funding sources). Irregularities in receiving promised monies in some cases added to the problem. The focus group participants reinforced this view; strategies to overcome the lack of money included selling a house on one person's home reserve and borrowing from others to make ends meet every month.

A major barrier discussed at length by the focus group participants was racism in various contexts and various forms. Some incidents took the form of belittling persons or cultures, some were depersonalizing incidents of tokenism and assuming that First Nations programs and achievements were inferior to those of the majority culture. The legacy of past discrimination and racism had present impact as well: aspects discussed by the focus groups included unrealistically low self-assessment and low self-esteem, genuinely low skill levels, emotional barriers, and lack of awareness of First Nations identity and issues.

Problems are often barriers to success: the questionnaire respondents included 170 problems or obstacles, 98 of which were some personal issue or characteristic (e.g., financial, emotional, identity problems, lack of skills). Most of the remaining obstacles were institutional (e.g., deficiencies in support services, poor teaching staff). A number of these obstacles may be related to specific First Nations factors; in addition, problems with racism, lack of respect for First Nations culture, and intolerance of traditional First Nations ways appear to have been factors in about 20% of the listed problems. Other responsibilities (e.g., family) may also serve as a barrier to success; over one half the respondents had such additions.

Negative perceptions of UBC as an institution constitute another potential barrier. The questionnaire respondents felt that on the whole UBC as an institution was somewhat more discouraging than encouraging; negative outweighed positive for general characteristics of the institution (e.g., impersonal, uncaring), for rules and regulations (e.g., inflexible), and some staff (e.g., totally negative, prejudiced). Although students of all cultures may share these feelings, many take on a special meaning in the First Nations context because of the history and present status of First Nations in Canada and may weigh more heavily than for the general population.

Education and employment. All but five of the questionnaire respondents reported no difficulty in finding employment, almost always in the field in which they had studied. (Of the five, one was specialized, one wished to work in a second field of specialization, and three experienced job dissatisfaction). In general, the respondents have broadened their work horizons within their field of training and/or have assumed progressively more responsibility in the field of training rather than changing fields.

Two thirds of the group are working in a First Nations context. Just under two thirds felt that UBC had generally prepared them well; another 15% had mixed feelings about quality of preparation. Negative comments tended to focus on the gap between preparation for work and the reality (e.g., in education, in community schools). The focus group participants concentrated on details of their university training including a number of perceived inadequacies and various "useful" aspects.

An outcome of the UBC experience that is likely to have both a direct and an indirect effect on employment is the impact of UBC on the graduates' First Nations identity. For 53 questionnaire respondents, this impact was positive, but not everything reflected positively on the institution. In response both to the nurturing milieu of the House of Learning and other First Nations programs and services (e.g., NITEP and Ts'kel), as well as to the negative factors often seen in the general university community, the graduates reported that First Nations identity and strength evolved progressively during the university years. The positive aspects confirm identity and legitimacy; the negative aspects challenge it and force resolution and firming of identity and power. Healing and the achievement of inner peace were additional aspects mentioned by focus group participants, as was the mending of family breaches.

Personal growth, another outcome of the UBC experience with both direct and indirect effects on employability, was revealed in a number of the questionnaire respondents' statements about UBC's influence. In a general way it can be seen as the result of focus on the individual as agent in his or her own education. For some their university experiences pervaded their whole lives; for others it broadened their perspectives and gave many specific skills. An aspect of personal growth is the graduates' ability to act as role models and to serve their communities (the one allows the other), which in turn increased the sense of personal strength and efficacy. Negative personal growth was rarely reported. The focus group participants discussed several aspects of personal growth (enhancing the whole person), including self-acceptance, increased power and strength, love of learning, and ability to meet challenges in private life.