

**NAVIGATING LANDSCAPES: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPECTATIONS
AND LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CANADIAN OUTDOOR RECREATION**

by

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You can't be outside without being part of the culture.

~ Ada (participant's first interview)

Abstract

To attract international students, Canadian universities promote safe and diverse cultural experiences and showcase Canada's outdoor environment, according to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (2015). Outdoor recreation may offer international students unique benefits in the adaptation across cultures as they transition to their new study environment. Cross-cultural transitions are associated with physical and mental stress, depression, anxiety, and a lack of sense of belonging (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Oberg, 1954; Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007), while participation in outdoor recreation is associated with physical and mental health well-being, reduced anxiety, increased social participation, and cultural exchange (Roe & Aspinall, 2011; Stodolska, 2015; Weng & Chiang, 2014). Drawing on interdisciplinary fields including international education, marketing, and sport sociology, and using a sequential qualitative dominant mixed methodology with survey participants ($n=47$) and three-stage guided walk participants ($n=7$), I address a main question: *How do international student expectations of the Canadian outdoors compare to their lived experiences in their first year at a university in Northern Ontario, Canada?* Findings suggest that participants had met and unmet expectations leading to positive experiences related to: (a) equipment and access, (b) sense of community, (c) English communication, and (d) learning about Canada; and negative experiences in: (a) finding partners, (b) cold weather, (c) safety, and (d) communicating with domestic students. Participants also had unanticipated experiences in the outdoors related to cultural differences and sense of well-being. In this dissertation, I also offer reflections on the findings situated in the current literature and advice on advancing the guided walk method for future researchers.

Acknowledgements

Early in this journey, I read a proverb that stayed with me:

If you want to go fast, go alone.

If you want to go far, go together.

I am grateful for how much of this work was inspired by togetherness. First, I acknowledge the honest reflections of the participants, Ada, Mo, Fon, Karim, Lina, Fannie, and Bohai, who helped shape this journey. Second, I appreciate the insights and contributions of my amazing committee. Dr. Maria Cantalini-Williams for your perspectives on international education and challenging me to think differently. Dr. Denyse Lafrance Horning for your down-to-earth logic and marketing lens, and for being an inspiring role model in the academic-parenthood-sport-life balance. Dr. Tara-Lynn Scheffel, I appreciated every moment that you encouraged me to dig deeper with a qualitative lens and incorporate ‘me’ into this creative and very personal journey. Dr. Callie Mady, you were the first person I met when I started my PhD and I liked your style the moment I met you: supportive, matter-of-fact, and encouraging me to think and grow beyond my comfort zone. I am proud of this work, and it is stronger because of you: *together, we went far!*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: STARTING THE JOURNEY

“Many people find that in learning about the natural world, they learn more about themselves.

Let’s begin the adventure”

(Claire Walker Leslie, 2015, p. 10).

Like setting off on an outdoor adventure, this research journey begins. This is a journey with international students in Northern Ontario, Canada, and a story of their expectations and experiences of Canadian outdoor recreation. Canadian universities recruit students from across the globe to diversify their campuses, foster intercultural competency, and increase university revenue (Universities Canada, 2014). To attract students, Canadian universities promote safe and diverse cultural experiences, showcasing Canada’s beautiful and natural environment, according to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (2015). International students appreciate opportunities to experience Canada’s natural environment through abundant activities, open spaces, and unique outdoor winter opportunities (Brunette, 2009).

The outdoor environment can benefit both the recruitment and well-being of students, yet international student expectations and experiences of Canadian outdoor recreation remain largely unexplored in research. This area is worthy of further study, since satisfaction with experiences are driven by the fulfillment of expectations (Ahmed, 2006; Kuh, 2005), but for many students a negative gap exists between their expectations and experiences (Kuh, 2005). An understanding of international student expectations and experiences is important as numerous researchers have linked unmet expectations and negative initial experiences to poor student integration and attrition (Ishler & Upcraft, 2005; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Tinto, 1999). Further, spending time outdoors is also linked to improved physical and mental health (Duvall, 2011; Louv, 2008;

Weng & Chiang, 2014), reduced anxiety (Fox, 1999; Roe & Aspinall, 2011), and positive social and cross-cultural interactions (Godbey, 2003; Stodolska, 2015), all areas which could benefit the international student experience.

Grounded by my previous exploration of international students' use of physical activity in their transition to studies in Canada (Brunette, 2009), my current research has evolved through course work and discussions as part of Nipissing University's PhD program in Educational Sustainability. In this present study, I address a main question: *How do international student expectations of Canadian outdoor recreation compare to their lived experiences in their first year at a university in Northern Ontario, Canada?* As I navigate this question, I consider two sub-questions. First, *what are international student expectations of Canadian outdoor recreation at their time of arrival?* Second, *what are international student lived Canadian outdoor recreation experiences during their first year in Canada?*

Situating Myself and the Participants: The Paddlers

Like Leslie (2015) described, the more I learn about the world around me, the more I learn about myself. My previous experiences help to situate me in this research, and help ready me for this adventure. My understanding of the landscape of international student expectations and lived experiences builds from my own adventures as an international student in China and Ireland, and my time negotiating cross-cultural contexts as I worked and travelled through Australia, Iceland, India, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and other regions. In the early 2000s, as universities in Canada were increasingly welcoming international students, I joined a newly created university international department taking on a professional role of promoting Canadian education opportunities to students, parents, and education partners. For more than 11 years, and in over 20 countries, I participated in university fairs organized by Canadian Education Centers

and other education partners abroad, school visits, and Canadian embassy events, acting as the first point of contact for prospective international students. In my time spent in Canada, I was enthusiastic in my role of welcoming and advising students as they made transitions to a university in Northern Ontario. Part of my role was to create and distribute marketing material to help build expectations about student life in Canada, and to help plan Canadian cultural events including holiday dinners, ski trips, and opportunities for international students to engage in the community through sport and volunteer events. In my current professional role, I lead projects in student retention and sustainability at a university in Northern Ontario. I have less direct contact with international students, but I am now deeply entrenched in issues of student engagement and transitions, which broadens my understanding of this research context.

Clarifying Terms: The Map Legend

In my exploration, I clarify terms to map the outline of what my study includes and what will be left to explore in future studies. Clarifying these terms is akin to a legend on a map. Map legends define the meaning of the symbols used to describe the landscape on the map. In my legend, I use words with meanings that are specific to the context of my research landscape.

My study is focused on international students who are in their first semester of studies in Canada. By *international student*, I refer to a student who has temporarily left his or her own country for the purpose of university studies. I exclude immigrant and refugee students whose experiences may be distinct from those of international students. In the context of this study, I limit my focus to understanding the experiences of international students at a single mid-size university in Northern Ontario, Canada, with enrolment slightly less than 10,000 students. International students are diverse and each unique, coming from a wide range of regions, cultural backgrounds, home languages and prior educational experiences. I provide more details and data

about international students in Canada and in Ontario through the review of literature in Chapter 2, and more specific to the context of this study as I describe the participants in Chapter 5.

I use the term *outdoor recreation* to refer to non-competitive leisure activities set in a natural outdoor environment for individual purposes (Manning, 2011; Moore & Driver, 2005), including walking, hiking, canoeing, biking, swimming, or other recreational activities pursued for pleasure, fitness, stress-relief, social enjoyment, or environmental experience. Often, outdoor recreational pursuits include *physical activity*, a term used to refer to physical movement and energy expenditure through group and individual exercise pursuits, but excluding activity related to regular daily pursuits (e.g., studying or walking to class). When the outdoor recreation pursuit include a specific set of rules or in the spirit of competition against others, I use the term *sport*.

As I navigate through this research, I recognize that culture is a central concept. *Culture* is a fluid term that refers to a set of individual values, understandings, and worldviews that can differentiate one group from another (Hofstede, 1980). In my use of the word culture, I am not ignoring the many within group differences, but understand culture as an influence in the way a student sees, hears, and interprets the world, as well as interacts in it. My own way of seeing, hearing, interpreting, and interacting in the world is also influenced by my cultural values, understandings and worldviews, which, I acknowledge, may be different than that of the participants. Journeying across cultures for research necessitates a deep attention to culture as it relates to both shaping student expectations and lived experiences, and also shaping the research environment.

Navigating this Research Journey

Navigating this research journey is not dissimilar from navigating the Canadian landscape for the purpose of my own outdoor recreation, with time committed to preparing and

learning about the landscape, discovering new ideas and reflecting on my learnings. With this in mind, I trace a metaphor of a canoe trip as I detail my research journey. I agree with Henderson and Potter (2001) that “the canoe is still a magnificent way to explore most of Canada” (p. 228), and, to me, a magnificent way to help navigate this research process. I began to consider a metaphor for this research as I prepared for my research proposal. While I identified each section of the research process, I was struck by how much it was similar to the way that I prepare and execute a canoe trip. I am an avid canoer, and my time canoeing and in the wild, has been an important place for me to contemplate my research approach, design, and to reflect on my findings.

A metaphor can help shape the research story and design, as Campbell, Parr, and Richardson (2009) described, and help researchers situate themselves in relation to the research context. Campbell et al. (2009) located their identities through metaphors of storyteller, poet, and musician, while I express myself through the identity of an adventurer. In this journey, I consider myself akin to an adventurer in the stern of a canoe responsible for steering the course, just as I am responsible for mapping and navigating the theoretical and methodological boundaries of this journey with the participants. Wolf (2012) noted that “canoe trippers approach the wilderness journey in their own unique ways...the beauty of canoe tripping is that it reflects the style of the individual and no matter how you go about it, the rewards are rich” (p. 42). The time spent preparing for a journey helps set expectations about what lies ahead and experiencing the landscape directly with participants fosters a deeper understanding and lessons learned.

Like canoeing, I see the research journey as a partnership. In this partnership, I recognize the important role of the participants, the international students, as co-adventurers in this journey. The participants have two important roles in this mixed method research. First, like land

surveyors, the survey participants help provide a broad survey of the landscape aiming for breadth of understanding related to expectations. Second, the interview participants are like the co-paddlers who take the bow of a canoe. They experience the front waters first and help to guide the way. Raffan (2014) described a “symbiotic relationship between paddling partners, working together for a common purpose and facing challenges collectively,” which builds trust through a respect of the common experience (p. 21). The participants experience the landscape first, directly, and then offer their own interpretations to help guide my exploration.

My journey in this research landscape includes a literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, data analysis, ethical considerations, and findings. I begin with a review of literature to learn from the expeditions of other researchers, as I summarize in Chapter 2. Next, I consider my theoretical framework like a map of my chosen landscape, defining the borders of my worldview and providing important guidance in my journey. The boundaries of my map point to theoretical discourses related to student expectations and student lived experiences, as I explore in Chapter 3. I map my exploration of student expectations through Tinto’s (1999) model of student integration and Oliver’s (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, and consider cross-cultural lived experiences through Dewey’s (1938) theories of experience and Vygotsky’s (1986) sociocultural theory. I map the methodological route by exploring the theoretical foundations of van Manen’s (1990) interpretive phenomenology and Hofstede’s (2011) cultural value orientations.

In Chapter 4, I detail my methodological route, marking my desired way to navigate through this landscape, guided by a pragmatic qualitative dominant mixed methods approach (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The methods, or tools, of my exploration, which are comparable to my canoe and paddles, were chosen to best meet the needs

of navigating this landscape. I elaborate on my choice of mixed methodologies, which includes a survey to sequentially inform a three-stage guided walk interview process. As part of my commitment to respect this landscape and the participants, I also detail ethical considerations and protocols.

In Chapter 5, I present my findings by offering interpretations of the landscape, like shaping a campsite to best view and understand the land around me. The findings are divided into two main sections, with a broader consideration of the land provided through the survey data, and a deeper exploration presented through the analysis of the guided walk interviews.

Since no adventure is complete without sharing it, in Chapter 6, I share the story of my journey through a discussion of my findings and weaving these with related literature. Like sharing stories around the campfire, I also share implications of this work for future journeys and offer unanswered questions and reflections to continue to weave this story in new directions beyond the conclusion of this study. In Figure 1.1, I summarize the parallels of navigating a research journey and a canoe trip. In the next chapter, I explore deeper into the literature to understand the landscape from the perspectives of researchers who came before me.

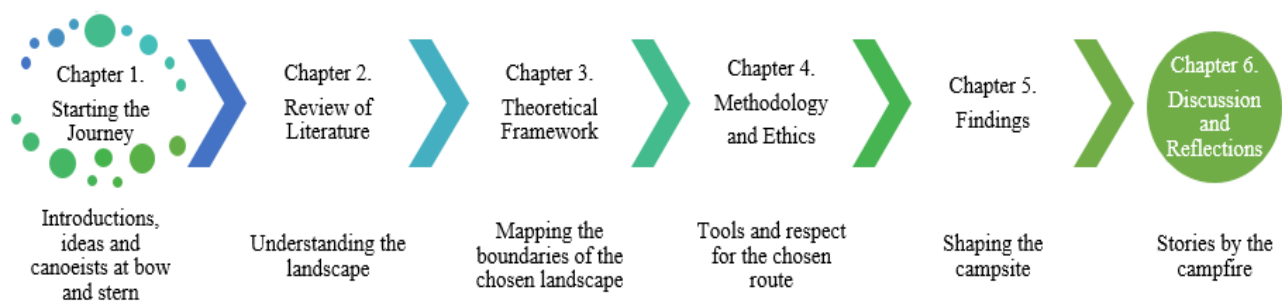


Figure 1.1 Parallels of the journey through a dissertation and canoe trip

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE

*“No person ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river
and she’s not the same person”
(proverb attributed to Greek philosopher Heraclitus).*

When I read Heraclitus’ proverb, I thought both of the adventurers and the researchers who travel a landscape before me (real and metaphorically) to help understand its context. I recognize that travels in similar landscapes can yield unique perspectives, as the landscape, like a river, continues to evolve and so do the experiences that help inform its understandings. The planning of a canoe trip begins with reviewing the stories of those who travelled the landscape before me. Their explorations and insights into the landscape provide important context that can offer a breadth of understanding about the area, the route, the participants, and spaces yet unexplored. My journey will be woven into these stories as I pick up on threads that are confirmed or disconfirmed in the unique context of my study and with the unique participants who help navigate this adventure. Understanding the richness of a landscape comes from examining it from diverse lenses.

In the metaphor of a canoe trip, considering the landscape from the points of view of a cartographer, a geologist, a biologist, a forester, or a physiologist, yields different, yet equally important, perspectives to understand the landscape. The unique perspectives of other researchers contribute to understanding international student expectations and experiences of Canadian outdoor recreation through a diverse, and interdisciplinary, exploration. My understanding of the landscape is also built on my own experiences as an international student and in outdoor recreation, which has shaped my research question and also draws my attention to

three areas that provide an interdisciplinary basis for my inquiry: international education, marketing, and sport sociology, as I illustrate in Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1. Situating my question. Interdisciplinary landscapes.

Situating this work in an interdisciplinary landscape, I draw on Aboelela et al.'s (2007) definition of interdisciplinary research as an integration of theoretical and methodological frameworks from different disciplines that combine diverse perspectives and skills through the research journey. International education is an interdisciplinary field that benefits from linking diverse perspectives, theories, units of analysis, policies and practices (Crossley, 2010). International education is the focal point of this research, which I link to the marketing of international education by Canadian universities, and the sport and social experiences of international students in the Canadian outdoors.

I consider the marketing literature related to international education by situating the development of student expectations as an important part of university recruitment of

international students. Canadian education marketing material is ripe with visions of students in pursuit of Canadian outdoor recreation, which brings me to the sport sociology literature. The tenet of sport sociology is that all studies related to sport should also consider the social implications of sport participation (Craig, 2016). From sport sociology, I link back to international education as I contemplate the meaning and potential benefit of outdoor recreation in the lived experiences of international students in Canada.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. First, I explore international students in Canada with a focus on: (a) international students in Ontario, (b) the Canadian education brand, (c) international student expectations, and (d) international student experiences. In the second section, I look to the outdoor recreation literature and concentrate on: (a) benefits of outdoor recreation, (b) cross-cultural perspectives of outdoor recreation, and (c) cross-cultural barriers to outdoor recreation. In these sections, I narrow my lens to the Canadian context as much as possible, and supplement with literature from global perspectives to offer relevant insights.

International Students in Canada

The most difficult adventures are the ones that are least familiar. As a canoeist, being unfamiliar with the landscape and the ways of navigating it brings a level of uncertainty. For international students, making the transition to Canada brings them to a landscape that is unfamiliar and uncertain, but they must navigate its complexities to succeed in the new environment. Magnussen (2012) noted that encounters with the unfamiliar are essential to human growth and transformation.

International student recruitment has been part of the internationalization of Canadian universities. According to Knight's (1994) foundational definition, "internationalization of higher education is the process of integrating an international dimension into the

teaching/learning, research and service functions of a university” (p. 3). The internationalization of Canadian universities offers many domestic benefits. Potter (2009) noted:

International education enhances Canada’s international presence by encouraging student mobility, fostering international cooperation in higher education and research, providing Canadians with international experience, creating forums for the exchange of ideas, and contributing to international development. The domestic impact of hosting foreign students is substantial in terms of both the economic benefits to the Canadian economy and the culturally enriching effect on Canadian society (p. 128).

As part of internationalization, international student enrolment in Canada increased 92% from 2008 to 2015, according to the Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE, 2016). In 2015, Canada attracted 353,570 students from 194 countries with the largest numbers of students arriving from East Asia (47%), South Asia (16%), Europe (9%), and the Middle East and North Africa (8%), and the largest enrolment growth from China and India (CBIE, 2016). International students account for 21% of the 1.7 million students studying at Canadian universities (Universities Canada, 2017a). The growth in international students is expected to continue, with the Advisory Panel on Canada’s International Education Strategy stating that doubling the number of international students in Canada is feasible by 2020 (Chakma, Bisson, Côté, Dodds, Smith & Wright, 2012).

International Students in Ontario

The Province of Ontario is home to 41.9% of the international students in Canada (111,171) at post-secondary institutions, secondary schools, and language schools, growing by 9.3% since 2007, contributing an economic benefit estimated at \$3.5 billion and 29,970 jobs

(Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, 2014). In 2015, Ontario universities welcomed 33,905 international students at the undergraduate level, according to the Council of Ontario Universities' Common University Data Ontario (CUDO) (2015). Within the province, most international students (44%) study in the Greater Toronto area, with the most students selecting University of Toronto (32%) or York University (12%) (CUDO, 2015).

Universities in Northern Ontario attract fewer international students. For example, Laurentian University attracted 1% (423 students) of the total international students studying in Ontario (CUDO, 2015). A summary of international students studying at the undergraduate (bachelor or professional 1st degree) level in Ontario is provide in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Bachelor degree seeking full-time international students (headcount) enrolled in Ontario (CUDO, 2015)

<u>University</u>	<u>Student Visa</u>	<u>As percentage of international students in Ontario</u>
Brock University	877	3%
Carleton University	2217	7%
Lakehead University	213	1%
Laurentian University	423	1%
McMaster University	1546	5%
Nipissing University	21	0%
OCAD University	332	1%
University of Ottawa	2403	7%
UOIT	512	2%
Queen's University	713	2%
Ryerson University	814	2%
Toronto	10864	32%
Trent University	437	1%
University of Waterloo	4121	12%
Western	2596	8%
Wilfrid Laurier University	699	2%
University of Windsor	902	3%
York University	4215	12%
	33905	

Total reported bachelor degree-seeking
international students in Ontario

Note: Algoma and Guelph data was not reported

The Greater Toronto area is able to attract high numbers of international students, even though these universities charge the highest international student tuitions fees in the province led by the University of Toronto at \$31,000-42,560 CAD, compared to Laurentian University's international tuition fees of \$20,378 (Universities Canada, 2017c). For every university in Ontario, tuition fees for international students significantly exceed domestic tuition (Universities Canada, 2017c), as summarized in Table 2.2. Above tuition fees, it is estimated that international students spend an additional \$30,000 CAD per year in Canada (Potter, 2009), contributing to both the university and surrounding community economy.

Table 2.2

Bachelor degree tuition range for full-time students enrolled in Ontario, in Canadian dollars (Universities Canada, 2017c)

<u>University</u>	<u>Canadian student tuition</u>	<u>International student tuition</u>
Algoma University	6143-6143	15952-15952
Brock University	6197-6378	22094-22094
Carleton University	6356-9691	23340-26799
Guelph	6172-6379	9730-20233
Lakehead University	5998-6267	20500-20500
Laurentian University	6042-6284	20378-20378
McMaster University	6329-6329	19238-23986
Nipissing University	6055-6055	19325-19325
OCAD University	6328-6389	18171-19167
University of Ottawa	6376-6376	25554-25554
UOIT	6328-6389	18171-19167
Queen's University	6385-6385	6385-6385
Ryerson University	6319-6400	18886-25636
Toronto	6400-11520	31000-42560
Trent University	6377-6408	18029-18832
University of Waterloo	6420-7800	24830-26210

Western	6338-6338	22004-24643
Wilfrid Laurier University	5958-6346	17339-21863
University of Windsor	6134-6134	19690-21500
York University	6408-6408	20632-21512

It is expected that the number of international students in Canada, and in Ontario, will continue to grow and diversity as 96% of Canadian universities indicate that internationalization is a priority in their planning, and 89% reported that over the last three years internationalization has increased in scope and pace, with growing priorities in China, Brazil, India, US, France, Mexico and Germany (Universities Canada, 2017b).

In the next section, I look to Canada's positioning as a global education brand, and then to the expectations and experiences of international students in the Canadian post-secondary landscape. To compare experiences in the Canadian context, I end this section by examining international student experiences in non-Canadian landscapes.

The Canadian Education Brand

When adventurers consider new experiences, they may be drawn to a particular location based on its unique attributes and the opportunities to explore the landscape in a way that appeals to their heart as an adventurer. Ewert, Gilbertson, Luo and Voight (2013) noted that adventurers are drawn to particular activities, like canoeing, based on their desired level of sensation-seeking from a particular landscape. In a sense, adventurers are looking to experience the landscape based on what they know of what it offers and how it best fits with their unique motivations to "produce an adventure experience that can be personally meaningful and unique to the individual" (Ewert, Gilbertson, Luo & Voight, 2013, p. 105). Adventurers go far and wide to seek appealing experiences, just as international students travel the globe seeking new educational destinations.

In an examination of internationalization and international students at Canadian university campuses, Chen (2008) found:

In the past decade, higher educational institutions have been looking for new markets to grow their enrolments, and increasingly they have applied marketing concepts, such as student market segmentation, institutional/country image, and positioning and branding, to compete in a global market for the recruitment of international students (p. 7).

Drawing on a marketing lens, a brand refers to a "name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers," as defined by the American Marketing Association (AMA) (2017). A brand helps universities communicate their unique advantages in comparison to other educational opportunities, especially in positioning their educational offering as something that is valuable to prospective students. De Chernatony and McDonald (2000) summarized that for a brand to be considered successful, its unique offering needs to appeal "in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added values which match their needs most closely" (p. 20). Universities need to clearly distinguish their unique selling proposition, such as their quality or value, to differentiate from other institutions and appeal to prospective student goals related to academic, career, social, or leisure activities (Lewison & Hawes, 2007).

There have been several historical and more current efforts to standardize and coordinate Canada's international education system at the federal level, as noted by Allison (2016), the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (2014), Chakma, Bisson, Côté, Dodds, Smith and Wright (2012), Jones (2009), Potter (2009), and Trilokekar and Kizilbash (2013). The Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (2014) and the

Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, led by Chakma, Bisson, Côté, Dodds, Smith and Wright (2012), pointed to the need for a coordinated long-term strategy that would refresh the Canadian education brand and set targets in attracting over 450,000 international students by 2020 (doubling the number of students registered in 2011).

Coordinating Canada's international education strategy is a difficult pursuit, as Jones (2009) and Trilokekar and Kizilbash (2013) described, since there is no federal jurisdiction over education (education is a provincial responsibility). However, recognizing the challenges of recruiting students in a competitive market, Canada set up a joint initiative between the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) to coordinate a Canada-wide education brand. The *Imagine Education au/in Canada* brand aimed to situate Canada as a destination where students can expect a high value, high quality, open, and supportive environment (CMEC, 2015). This branding positioned Canada as a "unique cultural experience in safe, diverse, and exceptionally beautiful surroundings" (CMEC, 2015, p. 15). This marked an attempt to showcase Canada's unique selling proposition through coordinated messaging about its differentiating characteristics to offer value to international students.

The Canadian education brand faces increasing global competition for students from Australia, United Kingdom, and the United States, while, at the same time, the brand struggles in defining itself as a destination beyond long winters and cold weather (Blanchfield, 2014; Trilokekar & Kizilbash, 2013). To counter this competition, the *Imagine Education au/in Canada* provided brand-use directives to encourage all Canadian universities to showcase diversity and prioritize the enjoyable outdoor environment in their marketing materials (CMEC, 2015). In February 2016, federal, provincial and territorial cooperation that led to the transition

to a new Canada-wide education brand, *EduCanada: A world of possibilities* to continue to promote world-class education opportunities in Canada (CMEC, 2016).

Canadian universities find advantages in using the natural landscape in the recruitment of international students who appreciate Canada's abundance of outdoor spaces and activities, and opportunities to experience winter recreation (Brunette, 2009). A review of Canadian university websites revealed that the outdoor environment is often highlighted, including Brock's (2016) "vibrant region with beautiful natural surroundings" (para. 2), Carleton's (2016) "park-like greenery, and extensive walking and biking trails" (para. 3); Laurentian's (2016), "pristine nature" which is "nestled among five freshwater lakes on 765-acres" (para. 1); McMaster's (2016) "natural beauty and ecological and geological diversity" (para. 1); Nipissing's (2016) "picture-perfect landscape" (para. 1); and the University of Toronto's (2016) "beautiful green space" (para. 1).

Universities play a role in setting expectations through recruitment materials and descriptions of campus life. Images that students receive through print material and institutional websites can impact expectations and influence students' choice of institutions (Wilkins & Huisman, 2011). Like any business trying to sell a product, institutions aim to create expectations that will attract consumers to experience their campuses. An institution needs to establish positive expectations about an educational and campus experience that stand out from tremendous domestic and foreign competition (Arambewela & Hall, 2009). Yet, beyond the objectives of the Canadian education brand, the choice to study abroad is a personal decision that is built on a set of expectations about academic, social, and cultural experiences, and related to longer-term goals (Tinto, 1999). Once the choice has been made, satisfaction with an educational experience is driven by the intensity and level of fulfillment of expectations (Ahmed, 2006; Kuh,

2005). In the next section, I journey through the literature to consider international student expectations.

Anticipating the Journey: International Student Expectations

The expectations of an adventurer set the tone for the journey. Expectations guide what to bring and which route to travel, and builds anticipation about the experiences to come. There are a variety of reasons that international students choose to study abroad. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013) listed preferred language of instruction, perception of educational quality, global educational rankings, fees and predicted return on investment, immigration and post-graduate work policies, admission criteria, geographical landscape, and culture, as the major influences in a student choice of study destination. Specific to the Canadian context, the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE, 2015) listed Canada's reputation of providing quality education, in a tolerant, open, and safe environment among the top reasons that international students choose Canada. Furthermore, Chen's (2008) study with 140 Asian international students studying at large universities in Toronto, revealed that international students expected Canada to be safe and multicultural, and provide a good environment for studies and high quality of life. Chen (2008) also found that information about Canadian education opportunities was easy to find online and that, comparatively, Canada offered lower costs of tuition and living expenses than other regions.

Understanding why students choose to study abroad is part of identifying what students expect from their experiences. The expectations about an educational experience abroad are shaped by various sources. In Ailes, Alvarado, Amundson, Bruchey, and Wheeler's (2015) qualitative examination of the expectations of nine first year students at Purdue University in the United States, they found that peers, family, media including movies, Facebook and television,

and employees of educational institutions can contribute to forming student expectations about an upcoming educational experience.

The work of Kuh (2005) is particularly useful in understanding student expectations. Kuh (2005) drew on 25 years of research and consultations related to undergraduate student experiences in predominantly American colleges, along with an analysis of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the College Student Expectations Questionnaire, and found a definite, and negative, gap between student expectations and experiences. Kuh (2005) noted “what students actually do in the first year of college falls short of what they expected to do” (p. 89), including engaging less in co-curricular and campus recreation activities than they expected. This gap is important, since unmet expectations can lead to negative experiences. In Ahmed’s (2006) in-depth group interviews with 21 international students in Australia, he found that experiences that fail to meet student expectations drive student dissatisfaction and lower student engagement and could lead to a student’s complete withdrawal from the campus.

Student expectations also predict student behaviour and experiences. In focusing on the engagement of first year college students in the United States, Kuh (2005) noted that student expectations shape behaviour, which impacts both academic performance and social well-being. International student expectations shape their choice of institution, and then shape their behaviour and experiences at the institution. In the next section, I explore the landscape of international student experiences.

Complex Navigations: International Student Experiences

Expectations help set the tone for a journey, but it is the experiences, both positive and negative, that adventurers remember. An adventurer can research the lakes and rivers to create expectations about the journey ahead, but it is one’s own steps in the river and own experiences

that help define the landscape. My own experiences as an international student remind me that studying abroad is complex, requiring a navigation of an unfamiliar campus, curriculum, and new explicit and implicit academic, social, and cultural rules.

International students can experience a range of emotions as they adapt to different stages of a cross-cultural transition. Oberg (1954) elaborated on the state of culture shock, which has been expanded on by others, including Pedersen and Brzeska (2011). As international students adapt to new cultural environments, they experience the first stage, a sense of euphoria with high (perhaps too high) expectations and excitement about their experiences in their new surroundings (Pedersen & Brzeska, 2011). In the second stage, frustration and disappointment may ensue as they adjust to the realities and must recover, in stage three, by learning more about the environment (Pedersen & Brzeska, 2011). In the final, fourth, stage international students feel better adapted in the new environment as they accept some of the new environment but also are able to maintain some of their home cultural values (Pedersen & Brzeska, 2011).

The stages of cultural shock are not linear, and all international students experience the cultural transitional uniquely, however for many the cross-cultural transition is challenging. Watt and Roessingh (2001) established that international student rates of retention (or their continued presence in the following year of their academic studies) are lower than domestic student retention rates, which can be attributed to the numerous challenges of cross-cultural transitions. In this section, I look to the literature to understand international student experiences outside of the classroom, first, (a) in the Canadian landscape, and, then turn to (b) the non-Canadian landscape.

International students in the Canadian landscape. In studies within the Canadian university context, participants described mixed experiences with issues related to: (a) linguistic and social challenges, and (b) financial and post-graduation challenges.

Linguistic and social challenges. For many international students, making the transition to Canada requires them to study in a non-first language. Zhang and Zhou's (2010) mixed method study at a Canadian university in Ontario revealed that participants experienced difficulties communicating in English and finding native English speaking friends. They found that Chinese international students who did make friends with native English speakers reported higher levels of satisfaction with their studies (Zhang & Zhou, 2010). Competency and confidence in English skills helped students adapt to their new study environment (Zhang & Zhou, 2010). In Kuo and Roysircar's (2004) study with 506 students of Chinese descent in an urban area of Ontario, they found that higher English competency was associated with less stress in adapting to the new culture. Developing social relationships was especially important and linked to more positive experiences (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004).

The transition to Canada can be a lonely experience for international students. In a mixed method study, Zhou and Zhang (2014) surveyed 77 international students from various nationalities and followed up with focus group discussions with 18 international students. They concluded that just over half of the students (55%) were satisfied with their experiences at a Canadian university, but that many students were uncomfortable with the level of independence required in Canada and a general sense of loneliness and homesickness (Zhou & Zhang, 2014). Most students did not regularly pursue leisure activities with domestic students and had overall low levels of social integration with Canadian students due to different language backgrounds and unfamiliarity with the Canadian environment (Zhou & Zhang, 2014).

In Houshmand, Spanierman and Tafarodi's (2014) in depth interviews with Asian international students at one Canadian university, participants described difficult social experiences including feeling excluded, avoided, insulted and ridiculed, rendered invisible or that their cultural values were completely disregarded, even though they had a desire to have meaningful interactions with their Canadian peers. Houshmand et al. (2014) found that students coped with these macroaggressions by turning to peers who shared their own cultural values or other non-domestic students for social networking.

The ability to make social connections is important for international students. Shifman, Moss, D'Andrade, Eichel, and Forrester (2012) surveyed 292 international students at a Canadian university in Ontario and determined that having "no one to participate with" was the most significant interpersonal barrier to participation in leisure physical recreation. Shifman et al. (2012) recommended that universities use recreation to foster positive experiences at the institution, as a way to help students adapt to the new campus, "develop a stronger sense of campus community, enhance their quality of life, and increase their satisfaction with their academic experience" (p. 11). In my previous qualitative study with Chinese international students at an Ontario, Canada, campus, I also heard participants express concern about their lack of belonging on campus, but some participants used physical activity as a way to reduce stress, make social connections, improve language skills, and learn about the Canadian environment (Brunette, 2009; Brunette, Lariviere, Schinke, Xiaoyan & Pickard, 2011).

Financial and post-graduation challenges. To add to the linguistic and social barriers, international students face other issues including financial and post-graduation challenges. Calder et al.'s (2016) multiple mixed method study with international students at a university in Western Canada, revealed several financial-related challenges such as affordable housing and

cost of living. The financial issues in this case were especially important since these international students lacked social support due to the great distance between them and their friends and family (Calder et al., 2016). The challenges of the international student experience can also extend beyond graduation. Scott, Safdar, Trilokekar, and El Masri's (2015) qualitative study in the Ontario context revealed that linguistic challenges are still present after graduation making it difficult for international students to make transitions and social connections. In the next section, I explore beyond the Canadian landscape to learn from the experiences of international students in other contexts.

International students in the non-Canadian landscape. Beyond the Canadian landscape, several researchers have attempted to understand international student experiences. Drawing on the global literature related to cross-cultural transitions, experiencing new cultures can lead to physical, mental, and social stress (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Oberg, 1954), depression, anxiety, and social distance (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007), and difficulty in navigating social relationships with domestic people (Walseth, 2006). In this section, I present an examination of international student experiences in Canada's top three competing markets, (a) Australia, (b) United Kingdom, and (c) United States. A summary of international student enrolment in these regions is offered in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3

International students by market: Canada and the top international education destinations

<u>Destination</u> <u>Country</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>International Students as a</u> <u>Percentage of Total Students</u>
Canada	353,570 (CBIE, 2016)	21% (Universities Canada, 2017a)

Australia	480,092 (Australian Government, 2017a)	36% (Australian Education Network, 2017)
United Kingdom	127, 400 (UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2017)	46% (UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2017)
United States	1,043, 839 (Institute of International Education, 2017)	5% (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2016)

International students in Australia. Australia is a popular destination for international students with 480,092 students coming from abroad, which increased 15% between 2016 and 2017 (Australian Government, 2017a). This accounts for 36% of Australia's total student population (Australian Education Network, 2017). Australia's Council for International Education, formed in 2016, aims to continue its growth in international students through increased global presence and partnerships (Australian Government, 2017b). Where Australia differs from Canada, is that education is under federal jurisdiction, which shares responsibilities at the provincial level (Trilokekar & Kizilbash, 2013). Its primary action related to international education is the recruitment of international students, both in seeking international students to travel to Australia for studies, as well as building off-shore campuses and partnerships to offer Australian education in another country (Trilokekar & Kizilbash, 2013).

Studies in the Australian setting have pointed to some positive experiences, along with similar challenges observed in Canada related to linguistic and social relationship issues. Dalglish and Chan (2005), for example, pointed to the positive experiences observed through focus groups with 38 international students studying in Australia, including the opportunities to build new friendships and contacts, increase job prospects, and to take part in unique campus

experiences. However, in Campbell and Zeng's (2006) mixed methods study with 100 Chinese students in Australia, they noted that international students had difficulty blending into a new campus and generally defined life as less satisfying than domestic students.

Within the Australian context, Rosenthal, Russell, and Thomson (2008) surveyed 979 international students related to their health and well-being and revealed complex challenges driven particularly by language barriers, lack of physical health, and anxiety. Rosenthal et al. (2008) recommended that universities do more to support international student health outcomes in order to create the conditions for positive student experiences. In another Australian study, Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia (2008) completed 200 intensive qualitative interviews with international students and found that students reported feelings of loneliness and isolation as they settled into their new environments. The distance from support systems decreased students' confidence and led to increased stress and, in some cases, depression (Sawir et al., 2008). Many researchers have established that the cross-cultural experience is challenging, as detailed above, but Campbell and Zeng's (2006) mixed method study, as described above, found that games and sports allowed international students to better cope with symptoms of culture shock including homesickness and loneliness.

International students in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom hosts 127,400 international students, which makes up 46% of their total student population studying at the postgraduate level (UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2017). Studies in the UK pointed to several challenges related to the international student experience that were similar to the studies in the Canadian and Australia contexts including linguistic, social and financial challenges. However, in the UK studies, researchers also observed incidents of racism that contributed to significant emotional stress (Brown & Jones, 2013).

In Taha and Cox's (2016) mixed method study, which included a social network analysis using a questionnaire, classroom observation, and interviews with 33 students, they found that international students were able to build relationships and multiple support networks for advice and shared academic work. However, their choice of networks was preferential toward others who shared their language, culture, and nationality (Taha & Cox, 2016). Like studies in Canada and Australia, as described previously, students in the UK also experienced financial stress. Alloh, Tait, and Taylor's (2017) qualitative interviews with Nigerian international students revealed that financial resources are a continued challenge for students in the UK as students need to pay high tuition fees and living expenses.

Spencer-Oatey and Xiong (2006) completed questionnaires and interviews with Chinese students at a large British university, and found that the majority of participants valued the sociocultural adjustment, but had trouble integrating into their surroundings and experienced a "clash of values and lack of things in common" with British people (p.12). Brown and Jones' (2013) survey of 153 post-graduate international students in the UK reported incidents of racism and antipathy toward international students, which triggered emotional reactions including feelings of sadness, disappointment, homesickness, anger, and overall negative impressions of the host country.

International students in the United States. In 2016, the international student enrolment in the United States surpassed 1 million, growing by 7% to 1,043,839 students with the top 5 student origins being China, India, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Canada (Institute of International Education, 2017). International students represent 5% of the 20.5 million students studying at universities in the United States (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2016). The US draws the most international students of any country in the world, however, many

American universities are observing a drop in international student applications driven by the new policies and travel bans initiated under American President Donald Trump (Deruy, 2017; Downs, 2017). The Institute of International Education (2017) recorded 17,354 international students in the US who originated from countries impacted by a recent travel ban, mainly from Iran.

International students in the US face similar linguistic and social challenges as students in Canada, Australia, and also the added stress of racial discrimination felt by students in the UK. From a linguistic perspective, Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman (1988) found that the navigation of a new campus in the US is very complex for international students who study in a second or third language as they must master new ways of speaking, reading, and writing, along with making the transition to the new environment. Mori (2000) suggested that international students in the US have unique mental health concerns driven by language barriers, diverse base values and beliefs, and the stresses related to adapting to their new linguistic and cultural milieu. For international students, the persistent stress of the transition to the new study environment can lead to lack of sleep, energy and physical and cognitive issues (Mori, 2000). Yeh and Inose (2003) reinforced the mental health concerns of international students through their in-depth study with 359 international undergraduate and graduate students from Asia, Europe, Central and Latin America and Africa, in a large university in northeastern US. They found that international students experienced more psychological stress than American students, but that students who felt connected to social networks were more satisfied with their experience and better able to adapt to the cultural transition (Yeh & Inose, 2003).

Similar to studies completed in the UK, students in the US described experiences of separation and exclusion. In examining the adaptation of international students from 9 countries

to post-secondary studies in the US, Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) concluded that discrimination and feelings of exclusion contributed to the highest levels of acculturative stress, regardless of the students' gender or nationality. Sullivan and Kashubeck-West's (2015) qualitative study of international student experiences at a mid-Western university in the United States established that more social support and increased participation in campus activities helped decrease the stresses related to the cultural transition.

To summarize this section, in the Canadian context and other popular educational destinations including Australia, United Kingdom and United States, researchers have studied the numerous challenges of the international education experience. In all contexts, language, social and financial pressures are experienced as international students make cross-cultural transitions. In the United Kingdom and the United States, where there are the greatest percentages of international students, incidents of discrimination and racism have also been part of international student experiences. In the next section, I shift my interdisciplinary lens to focus on outdoor recreation, but return to an exploration of cultural experiences as I consider cross-cultural perspectives of outdoor recreation.

Outdoor Recreation in the Canadian Environment

Canadian outdoor writer, Kevin Callan (2006), described time in Ontario's Killarney Provincial Park this way: "just the sight and sound of a loon landing on the lake made me realize that part of the true essence of being out here, alone or not, is knowing that in Nature you're never alone" (p. 67). I appreciate Callan's (2006) upper casing of the word Nature, placing emphasis on it as a living presence. My own experience in the Canadian outdoors embraces the benefits and aliveness of the outdoor environment, a setting that encourages me to think, feel, and talk as I navigate by foot or canoe. Outdoor educators position outdoor recreation as a way to

get to know Canada, through experiencing its land, its people, and to interpret its heritage (Henderson & Potter, 2001). In the section which follows, I explore the, (a) benefits of outdoor recreation, and then offer (b) cross-cultural perspectives of outdoor recreation, and finally, (c) cross-cultural barriers to outdoor recreation.

Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

Canada's geographical breadth and four distinct seasons provide changing surroundings and "a diverse richness" in experiencing its landscape (Henderson & Potter, 2001, p. 232). In all seasons, Canadian outdoor recreation, including walking, hiking, biking, swimming, canoeing, skiing, snowboarding, and pond hockey, offers space for people to engage in pleasurable, fitness, stress-relief, social, and environmental experiences. Experiencing outdoor recreation offers participants leisure opportunities in non-competitive natural environments (Manning, 2011; Moore & Driver, 2005). Researchers have positioned participation in outdoor recreation as a way to improve physical and mental well-being (Duvall, 2011; Weng & Chiang, 2014), reduce anxiety and improve mood (Fox, 1999; Roe & Aspinall, 2011), increase social participation, self-esteem, opportunity for learning, and cultural exchange (Godbey, 2003; Stodolska, 2015; Wijndaele et al., 2007). Playing in the outdoors allows participants to experience the unexpected and overcome a level of unpredictability and risk which contributes to one's growth and learning (Magnussen, 2012).

Even just being near Nature is linked to higher overall life and employment satisfaction (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). In a study of 72 US undergraduate students, Tennessen and Cimprich (1995) found that students with dorm windows that faced natural landscapes had better performance scores on tests of attention than students with views of built, non-natural environments. In the next section, I explore cross-cultural perspectives of outdoor recreation with

a particular emphasis on the potential for outdoor recreation to alleviate some of the challenges of the cross-cultural transition.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives of Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation has been important in the way I connect to people and in developing my own understandings of new cultural environments. As a student in China, outdoor recreation helped me resolve some of my feelings of linguistic and cultural isolation. Through outdoor games of pick-up basketball at my university campus in China, I started to connect with other Chinese students. The court was an environment where I could put aside my struggle with learning Mandarin and I could get to know students by name. To me, they were no longer *the Chinese students* and to them I was no longer *dabizi* (a Chinese slang for foreigner meaning big nose); instead I learned their names and they got to know me as Michelle. Even after my time in China, I re-settled in Canada and hosted a Chinese homestay student and used outdoor recreation, specifically hiking and trail walks, to help us connect as she navigated the transition to student life in Canada.

My time abroad and with international students motivated my previous in-depth qualitative study of 14 Chinese students' use of physical activity in Canada (Brunette, 2009). Through semi-structured interviews set within a cross-cultural protocol, I observed students' appreciation of Canada's natural landscape and facilities which offered them more choices and convenience in accessing activities, greater space, and opportunities to experience winter sports including skiing and snowboarding (Brunette, 2009). Outdoor recreation in Canada helped these students participate in Canadian culture, as one participant in my previous study described, "I learned to snowboard in Canada and I loved it. I love the act itself... it feels like you are more involved in society" (Brunette, 2009, p. 59). As I consider the value of outdoor recreation for

international students, I also looked to formal programming like the Trent International Program (TIP) 4-day camp experience, founded by Jack Matthews, which includes recreation opportunities such as canoeing and hiking as part of a mandatory orientation for international students (Trent University, 2017).

When I consider the benefits of participation in outdoor recreation, I am struck by how much the benefits parallel the challenges of cross-cultural transitions. For example, cross-cultural transitions are associated with physical and mental stress (Oberg, 1954; Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987), while participation in outdoor recreation is associated with physical and mental health well-being (Duvall, 2011; Weng & Chiang, 2014). Cultural transitions are associated with depression and anxiety (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Searle & Ward, 1990), yet outdoor recreation has been linked to improved mental health, reduced anxiety and improved moods (Fox, 1999; Roe & Aspinall, 2011). Finally, adapting to new cultures is accompanied by difficulties in navigating social relationships and a lack of a sense of belonging (Brunette, 2009; Walseth, 2006), while outdoor recreation offers opportunities to increase social participation, self-esteem, and cultural exchange in a new community (Godbey, 2003; Stodolska, 2015; Wijndaele et al., 2007).

By contrasting the challenges of cultural transitions with the benefits of outdoor recreation, as summarized in Table 2.4, it is reasonable to consider the potential of the outdoor environment in supporting international students' transitions to the new cultural environments.

Table 2.4

Challenges of cultural transition compared to benefits of outdoor recreation

<u>Challenges of Cultural Transitions</u>	<u>Benefits of Outdoor Recreation</u>
Physical and mental stress (Oberg, 1954; Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987)	Physical and mental well-being (Duvall, 2011; Weng & Chiang, 2014)
Depression and anxiety (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007; Searle & Ward, 1990)	Reducing anxiety and improving mood (Fox, 1999; Roe & Aspinall, 2011)
Difficulty in navigating social relationships and belonging (Brunette, 2009; Walseth, 2006)	Increase social participation, self-esteem, and opportunity for learning and cultural exchange (Godbey, 2003; Stodolska, 2015; Wijndaele et al., 2007)

Participation in outdoor recreation encourages students to be physically active which offers many benefits. Haase, Steptoe, Sallis, and Wardle (2004) surveyed 19,298 university students in 23 countries and found that students who participated in physical activity experienced positive health benefits. However, they also observed low participation rates with 35% of male students and 53% of female students being defined as inactive by participating in no physical activity in the previous two weeks (Haase et al., 2004). There are many factors that contribute to decreased levels of physical activity in student populations but in the scope of this study, I focus on the cross-cultural barriers to outdoor recreation, as I explore in the next section.

Cross-cultural barriers to outdoor recreation. Despite the many established benefits of outdoor recreation, there are many cultural factors that can act as barriers to participation. Fabrizio and Neill (2005) made the connection between culture shock and outdoor recreation. They observed that outdoor programming created the same conditions of adaptation as cross-

cultural experiences, and noted that in both instances, participants must adapt to new cultural norms and expectations, along with physical, cognitive and social challenges (Fabrizio & Neill, 2005). As participants adapt to their new environment, cross-cultural or outdoors, they must begin to become more aware and reflective about their surroundings, and develop more culturally appropriate expectations, or they risk a complete withdrawal from the new environment (Fabrizio & Neill, 2005). Researchers have identified numerous cross-cultural barriers to physical activity participation in outdoor and indoor environments including social, linguistic, personal, and environmental barriers.

In a study in a Hispanic community in the United States, Amesty (2003) found that the lack of social support that some newcomers experienced was linked to lower levels of participation in physical recreation. A lack of knowledge of English, concerns for safety, and social isolation also contributed to lower participation (Amesty, 2003). Similarly, Eyler et al., (1998) hosted 10 focus group sessions of 8-10 minority women per session in the United States and found that concerns about safety and lack of social network were barriers to participation in recreation, as well as personal barriers such as a lack of time, motivation, and interest. Eyler et al., (1998) also pointed to numerous environmental barriers to participation including difficulties accessing activities due to costs or transportation, cultural and language issues and poor weather.

In a study of 323 university students in Spain, Gómez-López, Gallegos, and Extremera (2010) found that students described a lack of time, lack of interest/enjoyment, overall laziness, or lack of social support as the biggest obstacles to participating in recreation. Further, in my previous qualitative study of the physical activity patterns of international students at a Canadian university, interview data pointed to a lack of a sense of belonging, insufficient information

about types and access to physical activity opportunities as barriers to the international students' participation in physical activity and sport (Brunette, 2009).

In Purdie and Neill's (1999) exploration with 32 Japanese students who participated in outdoor recreation in Australia, they found that programming was often not conducive to culturally diverse participants. Through two questionnaires addressing self-concept and course evaluation, they noted that participants experienced language and cultural barriers and were generally uncomfortable in the natural environment and participating in activities like swimming (Purdie and Neill, 1999).

From a cross-cultural perspective, time spent outdoors, particularly for the purposes of physical activity, is beneficial, but students must overcome these many challenges to reap these benefits.

Concluding Thoughts: A Need for Further Exploration

This chapter began by considering the work of those who explored areas related to international students' experiences and their interactions with the outdoors before me. Their journeys are rich with detail to provide context related to the previous experiences of international students within the Canadian setting. Drawing on diverse interdisciplinary literature, I picked up their threads to weave to this current study to examine international student expectations and experiences of the Canadian outdoors specifically in the Northern Ontario context. Linking the international education literature to the sport sociology literature offers promise, as the challenges of the cross-cultural educational transition have the potential to be alleviated by the established benefits of outdoor recreation. In the next chapter, I further map the boundaries of this study. The review of literature helped me understand where others have been,

the focus on the theoretical framework, which comes next, will map where I am going and what will be left outside the borders of this study for others to explore.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: MAPPING THE BOUNDARIES

*“Navigation is the art of keeping track of where you are,
and of figuring out where you’re going”*

(Bill Mason, 1988, p. 110).

Navigating a canoe trip, as Mason (1988) described, requires a map of the landscape: what lies within the borders of the map define the areas that will be explored in the journey, and those areas that lie outside are beyond the scope and need to be explored in future adventures or by other explorers. The theoretical framework is like a map of my chosen research, defining the borders of my worldview and providing important guidance in this journey.

The boundaries of this research landscape are interdisciplinary in nature and include a map of three theoretical discourses related to: (a) student expectations, (b) student lived experiences, and (c) methodology. First, I map my exploration of student expectations through Tinto’s (1999) model of student integration and Oliver’s (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm. Second, I unearth theories related to lived experiences in cross-cultural environments through Dewey’s (1938) theories of experience and Vygotsky’s (1986) sociocultural theory. Third, I map theories that underpin the navigation of my methodological route, within an interpretivist paradigm, by exploring the theoretical foundations of van Manen’s (1990) interpretive phenomenology and Hofstede’s (2011) cultural value orientations. Together, the three theoretical discourses connect to form a theoretical framework that best suits this research landscape, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

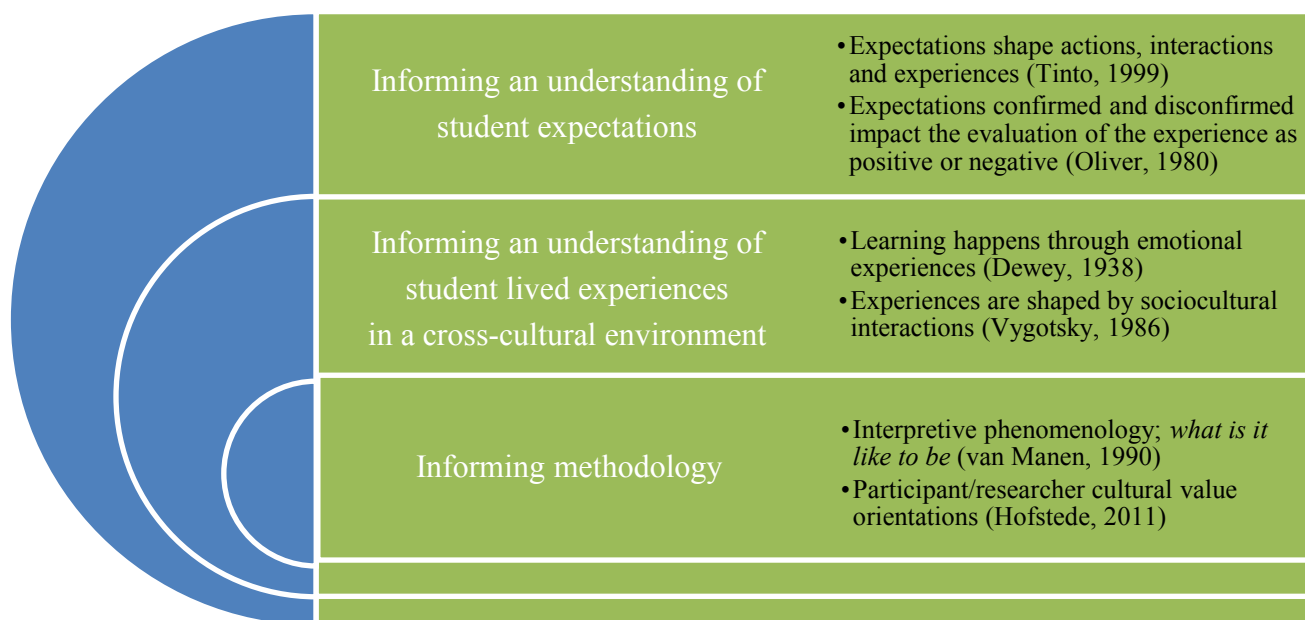


Figure 3.1. Theoretical framework: connecting theories to situate student expectations, experiences, and methodology.

Theories to Inform Student Expectations

In anticipating a canoe trip, what adventurers know about the landscape impacts what they expect about the journey ahead. The iconic paintings of the Canadian North by the Group of Seven artists inspired a 36-year journey by adventurers Jim and Sue Waddington, setting their expectations about their expeditions ahead and the landscapes that define Canada (Waddington and Waddington, 2016). The Group of Seven's "creative examples inspired generations of Canadians to make their own treks into the countryside and woods" (Waddington and Waddington, 2016, p. 14). Expectations set the tone for a journey, as expectations are either met or not in the actual experience. Callan (2008) put it this way, "most campers take months to prepare, researching the route, collecting the right gear... there is a huge buildup" (p. 11). In my

own outdoor recreation, when experiences were better or worse than I anticipated, I perceived the experience more or less favourably.

In this study, understanding student expectations is valuable in understanding their positive and negative experiences in outdoor recreation. To guide my exploration of international student expectations, I look to Oliver (1990) and Tinto (1999). Relevant to this study, Tinto (1999) illuminated how student expectations shape their actions and experiences in a post-secondary environment, and Oliver (1990) encouraged a focus on assessing gaps between student expectations and experiences.

Tinto's (1999) Model of Student Integration

An adventurer's expectations of the landscape influence how they will prepare and what they will do in that landscape. In this study, it is important to consider international student expectations and the way that those expectations shape their behaviour. For this purpose, I turn to Tinto (1975; 1993; 1997; 1999) who is influential in understanding expectations as part of the holistic student experience. Tinto's (1975) work is built on extensive reviews of the student success literature that influenced the theories he proposed in his later work. Particularly, Tinto's (1975) understanding of student experiences was an extension from Durkheim's (1951) theory of suicide, which conceived that the likelihood of suicide increases when an individual does not integrate in the wider social system. Applied to the post-secondary environment, Tinto (1975) believed that there are major risks for students who have unclear or unmet expectations that impede a student's ability to integrate in the campus.

The ability to integrate on the campus is a critical part of international student adjustment. Rienties, Beausaert, Grohnert, Niemantsverdriet and Kommers (2012) framed their study in Tinto's (1975) student integration theory, as they examined international student

integration in the Netherlands. Through their survey of 958 international students, they confirmed Tinto's theories and found that social support and interactions outside the academic environment are important in international students' adjustment to the campus (Rienties et al., 2012). Without clear expectations, the ability to integrate is difficult and can lead to negative experiences or student attrition. Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) found Tinto's work useful in understanding student perceptions of their experiences, though Guiffrida (2006) and Tierney (1992) criticized Tinto's work for its applicability to diverse student groups due to its basis on white, middle class, and traditional-age American student populations. However, Seidman (2005), noted that Tinto's (1997) work is valuable in considering the holistic experiences of culturally diverse students through focusing on student expectations, and by reflecting on campus integration as part of the holistic experience.

Tinto (2006) continued his exploration of the student retention literature for over 40 years, offering perspectives on how to engage and retain students. For Tinto (1999), expectations influence student actions and their overall involvement in the new environment. Tinto (1999) noted that expectations are part of the conditions which impact the experience of a student, along with advice, support, involvement, and the learning that occurs in the new environment. The conditions are interrelated with expectations shaping the rest of the experience. Relevant to this study, what students expect may impact the kind of networks that they build with other students, and the advice and support they seek in the new environment. Further, student expectations shape their involvement and overall evaluation of their experiences. Oliver (1980) more explicitly considers how expectations shape the evaluation of experiences as positive or negative, as I explore next.

Oliver's (1980) Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm

As we journey through a landscape, expectations shape our behaviour and what we do in that landscape, but it is in comparing our expectations against our experiences that we evaluate our experiences as positive or negative. Oliver's (1980) work helps extend from Tinto (1997) as I consider met and unmet expectations in the evaluation of student experiences. While Tinto (1997) provided valuable insights into the way expectations shape actions and experiences in a new educational environment, Oliver's (1980) work is useful in understanding the transactional relationship between expectations and experiences. In this section, I draw on the marketing literature and look to Oliver's (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm (EDP).

EDP is a marketing theory to understand how well expectations match the experience. Expectations are about anticipating the level of satisfaction to be gained from an experience (Oliver, 1980). In Oliver's (1980) EDP framework, positive experiences are those that confirm positive expectations or disconfirm negative expectations. On the other hand, negative experiences arise from the confirmation of negative expectations or in instances when positive expectations are disconfirmed (Oliver, 1980). In the context of this study, international student Canadian outdoor recreation experiences were assessed based on how the experience confirms or disconfirms expectations, to classify the experiences as positive or negative, as I discuss further along with the findings in Chapter 5.

According to Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006), EDP is "an appropriate means by which to investigate the relationship between student expectations and student satisfaction" (p. 256). They surveyed 55 students at a university in the United States using questions framed in EDP to measure student expectations compared to student satisfaction, and found that "the level

of expectation fulfillment or disconfirmation resulted in significant differences in levels of satisfaction” (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006, p. 258).

Arambewela, Hall, and Zuhair (2006) also applied Oliver’s (1980) EDP framework in a mixed method examination of the gaps between expectations and experiences of 31 Asian post-graduate students studying at Australian universities. They found that international student expectations of the university experience, and the quality of the services it provides, impacted the levels of satisfaction achieved through the experience. They recommended that student expectations “be carefully examined and analyzed in order to manage expectations” of international students from diverse cultural groups (Arambewela et al., 2006, p. 162). EDP was relevant to a higher education context as it provided a clear link between student expectations and satisfaction with the entire educational experience (Arambewela et al., 2006).

In Arambewela and Hall’s (2009) later work, they continued to frame their studies in Oliver’s (1980) EDP theory in their exploration of the international student satisfaction in Australia. Through their survey of 573 post-graduate international students, they concluded universities need to better manage international student expectations and consider cultural variations between expectations, finding that Indian students had the highest expectations but lowest levels of satisfaction, while Chinese students had the lowest expectations but higher levels of satisfaction with their experiences (Arambewela & Hall, 2009). The implications of Oliver’s (1980) work in my study included using a survey to assess student expectations at the time of arrival to then revisit, clarify and compare to the student experiences through the interviews. To further inform my understanding of student experiences, I turn to Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1986).

Theories to Inform Student Experiences

Experiences are personal and unique. I recognize, as Clandinin and Connelly (1994) did, that researching lived experience is complex since an understanding of experiences is based on what we, as researchers, choose as our research focus. In mapping theories to inform international student experiences, particularly in a cross-cultural context, I find the work of Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1978; 1986) insightful. While Tinto (1975) and Oliver (1980) noted that expectations shape experiences and the perceptions of the experience, Dewey (1938) linked emotional engagement as a way to assess the value of the experience, and Vygotsky (1986) added attention to social interactions as a basis of understanding experiences in a new environment.

Dewey's (1938) Theory of Experience

Some of the most memorable adventures are the ones that stir the greatest emotional responses: feelings of delight, awe, and achievement help situate the adventure in a positive light, while feelings of fear and anxiety generated more negative responses. To understand international student experiences, it is important to consider the meaning and emotional impacts of their experiences. For this I turn to Dewey's (1938) theory of experience, which is particularly relevant in understanding cross-cultural experiences. Dewey's (1938) theory of experience was built in the 1880s-1890s when Dewey was experiencing a world changing around him. New immigrants to America and the abolishment of the slave trade put issues of culture and diversity at the forefront (Ryan, 1998). For Dewey (1938), the campus environment was a space where students generated meaning about experiences in the institution and in the wider community.

Through a Deweyan lens, experiencing a new culture, as international students would experience in Canada, can create a new level of understanding about the students themselves and

their surroundings, which impacts their future experiences. Cross-cultural experiences can drive social interactions, new levels of tolerance, and knowledge about human nature, yet, for Dewey (1938), it is the level of “emotionally stirring” that creates the perception of experiences as positive or negative (p. 28). Dewey (1938) noted that the intensity of expectations (or how tightly the student held expectations) impacts the way an experience stirs an emotional and intellectual response.

Dewey’s (1938) concept of experiential learning is relevant to international student experiences in that students need to learn about appropriate actions and interactions in the new cross-cultural environment while being immersed in it. International student experiences in the Canadian outdoors may help students learn about Canadian culture by being immersed in it, and creating meaning from it. This is also one of the guiding principles of environmental education, as Baird (1991) described, in that more lasting and meaningful learning occurs as students participate in a natural environment and experience it directly. Greenwood (2014) put it this way, “as any good experiential education knows, Dewey was right: learning works best when the learning connects to lived experiences” (p. 14). Hammond (2013) also reaffirmed Dewey’s foundational contribution to understanding student experiences, particularly recognizing the importance of Dewey’s notion that “knowledge is based on the transaction between an active organism and its environment” (p. 606). The pragmatism of Dewey’s approach and his particular view of the nature of knowledge, according to Hammond (2013), is still appropriate and adaptable to help advance current research.

In applying the theoretical framework to my study, I included interview questions that assessed the emotional stirring that occurred through students confirmed and disconfirmed expectations and considered how international students learned about the Canadian environment

by being immersed in it. To examine culture in the context of this research, I consider the social and physical interactions that occur in new cultural milieus (e.g., interactions with other students, with the institution, or with the environment) through Vygotsky's (1986) sociocultural theory.

Vygotsky's (1978; 1986) Sociocultural Theory

Adventures can be shaped by interactions with others and with the environment. Co-paddlers on a canoe trip help provide context about the new environment, and the contact with the environment helps adventurers learn more about it. Vygotsky (1986) theorized that learning occurs through interactions in a social environment, and these interactions are guided by individual cultural beliefs and values. I extend Vygotsky's (1986) work to this study, by considering that international student experiences in the Canadian context are guided by their interpretations of the unfamiliar environment. As students become familiar with a new culture through their interactions in the cultural environment, they begin to build cross-cultural competencies, as Brown (2009) described, which continue to guide their actions and shape their experiences.

As international students experience life in Canada, Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development points to the difference between international students current level of social and intellectual development at the time of arrival, and the potential development that can occur as students interact in the new cultural environment, guided by peers, professors, and others in the new environment. Ryan and Viete (2009) turned to Vygotsky (1934) in understanding international student experiences in Australia, noting that social interactions can foster participation in new environments, but international student experiences are impacted, and limited, when students are unable to form meaningful social connections. Particularly important for Ryan and Viete (2009) was the link that Vygotsky made between language learning and

ability to interact in the new community, with international students finding difficulties negotiating the new social environment with native English speakers.

Vygotsky (1986) viewed language as a cultural artefact, a tool that can enable individuals' interaction with the world. Lantolf and Thorne (2000) used Vygotsky's (1986) sociocultural theory in the context of second language learning and explained that many learning experiences occur outside of a formal learning environment. The implication of Vygotsky's (1986) work in this study was to understand the meaningful experiences that occurred through interactions in the Canadian outdoors, along with the limitations in these interactions caused by linguistic, cultural, or other issues. In the next section, I look to methodologically-related theories to enlighten my own interactions with international student participants using theory to inform the tools that help navigate this study.

Theory to Inform Methodology

Choosing the right tools to explore depends on the landscape ahead. In this section, I look to theories that help map the boundaries of the methodology most appropriate for the goals of this study. Theory lays the foundation for a co-constructed and interpretive journey with international students to understand expectations and experiences with a level of both breadth and depth. Interpretations are a necessary part of this research, but framing the methodological route and method tools in theory supports trustworthiness and dependability in the data quality, reliability and credibility in the design quality (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

From a theoretical perspective, I frame my role as researcher and consider the importance of culture in this work. Culture refers to a set of individual values, understandings, and worldviews that can differentiate one group from another (Hofstede, 1980). I see the role of researcher, as van Manen (1990) did, as an active listener with a goal of supporting participants

in constructing the meaning of their experiences. The international students who participated in this study were like co-paddlers who take the bow of a canoe. They see the waters and landscape ahead first and with unique viewpoints. Through this study, the participants offered an interpretation of their experiences to help guide my exploration. I also placed importance on familiarizing myself with the cross-cultural context as part of the preparation for data collection, for which I looked to Hofstede (2011) to help to identify possible differences in the cultural understandings between myself and participants. The qualitative dominant mixed methodology route and supporting tools of this research journey are examined more deeply in Chapter 4.

van Manen's (1990) Interpretive Phenomenology

A desire to adventure deeply into a landscape requires carefully selected tools to help the adventurer best navigate and interpret their experiences. To understand the lived experiences of participants, I wondered, what is it like to be an international student experiencing Canadian outdoor recreation? I looked to van Manen's (1990) interpretive phenomenology to guide my journey. Evolving from the roots of phenomenology established by Husserl (1970) and Heidegger (1962), van Manen's (1990) interpretive phenomenology is a theory that helps to inform my methodological approach. Researchers have pointed to a lack of clarity in the usage of phenomenology, with some researchers using the term phenomenology to describe theory and others using it to describe methodology (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). To add clarity, my in-depth readings and discussions about phenomenology have led me to apply this definition: phenomenology is a theoretical approach that encourages researchers to be reflective, participant-centred, and committed to in-depth exploration, in order to interpret the human experience.

van Manen's (1990) interpretive approach is rooted in Heidegger's (1962) hermeneutic phenomenology in recognizing that the lived experience is inseparable from the social and cultural context that surrounds an individual. van Manen's (1990) interpretive phenomenology recognizes that the way a researcher interprets, imagines, and remembers the lived experiences described by participants helps give the experience essence and meaning. Epistemologically, I believe, as Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie's (2013) described, that the data I unearth will be grounded in my own interpretations of the interactions between myself, as researcher, and participants, creating a subjective reality. The way that I ask questions, follow up, and interpret themes are all built on my own subjectivity.

Researchers generally approach phenomenology from one of two camps, using either descriptive or interpretive phenomenological approaches in their work. However, Lopez and Willis (2004) criticized past researchers for not being clear about the type of phenomenological approach that they were using. Researchers who used Husserl's (1970) descriptive phenomenology approach placed importance on the researcher reducing or bracketing out personal (researcher) assumptions and experiences to be able to focus on the phenomenon at study. Though I appreciate the thick description offered in the first phenomenological camp, my own worldview supports the interpretive approach of the second camp. As a researcher, it is impossible, and undesirable, to re-present the lived experiences of participants without acknowledging that my own interpretations are part of the re-presentation. Like other researchers who have acknowledged the value, and need, of interpretations as part of the phenomenological tradition, such as Allen-Collinson (2009), Benner (1994), and Kimball and Freysinger (2003), I frame my research journey in interpretive phenomenology.

In approaching the study context, van Manen (1990) encouraged researchers to familiarize and orient themselves with the research area and participants. Having lived cross-cultural experiences personally, as an international student, and spending significant amounts of time with international students in my professional and social life, grounds some of my familiarity with the context. It was in considering van Manen's (1990) work that I decided on a mixed method design, which allowed me to orient myself with the research area and participants then explore with them in greater depth. The implications for my research design led to a sequential qualitative dominant mixed methodology using a survey to familiarize with the context of the participants, as described by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) and an in-depth and multiple (three-stage) interview process. In the next section, I move to Hofstede's work (1980) to draw attention to cultural diversity at the individual level and to continue to orient myself with possible differences in culture that can impact my interactions with participants, data collection and interpretation.

Hofstede's (2011) Cultural Dimensions Theory

Journeying across cultures in this research landscape necessitates a deep attention to culture as it relates to both shaping student expectations and experiences, and also shaping the research environment. Culture is a fluid term that refers to a set of individual values, understandings, and worldviews that can differentiate one group from another and can impact the way we experience and interact in the world (Hofstede, 1980). The value of Hofstede's work (1980; 1984; 2011) is in considering ways in which culturally diverse students, and myself as researcher, might view and experience the world and our unique roles in this research project.

Recognizing possible cultural differences is important as I try to understand participants and interpret this research context. I view Hofstede's (2011) six cultural dimensions as

continuums of diverse perspectives based on; (a) notions of individual or group (collective) responsibility; (b) comfort with ambiguity or uncertainty avoidance; (c) large or small power distance between leaders and followers; (d) pursuit of achievement and success or consensus and quality of life (described by Hofstede (2011) through a masculinity-femininity orientation); (e) long-term orientation and respect for history or short-term thinking and desire for immediate progress; and (f) free indulgence or social restraint. Student expectations of the formality of interviews, comfort with open ended questions, view of quality of experience and social interactions are shaped by where and how intensively they are located on the cultural continuums. These dimensions inform both the survey and interview questions and help inform the findings. Considering the individual/collective and power distance dimensions added to questions about the choice and roles partners in outdoor activities, and the ambiguity/uncertainty avoidance dimension made me consider how participants value and try new activities in new landscapes. As I considered the achievement/quality of life, time orientation, and freedom/restraint dimensions, I added questions to consider how participants valued their own well-being and fun in relation to the demands of their school work. In interviews, I also asked participants to reflect on their met or unmet expectations and lived experiences understanding that individual choices and satisfaction or dissatisfaction in a new environment are largely influenced by cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1984).

In my use of the word culture, I do not ignore the many within-group differences, but instead understand culture as an influence to the way a student, or I, see, hear, and interpret the world, as well as how we interact in it. I am careful in my use of Hofstede's (2011) work since I reject, like McSweeney (2002) did, the notion that one can accurately ascribe culture at a broad national level. I did anticipate wide within-citizenship and within-region differences and did not

attempt to impose a certain cultural value onto a student from a certain country. Instead, the implication of Hofstede's (2011) work was in helping me to prepare for cross-cultural interviews and to consider diversity in vantage points as I tried to understand and interpret student experiences.

As I detailed in the previous sections, the three theoretical discourses that I described, related to student expectations, student experiences, and methodology, have implications in the design of this study and moving into the data collection phases. A summary of the implication of each theory is offered in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Implication of Theories in the Research Design

Theory	Relation to Expectations and Experiences	Implications for this Study
Tinto's (1999) model of student integration	Expectations shape holistic student experiences	Consider expectations as part of the holistic student experience
Oliver (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm	Met or unmet expectations lead to perceived positive or negative experiences	Assess expectations at the onset of the research to compare for gaps in experiences
Dewey's (1938) theories of experience	Intensity and direction (i.e., positive/negative) of emotional stirring impacts value of experience	Assess intensity of emotions that accompany the expectations and perceptions of experiences
Vygotsky's (1978; 1986) sociocultural theory	Experiences are shaped by social interactions; meaningful experiences are shaped in and through non-formal environments	Assess the social interactions and meaningful experiences that occur in and through outdoor recreation
van Manen's (1990) interpretive phenomenology	Participant and researcher interpretations of experiences, together, shape the study	In-depth and multiple interviews are required to understand what it is like to be an international student
Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions	Culture impacts expectations, experiences, and researcher-participant interactions	Consider cultural differences through the research design, interviews, and interpretation phases

Map in Hand: Chapter Summary

Mapping the chosen landscape allows me to define the borders of my own worldview while adding important guidance for this journey. In this chapter, I mapped the theories of Tinto (1999) and Oliver (1980) considering the impact of student expectations on their behaviours in the new environment and on shaping their perceptions of the experience as positive or negative. I added the work of Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1978; 1986) to inform an understanding of student lived experiences in a cross-cultural environment. Finally, van Manen (1990) and Hofstede (2011) shaped the development of the theoretical framework that is most appropriate to inform the methodology that will help me journey through this landscape. These theoretical discourses are foundational in this journey helping me understand the international student expectations and experiences of Canadian outdoor recreation, and tracing the route to the chosen methodology. This chapter defined the borders of this research landscape and from here, with map in hand, I move to describe the tools I used to navigate this landscape by describing the research methods in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND ETHICS: RESPECTING THE CHOSEN ROUTE

“The canoe is not a lifeless, inanimate object; it feels very much alive... The behavior and temperament of the canoe is dependent on the elements... the canoeist must take the canoe where he or she wants it to go”
(Bill Mason, 1995, p. 5).

An adventurer looks to a map and defines where to go, then considers the right tools for the journey. A canoe and paddle serve well to navigating long journeys in flat waters, while being a flexible mode of transportation as a canoeist can carry it and portage around obstacles. The canoe also links two partners and allows them to navigate together while each having a unique role in contributing to the journey. The person at the stern must steer and respond to the elements, as Mason (1995) described, and the person in the bow experiences the waters head on offering unique perspectives of the experience. In this chapter, I consider the methodology and ethical considerations used to navigate this study. The chapter is divided into three sections. First, I describe the use of the qualitative dominant mixed methodology, which includes: (a) the quantitative survey and (b) the qualitative three-stage outdoor guided walk interviews. Second, I describe the data analysis process. Finally, I share my commitment to respecting this research landscape and its participants by describing the ethical considerations.

Qualitative Dominant Mixed Methodology

On a canoe trip, tools include a canoe and paddles to navigate the journey. For this research journey, my tools included a survey to learn more about the broad landscape, and guided walk interviews to seek greater depth. The strength of the survey was garnering viewpoints from a wider population, while the in-depth interviews encouraged deeper and open inquiry (Blair, Czaja, & Blair, 2013). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) emphasized that “in the

study of experience, it is the researcher's intentionality that defines the starting and stopping points" (p. 416). I chose mixed methodology intentionally to combine elements from both quantitative and qualitative traditions for a methodology that best suits this research landscape (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative tools offers four benefits, described by Bryman (2006): (a) supporting credibility in observations; (b) drawing on the strengths of two approaches to offset some of the potential weaknesses inherent in a singular approach; (c) deepening the understanding of the research context and; (d) illustrating, confirming, or enhancing findings.

My methodology is grounded in the theoretical foundations of van Manen's (1990) interpretive phenomenology, as I described in Chapter 3, guiding me, as researcher, to familiarize myself with the study context and participants to allow participants to co-construct the meaning of what it is like to be an international student with expectations and experiences of outdoor recreation in Canada. van Manen's (1990) interpretive phenomenology helped frame the qualitative dominant mixed methodology, which I describe in this section. Mixed methodology can help in assessing expectations and lived experiences, which is challenging since participants need to both remember prior expectations and at the same time try to evaluate if and how their expectations were met (Appleton-Knapp & Krentler, 2006). Hawkins and Hastie (1990) suggested that hindsight bias limits individual recollections since experiences can impact the way expectations are remembered. Mixing methods allowed ongoing assessment of expectations in relation to satisfaction with experiences, as Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) recommended, instead of assessing experiences at a singular point in time.

Using a quantitative method at the onset of the data collection can glean insights about the context of the participants (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007), and can inform the

qualitative stages (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). A qualitative method allowed me to explore expectations and experiences in greater depth and clarify themes at various points in time. Leading into data analysis, from an axiological perspective, mixed methodology encouraged my own on-going interpretation of the data as I corroborated the findings (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

My exploration was guided by a pragmatic qualitative dominant mixed methodology as I sought holistic interpretations of the landscape (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Specifically, a quantitative survey helped glean perspectives of international student expectations which were clarified, revisited, and reflected on as part of the three-stage guided walk interview process, as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

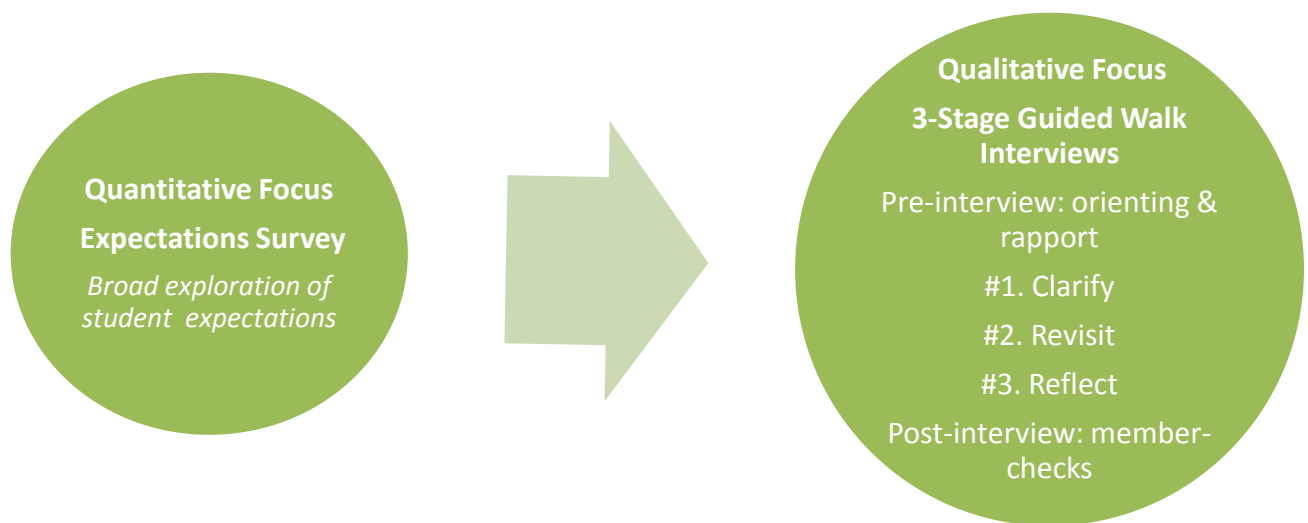


Figure 4.1. Sequential informing qualitative dominant mixed methods

Quantitative Tool: Survey

A survey of the landscape provides a breadth of information about the landscape: elevations, water sources and highlights. Similarly, the quantitative survey is part of a sequential informing qualitative dominant mixed method approach, as Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) described, to collect a breadth of data and identify emerging themes to subsequently clarify

through the qualitative stages. This type of sequential analysis contributes to building construct validity as themes that are drawn from the quantitative analysis are elucidated in the qualitative analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In this section, I describe: (a) the survey questions and (b) the interaction with the survey population.

Survey questions. The survey questions were designed to illuminate a broad understanding of the landscape. I approached the survey design with attention to Andres' (2012) comment; "the art of survey research is the ability to shape value judgments into meaningful and powerful survey research design" (p. 11). With this in mind, I made informed judgments about the best survey design to inform the goals of this study and looked to the literature to develop focus areas related to international student expectations of outdoor recreation. The survey questions included demographic information and areas of focus. Demographic information included, (a) nationality, (b) academic level, (c) primary language of communication, and, (d) and number of years in Canada. The four areas of focus included, (a) level of interest in outdoor recreation, (b) information received through images of Canada, Canadian universities, and the particular university of study, (c) relevance of the outdoor environment as a decision factor for choosing Canada at a study destination, and (d) overall expectations about participating in outdoor recreation, including expected barriers to participation. A sample of the survey questions, by focus area, is summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Sample of Survey Questions Sorted by Area of Focus

<u>Interest in Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>Images of Outdoors</u>	<u>Decision Factors</u>	<u>Expectation of Experience and Barriers</u>
Before my arrival in Canada, I enjoyed outdoor recreation.	Images of Canada often include pictures of people participating in outdoor recreation.	Pictures and images of Canadian outdoor recreation encouraged me to study in Canada.	In my first semester at this university, I expect to participate in outdoor recreation.
In Canada, I am interested in participating in outdoor recreation.	Images of Canadian universities often include pictures of people participating in outdoor recreation.	Opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation encouraged me to study in Canada.	I have access to the equipment I need to participate in outdoor recreation in Canada.
			I expect that participating in outdoor recreation in Canada will contribute to a positive experience.
			I expect barriers to participating in outdoor recreation in Canada.

Before the distribution of the survey, a draft was critiqued by members of the dissertation committee for feedback and additional clarification. To ensure that the survey language and wording was appropriate, as Andres (2012) described, it was piloted by senior members of the university's English preparation program and pre-tested with a group of international students. The final draft was developed using an online Canadian survey tool, Fluid Survey, which offered the advantages of being environmentally sound and allowing participants to follow up with questions easily via email (Andres, 2012). A copy of the Online Survey Questions is provided in Appendix A.

Survey population. Through non-probability (non-random) sampling, all newly arrived international students ($n=47$) who participated in the university international orientation at one university in Northern Ontario were invited to participate in the survey in person during

international student orientation week activities, which were geared to undergraduates during the first two weeks of the Fall semester. A brief presentation was made at two international orientation events, including the international student barbecue and the academic orientation event, inviting all new international students to participate. Participants were encouraged to share the survey link with other international students in a snowball sampling technique (Noy, 2008). Allowing time for international students to complete the survey at an orientation session allowed me to answer questions and offer further clarifications. A summary of the participant recruitment timeline is offered in Appendix B, along with the survey recruitment script in Appendix C. The informed consent letter that preceded the survey is in Appendix D. All participants who indicated an interest in the follow up interviews by responding yes to survey question Q15 ($n=8$) were contacted with additional information about the guided walks, as per Appendix E. A description of the participants is available in Chapter 5.

Qualitative Tool: Guided Walks

Canoeing, of course, is not the only way to have an experiential experience in nature. A simple walk in nature can connect us with our environment. I am inspired by the proverb attributed to naturalist, John Muir (1918), “in every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.” I was interested in understanding and interpreting student expectations and experiences of the Canadian outdoors, but I also saw value in using the Canadian outdoors as a tool of my discovery. I also considered the Japanese concept of *shinrin-yoku*, translated as “forest bathing,” which points to the calming effect of walking in the woods (Leslie, 2005, p. 80). Considering the outdoor space important in the context of my research, I turned to a mobile research method in which interviews can occur over the course of a walk with participants. Sheller and Urry (2006) pointed to “the ‘mobile turn’ within the social sciences,” which includes

emergent mobile theories and methods (p. 207). Mobile methods, such as “walking with” participants, can enable complex connections between people, and between people and places (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 218). Through a mobile interview method, I aimed to create conditions for what Clandinin and Connelly (1994) described as a two-way conversation with participants, coming together to collaborate and tell a story. In this section, I describe the unique attributes and considerations in using the guided walk method including: (a) benefits, (b) use as a culturally sensitive approach, (c) logistics, (d) timeline, and (e) participant size.

Benefits of the guided walk. A guided walk can ease participants into interviews by building rapport and situating the importance of place in the conversation (Evans & Jones, 2011). Instead of a more traditional face-to-face seated interview, in a guided walk, I, as researcher, walked alongside a participant through the interview. As Ross, Renold, Holland, and Hillman (2009) described, “interactions that took place on the move were dynamic, characterized by a more free flowing dialogue, moving from topic to topic, returning to previous topics, allowing unstrained gaps and pauses” (p. 619). Dubé, Schinke, Strasser, and Lightfoot (2014) used guided walks in their qualitative exploration of the experiences of 12 third year medical students in Northern Ontario. According to Dubé et al. (2014), “the guided walk made it easier for participants to take part in the study, provided context-rich research interactions, and led to serendipitous encounters for both participants and the first author” (p. 47).

The guided walk as a culturally-sensitive approach. Guided walks encourage open and pressure-free dialogue, and a balance of power between participants and researcher (Jones, Bunce, Evans, Gibbs, & Hein, 2008). This method is especially useful in studies with participants from diverse cultures. From a cross-cultural perspective, walking side-by-side helps reduce cultural misinterpretations of different uses of eye contact or physical distance. Kinlock

and Metge (2014) described the wide ranging uses of eye contact across cultures to express honesty, respect, opposition, conflict, or sexual invitation. In the guided walks, I also adhered to guidelines for cross-cultural interviewing, including offering more interview time and allowing translation devices if needed (Cortazzi, Pilcher & Jin, 2011).

The logistics of a guided walk. The guided walk began at a mutually convenient location, then the route was guided by the researcher, participant or co-determined, to situate the interview in familiar areas and to help participants learn about new routes to promote their further exploration (Evans & Jones, 2011). Alternative locations or formats were offered to participants based on accessibility needs or comfort of the participants (e.g., indoor track or sitting outdoors in a natural space), as per the confirmation letter in Appendix F. The informed consent letter for guided walk participants is provided in Appendix G. A guided walk must, as Carpiano (2009) described, consider appropriate weather, time of day, safety, and equipment to ensure the comfort and well-being of participants. A guided walk is similar to a sedentary interview, lasting approximately 60 minutes, and requiring checking of technology (e.g., microphone digital recording devices) before and during the interview, but in a guided walk participants may need reminding to clarify any observations verbally instead of physically pointing to areas, which may be unclear in the later processing of data (Garcia, Eisenberg, Frerich, Lechner, & Lust, 2012). The interviews were audio recorded with two clip omnidirectional microphones feeding into two digital recorders. I wore one of the microphones and asked participants to wear the other. I used the participant recorded audio as the main source for transcribing and the other as a backup.

Guided walk timeline. The guided walks were set in students' first year in Canada, with the first interview occurring approximately 4 weeks (mid-October) after the initial survey to

paddle deeper and clarify points related to student expectations derived from the survey. The second interview occurred after the midterm break (late November) to revisit expectations and open a discussion on experiences to date. Finally, the third guided walk occurred in the winter during the second semester (late January), when participants were asked to reflect on their expectations and experiences with attention to the benefits and barriers of their experiences. The timeline was set during a student's first year at the university, which is important as numerous researchers have linked unmet expectations and poor initial student experiences to student attrition (Ishler & Upcraft, 2005; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Tinto, 1999). Prior to each guided walk, the semi-structured interview questions were emailed to students for their consideration as per Interview Guide 1 (Appendix H), Interview Guide 2 (Appendix I) and Interview Guide 3 (Appendix J). In the post-interview phase, transcripts and themes were shared with participants for clarification and co-construction of meaning. The guided walk timeline, situated in the broader research process, is summarized in Table 4.2, and Appendix K.

Table 4.2

Overview of Research Process and Interview Stages

<u>Research Stage</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Information Shared by Researcher</u>	<u>Participant Documents</u>
Piloting survey	July	Pre-test survey with English faculty for appropriate language and wording	Survey questions	None
Quantitative Survey	Early September (Week 1-2 of new semester)	Context building; preparing for interviews	Study purpose, expectations of participation	Participation and consent letter
Quantitative Analysis	End of September	Analysis of survey results to inform interview phase	None	None
Pre-interview warm up	October	Set the stage; introductions	Building trust; situating myself in the context; research purpose and guided walk process	Participation letter

Interview #1.	Mid-October (after Fall Break)	Clarifying student expectations	Interpretations of survey results	Copy of interview guide and consent letter
Interview #2.	End of November (before Final Exams)	Revisiting expectations relative to experiences	Interpretations of first interview	Copy of interview guide and consent letter
Interview #3.	End of January (after Add/Drop period)	Reflecting on expectations, met or unmet, in evaluating first semester experiences	Interpretations of first and second interview	Copy of interview guide and consent letter
Post-interview wrap up	February-March (after Winter Break)	Member checking	Transcripts and emerging themes	Transcripts; themes
Qualitative Analysis	On-going to April 2017	Qualitative analysis of interview transcripts	Final themes	Final report and presentation

Guided walk participant size. Seidman (1991) noted that it is appropriate to set a goal for participant number ahead of time, but the progress through the research stages can help determine if I have met with “enough” participants (p. 45). In order to determine the appropriate participant size, Morse (2000) pointed to five main considerations: (a) the scope of the study, (b) the nature of the topic, (c) the quality of the data, (d) the study design, and (e) the use of shadowed data. The scope of this study is a rich exploration of the expectations and experiences in outdoor recreation. Incorporating multiple interviews in the study design allowed participants to reflect and focus on the scope of the study to generate rich data and help reach saturation of data even with fewer participants (Morse, 2000). Further, participants reported on the experiences of other international students, generating what Morse (2000) called shadowed data, to enhance the analysis. For Morse (2000), in a phenomenological design with multiple interviews, it is appropriate to select between 6-10 participants since “one has a large amount of

data for each participant and therefore needs fewer participants in the study” (p. 4-5). In this study, 7 participants were part of the guided walks. The participants are profiled in Chapter 5.

Data Analysis

An adventurer begins to understand their adventure as they reflect on what they saw, heard, and experienced, and begin to interpret these observations to add meaning to the adventure. In this section, I describe how the study data was interpreted and given meaning. The data analysis was sequential through the data collection period, with two main analyses completed. Stage 1 was an analysis of the quantitative data collected through the international student survey, which informed the interviews. Stage 2 was an on-going analysis of the interview data collected in the three-stage guided walks, including returning to participants to clarify themes. The analysis of the first interview helped clarify perspectives shared through the survey, especially those related to student expectations. The second and third interview analyses focused on revisiting and reflecting on expectations relative to student experiences.

Stage 1. Quantitative analysis

According to the survey collection protocol, all new international students who participated in the university’s international orientation events were invited to participate in the survey to gather initial expectations of Canadian outdoor recreation. With guidance from Depoy and Gitlin (2011), the initial analysis of the surveys included a review of the raw survey data for accuracy before downloading the data into a spreadsheet and labeling each variable. All questions that were answered by students were included in the data set. The survey was set up, distributed and completed in Fluid Survey online, which allowed students to skip questions that made them feel uncomfortable. The consent form indicated that the survey did not need to be completed in its entirety, but that all answered questions would be included in the data set. A

descriptive analysis was completed for frequency of occurrences to help inform the qualitative interviews including contributing to a profile of prospective guided walk participants.

Stage 2. Qualitative analysis

The strength of in-depth interviewing is in developing an understanding of people's experiences from their own point of view, as Seidman (1991) described, but the journey is also shaped by my interpretations and the visions of students. My interpretations are inherently part of my analysis, but I committed to analysis techniques to increase trustworthiness through six steps, using direction from Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006) and Seidman (1991) including;

1. Collection and verification of data;
2. Analysis and reduction of data to begin the search for meaning;
3. Identification of categories;
4. Confirmation of categories with participants;
5. Compared and integrated data from quantitative and qualitative sources to contrast and corroborate;
6. Interpreted the data and offered findings.

First, I collected interview data over three periods: the last week of October, the last week of November, and the last week of January and first week of February according to the Research Timeline in Appendix K. The guided walk interviews proceeded according to the protocol described in Chapter 5. The interviews were recorded using a clip omnidirectional microphone and recorder; I then transcribed the interviews verbatim and verified transcripts with participants after each interview. Since I used a three stage interview process, I also asked participants to clarify any points from the transcript that I provided to them at the beginning of the next

interview. In total, 128 pages of transcription data (Times New Roman, 12 point, double spaced) were collected.

Second, after the completion of each interview stage, I analyzed and reduced the data by reading the transcriptions from start to finish for an initial search for meaning. The search for meaning, as described by Janesick (2003), was to illuminate participants' perspectives and occurrence of events over time, and to consider "points of tension" in conflicting evidence between the participant views. Like Seidman (1991), I appreciated that "interpreting and analyzing are not processes the researcher does only near the end of the project" (p. 101). Instead, the meanings that I drew from reading the first interview transcripts helped tailor the interview questions in the next stage to clarify and probe ideas further with participants. In this sense, the second interview phase was informed by the first interview data, and the third interview was informed by meanings drawn from the second interview data. For example, in interview 1, participants shared concerns about the impact of their language ability and the weather on their participation in outdoor recreation. I probed these issues further in interview 2 with specific questions: "How has language impacted the way you participate in outdoor recreation?" and "How has the weather impacted the way you participate in outdoor recreation?" The return to participants to co-construct interpretations supports crystallization to add trustworthiness in my inquiry (Janesick, 2003). As Janesick (2003) described, "the image of the crystal replaces that of the land surveyor and the triangle," since "what we see when we view a crystal, for example, depends on how we view it, how we hold it up to the light or not" (p. 67).

Third, at the completion of the three stage interviews, I transformed the data by creating categories. The creation of categories came from an intentional search for patterns and connections between the questionnaire data and the interview categories that had been revealed

by the data (Seidman, 1991). In an inductive analysis approach, detailed by Thomas (2006), I re-organized text with similar meaning into categories, and then re-read the grouped sections to make sure the category label described the text groupings. I reduced the text to areas based on, what Clandinin and Connelly (1994) described as the necessary intentionality of a researcher to define where their study starts and ends. I went back to the text several times to resolve some of the “the messy complexity” of studying lived experiences that Clandinin and Connelly (1994) pointed to as they encouraged researchers to be intentional in their search for meanings (p. 416).

Fourth, I verified the data by confirming the categories and the associated text with participants in the post-interview phase for additional clarity and trustworthiness. The categories related to the expectations that were confirmed and disconfirmed were sent to the participants by email for their reflection with an attached word documents with the category and associated text, allowing participants to offer any clarifications or perspectives. The participants offered very few clarifications by email but added replies about their enjoyment in being a part of the study and gaining new knowledge about the trails and outdoors, which was included in the findings. The categories and associated text were built into the findings in Chapter 5.

Fifth, in this mixed method approach, I compared and integrated the data by contrasting the quantitative and qualitative data to look for contrasts and corroborations. Beyond the survey and interview data, I recorded contextual cues in a journal to record my on-going interpretation of the results based on my view of the journey. Most often, I wrote in my journal directly after an interview to record my perspectives of important insights gleaned from the conversation. I maintained the journal through the research process on the Evernote platform so that I had access to it from any of my devices at any locations to capture aha moments. I reread my journal to integrate my own perspectives as I finalized my findings.

Finally, sixth, I interpreted the data and offered a discussion to make sense of the findings in relation to my research question and the related literature. The findings are drawn from both the quantitative and qualitative data to assess how international students' Canadian outdoor recreation experiences confirmed and disconfirmed their expectations and what other unanticipated experiences they lived. In the next section, I share the ethical considerations that framed this journey and my commitment to respect this feature of the research landscape.

Ethics: Respecting the Landscape

“First and foremost, people protect what they love and people only love what they know” wrote conservationist, Shulman (2017, p. 30). There is beauty in making landscapes accessible by raising awareness about it, but adventurers who use the landscape must tread gently in order to protect it. Part of the goal of this research is to better inform universities about the expectations and experiences of international students to raise awareness about ways to better support them. In this study, I also committed to tread gently with the participants who journeyed with me in this landscape. Ethically, I entered this research with a commitment to respect for the research process and participants. In accordance with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2014) Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, I consider the importance of ethics in the, (a) scope of the research, (b) consent process, (c) fairness and equity in participation, (d) privacy and confidentiality of participants, and (e) conflicts of interest. Two Research Ethics Boards approved this research protocol: one from my home university (Appendix L) and one from the university where the study took place (Appendix M).

Scope of the Research

This research is one that journeys across cultures with participants whose cultural background and experiences are different than my own. Ethically, I considered cross-cultural sensitivity and appropriateness as I planned the research methods. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) reminded me that culture can impact the way people experience interviews. I viewed this research as an opportunity to build a relationship with participants and value their perspectives. Interviewing participants from diverse cultures and linguistic backgrounds may place limits on the way I interact and communicate with participants. Yet, I noted that some researchers see benefit in cross-cultural interviews. For example, Skyrme (2007) noted that second language students might be eager to take part in an English study to spend more time speaking in English, while Cortazzi, Pilcher and Jin (2011) and Durkin (2008) noticed that some Chinese participants find it easier to self-disclose and discuss sensitive topics with a non-Chinese researcher without worrying about issues of maintaining face or preserving harmony.

The participants in this study were active in shaping this research, and guiding the final findings. Benefits to participants included a better understanding of international student expectations and lived experiences. The magnitude and probability of potential harm to participants (or researcher) was low, with minimal risks to students. I acknowledged that asking students to participate in a study while they were also adjusting to a new cultural environment could add stress. For international students, the first year of studies can be filled with the initial stages of culture shock that often accompany a cross-cultural transition, while they also need to adjust to university life including a demanding course schedule, finding housing, and understanding new transportation systems. As researcher, I aimed to provide a safe space for students to share their experiences and challenges. I hoped that perhaps through walking and

talking, I helped the participants sort out and make sense of their experiences. Additionally, walking in an outdoor environment could have introduced some minimal risks for physical injury. To minimize such risks, walks occurred on campus, during the day, on maintained trails, and participants were asked, and reminded, to wear clothing appropriate for the outdoor climate.

Consent Process

In every adventure, partners need to understand the risks in the journey ahead. Participation in this study was free and voluntary, with participants having an opportunity to leave the study at any point. In addition, the consent process was on-going, with signed consent required before the participant began the survey, and oral recorded consent at the onset of each interview. There was no material or financial incentive for participation in this study.

Prospective participants received information about the purpose of the study, my identity and role as researcher, the duration of the study, data collection methods (including a description of the walking interviews), and responsibility of the participants. Details also included what information would be gathered from participants, and how the information would be shared in the final dissertation and supporting presentations. The information about the survey was provided in writing and also through verbal presentations in English. Since this study focused on the experiences of students whose first language is not English, the dissemination of information was in non-idiomatic and plain language. The study did not exclude students with low levels of English competency, but instead I slowed the pace of the recruitment presentations, and of interview questions when needed. To consider language barriers, I turned to Cortazzi, Pilcher and Jin (2011) who provided guidance on interviewing across cultures, for example, offering more time for the interview, avoiding idioms, and encouraging students to use bilingual dictionaries or translation devices as needed.

Fairness and Equity in Participation

One of the features I value most about the Canadian outdoor environment is the ability to experience it freely and openly. In setting up this research protocol, I also wanted to open the experience fairly and equitably to interested participants. To do so, I invited participation from the total group of all first year international students from any national and cultural backgrounds at one Canadian university. To consider accommodation for participants with accessibility needs, I offered an alternative to the walking interviews through a more traditional sit-and-talk interview in an indoor space near natural light or seat in an outdoor space conveniently accessible to the participant. To accommodate for poor weather and for participants who find greater safety or comfort in walking inside, I also planned for the possibility of moving interviews to an indoor track with windows facing the outdoors.

Privacy and Confidentiality

In my own journeys in the Canadian outdoors, I've enjoyed the time and space that being outside allowed me to reflect on my own life and experiences. Being outside is sometimes a personal journey, and in this study, I asked participants to share some of their private reflections. However, I maintained a commitment to the rights of privacy and confidentiality of participants, and the right for participants to withdraw from this study at any point. The survey data was confidential and included an optional question asking students to share their name and email address only if they were interested in volunteering for the follow up guided walk interviews. Dubé et al. (2014) noted that one of the limitations of the guided walk method is in maintaining the confidentiality of the participants, however also stated that some participants chose to be part of the study specifically to be part of the guided walk. The participants who chose to be part of the guided walk were provided clear information about the lack of confidentiality and anonymity

of participating in the guided walk, and specifically a reference to the likelihood of encountering others during the walks, according to the recommendations of Dubé et al., (2014), as presented in Appendix G. The data collected from the participants in both the survey and interviews was stripped of direct identifiable characteristics (e.g., name) or indirect identifiable characteristics (e.g., country of origin). For example, in the presentation of the data, I refer to “international student” instead of “Chinese student.”

The interview data was uploaded from the digital recorder to my personal password protected computer, and then the digital files were permanently deleted from the recorders. The transcriptions were labeled digitally by date, participant number and interview number (e.g., 2016-09-09.P1.I1). As part of a trust relationship that I aimed to build with participants, the data is kept confidential and secured in a password protected file and not disclosed to outside parties. In the storage of data and future re-presentation of the data, the interview participants are identified only by a pseudonym.

Conflicts of Interest

Adventurers in a journey may also cross paths in other areas of their life. In the context of this study, I shared the research journey with participants, but I was also aware of the possibility of meeting participants in the university halls as I am in my role of university employee and they are in their role as student. I disclosed to participants that I was an employee of the university where I also was conducting research. My professional role is administrative in focus with some part-time teaching in upper year courses, but I do not hold a position of authority related to international students that could be deemed to influence power over students.

Paddling Ahead: Chapter Summary

An adventurer's chosen tools determine how the landscape will be navigated. This chapter is a reflection of how I, intentionally, chose to navigate the research landscape. The methodology was shaped by the elements in the landscape and the participants who chose to be part of this journey. In this study, I chose two tools, a survey to help give a broad view of the landscape, and a three stage guided walk interview process to help me navigate the landscape in greater depth. Through all stages, I committed to respecting the research context through an ethical protocol that commits to cultural sensitivity and the rights of participants, the co-paddlers of this journey. My partnership with participants is important as I sought to unearth their truths and co-construct the meaning of their expectations and experiences. In the next chapter, I share our findings, reflecting on our journey, our learnings, and suggest ways to continue to explore in ways that are beyond the scope of this study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS: SHAPING THE CAMPSITE

“The landscape, like a canvas, awaits the realization of our unique vision”

(Frank Wolf, 2012, p. 40).

As I continue to reflect upon the metaphor of canoe trip, the raw data is like arriving at a campsite after a long day of paddling. Callan’s (2017) description of campsites resonated with me as I prepared to share my research findings:

Campsites are the bookends to our days outside, the centrepiece to every canoe trip. They are where the day’s stories are shared, laughs are had... It’s where we view the stars from, and where we are most vulnerable...Campsites are where wilderness memories take place...Campsites are the punctuation marks in any journey. Whether exclamation point or simple period, they make our journey complete (p. 64).

At a campsite, my interpretations of the land, along with the unique visions of my co-paddlers, help shape the final set up, through the direction I position the tent and chairs to best view the landscape, the lake and the stars. In the same way, my interpretations, along with the unique visions of the participants, similar to the way Wolf (2012) described it, help shape the presentation of the findings. I prepared these findings through two sets of raw data collected with international students: (a) responses to a quantitative survey and, (b) transcripts from a series of qualitative three-stage guided walk interviews. These findings are part of the memories of this journey with international students and help make this study complete.

In this chapter, I present the findings resulting from my journey with international students. As I described in Chapter 4, using a quantitative method, the survey, at the onset of the

data collection helped glean insights about the context of the participants, as Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) described, and helped inform the qualitative interview stages, as Mayoh and Onwuegbuzie (2013) recommended. I begin this chapter by providing a snapshot of the participants, the important surveyors and co-paddlers of this journey. Then, I present the findings related to my research question, as detailed in Chapter 1, to explore how international student expectations of the Canadian outdoors compare to their lived experiences in their first year at a university in Northern Ontario, Canada. The findings are organized in two sections, (a) expectations of outdoor recreation informed through the survey, and (b) lived experiences of outdoor recreation, including challenges and benefits, informed through the interviews.

The Surveyors and the Co-paddlers: Participants

The findings are an assembly of multiple truths co-created by the interpretations of the participants along with my own, which situate this research in an interpretivist paradigm. The survey participants are like land surveyors whose roles are to position important points, elevations, distances and angles so adventurers can know what kind of terrain to expect. In this study, the survey participants provided layers of context about this research landscape by positioning international student expectations, both positive and negative. Beyond the breadth defined by the survey participants, the interview participants helped me explore in greater depth.

Together, like the tandem pairs that need to work together to propel a canoe, the interview participants are important partners in this study. The interview participants are like co-paddlers in this journey, who interpret the landscape ahead of me and help navigate toward the setting up of our unique campsite. As a researcher and co-paddler, I am like the stern person at the back of the canoe, I cannot see the landscape exactly as they see it at the front in the bow of the canoe, but together we paddle and navigate the research landscape. In this section, I describe

the participants who completed the survey, and provide a snapshot of the subset who took part in the guided walk interviews.

The Surveyors: Survey Participants

Surveys of a landscape help position important context, like lines of contour and elevations, to help predict how to best navigate. I looked to survey participants to act as land surveyors, to provide a survey of the landscape and help define and detail the research context. The international office confirmed that 79 new international students arrived in time for the September orientation week with 62 confirmed participants in orientation week activities. All students who were part of the international orientation week activities were invited to participate in the survey (62 participants). A total of 47 students completed the survey, as presented in Appendix A, becoming the land surveyors, for a response rate of 76%. To narrow the focus on the landscape of this study, as per the selection criteria detailed at the onset of my research, I removed responses from participants who had been in Canada for more than 3 months and limited this exploration to the experiences of new international students. A total of 18 participants, from 8 countries with 6 different first languages of communication (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Malagasy, and Thai), remained for further analysis. A breakdown description of the 18 participants who were retained for the analysis is provided in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

<i>Participant profile</i>		
<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Number of participants</u>	<u>First language</u>
Chinese	5	Chinese
Nigerian	3	English
Syrian	2	Arabic
Congolese	2	French

French	2	French
Thai	2	Thai
Indian	1	English
Malagasy	1	Malagasy

The 18 survey participants were predominately in English preparation studies (50%), or undergraduate studies (33%), with the remainder in graduate studies (17%). The majority of participants were in their first year of studies (83%), with other participants starting studies with transfer credits from previous college or university studies in other countries. Some of the students met the English language requirements for direct entry to university studies (38%), while others completed or were planning to complete English language training prior to starting their academic studies (62%). Survey participants had diverse experiences with outdoor recreation with most participating in team or individual activities in their home countries (66%), and some having no prior experience in outdoor recreation (34%).

The Co-Paddlers: Guided Walk Participants

A total of 8 participants indicated an interest in participating in the guided walk portion of the study by providing their contact information in the survey, which adhered to an appropriate participant size for multiple-interview phenomenological designed interviews (Morse, 2000), as described in the data collection protocol in Chapter 4. Of these respondents, one was excluded from the prospective interview pool because they had previously visited Canada. Following the purposeful selection criteria set out at the onset of the research, I selected 7 participants from 5 different countries who had been in Canada for less than 3 months and had no prior visits to Canada. One student left the university after the first semester, before the

completion of the third interview, but data from interviews 1 and 2 were included in the analysis as per the collection protocol. In total, I completed three interviews with six participants and two interviews with one participant for a total of twenty interviews lasting just over fifteen hours (an average of forty-four minutes per interview). In the next section, I provide a snapshot of the participants to help contextualize their responses.

A snapshot of the co-paddlers. Using pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality, I provide a snapshot of the interview participants by including their level of study, language competency, and their responses to the question, “list 3-5 words you would use to describe the Canadian outdoors.” With inspiration from Phillips (2017) who provided a portrait of his participants to help contextualize his mixed method doctoral study in a Canadian university setting, I also included examples from the stories that they shared about their expectations of outdoor recreation to set the stage for the findings that follow.

“Ada”, a native English speaker pursuing studies in the Master of Business Administration, described Canada as “pleasant, fun and wonderful.” In our first interview, Ada shared his anticipation of the changing landscape,

Getting here was very exciting. I was really amazed when I got here seeing things I had never seen before. It really amazed me. Seeing all the leaves changing colours, it’s beautiful. It’s even making the environment beautiful. So, as time goes on, it is the things I don’t have, the leaves going to fall down and no more leaves and winter will be coming. So, I can’t wait to see that. I have never experienced winter in my life but it’s going to be a great day.

Ada was especially excited to try activities in the snow and visibly amazed and delighted as he grinned and put his hands out to catch snowflakes while we walked together shortly after the first snowfall of the year. “Just wow!” exclaimed Ada.

“Bohai” is an articulate student in the upper level (level 3) of English for Academic Preparation (EAP) program, with a plan to continue his studies in the Bachelor of Arts in English with a specific interest in creative writing. Bohai described Canada as “beautiful and perfect” and in our first interview together he added that the “environment is very quiet, so it is more suitable for me to focus on my writing.” Bohai shared an interesting perspective of the value of experiences, like the experiencing of the Canadian outdoors, to inform his creative writing,

Writing has a lot of different ingredients or materials so the stories are much like pieced together with small segments of life. So, you have to experience more and see more to know other people’s life or learn more stories about other people. It’s one of the main reasons I come here. I want to know more.

Bohai left Canada after his first semester, only taking part in the first and second interviews, as he went to pursue studies closer to his fiancé in another country.

“Fannie”, a student in the intermediate level (level 2) of the EAP program, plans to continue her studies in the Bachelor of Business Administration. She arrived at the first guided-walk interview in small open shoes not made for a lengthy walk. Though she appeared tentative on the trails, she said she wanted to continue and seemed eager to spend time together talking. She described Canada using the words “awesome, clean and peace.” She was very busy in Canada and it often took several back and forth emails to set interview times as she balanced school and church commitments. She seemed to be a keen explorer, sharing in her first interview her desire to experience new environments: “when I am planning to finish my post-secondary

school, why don't I choose another place to live other than Canada? I don't want to spend 60 years to stay in one place. I want to find a different place."

"Fon", a friendly and active student in the upper level (level 3) of the EAP program with an undecided plan of study after graduation from language studies, described Canada using the words: "big, trees, melting pot, friendly, and bilingual." Fon lived in residence and, for her, it was an important place to connect with other students. She shared several stories about the connections she made with her roommates and activities that they tried together: "my favorite sport is basketball but I come here my roommates teach me how to play baseball, volleyball, hockey and swimming." Fon seemed to really enjoy the walking interviews, she said, "it's really cool, I mean we can use like sport at the same time we can talk. It's really fun."

"Karim", a student in his first year of studies in the Bachelor of Engineering program is a native English speaker. He described Canada using the words "awesome, amazing and people." He didn't expect any challenges to participate in outdoor recreation and was especially eager to try winter sports. Karim looked forward to his active experiences in Canada, saying, "I wish to do whatever they are doing here, I have to participate with it to know how they are doing it. Even when I go back to my country I will be able to show them these outings, these walks. Whatever activities they are doing here I have to put myself there. Not that I should be watching, I have to participate, put myself into it." Through the interviews, Karim distinguished more than once between doing and watching. It was clear to me that it was important that he try new activities as an active participant.

"Li", a student in the beginner level (level 1) of the EAP program, plans to continue his studies in Engineering. Li was working hard to improve his English. He described Canada as "cold, beautiful and sexy." He lived off campus and overall seemed less comfortable walking on

the trails and being in nature. During our first interview, Li commented, “I am afraid to get lost in the trails. I am also afraid of the bears. I have never seen a real bear.” The walks with Li were at a much slower pace than the rest of the interviews, almost tentatively, and with frequent pauses as Li stopped and turned to make eye contact with me as he emphasized a point, quietly and in earnest.

“Mo”, a student in the upper level (level 3) of the EAP program, plans to transition to the Master program in Computer Science program. He had some experience living abroad in another country prior to starting his studies in Canada. He described Canada as “beautiful, peaceful, and quiet.” Mo was a keen explorer. He asked questions before and after the interviews about where to access outdoor gear and how to join clubs. The conversations with Mo over the walks felt very sincere and sometimes emotional as he talked about cultural differences and feelings of discrimination. From Mo, I could really sense his struggle to adapt in Canada, balancing his own cultural values with his desire to stay in Canada beyond graduation.

To summarize, together with the co-paddlers we journeyed to our campsite. We aimed for a campsite nested by crystal waters that sparkle and reflect differently from different vantage points. The goal of this journey with the co-paddlers was to allow a co-creation of multiple truths and interpretations to lead to what Richardson (1994) described as crystallization. In the sections that follow, I describe findings through two lenses: (a) the expectations of outdoor recreation gleaned from the surveyors and; (b) the deeper exploration of lived experiences and comparison to expectations, discovered with the co-paddlers.

Expectations of the Landscape: Survey Findings

A survey of the land determines the best location to build a campsite, as I examine the contour lines and angles. Like land surveyors, the survey participants provided important context

Setting Expectations

A word cloud of positive adjectives in various colors and sizes, centered around the word 'beautiful'. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with 'beautiful' being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'awesome', 'exciting', 'fun', 'peaceful', 'clean', 'cold', 'amazing', 'interesting', 'friendly', 'peace', 'wonderful', 'perfect', 'outstanding', 'impressive', 'sporty', 'activities', 'pretty', 'wild', 'bilingual', 'weather', 'excited', 'smart', 'country', 'wish', 'winter', 'trees', 'good', 'flat', 'open', 'funny', 'big', 'snow', 'passion', 'cool', 'hockey', 'breezy', 'quiet', 'green', 'fresh', 'habitat', 'various', 'melting', 'pot', 'best', 'people', 'pleasant', 'charming', 'sexy', 'lakeside', 'safe', 'nice', 'free', 'hiking', 'scenic', 'useful', 'peaceful', 'clean', 'cold', 'amazing', 'interesting', 'friendly', 'peace', 'wonderful', 'perfect', 'outstanding', 'impressive', 'sporty', 'activities', 'pretty', 'wild', 'bilingual', 'weather', 'excited', 'smart', 'country', 'wish', 'winter', 'trees', 'good', 'flat', 'open', 'funny', 'big', 'snow', 'passion', 'cool', 'hockey', 'breezy', 'quiet', 'green', 'fresh', 'habitat', 'various', 'melting', 'pot', 'best', 'people', 'pleasant', 'charming', 'sexy', 'lakeside', 'safe', 'nice', 'free', 'hiking', 'scenic', 'useful'. The colors range from light blue to dark blue, with some words in a lighter shade of blue. The font is a clean, sans-serif typeface. The overall shape is roughly circular, with the words filling the space around the central 'beautiful'.

Figure 5.1. Survey participants' responses to "list 3-5 words you would use to describe your expectations of the Canadian outdoors"

Beyond the descriptions that participants provided about the Canadian outdoor environment, the survey of the landscape aimed to add context about the people and things that impacted their expectations. In the section below, I detail the survey findings related to setting expectations including the influences, images, and expected participation.

When asked “who helped set up your expectations about the outdoor environment”, friends (50%) were cited as the most important influence shaping what participants should expect about Canadian outdoor recreation, followed by parents and other family members (33%), media, like television, Facebook or Twitter (27%), teachers from home community (27%) and university representatives (22%). No participants chose the response option ‘other’ or added an open ended response. A breakdown of the influences on student expectations of outdoor recreation is provided in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2

Influences on student expectations of Canadian outdoor recreation (multiple responses allowed)

<u>Influence</u>	<u>Response by number</u>	<u>Response by %</u>
Friends	9/18	50%
Parents or other family members	6/18	33%
Media, like television, Facebook or Twitter	5/18	27%
Teachers in home community	5/18	27%
University representative	4/18	22%

When asked about Canadian images they remembered seeing in their home country, most survey participants (55%) remembered images (including pictures or videos) related to general outdoor recreation in Canada, and some (38%) remembered seeing images of outdoor recreation

at their specific university campus. The pictures and videos that participants saw encouraged participants to want to experience the Canadian outdoors, with most participants responding that they expected to engage in some type of outdoor recreation (55%).

Many participants (55%) expected their participation in outdoor recreation to be different than in their home countries, due to different weather (“extremely different climate”), and different sport opportunities, particularly winter sports (“there is no hockey back home”). When asked if there were particular Canadian outdoor activities that they were excited to try, most (61%) noted that they were excited to try Canadian outdoor activities and listed examples (by number of mentions) including (a) summer leisure activities such as canoeing and kayaking (3), swimming (3), and hiking (3), and (b) winter activities such as skating and hockey (2), general winter sports (2), and skiing (1). Participants indicated that they expected that their participation in outdoor recreation would occur with other international students (38%) or other domestic students (27%).

Participants had a mix of negative and positive expectations related to their outdoor recreation. Findings related to the expected challenges and benefits of participation in Canadian outdoor recreation are detailed below.

Expected Challenges of Outdoor Recreation

Participants were asked to reflect on the expected challenges of participating in outdoor recreation experiences. When considering the challenges to participation, the top cited challenges on the survey included finding the right equipment, clothes or footwear (72%), finding a partner (33%), finding the right time constraints due to being too busy with school (27%), the cold weather (27%), finding where to access the activity (16%) and feeling that the activities are unsafe (16%), as listed by frequency in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Expected challenges to participating in Canadian outdoor recreation (multiple responses allowed)

<u>Challenge</u>	<u>Response by number</u>	<u>Response by %</u>
Finding the right equipment	13/18	72%
Finding a partner	6/18	33%
Too busy with school	5/18	27%
Cold weather	5/18	27%
Finding where to access the activity	3/18	16%
Unsafe	3/18	16%

Expected Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

International students shared their expectations of the benefits of participation in outdoor recreation. In the survey, participants were asked to consider the expected benefits of participating in outdoor recreation. When asked, “do you expect any benefits of participating in outdoor sport and leisure activities in Canada?” participants noted that they expected to use outdoor recreation as a way to meet new people (66%), try new activities (61%), and make new friends (50%). For many participants, they expected that participating in outdoor activities would also help them to learn about Canada (61%), give them an opportunity to practice their English (44%) and communicate with domestic students (16%). A list of expected benefits cited by participants is listed by frequency in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4

*Expected benefits of participating in Canadian outdoor recreation
(multiple responses allowed)*

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Response by number</u>	<u>Response by %</u>
Meeting new people	12/18	66%
Trying new activities	11/18	61%
Learning about Canada	11/18	61%
Making new friends	9/18	50%
Practicing English	8/18	44%
Communicating with domestic students	3/18	16%

Decision to Study in Canada

To illuminate how expectations shape the decision to study in Canada, participants were asked to reflect on the images of Canada and their destination university that they remembered seeing before their arrival. When asked, “did pictures and images of the Canadian outdoor environment encourage you to study in Canada?” most participants agreed that the images they saw encouraged them to study in Canada (55%). Further, opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation impacted their decision to choose Canada as a destination of study, with the majority of respondents (69%) indicating yes to the question “did opportunities to participate in Canadian outdoor recreation encourage you to study in Canada?” Participants were influenced by what they heard and saw about Canadian outdoor recreation, leading to anticipation about the type of activities that would be part of their Canadian experience and their overall decision to study in Canada.

To summarize, the goal of this section was to survey the landscape and present findings to describe international student expectations before co-paddling deeper with interview

participants to compare expectations to lived experiences. The land surveyors (survey respondents) shared that friends and family were key in setting expectations, along with images that participants observed in the media and through social media platforms. Respondents expected to take part in outdoor activities in different weather, especially in the snow, and were eager to try new activities such as canoeing, kayaking, swimming and hiking. However, the participants did not assume that their involvement in outdoor activities would come without challenge. They expected that finding the right equipment and partners, along with competing school priorities and cold weather, could pose challenges. Despite expected challenges, most participants were eager to use outdoor activities to meet new people and make new friends, try new activities, and learn more about Canada. For participants, their expectations about the Canadian outdoors contributed to their decision to study in Canada. In the next section, I journey beyond the survey of the land to explore international student experiences through the interview data and focus particularly on how participants' lived experiences compared to their expectations.

Comparing Expectations and Lived Experiences: Interview Findings

The survey data helped provide important context for the interviews. A land surveyor provides important data, lines of contour, and areas of interest that I can see on paper to help learn about a landscape, but I need to paddle an area to really explore it, to know it and feel it. To deepen my understanding, I looked to the co-paddlers, the guided walk participants. In this section, I organize the findings gathered from the interview data through two lenses. First, I describe the participants' expectations and decisions, illuminating the important role of the media in setting expectations and the influences on the decision to choose studies in Canada. Second, I describe the challenges and benefits experienced by participants, specifically illuminating

participants' met and unmet expectations. The comparison of participants' expectations to their lived experiences is a valuable way to understand their experiences and classify the experience as positive or negative, according to Oliver's (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm (EDP), as discussed in Chapter 3. Positive expectations that are confirmed, or negative expectations which are disconfirmed, are important cues to evaluating the lived experience as positive. Alternatively, negative expectations that are confirmed, or positive expectations that are disconfirmed, lead to an evaluation of the lived experience as negative (Oliver, 1980).

Expectations and Decisions

In the guided walk interviews, participants pointed to: (a) the ways that they learned about the Canadian environment through the media and; (b) how their expectations shaped their decision to study in Canada.

Media images. Internet searches, particularly using Google, were an important source of images and information to learn about the Canadian environment. Mo said, "for me, the internet was very helpful...I used Google Street to walk around and know the area." Ada added that the images he saw online made him more excited about his arrival. He said:

Like how Canada is going to look like? When I was in (my home country), I always have dreamed it would be wow! I did a Google search to see the environment, what I am going to see and what it looks like. I couldn't wait to witness all these things. It's a beautiful country...seeing the maple leaf...the beautiful leaves.

Through the interviews, participants elaborated on the kinds of Canadian images that they saw when they were still in their home country. Participants shared that they remembered seeing images of the beauty of the Canadian landscape, including its different seasons, lakes, varieties

of trees, red leaves, fall colours, hiking, and ice fishing. Fon described the images this way: “I remember seeing the landscape around this campus. It looked very beautiful. The lake, the different types of houses around the lake, colorful mountains or colorful trees in the fall.” However, some participants found that images were more geared toward city living, with images of the cityscapes of Toronto and Vancouver more common than images of the natural environment. Bohai shared, “by the pictures I saw, I thought everything would look like Toronto. It seemed similar like (a big city in my home country). I changed my mind when I came here and saw the outdoor activities in Canadian daily life, like fishing, kayaking, canoeing.”

The images and information that participants learned about Canada created expectations about their experience, and influenced the decision to study in Canada, as detailed next.

Impact of the outdoors on decision to study in Canada. In the first interview, participants shared that the outdoor environment was a factor in their decision to come to Canada. Fannie described her decision this way, “Canada looked quiet and cozy. Actually the reason why I chose this university is because I think it is very tranquil. A place for me to focus on my school work.” Ada added,

The outdoors created inspiration for me. The environment is very inviting.

Seeing the environment there are so many strange things. So many things I have not seen in my country. In my own leisure time, I expect to see so many things, like trees changing colours. It is part of the experience I am trying to have here.

For the participants, Canada’s outdoor environment was one of the factors that influenced their decision to study in Canada. Congruent with the survey results, participants were eager to take part in Canadian outdoor activities in the summer including canoeing and swimming, as well as

activities in the snow, including hockey and skiing. Participants also added other activities that were not reported in the survey, including fishing and ice fishing, snowboarding and winter camping. Ada was especially excited to participate in winter activities, as he shared, “what I am waiting for is this winter because I have heard that there are many activities during the winter, like skating or other activities on the ice. That is what I am looking for.” In the second interview, in early November, I could sense the excitement and anticipation in Ada’s voice as he looked at the land around us lightly dusted with the first snowfall and looked forward to being part of activities in the snowy days ahead.

Participants had expectations about outdoor recreation that were shaped by the images that they saw in the media, including images of the beautiful landscape and winter activities. They had particular interest in trying new activities in the new environment and in the snow, though they expected that their experiences could bring some challenges and benefits, as I explore in the sections that follow.

The Challenges of Participation in Outdoor Recreation

In this section, I situate the participant experiences, as per the guided walk data, to confirm and disconfirm the expected challenges. Negative experiences are characterized by confirmed negative expectations and disconfirmed positive expectations, according to Oliver (1980). The data analysis also revealed that some challenges were unexpected by participants.

Negative expectations confirmed. Through the guided walks, participants described experiencing three challenges that aligned with the negative expectations that were identified in the survey: (a) finding partners, (b) cold weather, and (c) safety.

Finding partners. Participants noted that they were eager to find opportunities to get to know people through their participation, both international and domestic students. Ada explained it this way,

I don't walk alone. I wish to play with everybody including Canadian and international students... to me I want to mix up with people, to mix with Chinese, Brazilian, Indian and others to be friends and just for me to know the culture of everyone.

For Ada, participation in the outdoors with new partners was a way to engage in an exchange of culture. Finding a partner was less about participating in a certain activity than it was about using the activity to help connect with others.

Participants expressed an overall desire to participate with diverse partners, both Canadian and domestic students, but the interviews revealed that finding partners was indeed a challenge. In the first interview, Mo said simply, "it is hard to find people to go with." As I probed the ability to find a partner in the second interview, Mo elaborated,

I can't find a partner. In (my home country), I met many groups who organize events like going hiking or to the lake... So, people who are organized to prepare it and make it more easy for you to participate. I found some groups here but I how do I join?

Like Ada shared, participants expressed a desire to connect with others through activities and didn't want to "walk alone", but walking together, and finding partners, was not always easy, as Mo described.

Cold weather. The weather was very present during the outdoor interviews. The first interview occurred in October as the Fall leaves around us changed to rich reds and oranges. The

second interviews occurred shortly after the first snowfall of the season, in early November, while the third occurred in the cold days of late January. Participants recognized that the cold weather and snow were a normal part of the Canadian winter experiences. As detailed in the survey results, participants expected snow and were eager to take part in winter activities that seemed to be a regular part of Canadian life. Mo commented, “you have very good infrastructure for this snow so it doesn’t affect the people’s lives. Last week, it snowed for the first time in (my home country) and they closed everything. The country shut down.”

I revisited the weather in the second and third interviews, when the cold weather had arrived, asking participants to comment on the impact of weather in their outdoor experiences. Participants noted that the weather in Canada ranged from inconvenient to challenging. Fon said simply, “winter is so cold. I don’t like going outside in the winter.” Mo added, “today is the coldest day so far, and I thought it would be very good with a lot of snow. But it’s complicated. I found myself wearing wrong clothes.” Even though participants expected the cold weather and snow, the reality of it was still challenging, as Karim described,

I was so excited about the snow. I was planning on it. I was so excited to ski on the lake but since the winter has come I just feel, wow, it is really cold. And especially the wind. The air temperature is fine but when the wind comes, it feels really cold.

Li added,

The snow is so high, even over my shoulders. Yeah, up to my shoulder and you can’t walk. I just go ‘that’s okay, I don’t want to go outside with others’. I had snow in my hometown but it’s not that big. It’s huge.

Situating the interviews outside meant that the weather was very much a part of the research experience. I share a sample of the sights we experienced during our walks through the pictures I took, in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2. The weather present in interviews 1, 2, and 3: Fall (late October), Early Winter (mid-November), and Winter (late January).

After our last interview in January, Bohai emailed me a picture of a water bottle that he had in his pocket. He was surprised to see the ice that had formed, as shared in Figure 5.3.



Figure 5.3. Bohai's shared image of his frozen water bottle after the third interview.

As I moved into the second and third interviews, I was able to observe the participants' preparedness for outdoor recreation through the guided walk interviews. Multiple participants arrived without warm clothes such as toques or mitts. I moved the end of the second interview with Li indoors as I worried about his cold hands without mitts. The excitement that I heard

participants talk about in the first interview about the weather was more subdued in the second interview as participants began to have to adjust to the colder weather. By the third interview, participants seemed better prepared to be outdoors for our walk together, but overall, the cold weather did prove challenging as we sometimes shortened our time outside and huddled in a warm stairwell to complete the interview. In Chapter 6, I discuss the weather in more detail related to the challenges of guided walk method.

Safety. Some participants worried about the safety of participating in outdoor recreation due to being unfamiliar with the rules or areas, and encountering wildlife. Mo shared how being unfamiliar with the rules of the game could impact safety, he said, “figuring out the rule of the game is really important. I can’t understand the baseball game so I just used my hand to catch a ball and it’s very hard. I almost break my hand.” Li also expressed some safety concerns as he explained why he didn’t use the campus trails: “I am afraid to get lost in the trails. I am also afraid of the bears.” Despite his comments, Li was willing to be in the trails with me as part of the interview process. He seemed to trust me as the expert and was willing to go along. A summary of expected challenges that were confirmed in participants lived experiences is provided in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5

Challenges of participating in Canadian outdoor recreation: Expectations confirmed

<u>Expected challenges</u>	<u>Lived experience</u>	<u>Expectation confirmed / disconfirmed</u>
Finding partners	<p>“It is hard to find people to go with.”</p> <p>“I can’t find a partner. In (my home country), I met many groups who organize events like going hiking or to the lake... So, people who are organized to prepare it and make it more</p>	Negative expectation confirmed

	easy for you to participate. I found some groups here but I how do I join?"	
Cold weather	"Today is the coldest day so far, and I thought it would be very good with a lot of snow. But it's complicated. I found myself wearing wrong clothes."	Negative expectation confirmed
	"I was so excited about the snow. I was planning on it. I was so excited to ski on the lake but since the winter has come I just feel, wow, it is really cold. And especially the wind. The air temperature is fine but when the wind comes, it feels really cold."	
Safety	"Figuring out the rule of the game is really important. I can't understand the baseball game so I just used my hand to catch a ball and it's very hard. I almost break my hand."	Negative expectation confirmed
	"I am afraid to get lost in the trails. I am also afraid of the bears."	

As detailed above, participants pointed to the many challenges that they both expected and experienced. In addition, participants experienced challenges when they did not realize their positive expectations, which I outline in the next section.

Positive expectations disconfirmed. Based on the survey findings, a minority of participants expected outdoor recreation to help them connect to domestic students. However, for many interview participants (6 out of 7 participants), communicating with domestic students was very difficult. Participants described significant challenges in interacting with Canadian students.

Communicating with domestic students. Interview participants expected that one of the benefits of participating in outdoor recreation was in having an opportunity to communicate with Canadian students. For some, the outdoor environment did provide opportunity to meet Canadians, as Bohai mentioned, "we have baseball day in residence, it's so cool. I met a lot of Canadians." However, most agreed that communicating with Canadian students was

challenging. Karim summed it up this way, “it is much harder than I thought to meet Canadians.” Li elaborated,

I was thinking about going hiking with Canadian students because they are familiar with this area and they can help me to become familiar. But it’s really hard to socialize with them because the way we socialize is very different. Sometimes the manner, the language...sometimes they just misunderstand or mistaken my manner with something else.

Instead, international students felt more comfortable communicating with other international students, even students who were not from their home country. Fannie described it this way,

Sometimes international students seem more relaxed with international students. If they are from different background maybe they are from Germany or Spanish or Thailand or other different countries. I feel we are the same. I sometimes feel it is hard to talk to Canadian people. I don’t know how they feel. It is their school and there is lot of foreign people coming to their school and I don’t know how they feel. Sometimes at the start it is hard to talk to them, they don’t know you and you don’t know them. And your speaking skills may not be very good and you may not understand each other very well. But when you talk to international students, sometimes I feel we both come from different countries to Canada and we are more similar.

Similar to the perspectives shared around finding partners to share the outdoors, I heard participants express a desire to reach out and connect with others, especially Canadian students, but it was difficult for participants to really engage and socialize. A summary of the disconfirmed positive expectation is provided in Table 5.6. There seemed to be a feeling of ‘us’

and ‘them’ between the international student participants and the Canadian students, and that participants really felt that they were the ‘others.’ Some of the feelings of otherness and inability to connect were driven by cultural differences that participants did not expect, as I discuss in the next section.

Table 5.6

Challenges of participating in Canadian outdoor recreation: Positive expectations disconfirmed

<u>Expected benefit</u>	<u>Lived experience</u>	<u>Expectation confirmed / disconfirmed</u>
Communicating with domestic students	<p>“It is much harder than I thought to meet Canadians.”</p> <p>“I was thinking about going hiking with Canadian students because they are familiar with this area and they can help me to become familiar. But it’s really hard to socialize with them.”</p> <p>“Sometimes international students seem more relaxed with international students...I feel we are the same. I sometimes feel it is hard to talk to Canadian people.”</p>	Positive expectation disconfirmed

Unexpected challenges. Participants experienced several challenges, some which they expected and others which they did not, as described in the previous sections. In this section, I detail the additional, yet unexpected, challenge of participating in outdoor recreation, as shared by participants, driven mainly by cultural differences.

Cultural differences. Participants described challenging outdoor experiences related to their cross-cultural interactions. Particularly, interacting with others in the new environment was difficult due to cultural differences and experiences of discrimination based on the participants’ culture or religion. Some activities were not appropriate from some cultural perspectives. Mo described his reluctance to go hunting with some of his Canadian classmates,

I have some challenges related to my background. I am Muslim so I have some restrictions. For example, we can't hunt for fun. We have to eat what we hunt.

So, you can't, for example, hunt some birds and throw them out.

Through Mo's comments and tone, I noted his discomfort in trying to balance his desire to participate and connect with other students but also adhere to his cultural values. As a Muslim student, Mo also shared that he preferred activities that had no direct contact with others, he shared, "some sports include a lot of interaction...so for me, now I play ping pong now. No physical interaction." The cultural differences necessitated decisions to be made by participants in balancing the norms of Canadian outdoor recreation and their home cultural values.

By talking about cultural difference, participants also shared how the outdoor environment created a space where they faced discrimination. Outdoor recreation happened away from the more formal environment of the classroom, which for some participants opened the space to more cultural charged and inappropriate questions. Karim described his interactions in the informal outdoor environment,

Doing sports and going outside, yeah everyone will be ask me anything they don't know. The media has main role in this behaviour I think. Everyone talks to me about terrorists. A lot of Canadians do not know who is Allah and what it means to be Muslim. We are humans just like you...Don't define me by my religion. It is my right to have my beliefs. We share the same city.

I heard the frustration in both Mo and Karim's voice as they discussed the culture differences that proved to be unexpected challenges to their participation. There was also a desire for better understanding about their culture that came through in their

comments, which balances new experiences in the host country while also valuing their home culture. A summary of the unanticipated challenges of participating in Canadian outdoor recreation is provided in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7

Unanticipated challenges of participating in Canadian outdoor recreation

<u>Unanticipated challenges</u>	<u>Lived experience</u>
Cultural differences	<p>“I have some challenges related to my background. I am Muslim so I have some restrictions. For example, we can’t hunt for fun. We have to eat what we hunt. So, you can’t, for example, hunt some birds and throw them out.”</p> <p>“Everyone talks to me about terrorists. A lot of Canadians do not know who is Allah is and what it means to be Muslim. We are humans just like you...Don’t define me by my religion. It is my right to have my beliefs. We share the same city.</p>

To summarize, the co-paddlers helped explore the research context more deeply by sharing their direct experiences and observations. The co-paddlers shared that they were aware that participation in outdoor recreation could be challenging, with expected challenges including finding equipment, partners, competing priorities, weather, access, and safety. Participants also experienced unanticipated challenges, driven mainly by cultural differences. In the next section, I illuminate additional positive experiences by describing the benefits of participating in outdoor recreation, some which were expected and others that were pleasant surprises.

The Benefits of Participation in Outdoor Recreation

Through the guided walks, participants shared the many benefits of participating in outdoor recreation. Some also noted that participating in the guided walks interviews, offered them some unique benefits, a topic I will discuss further in Chapter 6. In this section, I detail the

benefits of outdoor recreation, through: (a) confirmed positive expectations, (b) disconfirmed negative expectations, and (c) unanticipated benefits.

Benefits of outdoor recreation. The interview stages revealed that participation in outdoor recreation did bring many benefits. Positive experiences are driven, according to Oliver (1980), by positive expectations that are confirmed, or negative expectations that are disconfirmed. As expected based on the survey findings, participants were able to try new activities that they didn't have a chance to try in their home countries. Karim commented, "this is my first time to ski because the school has activities for international students during the year. It is pretty fun there is lots of snow, I like it." Participants were especially appreciative of opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation that were organized by the school which allowed them to access borrowed equipment and opportunities to learn safely.

Positive expectations confirmed. Through the interviews, participants described three main benefits of their participation in outdoor activities: (a) developing a sense of community, (b) English communication and (c) learning about Canada.

Sense of community. In the survey, participants shared that they expected outdoor recreation to help them meet new people. The guided walks confirmed that participation in outdoor recreation was a good way to meet new people, but this extended further to help generate a sense of community.

When participants had the opportunity to participate in outdoor recreation activities that were organized through the university, they were able to get to know other students. Li put it this way, "the activities we did with our class were interesting and exciting, fantastic. We make friends. We are happy to play with them." Experiencing the outdoors also allowed participants to meet others in the community. Li and Mo expressed their surprise in the way they met and talked

with strangers while they walked on the campus and community trails. Li told a story about meeting a Canadian senior while out on a walk,

I have to mention an old lady, she is 76 years old, and the day I arrived here I go out for a walk and at that time I didn't even know how to buy stuff, like groceries and I don't know how to take the bus or the route map. I just meet this old lady and I ask for favor. And the old lady is walking and she told me how long have you been in Canada? And I said, I just arrived here this afternoon. And she said my husband is living in the hospital dealing with cancer and he is sleeping so I can drive you there. She spent about 4 hours with me, helping me buy my groceries. That is really kind. And then brought me back and dropped me off right in front of the gate of the residence. That is really kind, really nice. She is really friendly. I was drawn to her when I walk outside. She seemed very friendly and polite. Sometimes the thing of polite makes me consider Canadians detached from other people's lives, but maybe they are so friendly in the deeps of their heart.

I could hear the emotion stirring, as Dewey (1938) had described, in Li's voice as he shared this passage. The early days of his arrival were lonely, and his interaction with this senior was very important to him. In the final interview, Li shared that he still emails with this senior lady and thinks that when he graduates from the EAP program she will be the first one he will call to share his news. She was obviously an important person to Li, who helped him feel connected to the community.

Mo also talked about meeting a Canadian stranger while hiking on a trail near the campus. After sharing details about his home and family, he decided to call his family from his cell phone. He described the story this way:

I was out walking, maybe a week ago, and I did a video call with my brother and he has small kids so I gave the phone to one of the seniors who was walking here and he started talking with my nephew. It was very nice. They don't know the language, but they just say hi and I told my nephew to say hi too. And he was really nice so he take the phone and start talking to him. And then he kept talking to me.

Through this serendipitous encounter, Mo seemed to feel some pride about being part of his new Canadian community. He wanted to introduce his new Canadian friend to his family through the video call even though it was someone he just met. These examples demonstrate the ways that outdoor recreation helped participants meet people and contributed to their overall sense of community through their communications in the new environment.

English communication. As suggested in the surveys, participants expected the outdoor environment would provide an important space to practice English. The interviews confirmed that outdoor recreation helped improve English communication skills and confidence. Particularly, for non-native English speakers, outdoor recreation provided an informal space to practice English. As participants improved their English skills, they were able to connect to other students and in their community. Karim described it this way,

I went to play a hockey game and I did enjoy it. Going to these activities is not just for the activities, but just to be with people. This is my first time being in

the English environment. I have never been in English environment before so I am just trying to engage in the city, talk with people, and improve my English.

For Karim, the goals of his outdoor recreation participation were less about the specific activities than about using outdoor recreation as a tool to improve his English communication skills. Bohai described how much his English improved,

When I got off the airplane and got to the gate where officer will ask you some questions, I could not even understand the questions... I do a lot of outside activities to practice my English and you can say I improved a lot I think. I can say somethings that I want to say and I can express myself ...it's really cool. As a foreigner for Canadian people, you need to think about how to join to talk, how to express yourself. Sometimes even you don't understand what they are talking about. You need to say something and don't be alone.

Karim and Bohai's experiences positioned outdoor recreation as an informal space for them to practice English, allowing them to express themselves and get more comfortable in the Canadian environment.

Learning about Canada. The outdoor environment was an important place to learn about Canada and Canadian culture. Ada summed it up this way, "you can't be outside without being part of the culture." For Mo, he was able to learn about Canadian culture by playing baseball, as he described, "we just talk with my teammates. We talk about sports. It is important for me to learn and know some Canadian culture and Canadian words."

Being outdoors also helped participants understand how Canadians act and interact. Li admired how male and female students participated together, commenting,

It was very surprising to see a girl play basketball, my Canadian friend who is a girl. Because playing basketball you need a stronger body and you need speed like a boy. I never see any girls play basketball with boys in China. I think, some girls will play basketball with and play some sports with their boyfriend but the girl doesn't play sports with boys together. It's cool. In my country, a boy like this and girl like this play sports but in Canada we are equal and we can do anything we want.

Outdoor recreation gave Li an opportunity to observe Canadian cultural values around equality through the mixed gender interactions that happened on the court. As Li spoke, I reflected on my own time as an international student in China, being the only female basketball player on the outdoor court, and how strange it seemed to my female classmates. Yet for me, basketball was a way to connect, despite gender differences, to get to know other (male) classmates and begin to understand Chinese culture. I resonated with Li's reflections of learning about Canadian culture through sport.

The opportunities to learn about Canada and the Canadian culture through participation in outdoor activities were important for participants. Mo described it this way, "I am not just a student here. My plan is to stay here. To become my home. So, it works for me to gain more knowledge about the highlights and about the city and other things, maybe make connections." There were many benefits to participation in the outdoors, but the activities themselves were less important than the interactions with people and the Canadian culture. Outdoor recreation helped develop a sense of community, build skills and confidence in English communication, and overall helped participants learn about the Canadian culture. A summary of the positive expectations confirmed is detailed in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8

Benefits of participating in Canadian outdoor recreation: Expectations confirmed

<u>Expected benefits</u>	<u>Lived experience</u>	<u>Expectation confirmed / disconfirmed</u>
Sense of community	“The activities we did with our class were interesting and exciting, fantastic. We make friends. We are happy to play with them.”	Positive expectation confirmed
English communication	<p>“I went to play a hockey game and I did enjoy it. Going to these activities is not just for the activities, but just to be with people. This is my first time being in the English environment. I have never been in English environment before so I am just trying to engage in the city, talk with people, and improve my English.”</p> <p>“As a foreigner for Canadian people, you need to think about how to join to talk, how to express yourself. Sometimes even you don’t understand what they are talking about. You need to say something and don’t be alone.”</p>	Positive expectation confirmed
Learning about Canada	<p>“I just want to know about the Canadian culture I think. You can’t be outside without being part of the culture.”</p> <p>“We just talk with my teammates. We talk about sports. It is important for me to learn and know some Canadian culture and Canadian words.”</p>	Positive expectation confirmed

The benefits that were described in this section were largely expected by participants, as detailed in the student survey findings. However, participants also benefitted from negative expectations that were unrealized, as described in the section which follows.

Negative expectations disconfirmed. While the above section explored the benefits that met participants expectations, some of the challenges that they expected were not experienced, particularly related to equipment, access, and time concerns. Drawing back on Oliver (1980),

negative expectations which are disconfirmed can contribute to a more overall positive view of the experience.

Equipment and access. As discussed above, the survey indicated that participants expected it would be difficult to find the right equipment or where to access the activity, and that their participation could be limited by the time they prioritized for other activities. However, the guided walk interviews revealed participants were able to find equipment and opportunities to participate through (a) friends, (b) school organized events, and (c) proximity and abundance of outdoor activities that made them easily accessible.

Friends were important in helping participants discover where to find equipment and how to access outdoor activities. As Mo said “I played ball hockey with some of my friends here, they have equipment” and Karim added “I was planning to go to snowshoeing and one of my friends told me that there is a place here where I can rent the equipment.”

The school organized events also helped facilitate outdoor experiences. Ada emphasized that opportunities were not hard to find, “it’s not a challenge if you want to do it. There is a lot for you to do... The school already provided the one that is convenient for you and it is all free.” Particularly, participants seemed appreciative of the number of activities that were organized by the school to help international students experience the outdoors. Fannie said,

I do activity at school, if school has activities to go to. They send an email to international students that there is a chance to go with other international students, hiking or camping. I say absolutely yes, I want to go with them.

The proximity and abundance of the outdoor environment in Canada also provided participants convenient access to outdoor activities. Bohai added, “in Canada, you can just go find a trail and go hiking. In (my home country), you have to go to a park or a formal walking

path.” Participants were appreciative of the abundance of nearby free outdoor space in Canada, especially relative to their home country. Bohai emphasized,

In (my country)...they just don't organize any activities for students because we are too busy in class. And, we don't have a lot of chance to do activity outside. Even if we want to go with friends hike or biking, usually we live so far, you would have to drive 2 or 3 hours. If you live in the right environment so it is easier to keep balance in your life.

The proximity that Bohai described meant that the outdoors was easily accessible, but also not over crowded. As we walked through the trails in the second interview, Li pointed to the surroundings and added these comments,

I think it's beautiful. If we want to see this kind of landscape near my hometown, we have to go to a park and we need to buy a ticket. In the autumn that ticket is so expensive because of the leaves change of color...and if you want to go you have to pay a lot of money. And with a lot of population if you want to go you should early or you can't find place to park. We have some holidays but in the holiday, everyone has free time so if you want to go outside you will see people, not landscape. On a trail without people, that is freedom and relaxing.

For participants, the Canadian environment was easy to access, as equipment was easy to find, opportunities were nearby and abundant making outdoor activity accessible and convenient. As the participants described the convenience of activities and equipment, they seemed to be appreciating the freedom that Canada offered. The

ease of access to the outdoors generated a sense of balance and freedom for participants instead of the expected challenges they expected.

A summary of expected challenges that were disconfirmed in participants lived experiences is provided in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9

Benefits of participating in Canadian outdoor recreation: Negative expectations disconfirmed

<u>Expected challenges</u>	<u>Lived experience</u>	<u>Expectation confirmed / disconfirmed</u>
Equipment and access	<p>“I was planning to go to snowshoeing and one of my friends told me that there is a place here where I can rent the equipment.”</p> <p>“I do activity at school, if school has activities to go to. They send an email to international students that there is a chance to go with other international students, hiking or camping, I say absolutely yes, I want to go with them.”</p> <p>“It’s not a challenge if you want to do it. There is a lot for you... The school already provided the one that is convenient for you and it is all free.”</p>	Negative expectation disconfirmed

Unexpected benefits. In the guided walks, participants confirmed additional unexpected benefits through their participation in outdoor recreation, specifically the contribution to their overall sense of well-being.

Sense of well-being. All participants described how participating in the outdoors contributed to their overall sense of well-being in Canada. Fannie described it this way, “you can have very good views, you will see something beautiful that will make you feel very nice,” and Fon added, “it makes me feel happy and can keep my body healthy.”

Participants anticipated that their new school schedules would keep them too busy to be able to commit time to outdoor recreation. However, participants described their outdoor

experiences as a retreat from their school work. Bohai put it this way, “my work was overloaded but I just tried to do something outside, just to stay focused.” Li also emphasized how the outdoor environment helped balance the busyness of school: “Most of my month last month was reading or studying, preparing too. So, it was serious work. Every day I went outside just to relax. Even sometimes it was snowing and windy but I went outside.”

For Bohai, the sense of well-being was driven by a reduction in feelings of loneliness that he experienced in Canada. Bohai shared his perspectives this way: “Inside is lonely. You feel helpless... Reading Week and Thanksgiving is really lonely. But when you walk outside in this country I feel more hopeful, I feel more comfortable, buoyant, elevated.” Overall, the outdoor environment seemed to bring participants a sense of well-being that was unexpected. Fannie summarized it this way: “When I go outside I feel nice. I was the kind of person that preferred to stay at home but, really, when I go outside it feels I really need to spend more time outside because the feeling makes me feel better.”

The walks with participants also contributed to developing a comfortable and stress-free research space, and through them I developed a sense of connectedness with the participants. I describe the benefits of the walking interview method in detail in Chapter 6. A summary of the unexpected benefits of outdoor recreation is provided in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10

Unanticipated benefits of participating in Canadian outdoor recreation

<u>Unanticipated benefits</u>	<u>Lived experience</u>
Sense of well-being	<p>“It makes me feel happy and can keep my body healthy.”</p> <p>“I really like the views in Canada. When I go outside I feel nice... I really need to spend more time outside because the feeling makes me feel better.”</p> <p>“Most of my month last month was reading or studying, preparing too. So, it was serious work. Every day I went outside just to relax. Even sometimes it was snowing and windy but I went outside.”</p>

Before summarizing the findings in this chapter, I acknowledge how much depth the co-paddlers helped me explore in this research landscape. The findings in this section were based on moving beyond the lines and contours that the land surveyors helped uncover, to paddle deeper with the co-paddlers to really get to know the landscape and set up of campsite. Oliver's (1980) work was especially useful in classifying experiences as positive and negative. The findings revealed several met and unmet expectations as well as unanticipated challenges and benefits of participating in outdoor recreation.

Paddling Forward: Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I present the findings of my journey with international students. This research is interpretive in nature, which necessitated an on-going analysis to support trustworthiness and dependability in the data quality, reliability, and credibility (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The survey data provided the first landmarks to help interpret this landscape, then, the interviews helped thread the unique visions of my co-paddlers, the international students who participated in this study. Participants expected many challenges in participating in

outdoor recreation, some which were realized. It was difficult for participants to find partners, adjust to the cold weather, stay safe, and very challenging to communicate with domestic students. Participants also had to deal with culture differences and discrimination as they pursued activities outside. However, there were also many important benefits for international students achieved through their actions and interactions in the new environment. Participating helped students feel a sense of community, while providing opportunities to practice English and learn about Canada. The transition to studies in Canada can bring challenges including cultural differences and isolation, but outdoor recreation opens opportunities for increased interactions and wellness.

The survey and the in-depth exploration with participants helped shape the final set up of the findings, like setting up a campsite. Like Callan (2017) described in reference to campsites in the opening of this Chapter, the findings are the centrepiece to this research study, as I presented and interpreted important passages shared by the participants. These findings also help mark the memories of this journey, which I discuss in Chapter 6, like sharing stories around the campfire, to help make this study complete.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS: STORIES BY THE CAMPFIRE

“Advice from a campfire: spark new ideas, bring people together, be a good storyteller”
(Unknown).

A long day of paddling often ends gathered around the campfire. The campfire centers the conversation as adventurers discuss the tales of the trip and lessons learned. In this chapter, I discuss and reflect on my journey with international students and the new ideas that the journey helped spark. The story centred on a main question, as I described in Chapter 1, *how do international student expectations of the Canadian outdoors compare to their lived experiences in their first year at a university in Northern Ontario, Canada?* This chapter offers a discussion and related reflections. First, I discuss the findings and share related literature to weave different perspectives together. Second, I consider the lessons learned through this research, including the applications and advice for future adventurers. Third, I mark the boundaries of this landscape by defining the limitations of this study and offer unanswered questions to help grow beyond this story. Finally, I reflect on this adventure, and my role in the stern navigating through it, and offer a conclusion to this story.

Weaving Stories: Discussion of Findings

As adventurers gather around a campfire, stories are often weaved together as people congregate to share their individual perspectives. The discussion and sharing of stories is important for paddlers. Mason (1988) pointed out about adventures in nature, “sometimes the joy comes from sharing the places we all love” (p. 4). The threads of perspectives woven by the campfire add to the paddlers’ own story, just as revisiting the work of other researchers helps

contextualize and situate the findings that I presented in Chapter 5. I begin this discussion with a summary of positive and negative experiences based on confirmed and disconfirmed expectations, as discussed in Chapter 5. Then I turn to the literature, aiming to bring people's diverse perspectives together and spark new ideas related to: (a) negative experiences, and (b) positive experiences.

Comparing Expectations and Experiences: A Summary

The international students who participated in this study shared their expected participation in outdoor recreation, including expected challenges and benefits. In Chapter 5, I detailed how several expectations were confirmed while others were disconfirmed, and illuminated additional unexpected experiences. I used Oliver's (1980) EDP framework to classify the experiences as positive or negative, as described in Chapter 3, to position positive experiences as those which confirm positive expectations or disconfirm negative expectations. Negative experiences arise from the confirmation of negative expectations or positive expectations which are disconfirmed (Oliver, 1980). There were also additional experiences that fell outside student expectations, which were classified as positive or negative experiences based on my analysis of the findings. Participants experienced five negative experiences and five positive experiences as summarized in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Summary of positive and negative experiences based on confirmed and disconfirmed expectations

Lived negative experiences	<u>Negative expectations confirmed</u>	<u>Positive expectations disconfirmed</u>	<u>Unexpected challenges</u>
	Finding partners	Communicating with domestic students	Cultural differences
	Cold weather		
	Safety		

Lived positive experiences	<u>Negative expectations disconfirmed</u>	<u>Positive expectations confirmed</u>	<u>Unexpected benefits</u>
	Equipment and access	Sense of community	Sense of well-being
		English communication	
		Learning about Canada	

In the sections that follow, I weave these findings with the literature, first through the lens of negative experiences, then focusing on positive experiences.

Weaving Stories of Negative Experiences

Participants experienced challenges related to finding partners, Canada's cold weather, and safety. These challenges had been anticipated, which minimized some of the associated stresses. However, students expected that outdoor activity would also bring the benefit of communicating with domestic students, which, in reality, they found to be a significant challenge and a barrier to their participation. Although the interview participants recognized that language played a role in their limited communication with domestic students, both English language learners and Karim as an English speaker revealed that the challenges went beyond language to include, for example, different mannerisms. Such experiences, or lack thereof, reduce the opportunity for domestic and international students to come to new understandings (Dewey, 1938). These unmet expectations and challenges are of particular importance, given a revisiting of Dewey (1938) who noted that the intensity and direction (positive or negative) of the emotions that are stirred up by an experience impacts its perceived value. "Emotional stirring" was especially evident in the interview participants' revelations of unanticipated cultural challenges. Students lived negative cross-cultural experiences. They described cultural barriers to their participation and shared examples of overhearing negative assumptions about their cultural

background while they participated in outdoor leisure. These findings align with Kuh's (2005) observation of a gap between student expectations and experiences, as students tend to engage less in co-curricular and campus recreation activities than they expected, especially in their first year of studies. The gap between expectations and experiences can lead to the evaluation of the experience as negative, as Oliver (1980) described. Ahmed (2006) reported that campus experiences that failed to meet student expectations drove student dissatisfaction and resulted in low engagement or complete withdrawals from the campus. In the section below, I situate the challenges within the current literature through two main focuses, (a) interactions, which includes the difficulty in finding partners, communicating with domestic students, and cultural differences, and (b) weather and safety.

Interactions. Participants in this study described an eagerness to get to know other people through outdoor recreation, particularly domestic students. This desire to integrate in the new community through the social environment supports Vygotsky's (1986) sociocultural theory which placed significance on the meaningful experiences that are shaped in and through the non-formal environment. In this sense, the participants' social interactions in the outdoors shaped their experiences in the new culture. Unfortunately, participation in these social interactions were challenging. Given Vygotsky's (1986) theory that asserts that learning occurs through social interaction, the challenges to such interaction may have minimized both the participants and the domestic students' opportunities to learn. In Chapter 3, I highlighted Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development where international students could develop through interaction, the interview participants, however, underscored the potential opportunities for domestic students to also develop and broaden their understanding through interactions with international students.

Finding partners and communicating with domestic students proved difficult for the international student participants. It is important to recall that the international students in this study were part of a university that is home to only 1% of Ontario's international student population (423 students) (CUDO, 2015). For many domestic students at this institution, contact and experience with international students is minimal. In addition, some assumption or fear could be present that international students in Canada "displace the local", taking away scholarships, program spaces, campus jobs, or future opportunities, from domestic students (Jones, 2009).

Ada shared that he thought that outdoor recreation would allow him to learn about other cultures, but despite a desire to partner with others, interacting with domestic students proved difficult. Mo summed it up this way: "it's hard to find people to go with." These findings support Shifman et al., (2012) who found that international students at an Ontario university described having "no one to participate with" as the greatest challenge to participation in leisure time physical recreation. Part of the reason that finding partners was so difficult was that, as Li described, the way international and domestic students socialize is "very different."

Communicating with domestic students was difficult as Fannie expressed when she shared her feelings that it was sometimes "hard to talk to Canadian people." Zhou and Zhang (2014) added that international students in Canada did not regularly take part in leisure activities with domestic students, and Campbell and Zeng's (2006) noted that international students had difficulty blending into a new campus. The lack of communication with domestic students and feelings of disconnect between cultural values is an important predictor of student integration. As Tinto (1975; 1999) explored, students who do not integrate with local students and in the local environment have higher dropout rates and decreased overall involvement in the campus life.

The ability to find partners, and desire to partner, for the purpose of outdoor recreation, was influenced by diverse cultural orientations, as Hofstede (2011) described. In Chapter 3, I described Hofstede's (2011) work as a means to heighten my own awareness of my position of power in these interactions, yet it was the interview participants who revealed a power distance between themselves and domestic students that they did not anticipate. Cultural differences drove some of the challenges in connecting with domestic students. Participants described feeling that, as international students, they were being defined by their cultural beliefs even though domestic students generally lacked an understanding of their culture. As I shared in the findings in Chapter 5, Karim was dismayed with the comments from his classmates: "everyone talks to me about terrorists. A lot of Canadians do not know who is Allah and what it means to be Muslim. We are humans just like you...Don't define me by my religion. It is my right to have my beliefs. We share the same city." The participants voiced concerns about their cross-cultural interactions, but their experiences did not seem as negative as those that Houshmand et al., (2014) described in their story of Asian international student experiences at a Canadian university. In their study, participants shared that they felt excluded, avoided, insulted and ridiculed, rendered invisible or that their cultural values were completely disregarded, even though they had a desire to have meaningful interactions with their Canadian peers.

Brown and Jones (2013) also detailed the negative experiences of international students in the United Kingdom including incidents of racism and antipathy, which triggered feelings of sadness, disappointment, homesickness, and anger. There is still much variance between international student cross-cultural experiences within the literature and much more to explore related to the factors that support international students in finding partners to experience the outdoors and developing more positive cultural interactions. Understanding diverse experience is

especially important to inform the positioning of the Canadian education brand. Canada continues to position itself as a place where international students can interact in “safe, diverse, and exceptionally beautiful surroundings” (CMEC, 2015, p. 15). However, these findings suggest that experiences and interactions in the Canadian outdoors were not always positive, and not well aligned with the promises of the Canadian brand.

Weather and safety. Cold weather and safety did pose challenges to participation in outdoor recreation. Participants, like Mo, described wearing the wrong clothes, or like Karim, underestimated the cold wind and snow. Li shared that beyond the challenge of the weather, there were hesitations and safety concerns in going outside on unfamiliar trails or with the chance to encounter wildlife. Despite the challenges that the snow and winter weather posed, participants were also eager to take part in new activities in the snow. There was a learning curve that participants needed to overcome to adjust to the weather and be able to enjoy recreation outside.

In my previous work, I noted that Canada’s winter weather allowed international students to take part in Canadian sports that they had previously not experienced, including skiing and snowboarding (Brunette, 2009). However, there is very little in the literature about the impact of the Canadian climate on international student experiences in Canada. Other researchers have considered the role of climate on international tourism (de Freitas, 2017), but there is much room to explore regarding the impact of the weather given that Canadian universities use images of the outdoor environment as part of the experience that they are selling to international students (CMEC, 2015). Universities play a role in setting expectations through their recruitment materials and descriptions of campus life. Images that students receive through print material and institutional websites can impact expectations and influence students’ choice of institutions (Wilkins & Huisman, 2011). Outside of the academic literature, many Canadian universities

share advice about preparing for winter in Canada through their orientation guides and websites, including average snowfalls and appropriate clothing selections (e.g., McGill, 2017; University of Toronto, 2017). I return to the impact of the weather again in the lessons learned about the guided walks.

My findings build on the exploration of negative international student experiences in the literature, however there are additional unanswered questions that can be raised related to partnering and cultural interactions, and experiences with the distinctly Canadian weather, which I propose before concluding this chapter.

Weaving Stories of Positive Experiences

Participants' stories revealed that many of their positive expectations of outdoor recreation were realized in the participants' lived experiences. First, students expected that equipment and access might have posed barriers to their participation in outdoor activities, but instead they had positive experiences with easy access to equipment and finding free space to access the outdoors. Second, the realization of expectations around developing a sense of being part of the Canadian community, and using outdoor activity to practice English and learn about Canada contributed to the evaluation of the experience as positive. Third, the benefits continued with unexpected experiences in the outdoor landscapes contributing to students' overall sense of well-being. The discussion of positive experiences is woven through three threads, (a) equipment and access, (b) Canadian community which includes developing a sense of community, practicing English, and learning about Canada, and (c) overall wellness.

Equipment and access. Access to equipment and opportunities to participate were more easily accessible than participants expected. Particularly, participants were able to find areas to rent or borrow equipment, as Karim shared, and were grateful for the opportunities organized by

the school for international students. Canada's free and abundant outdoor spaces also meant that outdoor recreation was convenient, as Bohai emphasized. These findings differed from the work of Shifman et al. (2012) who found that the international students were discouraged from participating in leisure time physical activity since they felt that they lacked time, did not know what activities were available or felt that facilities were too crowded. The size of the university, number of students, and urban or rural setting may impact students' ease of access, which other researchers may want to explore further.

Canadian community. Being outside created a space for participants to be part of the Canadian community. Li and Mo both described how meeting strangers outside helped them feel connected to the community. Participating, as Karim described, was less about the activity itself and more about participating in the Canadian environment and in an English setting. Similarly, Zhang and Zhou (2010) found that international students who made friends with native English speakers had higher levels of satisfaction with their academic studies. Participants arrived with expectations related to integration in the Canadian community which shaped their actions, interactions and overall experiences in the new environment. The findings align with Tinto's (1999) model of student integration, which positioned expectations as a way to shape the experiences and interactions in the new community, and a student's ability to integrate in the new educational environment.

Learning about Canada and Canadian culture through outdoor recreation was important for participants, as Mo emphasized: "it works for me to gain more knowledge about the highlights and about the city and other things, maybe make connections." These connections are important for students, as Yeh and Inose (2003) also noted. They found that while international students experienced more stress than domestic students, students who felt connected to social

networks were more satisfied with their experience and better able to adapt to the cultural transition (Yeh & Inose, 2003). Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) reinforced this message by sharing that international students, with greater participation in campus activities, had decreased stress related to the cultural transition. For this reason, my research findings support the recommendation of Shifman et al. (2012) for universities to use recreation to foster positive educational experiences that enhance students' overall sense of community and satisfaction. Recommendations and implications for universities are discussed in the section that follows.

Sense of well-being. Through my journey and explorations with international students, and as a former international student, I concur with the findings of other researchers who observed that cross-cultural experiences can generate physical, mental, and social stress (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Oberg, 1954). The transition to a new educational environment can be accompanied by difficulties in building social relationships with domestic students (Brunette, 2009; Walseth, 2006). There is real value in considering outdoor recreation to reduce some of the stress and help build a feeling of belonging in the Canadian community. The time that the participants in this study spent outside contributed to feeling healthy and their overall sense of well-being. The time spent outside also helped participants decrease feelings of loneliness and uncertainty. As Bohai shared, "inside is lonely...when you walk outside in this country, I feel more hopeful, I feel more comfortable, buoyant, elevated." Bohai's comments about the benefits of being outside reminded me of Callan's (2006) words, "in Nature you're never alone" (p. 67).

International students need to be able to find partners and be ready to participate comfortably and safely enjoy Canada's outdoors. Haase, Steptoe, Sallis and Wardle (2004) found that most international students participate in physical activity less than three times per week, but those that did participate yielded positive health benefits. Even just being near nature is linked to

higher overall life and employment satisfaction (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). The benefits of outdoor recreation combine both the advantages of physical activity and of being in nature.

The overall findings in the story of this present study extends my previous work, which positioned physical activity as a way for international students to reduce stress, make social connections, improve language skills, and learn about the Canadian environment (Brunette, 2009; Brunette et al., 2011). Extending to the outdoor environment added more clarity about the benefits of recreation in nature for international students and, in the next section, I add lessons learned to help future researchers extend these findings.

Lessons Learned: Implications and Advice for Future Adventurers

The reports and lessons learned shared by other adventurers contribute to the landscape of research that helps others prepare for their own future journeys. The lessons learned can act as advice for future adventurers to advance the journey further, deeper, or more thoughtfully. In this section, I describe the implications of this work, specifically in the context of Canadian universities. Then, I explore the lessons learned about the guided walk method in an outdoor setting to extend the use of this unique mobile methodology to other researchers.

Implications

In many years by the campfire, I've heard stories about how the journey contributed to broader lessons learned beyond the adventure itself. When paddlers tell stories about their journeys, it heightens an understanding of the landscape and willingness to improve or protect it. In this section, I describe the implications of this study with specific attention to Canadian universities' international student recruitment and services, and the personal applications of this journey to my own work with diverse post-secondary students and in informing my future interests.

University international student recruitment and services. International students were vital co-creators of this research study, with 47 students contributing to the survey of the landscape and 7 students co-paddling with me to a deeper exploration of their outdoor recreation expectations and experiences. The experiences of the participants in this study, along with those woven into this chapter from the literature, enhance understandings of international student expectations of Canadian outdoor recreation and how their experiences are satisfying these expectations. The lessons learned through their participation and contributions are important to share with Canadian universities who aim to recruit and serve international students and foster appropriate student expectations. The images that students receive through print material and institutional websites can impact expectations and influence students' choice of institutions (Wilkins & Huisman, 2011). At an institutional level, to help generate positive Canadian experiences, universities need to understand and manage student expectations and align services, learning opportunities and social experiences to meet student expectations (Arambewela et al., 2006).

The findings of this study have been shaped by the perspectives of the people on the journey: I was at the stern and the participants at the bow navigating this landscape toward our campsite. The findings presented in this chapter were built on both the participant and my own interpretations as researcher, as van Manen (1990) recommended, which, together, helped shape this study. The stories that participants shared, especially when woven with the work of other researchers, helped create a list of recommendations, as detailed below, aiming to enhance the outdoor recreation and overall experiences of future international students. The following recommendations for international student recruitment and services are organized in six phases

of the international student journey, (a) recruitment, (b) preparation, (c) orientation, (d) planning, (e) delivery, and (f) evaluation.

Recruitment. The initial stage is to appeal to what international students need or want from their experiences at the destination university. The university should:

1. Showcase desirable outdoor recreation opportunities in university marketing materials aiming to influence student decision making about the destination university.
2. Clearly define expectations of the outdoors, including climate, necessary outdoor clothing and gear, and opportunities to participate, particularly in winter activities to help prepare students for snow or cold weather.
3. Define what types of social interactions between international and domestic students are desired through participation in outdoor recreation.

Preparation phase. Prior to an international student's arrival on campus, universities could support positive experiences through these actions:

1. Share links to Google Earth or Street View for students to experience the campus and nearby surroundings virtually prior to their arrival.
2. Invite the local community to participate in a donation drive for winter clothing and gear to provide to international students to eliminate some of the financial stress of gearing up for the Canadian outdoors.
3. Develop intercultural training for outdoor education leaders to increase leaders' cultural self-awareness, cross-cultural competency, communication and effectiveness in responding to the needs of culturally diverse participants, which aligns with the recommendations of Thompson and Horvath (2007) and Zucker (2012).

Planning phase. In completing the planning of international student outdoor recreation activities, universities could support positive experiences through these actions:

1. Plan group outdoor recreation activities in all seasons geared to international students, including opportunities such as canoeing, camping, hiking, and skating, and appropriate risk management protocols in coordination with the university's safety office.
2. Invite upper year international students to participate in the planning of outdoor activities to identify any barriers to participation and encourage social support through availability of partners.
3. Invite Canadian students to participate as outdoor activity mentors to facilitate the desired interaction between international and Canadian students.
4. Create a schedule of accessible and appropriate outdoor recreation opportunities to ease students' ability to find convenient activities and partners.

Orientation phase. During the first week of arrival (e.g., during the international orientation week), universities could support positive experiences through these actions:

1. Introduce students to outdoor recreation services and opportunities, with an emphasis on free campus and community activities and lending programs, and distribute schedule of planned events.
2. Clarify student expectations and desired participation in local outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., through a web survey) to tailor future programming appropriately.
3. Remind students of appropriate winter clothing and gear and where to locate these items (e.g., provide a shopping list or directions to locate donated items, as per item 4 above).
4. Make outdoor recreation part of the orientation schedule to allow international students to try out activities and help maintain their sense of wellness.

Delivery phase. During the delivery of a planned international student outdoor activity, universities could support positive experiences through these actions:

1. Offer training or instruction in using equipment, and adhere to risk management protocols.
2. Bring extra outdoor gear for students who may not have planned appropriately for the weather conditions (e.g., sunscreen, hat, winter mitts).
3. Check on students' comfort level during the activity including feeling safe, warm enough, and interest in continuing the activity.

Evaluation phase. In the final stage, the university should consider how the activity will be evaluated upon completion to tailor future programming through these actions:

1. Provide an opportunity for students to give formal feedback through a short survey or focus group session to evaluate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the activity, interactions through the activity, and overall experience to date.
2. Record other feedback received by email or in person during or after the activity to guide future planning.
3. Ask students for permission to share positive comments in future marketing materials to contribute to expectation setting.

In the internationalization of universities and the greater welcoming of international students to Canadian campuses, the outdoor environment offers recruitment appeal and begins to set student expectations about campus life. The six recommendations, above, guide universities in recognizing and stimulating positive international student experiences in the Canadian outdoors to promote met expectations, student satisfaction and support overall well-being.

Personal applications. I have spent 15 years employed in the university setting, beginning as an international student recruiter, then advisor, and moving to a special advisor role on student retention and sustainability. These research findings are applicable to my work environment as I continue to commit to understanding the expectations and experiences of international students in an effort to promote student retention and campus engagement. Through each interaction with an international student, I felt like I deepened my understanding of diversity and the challenges of cross-cultural interactions.

Through this research project, I am prepared to advocate for the important role of outdoor recreation as part of the holistic supports for positive international student transitions, adhering to the recommendations described above. I note that outdoor recreation has many benefits for international students, yet it should be complemented by other campus supports. For example, Swail (2004) noted that post-secondary institutions have the ability to impact student persistence by focusing on five institutional factors including, recruitment and admissions, financial aid, student services, academic services, and curriculum and instruction. The current study contributes to areas related to recruitment and student services by fostering clear expectations and supportive environments for international students, but leaves room for other important areas of support.

As I reflect on my research journey, I also think back to Chambers' (2009) words: "Sometimes looking for one thing, you find another" (p.46). The journey through my doctoral work was also one of self-reflection as I considered my own identity and how it braided with my identity as a researcher. It was through this journey, that I explored my Métis roots and developed an interest in Indigenous methodologies. Without beginning with a specific Indigenous lens on this research, I now understand that my particular worldview, my

connectedness to the land, and my desire to bond through shared stories with participants, could provide stepping stones to explore Indigenous ways of knowing, as described by Indigenous scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) to inform my future research. More exploration is warranted in the outdoor education literature and can extend into wild pedagogy, as Jickling's (2016) defined, to consider what people value in experiencing the wild, and how learning in and through the wild can be more welcoming and relevant for diverse students.

Personally, I am considering ways to continue to weave the threads of this study into new directions, particularly with an interest in introducing international students to the outdoors through guided canoe trips in Northern Ontario. In the next section, I expand beyond the implications of this study by offering advice to refine the guided walk method to enhance the experiences of future researchers and participants.

Lessons on the Guided Walk Method: Advancing the Tools

Just as a canoe trip impacts the paddlers, a research journey influences the researcher and participants. In this section, I reflect on the impacts of this study and particularly the challenges and benefits of the guided walk interview method. I also offer advice to improve and leverage the potential of guided walks in an outdoor setting, as a way to help advance the tool for future adventurers.

Challenges of the guided walk. Through the study, I observed several challenges in using the guided walk methodology including, (a) weather, (b) privacy and noise, and (c) balanced relationships with participants. Each challenge is discussed, below, along with recommendations to minimize these challenges.

Weather. The weather was an important consideration in the guided walk interviews, especially in the context of interviewing international students who had just arrived in Canada.

As I described in the findings in Chapter 5, the weather did pose a challenge to participation in outdoor recreation and that also included participation in the outdoor guided walks. As a Canadian researcher and outdoor enthusiast, I am accustomed to the Canadian weather and knew how to adequately prepare for time outdoors. Some participants, however, arrived to the interviews unprepared for the weather even after being reminded in the confirmation emails to dress warmly. In my second interview with Karim in early November, I said “I am worried about you. You are not wearing a hat and mitts.” As per the ethics protocol, I offered to move the interviews inside when I thought the participants were uncomfortable. I ended one interview with Karim inside in a quiet area of the campus near a window after a brief walk outside when he seemed uncomfortable. During an interview with Mo, we also moved inside to the same location to warm up near the end of the interview wrap-up phase. The indoor contingency plan was useful in continuing the interviews comfortably.

Carpiano (2009) also found that walking interviews could be influenced by weather, finding that winter months and snowfall could be incompatible with walking interviews, yet also observed that conducting interviews in the winter months provided important insights into how participants interact in the environment during inclement weather. I observed fairly limited awareness from participants about how to dress for Canadian winter conditions. In the second interview, I asked Fon about the weather and her comfort walking in the first snowy days of November. She replied, “that’s okay for me it’s more small snow. The weather is not very cold but I didn’t bring my scarf.” Two recommendations come from these encounters with challenging weather. First, participants do need to be reminded to dress according to the outdoor conditions, with specific examples of the type of clothing and footwear to wear. Second, researchers should be prepared to have appropriate layers of clothing available as needed to lend

to participants, such as an extra pair of gloves, mitts, tuque and scarf for winter walks, or a water bottle, hat and sunscreen available for hot weather.

Privacy and noise. As I discussed in the ethics protocol in Chapter 4, I was prepared for the lack of privacy that could accompany the outdoor guided walks. The participants and I both recognized other pedestrians while we were on the walks, signalling to them with small waves and nods but not stopping to talk. Our experiences reinforced the work of Dubé et al. (2014) who noted that one of the limitations of the guided walk method is in maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the need to share the likelihood of encountering others during the walks. The participants did not seem to be bothered by encounters with others, but the random meetings did pose a greater challenge to the quality of the audio recording. As others walked by, or rode by on bikes in some cases, the audio recording picked up some background voices and noise that made transcription more difficult sometimes needing repeating four or five times to decipher the participants' words. Carpiano (2009) also noted that the quality of recording was impacted when walking in traffic areas or when other people were in proximity of the interview. Based on this research experience involving guided-walks, it is recommended that future researchers using the walking interview method pause the conversation when others are approaching to help maintain the privacy of the conversation as well as to maintain quality audio recordings.

Balanced relationships with participants. Walking outside together created an open and comfortable space and the three-stage interviews meant that I spent extended periods of time shared with participants. The outdoor setting and multiple interviews allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of what it is like to be an international student experiencing the Canadian outdoors. As I described in my methodology, I wanted to go beyond providing a thick

description of the students' experience, as would have been appropriate in a descriptive phenomenological approach (van Manen, 1990). Instead, I committed to an interpretive phenomenological design, as described by van Manen (1990) which required me to familiarize myself with the participants and our research context. A balanced relationship with participants, and my reflections on this relationship, was central understanding their experiences and to committing to a research process that was participant-centered and committed to in-depth exploration.

As I entered the third stage of interviews, I felt like I had developed very positive relationships with these research participants, which was facilitated through the guided walks. However, I was worried that the relationship with participants felt unbalanced in that the participants did much more sharing about their experiences than I did. I found myself reflecting on my own experiences as an international student, particularly in China, and felt that I wanted to empathize with the participants and tell them how my experience improved with more time abroad. Yet, the intent of this study was to hear and understand participant experiences, from their points of view, so I shared less openly and freely about my own experiences. Participants knew general information about my experience, "I was an international student too. I studied in China and in Ireland", and I shared a few more details with some participants in the pre-interview warm up conversations, but my additional comments were serendipitous and not part of the sharing with every participant.

My conversation with Li about gender differences in sport participation felt especially unbalanced as I reflected on my experiences as a female playing basketball with male students in China but I did not share these reflections with Li even though I felt I had lots of commentary to add. I considered Hofstede's (2011) cultural dimensions as I explored Li's comments, and aimed

to understand how Li's cultural background impacted the set of assumptions and expectations that were different from my own. Li eluded to a different masculinity-femininity orientation with expectations of females being more modest and less competitive than males.

To me, this research journey did allow me to reflect on my past cross-cultural experiences, which helped situate myself in my study, even though I shared minimal personal reflections with participants. After the interviews, I did share more practical advice with some participants, directing them to outdoor equipment and opportunities, but future researchers may want to consider the boundaries of their sharing and giving back to participants. Swartz's (2011), informed through work with impoverished youth in South Africa, made an interesting case for researchers to exceed ethical standards when studies include vulnerable youth participants. Swartz (2011) used outings and adventure camps with participants to help build trusting relationships with participants, noting that the informal outings allowed her to give back to participants while they also, "fast-tracked our relationship, while providing young people with opportunities to rock climb and abseil, hike, whale-watch, swim, eat well, and escape township life" (p.53). As Swartz (2011) explained, there was value in mutual sharing between the participant and the researcher:

These relationships also helped stories to emerge that were merely difficult to tell, and that young people were keen to tell. Informal conversations were frequently revisited during subsequent interviews as young people gathered courage to provide more details or confessed to untruths they had initially told (p. 54).

Future researchers are encouraged to consider how much sharing they will do in building trusting relationships with participants. In the context of my study, recommendations for

participant follow up include sharing a list of local free outdoor trail systems and equipment lending programs. For example, I followed up with all survey participants to express thanks and offer links to campus and nearby recreation opportunities, and shared instructions with guided walk participants on how to access the free snowshoe lending program at the local public library. It would have been beneficial to include someone from the campus recreation office in the participant recruitment presentations to help follow up regarding campus outdoor recreation opportunities, locating equipment and local recreation clubs, since the presentation generated some interest in these activities even among those who did not participate in the study. An additional recommendation is to offer a free outdoor fun activity to participants, in coordination with the international student or campus recreation offices, such as a day for participants to try canoeing and stand up paddle boarding as a way to give back to participants.

Benefits of the guided walk. So many times during this research process have I thought back to Nietzsche's (1889) words, "all truly great thoughts are conceived by walking." There were numerous benefits to the guided walk identified by participants and by myself as researcher, including (a) just two people talking, (b) dynamic environment, and (c) contributions to overall researcher and participant wellness.

Just two people talking. Through the interviews, participants shared that they enjoyed the open and comfortable space that the walks provided for one-on-one sharing. More importantly for researchers, the guided walk provided a space that facilitated trust building with the participants. Fannie described it this way:

Walking is better because when you sit it's face to face and when you are walking it's side by side. I think side by side feels more close. When you are close to some people we will talk more and speak more sentences or you open

more comfortable...Before I started I thought it's going to be very difficult for me and now I feel it's okay, I can do it. Because there is only two people and we talk just directly to each other and it's not like in the class. It's more like just two people talking.

Fannie seemed to appreciate the informal environment that the guided walks provided. Li shared a similar thought as he summarized, "it's like talking to one of my friends." As the researcher, I also felt this easy back and forth sharing with participants. Vannini and Vannini (2017) considered walking as a wilder way of knowing, advocating that the walking interview method can help researchers be open to perspectives and less predetermined by a certain research direction. As researcher, I felt that the guided walks created an open environment for participants to share their experiences and perspectives allowing me to gain a depth of knowledge, and new and unexpected insights into their experiences. Carpiano (2009) described similar benefits in using walking interviews, noting the unique perspectives that can be gleaned by examining "a participant's interpretations of their context while experiencing these contexts" producing both an "immediate sensation" and a time to reflect on memories of past experiences (p. 12). Through the walks, I felt like we were just two people talking, as Fannie described, which led to a better understanding of their unique perspectives.

Future researchers can use outdoor guided walks in their goals of developing an open and in-depth one-on-one relationship with the participants. This method feels less formal than traditional seated interviews, and the reduction of eye contact and other barriers (such as a desk between the researcher and participant) allows free flowing dialogue and building open and trusting relationships. With the development of these relationships, researchers must consider

how they will give back to participants, as described in the previous section, relating to balancing the relationship with participants.

Dynamic environment. The outdoor guided walks created a dynamic research environment that encouraged initial and continued participation. As per the guided walk method, I met participants at a designated location and then was open to either of us (me or the participant) choosing the direction as we headed out on the trail. In reality, participants looked to me to guide the location of each walk. This was beneficial to participants in discovering new trails. On a walk with Bohai to the highest point of the campus trail system, he was very happy to learn about the trail and shared that he planned to return. Bohai said: “Now I know this trail...the outdoors are good for creative writing, as meditating in this environment. I could stay here and work all day.” I had a similar conversation with Ada, he was pleased with learning about new trails and new perspectives on using the trails: “I found new trails. But I never thought of going there when the snow is coming. This is really good.” As I explained in the findings, the walks were part of the cultural learning that occurred. Participating in the guided walks, and learning about the new trails, was part of learning about Canada and taking part in a Canadian experience.

It is recommended that future adventurers who use an outdoor guided walk be familiar with the trails, including the distance, terrain, and possible loops back to the designated meeting spot, to help participants learn about the trails. Adding highlight points on the walk, such as a highpoint view or lake, is also valuable for participants to learn about returning to these spots on their own. Researchers can also use guided walks indoors as Dubé et al. (2014) did, still finding that walking side by side in a specific environment provided rich and open dialogue.

Researcher and participant wellness. The guided walk provided an opportunity to be outside and also participate in physical activity, which both contributed to my own overall

wellness and the well-being of participants. Being outside, I resonated with Bohai's words: "when you are walking maybe you breathe fresh air that makes you have more ideas." For me, being in nature helps bring new ideas and walking on my own after the interviews and through the research process was an important way to help organize and digest what participants had shared. Bates and Rhys-Taylor (2017) summed the experience nicely,

Walking is a brilliant form of exercise for our stiff bodies and a way of reinvigorating our engagement with the social world. It induces a mobile, grounded perspective and foregrounds corporeal, sensual and affective matters.

Walking collects together visions, smells, tactilities, sounds and tastes with various degrees of association and intimacy (p. 6).

On a physical level, during the interview weeks, I averaged over 10 kilometers of walking per day, according to my Fibit exercise tracking device. I concur with Fon, who described the guided walks this way: "it's really cool, I mean we can use like sport at the same time we can talk. It's really fun." It is important for doctoral students, and their participants, to seek out opportunities to exercise and maintain a healthy balance between studies, work, and life, as Martinez, Ordu, Della Salla and McFarlane (2013) found. As I compare to interviews that I had completed in previous research in a traditional seated format, the guided walk method had the advantage of getting me moving so that when I returned from an interview I was ready to get back to seated indoor work and to keep my research progress moving.

Future adventurers should consider their own physical wellness in scheduling guided walks, considering how much time they are ready to spend outside on their feet as a guide to whether to schedule multiple interviews in one day. Also, consider extra time to walk alone at the end of the interview to help organize thoughts and generate ideas reflecting on the interview.

Future researchers may also be interested in specifically quantifying the guided walk in terms of number of steps, kilometres, pace or calories burned as a way to evaluate the physical impact of using the guided walk method, which does not currently exist in the literature.

In Table 6.2, I summarize the recommendations made above to help advance the guided walk method.

Table 6.2

Summary of the recommendations to advance the guided walk method

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Weather	<p>Offer alternative indoor locations for participant comfort</p> <p>Remind participants of appropriate dress for conditions, with specific examples of the required types of clothing and footwear</p> <p>Have extra layers of clothing available to lend to participants, appropriate for conditions</p>
Privacy and noise	<p>Alert participants to lack of privacy and likelihood of encountering others that can accompany guided walks</p> <p>Pause conversations while others are approaching to maintain privacy and quality of audio recording</p>
Balanced relationship with participants	<p>Establish how much sharing and interaction with participants is appropriate related to directing participants to equipment and activities, or offering to participate with them in non-research related activities</p> <p>Organize a free outdoor activity at the conclusion of the study to thank participants for their participation, in coordination with the international student or campus recreation office</p>
Just two people talking	Use guided walks to develop open and in-depth one-on-one relationships with participants
Dynamic environment	Be familiar with the environment surrounding the campus to introduce participants to new or convenient trails and highlight spots

Researcher and participant wellness	Be ready for an increase in physical activity, using guided walks to maintain a healthy study-life balance
	Determine the number of interviews that can be completed in one day based on the time the researcher is ready to spend outside
	Allow extra time at the end of the interview to organize thoughts and reflect on the interview
	Quantify the physical aspects of the guided walk by recording number of steps, kilometers, pace or calories

In the next section, I share the limitations of this study to continue to guide the journeys ahead.

Marking the Boundaries: Limitations of this Study

Beyond this study, there is so much left to explore. In reference to canoeing, Mason (1988) said “there is only one thing about living in Canada that makes me sad: I will never be able to paddle all the rivers and lakes in my lifetime” (p.83). Through this study, I will not paddle all the waters, but instead ask more questions that perhaps can inspire other researchers to offer interpretations through their own eyes. The findings in this study are limited to my interpretations which, I acknowledge, could be influenced by my own passion for the outdoors and the way this passion extended to participants’ views and experiences. This research was aimed at understanding the gap between expectations and experiences and it inspires several other questions which could be pursued in future research. In the sections that follow, I detail the limitations related to, (a) the study location, (b) diversity of participants, and (c) survey setting and language, and conclude by offering (d) further questions to help guide future research in this landscape.

Location

The location of this study was limited to the expectations and experiences of participants at one university in Northern Ontario, in a city where only 2% of residents are visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2009). In addition, fewer international students choose universities in Northern Ontario, compared to studies in more populated regions such as Toronto (see Table 2.1 for a breakdown of international students by institution) (CUDO, 2015). The university in this study context is home to only 1% of Ontario's international student population (423 students) (CUDO, 2015).

While the location was limited, the context of this study extends from Houshmand et al. (2014)'s study of the social experiences of Asian students at a big university in a large cosmopolitan city in Canada. They recommended that future studies help explore the experiences of international students in smaller cities in Ontario where there may be smaller populations of international students and visible minorities. My journey with international students was located in a smaller city than the setting of Houshmand et al.'s (2014) work, along with fewer international students and a smaller minority population. The findings from this journey differed from those of Houshmand et al. (2014) who discovered themes of withdrawal and retreating to areas in the city where students could be with other visible minorities and people who shared their culture.

The expansive landscape of Canada could provide a rich diversity of experiences in different locations. For example, international student experiences at universities in smaller or more rural cities may have less access to services, contacts or programming in their home languages, decreased availability of ethnic foods, or a diaspora support system. Similarly, international student experiences at Canadian colleges may be distinct based on different

recruitment materials, initial expectations, student goals, supports or other factors. At the university level, the location of a university near land or water trails may also influence how much the university emphasizes outdoor recreation to its students and overall accessibility by students.

Diversity of Participants

As described in Chapter 5's profiling of the co-paddlers of this journey, this study was informed by surveys completed by 47 participants, and the deeper exploration of experiences was limited to 7 participants from 5 different countries who had been in Canada for less than 3 months and had no prior visits to Canada. The diversity of participants in this study did not aim to represent the diversity of international students in Canada, which the Canadian Bureau of International Education (2015) summed as 336,497 students from 194 countries including China (33%), India (12%), South Korea (6%), France (6%), Saudi Arabia (4%) and United States (4%) and growing numbers from Nigeria, Vietnam, and Brazil.

This study was focused on the experiences of new international students; however, some students may have had different interests and exposure to Canadian culture. Little information was collected about participants' prior formal educational experiences, which could have included interactions and instructions with Canadian teachers abroad or in their home country, or prior visits to countries more similar to Canada including the United States. There is value in considering other demographic factors in the further exploration of the experiences of international students. Kuo and Roysircar (2004) focused on 506 students of Chinese descent in an urban area of Ontario, and found that greater transitional stress was associated with older ages, lower socioeconomic status, and lower English competency. They recommended further exploration of other personal variables and in diverse contexts (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004). This

exploration was limited to the experiences of a particular student cohort at one Fall intake, and future studies could consider additional cohorts at multiple intakes.

As I reflect on my time with Ada, Bohai, Fannie, Fon, Karim, Li, and Mo, I acknowledge the uniqueness of each participant. They were all international students who shared a common experience in transitioning to a new country to study at the same university in Northern Ontario, yet their stories were different, shaped by their own unique perspectives and interactions in the new environment. Each of the participants' unique experiences outdoors shaped their perspectives of what makes Canada unique. As Ada remarked about Canada, "you can't be outside without being part of the culture." For Fannie, the Canadian outdoors were about peace and tranquility, she explained: "you will see something beautiful that will make you feel very nice." Fon shared similar views of the Canadian outdoors, "it makes me feel happy and can keep my body healthy." Bohai appreciated the accessibility of the outdoors: "in Canada, you can just go find a trail and go hiking." Li enjoyed the outdoor recreation organized by the school as a way to connect with people: "the activities we did with our class were interesting and exciting, fantastic. We make friends." Karim noticed that Canadians "will try a lot of outdoor activities...I saw a lot of people running outside and I think, oh my God, I don't want to do that!" For Mo, his experience in Canada made him feel safe: "a country like Canada is different...I have rights, there is a law." The stories that participants share around their own campfires when they return home will share common threads, but each story is unique and shaped by the participant's new ideas, the people brought together, and the adventures that they choose to tell.

Survey Setting and Language

The lessons learned about the guided walk method pointed to some limitations in its use in data collection. The survey also had some limitations related to the settings of the data

collection and the choice to offer the survey in English language only. Through the survey phase, the informal setting of the barbecue, as a means for soliciting survey respondents, did make data collection awkward since students were eating and I did not want to disturb them or they were already mingling with other students. The data collection at the academic orientation was in a classroom setting, which provided a better venue for students to listen to the presentation and questions and responses as a group. In both settings, it took students longer than the allotted 15 minutes to complete the survey, and a recommendation to future researchers is to allow more time for international student participants who may be non-native English speakers.

A limitation of the survey is that it was only prepared in English, but it would have been useful to have translations available in Chinese, Arabic and French to consider the home language of the majority of student population. Spontaneously, upper year international students who were volunteers at the orientation events were able to help participants complete the survey by explaining words or terms in their home language, and future researchers could consider building peer mentors into the data collection protocol.

In the interview stages, the participants seemed eager to practice their English and comfortable in the outdoor setting. However, interviews in participants' second language may have impacted the depth of the details shared by participants. Several times during the interviews, participants paused to find the right word and spoke using short sentences. I was especially conscious of Lantolf and Thorne's (2000) positioning of Vygotsky's (1986) sociocultural theory to capture the important role of experiences in informal settings to support second language learning. The guided walks provided an informal setting for participants to practice their English, but I acknowledge that participants' language skills may have limited their full expression of ideas and perspectives.

I implemented steps in the research protocol to limit some of the language challenges of a journey with international students, as I described in Chapter 4. I piloted the survey with English language instructors and former international students who were familiar with second language learning to identify any words or phrases that may be unclear. In the interviews, I phrased the questions in plain language, slowed the pace of the dialogue and offered clarification when needed. Cortazzi, Pilcher and Jin (2011) advised using non-idiomatic and plain language, and a slower interview pace with participants who are responding in their second language. Despite language challenges, understanding the experiences of non-native English international students is important to support their complex transitions across cultures.

Expanding the Story: Unanswered Questions

Like stories by the campfire, this one is unfinished. Though I am drawing near my conclusion, I offer here loose threads of unanswered questions to help other researchers weave into new stories of their own. Future adventurers might want to focus on new themes of inquiry which reflect the interdisciplinary nature of this study.

Related to the field of international education and diverse student populations, future research may centre on questions to determine what, if any, variations exist in the outdoor recreation expectations or experiences based on national, cultural or linguistic competence factors? A regional lens may also prove useful, by considering international student expectations and experiences in Northern Ontario compared to more metropolitan areas, or considering student experiences at larger universities with higher international student populations. The academic context may also impact studies in this area with colleges traditionally offering more natural cohort-building opportunities than traditional universities.

With a growing interest in encouraging more Canadian students to study abroad, according to the Conference Board of Canada (2017), future exploration may be warranted in aiming to understand Canadian student expectations and experiences in outdoor recreation during their studies abroad. Considering time dimensions of the international student experience, researchers may wish to explore how, if at all, international student experiences in outdoor recreation change over time as they progress into upper years of their studies and impact student retention? Future researchers may also want to explore the value and impact of outdoor-based post-secondary orientation programs on international students.

From a marketing perspective, researchers may narrow their focus to consider what is the impact of international student outdoor recreation experiences on future tourism or willingness to recommend Canada as a study destination formally or through word of mouth? Sport and physical activity researchers may wish to quantify the use of an outdoor mobile methodology, by determining tracking number of steps, pace, kilometers, or calories burned by the researcher or participants who engage in guided walk methods.

Further, sport sociologies could consider alternate mobile methods to extend beyond guided walks, to consider the use of guided canoeing or hiking methods. I am particularly interested in understanding the way international students experience Canada through guided canoe trips. This would expand on the work of educator Potolicki Steers (2011) who helped ESL students at Trent University learn about Canadian geography, history, climate and wildlife, while also practicing English skills, through canoeing and other experience based learning. Griffin (2017) also examined the way paddling a canoe could help generate a sense of a Canadian belonging and identity among newcomers. Other researchers, through their own eyes and their

own adventures, may see different variations and spark new ideas to add breadth or depth to the findings of this work to continue to shape their own research.

Reflecting on this Adventure: Concluding Thoughts

I reflect on the stories that my canoe partners have shared around campfires in my years of canoeing; I heard stories about how the adventure met expectations and compared to other journeys, what was learned along the way, the limitations of the adventure, and what is left to explore. The campfire is always a good place to sit and reflect on the day that ends and the ones that are ahead. Metaphorically, sharing stories around a campfire helped centre the reflections on my findings and the findings of other researchers.

Canadian universities continue to work, together with government partners, toward to comprehensive internationalization strategy that includes the recruitment and welcoming of international students (Jones, 2009). Welcoming international students contributes both economically and culturally to Canadian society, as Potter (2009) noted. To extend this welcome, Canadian universities must understand student expectations and extend stimulating experiences far beyond the classroom (CMEC, 2015). More students than ever before are seeking opportunities abroad and more universities are seeing the presence of international students as a way to raise their international profiles (Douglass & Edelstein, 2014). For universities, student expectations need to be understood and helped to clarify at the onset. This is not to imply that all expectations should be positive, nor, that all lived experiences will be positive. More importantly, to best support international students, expectations need to be clear and realistic to contribute to the holistic lived experiences. Arambewela et al. (2006) corroborated this point, as they described the importance of universities both analyzing and managing the high expectations that student bring with them in their transition to the new university environment. Different

universities may need to manage expectations differently and offer unique supports to international students to help them experience the benefits of the Canadian outdoors.

There are two unique and interdisciplinary contributions of my research. The first contribution, relevant to the fields of international education and marketing, is understanding the met and unmet expectations that can contribute to international students' evaluation of their experiences as positive or negative. Through this understanding, I was able to provide recommendations to Canadian university marketing and service teams to best situate outdoor recreation as a way to recruit and better support international students. The second contribution arises from the extension of the guided walk method to an outdoor environment, which is relevant for sport sociologists and other researchers with an interest in mobile methodologies. With this contribution, I provided advice to future researchers who would like to adopt a mobile methodology and especially employ an interview technique that does not just illuminate experiences, but that in itself is a rewarding experience for the participants and researcher alike.

I look forward to reading more stories in the literature as they unfold to help expand from this study by answering new questions and posing more. I also look forward to the advancement of the outdoor guided walk method by other researchers which served as an effective method to journey with diverse participants and contributed to a sense of participant and researcher wellness. On a personal level, this study allowed me to journey with international students in their cross-cultural adventures in Canada and share my love of the Canadian outdoors.

I was like the paddler in the stern of the canoe, as I navigated this research, mapped the boundaries, and looked to the stories of others to help give context to my own. The participants were essential characters in this story, acting as land surveyors to help understand the broader landscape, and co-paddlers, Ada, Bohai, Fannie, Fon, Karim, Li, and Mo, at the bow to help me

explore the landscape in greater depth. In shaping my own adventures forward, I find joy in better understanding international students and in being better able to support international student transitions on university campuses across Canada. In this adventure, I was able to spark new ideas, come together with new people, and feel joy in sharing this story. I acknowledge that this story is unfinished, like the landscape that changes with time and the seasons, there are always more ways to explore it and more stories to share in reflecting on this journey and preparing for the next. Paddle on.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Online Survey Questions

Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Timeline

Appendix C: Survey Recruitment Script

Appendix D: Information and Informed Consent Letter for Prospective Survey Participants

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Appendix H: Interview Guide: Interview 1 (Focus on Expectations)

Appendix I: Interview Guide: Interview 2 (Focus on Met or Unmet Expectations)

Appendix J: Interview Guide: Interview 3 (Reflecting on Expectations and Experiences)

Appendix K: Summary of the Research Timeline

Appendix L: Ethics Approval: Home University

Appendix M: Ethics Approval: Location of Study

Appendix A. Online Survey Questions

International Student Survey on Expectations of Canadian Outdoor Recreation

Instructions: Please complete this online survey honestly, skipping any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Please do not put your name or identifying information anywhere in your responses.

The survey is confidential. If you wish to be considered for three follow-up interviews, then please respond yes to question 15 and add your email address. If you include your email address, the survey will remain confidential and your answers will help focus follow up interviews.

Section 1. Demographic Information

In section 1, you are asked biographical information. Please fill in the blank or select the response which best fits your situation.

1. What is your nationality?
2. What is your current level of study at Laurentian University? Select one: English Preparation Program, Undergraduate, Masters or PhD
3. What is your current year of study? Select one: 1st Year, 2nd Year, 3rd Year, 4th Year, or 5th+ Year
4. What is your First Language (or language which you feel most comfortable speaking)?
5. What level is your English language proficiency?
 - a. TOEFLibt: 88-90; 91-93; above 93
 - b. IELTS: 6.5-7.0; 7.1-7.5; above 7.5
 - c. Laurentian LELI program: 70-75%; 76-80%; above 80%
 - d. Other: _____
6. How long in months and years have you been in Canada? _____ months _____ years
7. Have you previously visited Canada? Select one: Yes or No

Section 2. Expectations of Outdoor Recreation

In section 2, you are asked to reflect on expectations of outdoor recreation which includes sport and leisure activities that you could do with a team or by yourself.

QUESTION	GOAL
Section 1. General Impressions of the Canadian Environment	
1. List 3-6 words to describe the Canadian education environment.	To compare impressions of Canada with goals of the Canadian Education Brand.
Section 2. Home Country Experiences	
<p>2. In your home country, did you enjoy participating in outdoor recreation activities? Yes or No.</p> <p>If yes, what type of outdoor recreation did you participate in? Team activities like soccer or basketball Individual activities like walking or hiking Both team and individual activities Unsure</p> <p>If No, why not? (open-ended)</p>	Enlighten pre-entry interests in outdoor recreation
<p>3. In your home country, did anyone tell you what to expect about the Canadian outdoors? Yes or No.</p> <p>If Yes, who helped set your expectations about the outdoor environment? Friends Parents Other Family Members Teachers in your Home Country University Representatives University Agents in my Home Country Media, like television, Facebook or Twitter Other _____ None</p>	Enlighten influencers of expectations of Canadian outdoor recreation
<p>4. In your home country, do you remember seeing pictures or images related to outdoor recreation in Canada? Yes or No</p> <p>If Yes, what type of pictures do you remember? (open-ended)</p>	Enlighten previous views of images of Canada

Where did you see these pictures? (open-ended)	
<p>5. In your home country, do you remember seeing pictures or images related to outdoor recreation at Laurentian University? Yes or No</p> <p>If Yes, what type of pictures do you remember? (open-ended)</p> <p>Where did you see these pictures? (open-ended)</p>	Enlighten previous views of images of Laurentian University
Section 3. Choosing Studies in the Canada Environment	
<p>6. Did pictures and images of the Canadian outdoor environment encourage you to study in Canada? Yes or No.</p> <p>If Yes, why? (open-ended)</p> <p>If No, why not? (open-ended)</p>	Enlighten images of the Canadian outdoors as part of the decision to study in Canada
<p>7. Did opportunities to participate in Canadian outdoor recreation encourage you to study in Canada? Yes or No.</p> <p>If yes, why? (open-ended)</p> <p>If No, why not? (open-ended)</p>	Enlighten expectations of participation in Canadian outdoors as part of the decision to study in Canada
Section 4. Expectations of Canadian Outdoors Recreation	
<p>8. In Canada, do you expect to participate in outdoor recreation activities? Yes or No.</p> <p>If yes, what type of outdoor recreation do you expect to participate in? Team activities like soccer or basketball Individual activities like walking or hiking Both team and individual activities Unsure</p> <p>If No, why not? (open-ended)</p>	Enlighten expectations of participation in Canadian outdoors recreation activities, by type

<p>9. Are there any Canadian outdoor recreation activities that you are excited to try? Yes or No.</p> <p>If yes, which activities? (open-ended)</p>	<p>Expectations of new outdoor recreation experiences</p>
<p>10. Will your participation in outdoor activities in Canada be different than in your home country? Yes or No.</p> <p>If yes, how will it be different?</p>	<p>Expectations of diverse outdoor recreation experiences</p>
<p>11. Who do you expect to participate in outdoor recreation with? Nobody, I prefer individual activities Other international students Other domestic students Non-students Unsure I do not anticipate participating</p>	<p>Expectations of social outdoor recreation experiences</p>
<p>12. Do you expect any challenges to participating in outdoor recreation in Canada? Yes or No.</p> <p>If yes, select the challenges from the list below (select all that apply): Finding a partner Finding the right equipment Finding the right clothes/footwear Finding where to go to access the activity Communication issues Too expensive Too busy with school Cold weather Unsafe Other (open-ended)</p>	<p>Expectations of challenges to participating in outdoor recreation experiences</p>
<p>13. Do you expect any benefits of participating in outdoor sport and leisure activities in Canada? Yes or No.</p> <p>If yes, select the benefits from the list below (select all that apply): Meeting new people</p>	<p>Expectations of challenges to participating in outdoor recreation experiences</p>

Make new friends Trying new activities Learning new skills Learning about Canada Keeping Fit and Healthy Having Fun Practicing English Communicating with domestic students Other (open-ended)	
Section 5. Other Comments	
14. Is there anything else about your expectations of outdoor recreation in Canada that you would like to share? (open-ended)	Open-ended, rich data
Section 6. Interest in Further Participation (Optional)	
<p>15. In the next stage of this study, volunteers are being recruited to participate in three follow-up interviews. Participation is voluntary and your information will be kept confidential (I will not share it with anyone else). Please indicate your interest below.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I would be interested in participating in the follow-up interviews. I understand my survey will be used to inform the next stage of the study if I am selected.</p> <p>NAME _____</p> <p>EMAIL ADDRESS _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, Thank-you for the invitation but I am not interested in participating further.</p>	Recruitment for interviews
SUBMIT	

Appendix B. Participant Recruitment Timeline

An overview of the data collection stages is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Recruitment Process and Participant Documents

<u>Recruitment Stage</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Goal / Actions</u>	<u>Participant Documents</u>
Confirm presence at International Student Orientation Days	July / August	Confirm presence at International Student Orientation (Day 1 and Day 2) through contact with International Office.	None
Introduction to study and survey	Early September (International Student Orientation Day 4)	Introduce myself and inform students of goals of study and information about survey which will they will be invited to participate in on the following day. Share a copy of the consent letter and survey questions for students to have time to review and consider questions or areas to clarify before they are invited to participate in survey on the following day.	Copy of Information and Informed Consent Letter for Prospective Survey Participants; and copy of Survey Questions.
Invitation to participate in survey	Early September (International Orientation Day 5)	Respond to any questions about the survey or study. Invite students to participate and provide survey link to students for complete on their own device or available iPads, with no international staff or teachers present in room. Also provide link to Campus Recreation website for students to be able to review if they choose not to complete the survey.	Information and Informed Consent Letter for Prospective Survey Participants; and Survey.
Contact prospective interview participants	Mid to Late September (after Fall Break)	Contact all students who respond Yes / No to survey question Q15 (see Appendix E) with additional information about selection to be part of research process. Select 5-8 participants to be part of the interviews, based on diverse geographic locations, academic levels, and language spoken at home (when more than one volunteer is received from the same category, I will select the first who responded).	Email
Confirm interviews #1-3	October to January	Confirm meeting time, location, and expectations of each interview; ask students to review and sign Information and Informed Consent Letter for Guided Walk Participants.	Email; and semi-structured interview questions.

Appendix C. Survey Recruitment Script

<in preparation for initial presentation to international students at International Student Orientation>

Welcome to Laurentian University!

My name is Michelle Brunette. I am a PhD student at Nipissing University. I also work at Laurentian University and have an interest in supporting international students. I was an international student too; I studied in China and in Ireland. For my Doctoral research, I want to learn about international student expectations and experiences in Canadian outdoors.

If you are a new international student at Laurentian University, I invite you to participate in a survey about yourself and your expectations of outdoor recreation in Canada. By participating in the survey, you could help improve programming for future international students. You may also enjoy reflecting on your experiences.

The survey should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

The survey is confidential (I will not share your personal information with anyone and your identity will not be revealed in the study). At the end of the survey, you can indicate if you are interested in participating in three confidential follow up interviews with me, which will take approximately 3 hours of your time. The interviews will occur on the Laurentian campus and trails, so you might get to learn more about the campus.

I will pass around details about the study, the consent letter, with a link to the survey. Please take the letter home with you as you consider if you would like to participate. I have also provided a copy of the questions for you to read over. I will come back tomorrow at (<insert time and location>) to answer any questions. You will also be given time to complete the survey tomorrow using a digital device, either your own or with an iPad provided by me for this purpose. In the information that I am passing around, you will also see my contact information. Please contact me if you have any questions about this study!

Appendix D. Information and Informed Consent Letter for Prospective Survey Participants

<On Nipissing University letterhead with logo>

Principal Investigator:

Michelle K. Brunette

PhD Candidate, Nipissing University

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Thesis Supervisor:

Dr. Callie Mady

Professor, Schulich School of
Education, Nipissing University

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Purpose of the Study: I am conducting this study as part of my PhD research at Nipissing University to learn about international student expectations and experiences in the Canadian outdoors. I also work at Laurentian University and have an interest in supporting international students.

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in this survey because you are a new international student in your first semester at Laurentian University.

Participation in Online Survey: I invite you to complete a short online survey which should take you approximately 10-15 minutes. The questions are about yourself and your expectations of outdoor recreation in Canada.

Consideration for Interviews: The final question of the survey invites you to participate in a series of three interviews. If you select “No” in response to this question, your participation in this study is complete. If you wish to be considered for follow up interviews, select “Yes” and provide your email address (I will know your name and contact information but will keep your information confidential). I will contact all prospective participants by email, and select 5-8 participants who have no prior experiences in Canada. Participants will be selected based on diverse geographic locations, academic levels, and language spoken at home (when more than one volunteer is received from the same category, I will select the first who responded).

Information about the Interviews: The interviews will take place while walking on the Laurentian campus and trails, between September and January and take approximately 3 hours of your time (1 hour per interview). Additional information about participation in the guided walk is provided in the *Information and Informed Consent Letter for Guided Walk Participants* (available here for your reference <insert link>).

Risks: Participation in the online survey has some foreseeable risks related to the possible external access or sharing of data by Fluid Survey employees (see Conservation of Data section, below). If you are selected to participate in the interviews, the *Information and Informed Consent Letter for Guided Walk Participants* provides additional details about the minimal physical risk associated with walking outdoors for the purpose of this study, alternatives to walking, and the

possibility of encountering someone during the walk with could limit the confidentiality of your participation.

Benefits: Your participation in this study can contribute to better supporting international student transitions on university campuses across Canada, especially related to outdoor experiences. You may also enjoy reflecting on your experiences in Canada.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study is voluntary. You can withdraw from the survey at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions without impacting your relationship with me, Nipissing University, or Laurentian University, or suffering any negative consequences. There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Right to Withdraw, Refuse to Respond, and Seek Further Support: If you feel any distress from your participation, you are free to withdraw from the survey or refuse to answer questions which make you feel uncomfortable. You can also seek an appropriate referral for support at no charge through the Counselling and Support Office at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED], or academic and learning support at the Centre for Academic Excellence at [REDACTED]. You can also access

Conservation of Data: The data will be collected online via Fluid Survey and data will be stored on a server owned by Fluid Survey and may be stored outside Canada and may be subject to the United States' Patriot Act. Data shared on Fluid Survey is owned by Fluid Survey and may be accessed by employees of Fluid Survey. Data download by the researcher from the online survey will be safely stored in a password protected file for five years beyond this study, then the electronic files will be destroyed. Only the researcher will have access to the survey data.

Research Contacts: For more information about this study please contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Callie Mady. Your contact information and identity will remain confidential. This study has been reviewed and received ethics approval through the Research Ethics Boards at Nipissing University (**REB # 101078**) and at Laurentian University (**REB # 6008369**). If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Ethics Administrator, Nipissing University, 100 College Drive, North Bay, ON P1B 8L7, toll free at 1-800-655-5154 or ethics@nipissingu.ca, or the Research Ethics Officer, Laurentian University Research Services, at (705) 6751151, ext. 3681 or 2436, toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or ethics@laurentian.ca.

Research Results: My intention is to publish the results, however any information that could identify you will remain confidential. I will use pseudonyms to refer to all interview participants. I will present my findings as part of my thesis defense at Nipissing University and through an open presentation at Laurentian University, communicated through the campus-wide

Communications email system. If you wish to be notified directly of upcoming presentations, please contact me [REDACTED]

Survey Consent: By completing the online survey via the link below, you are consenting to participate in this study and understand that you can withdraw at anytime. You agree that you have read the Informed Consent letter and have had any questions, concerns or complaints answered to your satisfaction. You are agreeing to the confidential use of the information that you provide in the survey to inform this study. Once you submit the survey electronically, your participation in this study is complete if you choose not to be considered for follow up interviews. Please print a copy of this information letter for your future reference.

To complete the online survey, click here (<*insert Fluid survey link here*>).

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me.

Michelle K. Brunette
PhD Candidate
Nipissing University
[REDACTED]

Appendix E. Recruitment Letters for Prospective Guided Walk Participants

Hello <insert name>,

Thank you for completing the online survey, *International Student Survey on Expectations of Canadian Outdoor Recreation*, which is part of my PhD research at Nipissing University.

In completing the survey, you expressed an interest in participating in three confidential follow up interviews with me which will take approximately 3 hours of your time (1 hour per interview). The interviews will occur while walking on the Laurentian campus and trails, or in alternate locations based on your needs or comfort. Your identity and all information you share with me is confidential.

Please see the Information and Informed Consent Letter for Guided Walk Participants attached. If you have any questions about the study or the letter, please contact me. I will follow up with a suggested meeting time shortly.

Thanks for your interest in this study. I look forward to meeting with you.

Michelle K. Brunette
PhD Candidate
Nipissing University

[REDACTED]

Appendix F. Confirmation of Guided Walk Interview

<insert date and time for Calendar Appointment through GroupWise Email System>

Hello <insert name>,

Thank you for completing the online survey, *International Student Survey on Expectations of Canadian Outdoor Recreation*, and agreeing to be part of the guided walk interviews as part of my PhD research at Nipissing University.

Interview <insert interview number> is scheduled for <insert date, time, meeting location>. Should you prefer an alternate date, time or meeting location, please contact me. Alternate meeting locations could include the indoor track, seated spaces outdoors or indoors near nature, or other spaces based on your needs and comfort.

Please wear comfortable shoes and appropriate clothing for approximately 1 hour outside. As a reminder, you can decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any point. Please see the *Information and Informed Consent Letter for Guided Walk Participants attached* (<attach letter to email, see Appendix F>). If you have any questions about the study or the letter, please contact me.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Michelle K. Brunette
PhD Candidate
Nipissing University



Appendix K. Information and Informed Consent Letter for Guided Walk Participants

<On Nipissing University letterhead>

Principal Investigator:

Michelle K. Brunette
PhD Student, Nipissing University

████████████████████
████████████████████

Thesis Supervisor:

Dr. Callie Mady
Professor, Schulich School of
Education, Nipissing University

████████████████████
████████████████████

Purpose of the Study: I am conducting this study as part of my PhD research at Nipissing University to learn about international student expectations and experiences in the Canadian outdoors. I also work at Laurentian University and have an interest in supporting international students.

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in the interviews because you are a new international student studying in your first semester at Laurentian University. You indicated that you are interested in participating in these interviews when you completed the online survey.

Participation in the Interviews: Interviews will take place through a guided walk format. In a series of three guided walk interviews, you will walk beside me on the Laurentian campus and trails while you respond to questions. The guided walks will occur at mutually convenient times and locations between September and January and take approximately 3 hours of your time (1 hour/interview). During the interviews, I will ask you to discuss your expectations and experiences of outdoor recreation in Canada and to reflect on your own survey responses. The interviews will be audio recorded. As part of the interviews, I will look back at your initial survey responses to inform our discussions.

Alternate Interview Methods: Alternative locations for the interviews can be arranged based on accessibility needs or comfort (e.g., sitting outdoors in a natural space; sitting indoors near windows that face natural settings; or meeting on the Laurentian University indoor track which complies with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act).

Risks: Participation in the guided walks has minimal physical risk associated with walking outdoors and the possibility of uneven terrain. It is also possible that while we are walking or meeting we have meet someone you know which may link you to this research and limit the confidentiality of your participation. During the interview, you might also experience emotional stress from discussing unmet expectations, challenges in your transition to Canada, or general feelings of homesickness or culture shock.

Benefits: Your participation in this study can contribute to better supporting international student transitions on university campuses across Canada, especially related to outdoor experiences. Through the guided walks, you may discover new trails or natural spaces. You may also enjoy reflecting on your experiences in Canada.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study is voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions without impacting your relationship with me, Nipissing University, or Laurentian University, or suffering any negative consequences. You

can end the interviews, stop walking, or return to the starting point at any time during the interview.. There is no compensation for participating in this study

Right to Withdraw, Refuse to Respond, and Seek Further Support: If you feel any distress from your participation, you are free to withdraw from the study or refuse to answer questions which make you feel uncomfortable. You can also seek an appropriate referral for support at no charge through the Counselling and Support Office at (705) 673-6506 or by email at supportprograms@laurentian.ca, or academic and learning support at the Centre for Academic Excellence at (705) 675 1151, ext. 3300 or excellence@laurentian.ca.

Conservation of Data: The data from the interviews will be safely stored in a password protected file for five years beyond this study, then the electronic files will be destroyed. Only the researcher will have access to the interview data.

Research Contacts: For more information about this study please contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Callie Mady. Your contact information and identity will remain confidential. This study has been reviewed and received ethics approval through the Research Ethics Boards at Nipissing University (**REB # 101078**) and at Laurentian University (**REB # 6008369**). . If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Ethics Administrator, Nipissing University, 100 College Drive, North Bay, ON P1B 8L7, toll free at 1-800-655-5154 or ethics@nipissingu.ca, or the Research Ethics Officer, Laurentian University Research Services, at (705) 6751151, ext. 3681 or 2436, toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or ethics@laurentian.ca.

Research Results: My intention is to publish the results, however any information that could identify you will remain confidential. I will use pseudonyms to refer to all interview participants. As a participant will see the initial analysis to help clarify themes before any presentation or publication of findings. I will present the findings as part of my thesis defense at Nipissing University and through an open presentation at Laurentian University, communicated through the campus-wide Communications email system. If you wish to be notified directly of upcoming presentations, please contact me at [REDACTED]

Guided Walk Consent. As a participant in this research project, I (print name) _____, clearly understand what I am agreeing to do, and that I am free to decline involvement or withdraw from this project at any time, and that steps are being taken to protect me. I have read this Consent Form and have had any questions, concerns or complaints answered to my satisfaction. I have been provided a copy of this letter.

Signed _____ on this day _____, month _____, 2016.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me.

Michelle K. Brunette
PhD Candidate
Nipissing University
[REDACTED]

Appendix H. Interview Guide: Interview 1 (Focus on Expectations)

1. Let's begin with a story. Tell me a story about what you expected to do in your leisure time when you thought about coming to Canada to study?
 - a. Where did those expectations come from?
 - i. From friends?
 - ii. Others?
 - b. Now that you are here, do you expect the same things?
2. Do you remember seeing images of Canada when you were in your home country?
 - a. Which?
 - b. Images of outdoor recreation at Laurentian University?
3. Did those images encourage you to choose studies in Canada?
 - a. At Laurentian?
4. Are there particular outdoor recreation activities that you are excited to try?
 - a. Like what?
 - b. Why?
5. Have you had a chance to participate in outdoor recreation in Canada yet?
 - a. If yes, tell me about it?
 - i. Did you participate with others? Who?
 - ii. Were there any challenges to participating?
 - iii. Do you expect any challenges? Why?
 - iv. Do you expect any benefits? Why?
6. Is there anything else about your expectations of outdoor recreation in Canada that you would like to share?

Appendix I. Interview Guide: Interview 2 (Focus on Met or Unmet Expectations)**OPENING**

1. Tell me about your thoughts about our first interview together? Any comments?
2. Do you have any changes you would like to make regarding the transcript I sent you, based on our conversation last time?

REFLECTING

3. Have you participated in any outdoor recreation since the last time we met? Please tell me about it. If not, why?
4. Were you able to find partners to join you in outdoor recreation? Who?
5. How has language impacted the way you participate in outdoor recreation?
6. How has being an international student from (name country) impacted the way you participate in outdoor recreation?
7. How has the weather impacted the way you participate in outdoor recreation?

WRAP UP

8. Thinking back to your arrival in Canada, does your experience so far meet what you expected in terms of your participation in outdoor recreation? Please explain.
9. Do you have any other comments about your outdoor recreation expectations or experiences in Canada?

Appendix J. Interview Guide: Interview 3 (Reflecting on Expectations and Experiences)**OPENING**

1. Tell me about your thoughts about our second interview together? Any comments?
2. Do you have any changes you would like to make regarding the transcript I sent you, based on our conversation last time? Would you like to add any points?

CLARIFYING

1. In the interviews, some participants mentioned trying activities in the snow. Tell me about your experiences in winter outdoor recreation.
2. How has the weather impacted your participation in outdoor activities?
3. How has participating in outdoor recreation impacted your ability to meet people or make new friends?
4. Please tell me what you have been able to learn about Canada and/or Canadian culture through your participation in outdoor recreation.

REFLECTING

1. Thinking back to your arrival in Canada and your online survey answers, as I sent to you, how has your experience compared to what you expected in terms of your participation in outdoor recreation?
2. Tell me about any benefits that you experienced through your participation in outdoor recreation.
 - a. Which of the benefits did you not expect? Why?
3. Tell me about any challenges that you experienced through your participation in outdoor recreation.
 - a. Which of the challenges did you not expect? Why?
4. Do you have any final comments about your outdoor recreation expectations or experiences outside in Canada?
5. Please share any final comments about your participation in this research and using walking interviews as a method of research.

Appendix K. Summary of the Research Timeline

An overview of the research process including quantitative and qualitative stages is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Overview of Research Process and Interview Stages

<u>Research Stage</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Information Shared by Researcher</u>	<u>Participant Documents</u>
Piloting survey	July	Pre-test survey with English faculty for appropriate language and wording	Survey questions	None
Quantitative Survey	Early September (Week 1-2 of new semester)	Context building; preparing for interviews	Study purpose, expectations of participation	Participation and consent letter
Quantitative Analysis	End of September	Analysis of survey results to inform interview phase	None	None
Pre-interview warm up	October	Set the stage; introductions	Building trust; situating myself in the context; research purpose and guided walk process	Participation letter
Interview #1.	Mid-October (after Fall Break)	Clarifying student expectations	Interpretations of survey results	Copy of interview guide and consent letter
Interview #2.	End of November (before Final Exams)	Revisiting expectations relative to experiences	Interpretations of first interview	Copy of interview guide and consent letter
Interview #3.	End of January (after Add/Drop period)	Reflecting on expectations, met or unmet, in evaluating first semester experiences	Interpretations of first and second interview	Copy of interview guide and consent letter
Post-interview wrap up	February-March (after Winter Break)	Member checking	Transcripts and emerging themes	Transcripts; themes
Qualitative Analysis	On-going to April 2017	Qualitative analysis of interview transcripts	Final themes	Final report and presentation

Appendix L. Ethics Approval: Home University

July 06, 2016

Mrs. Michelle Brunetter
Schulich School of Education
Nipissing University

File No: 101078
Expiry Date: *July 06, 2017*

Dear Michelle,

It is our pleasure to advise you that the Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed your protocol titled 'NAVIGATING LANDSCAPES: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CANADIAN OUTDOOR RECREATION' and has granted ethical approval. Your protocol has been approved for a period of one year.

Modifications: Any changes to the approved protocol or corresponding materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation.

Adverse/Unanticipated Event: Any adverse or unanticipated events must be reported immediately via the Research Portal.

Renewal/Final Report: Please ensure you submit an Annual Renewal or Final Report 30 days prior to the expiry date of your ethics approval. You will receive an email prompt 30 days prior to the expiry date.

Wishing you great success on the completion of your research.

Sincerely,

Dana R. Murphy, PhD
Chair, Research Ethics Board

Please note: If you encounter any issues when working in the Research Portal, please contact our system administrator via [REDACTED]

Appendix M. Ethics Approval: Location of Study**APPROVAL FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS**

Research Ethics Board – Laurentian University

This letter confirms that the research project identified below has successfully passed the ethics review by the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board (REB). Your ethics approval date, other milestone dates, and any special conditions for your project are indicated below.

TYPE OF APPROVAL / New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / Modifications to project / Time extension
--

Name of Principal Investigator and school/department	Michelle Brunette, PHD candidate, Nippissing University C. Mady, supervisor
Title of Project	Navigating Landscapes: International Students Expectations and Lived Experiences of Canadian Outdoor Recreation
REB file number	ROMEO file 6008369
Date of original approval of project	August 30, 2016
Date of approval of project modifications or extension (if applicable)	
Final/Interim report due on: <i>(You may request an extension)</i>	August 30, 2017

Conditions placed on project	
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During the course of your research, no deviations from, or changes to, the protocol, recruitment or consent forms may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to the Research Ethics website to complete the appropriate REB form.

All projects must submit a report to REB at least once per year. If involvement with human participants continues for longer than one year (e.g. you have not completed the objectives of the study and have not yet terminated contact with the participants, except for feedback of final results to participants), you must request an extension using the appropriate LU REB form. In all cases, please ensure that your research complies with Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS). Also please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence with the REB office.

Congratulations and best wishes in conducting your research.



Rosanna Langer, PHD, Chair, *Laurentian University Research Ethics Board*