



PROJECT NEWS

Finding Your Voice, Knowing Your Rights

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Finding Your Voice, Knowing Your Rights

The core of our two-year research plan is in-depth interviews with newcomer youth about their experiences with Canadian occupational health and safety and employment standards. During phase one of the work, our lead researcher and research associate conducted the interviews, with their work being supported by Bow Valley College student research assistants. During the data collection phase, the team conducted interviews with 18 youth workers, 10 English language instructors, and 10 employers. Participants were recruited from Bow Valley College and the broader Calgary area. All interviews were transcribed and coded, with the codes developed to support identifying and analyzing themes. The data analysis is now supporting the development of the three (3) unique research outputs (see: page two) that are scheduled to be piloted November/December 2020.

Making All Learning Count: The School of Technology

As the project's technology partner, Bow Valley College School of Technology instructors and students supported the development and design of a mobile app for newcomer workers, one of the three research outputs. In their Winter 2020 cap-stone classes, software design students designed an app while software development students created working prototypes and digital marketing students researched and drafted potential marketing plans. Building on the work done contributing to the initial concept, development, and design, this past summer the research team hired a team of eight (8) new graduates and students from cap-stone classes to complete the work initially undertaken in their courses.

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Research Outputs in Focus – Workers' Mobile App

While navigating the changing landscape of COVID-19, the team has worked to complete data collection, transitioned to data analysis, and developed the planned outputs for workers, language instructors, and employers. The research revealed that newcomers face barriers to information on workplace safety and rights. There is a need and a desire for newcomer, youth friendly information. For example, on-the-job training can be text heavy with minimal reinforcement for the information to be processed and applied correctly in the workplace.

The **research output for workers, a free mobile app for newcomer youth workers** is accessible on their phones (which they frequently have with them while at work) and has been developed to reflect Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 5/6. Although the target audience is youth workers between the ages of 18-30, our data analysis indicates the mobile app will be shared with newcomer workers of all ages and groups.

Creating the mobile app for workers engaged School of Technology classes and the co-creation team. Students from digital design, development, and marketing cap-stone courses collaborated across courses to develop a mobile app for newcomer workers. The co-creation team then provided insight and feedback that was used to inform the final development this past summer. A team of Bow Valley College graduates and students, hired from the three cap-stone classes, have now delivered a mobile app that will be launched and piloted this November / December in an effort to provide young newcomer workers with up-to-date, simple, and effective workplace health and safety information when they need it.

Stay tuned for more news about this pilot, as well as the employer and language instructor pilots, and how you can get involved!

Key Concepts: Safety Voice in the Workplace

Our research revealed that **safety voice, as a form of workplace self-regulation**, is not always beneficial to young workers, especially English language learners. Speaking up – exercising safety voice – relies on advanced language skills, which many young newcomer workers do not have. Consider Shawna's (pseudonym) experiences. She is a 24-year-old Haitian immigrant who arrived in Canada six years ago and has worked many jobs, including two Calgary restaurants. At the first restaurant, co-workers consistently made fun of her French accent. Her manager was amongst the perpetrators. After this experience Shawna was hesitant to voice her concerns. At the second restaurant, Shawna did not receive knife training and did not speak up. She cut herself, visibly angering her manager. After healing and modified duties, she returned to full work and still never received proper training. Having upset her manager by hurting herself, she no longer trusted them and did not feel empowered to use her safety voice to request knife training. Shawna cut herself again, received no post-training, and only then taught herself how to cut with kitchen knives. Shawna's experiences illustrate **the limitations of placing the burden on individual workers to look out for their own safety**, as it removes responsibility of employers to see and address safety issues and lack of training, safety voice does not address what to do when employers may be a part of safety problems.