Legacy of the Trent Community Research Centre: From Student Researchers to Community-Engaged Professionals

Includes:

Final Report

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<u>Abstract</u>

The Trent Community Based Research Centre (TCRC) aims to augment the social, cultural, economic, and environmental well-being through bringing together Trent University students, faculty and community partners. For over 30 years and across a vast geographic region, the TCRC has enabled research for the purpose of confronting local needs while simultaneously fostering an impactful and lasting learning opportunity. The TCRC therefore prides itself on supporting community-driven projects by means of academic collaboration; ultimately supporting sustainable development as well as community advancement. This project focuses on highlighting the ways in which Community Based Research strengthens the professional trajectories and personal development of former student researchers. Students not only were able to accomplish their career goals through academic research but were also given practical experience by engaging with their community. Through further understanding of how these experiences have impacted past student researchers today, the project will focus on emphasizing the long-term development of student researchers and the benefits associated by means of TCRC involvement. These influences fortify the immense value of community-based research in shaping a student's growth and to aid the TCRC in navigating future strategies. These findings will showcase how TCRC's programs contribute to career trajectories and the continued development of research that assist the community and students.

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Past Student Researchers: Thank you for sharing your personal experiences, and working to help improve the CBR experience for the next generation of student researchers.

Fellow Classmates: Thank you for providing feedback, being a great support system and resonating with the research being conducted.

Future Student Researchers: Say yes to CBR. It's going to challenge you, but it will change you.

Key Research Terms

Community-Based Research (CBR): a collaborative means of research that incorporates community members, local organizations and researchers throughout the entire research process to allow for a holistic approach that involves a variety of expertise.

Alumni: a graduate or former student of Trent University

Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC): An independent organization that brings together Trent University student researchers and community organizations to create a community-based research project that benefits both the community and the student while also providing the student with academic credit.

Experiential Learning: a hands-on approach to education that provides the ability to learn by means of direct experiences and reflection.

Introduction

      Research isn't just about answering questions, it's about creating a lasting impact that

paves the way for a better future and makes a difference. At Trent University, students who

engage in Community-Based Research (CBR) through the Trent Community Research Centre

(TCRC), are able to engage in projects that go beyond just collecting data and using quantitative

methodologies. They push the traditional boundaries of research and gain hands-on experiences

that have the ability to shape future careers and personal growth of student researchers. By

collaborating with community partners, local organizations and academic faculty, student

researchers have the opportunity to acquire notable skills including problem-solving, leadership,

and interdisciplinary thinking – abilities that set them apart long after graduation. CBR becomes

more than a research method. It becomes a bridge between knowledge and action, for the

purpose of fostering an array of meaningful connections and having the potential ability to produce real-world changes. Through the CBR Legacy Project, alumni were given the opportunity to reflect on their experiences reinforcing a clear takeaway; that participating in CBR through the TCRC has a profound and lasting impression by means of growth and equipment of tools to prosper in both their personal and professional trajectories.

Background & Context

Community-Based Research (CBR) has served as an important bridge between both academic institutions and the broader community for the purpose of fostering collaborations that drive cultural, social, economic and environmental progress (Mosurka and Ford, 2020). At the centre of this research is a commitment to address real-world issues through student-driven initiatives that allow for the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. The Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC) embodies this mission, having operated for over 25 years to connect students, faculty and communities and engage them in meaningful research efforts (Trent University, 2024a).

The CBR Legacy Project aims to identify and record the impact of these research experiences on former student researchers. Through examination of the professional and personal trajectories of Trent alumni who previously engaged in CBR through the TCRC, this project aims to uncover the capabilities of community-based research in higher education. The study will primarily focus on identifying how CBR has affected specific aspects of alumni including their careers, skill development and current community involvement which in turn reinforces the necessity of CBR programs in shaping future researchers.

CBR for Students at Trent

At Trent, CBR has been implemented in a number of ways to provide students with the opportunity to engage with a non-traditional form of research. Instead, it provides an alternative interaction with research, bringing together a community partnership to better the Peterborough community as a whole while still providing academic evolution to the student researcher. As per the TCRC, students have chosen to get involved based on the real world impact, community connection, professional development, networking opportunities and the public presentation of results that the CBR experience provides (Trent University, 2024a). Through the TCRC, undergraduate students are able to complete a CBR project independently, or by capstone project through the academic department (Trent University, 2024a).

Historical Context of the Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC)

The Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC), previously recognised as the Trent Centre for Community-Based Education (TCCBE), was established in 1996 (McDermott et al., 2011). Originally, it started as a partnership between the Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Native Studies at Trent University, the Community Opportunity and Innovation Network (COIN), and Peterborough Social Planning Council (Barr et al., 2008; Thiessan, 2017). Eventually, it evolved into a not-for-profit charitable organization that aided in creating partnerships between the community organizations and Trent University Students (Whillans and Wadland, 2014; Thiessan, 2017). By 2001, Trent University integrated CBR into the program curriculums by means of a Community-Based Education (CBE) Program (Thiessan, 2017). In 2015, the organization was officially rebranded to how it is known today as the Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC) to better reflect their mission and scope (Trent University, 2024b). Since that time, the TCRC has facilitated CBR projects across Peterborough City and

County, City of Kawartha Lakes, Durham Region and Northumberland County (Trent University, 2024a).

Research Purpose

The goal of this research is to comprehend how participation in CBR through the TCRC has contributed to the success and development of student researchers post-graduation. The observation of past student experiences by use of surveys and semi-structured interviews will provide the study with information to assess the impact of CBR on student researchers. Whether CBR opened doors to tangible career options including internships, job offers or higher education. Moreover, if it affected them personally regarding their perspectives on community issues or research. It will also explore the long-term effect of CBR on alumni's commitment to professional networks, community service, and activism. In essence, this project aims to answer the following;

1. In what ways has participation in community-based research through TCRC influenced and benefitted former student researchers?

2. Has participation in community-based research influenced or supported their personal or professional trajectories?

By addressing these questions, this study will create a clear image into how CBR can foster long-term success for students and serve as a model for experiential learning in higher education. In essence, the Legacy Project aims to unveil how Community-Based Research through the TCRC not only shapes the student researcher, but also prepares them for their future – embodying Trent's motto of "*challenging the way you think*" throughout their personal and professional pathways.

Literature Review

Community-Based Research (CBR) has emerged as a notable pedagogical tool, specifically in higher education courses focused on providing experiential learning through community collaboration (Zeydani et al., 2021). As per the Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC), CBR brings together both the community and the student researcher to provide potential solutions for the community issue at hand as well as to provide a rewarding experience for the student researcher (Trent University, 2024a). This not only encourages students to gain practical research skills but also allows students to be active participants in real-world issues (Zeydani et al., 2021). The growth in CBR research interest ultimately stems from its capabilities to strengthen traditional academic learning by connecting it with further responsibilities that have the potential to have a professional or personal outlook. This literature review focuses on exploring the role of CBR and how it may contribute to undergraduate students' professional and personal trajectories. Moreover, how it permits the acquisition of soft and hard skill sets for future growth. Specifically, the research questions that are being examined involve; In what ways has participation in community-based research through TCRC influenced and benefitted former student researchers? Moreover, how has participation in community-based research influenced or supported their personal or professional trajectories?

Understanding Community Based Research

Community Based Research focuses on a collaborative approach where the student researcher along with the community members work alongside one another to address an issue that is relevant to the community (The Community Research Collaborative, 2021). It functions for a mutual goal and maintains an empathetic approach to research as the community members are seen as partners that are contributing local knowledge and representing the communities

priorities as opposed to being viewed as a research subject (The Community Research Collaborative, 2021). This shared management of the research process allows CBR to identify a vast number of areas such as social inequalities, economic growth, public welfare and the shared benefits between both the institution and organization (University of Victoria, 2009;). Moreover, it provides an opportunity for students to expose themselves to diverse communities from all spectrums including elderly, children, addicts, varying religious identities or individuals with disabilities and create better relationships with the communities in which they may be working with in the future (Zeydani et al., 2021; Glazier & Bowman, 2021).

CBR as an Experiential Learning Tool

CBR as an experiential learning tool in undergraduate education is valuable in that it allows students to work directly with community agencies and organizations on research projects that aim to satisfy a local need (Strand, 2000). Students gain hands-on experience in methodology whether that is through government or well being related assessments or in this case, how CBR impacts an alumni's life trajectories (Karasik, 2020). It takes the traditional research techniques and encourages students to apply their research to real communities in both ethical and epistemological manners (Strand, 2000). For example, conducting CBR research as opposed to traditional research challenges the student to take into account the ethical implications of their research as they may be confronted with vulnerable populations (Strand, 2000). This is emphasized in the understanding that community members are the experts in their lived experiences and the student researcher is there to learn from them and contribute to future solutions (Villar & Johnson, 2021). This concept is relevant specifically in the interview stages, where students face the complexities that may arise due to sensitive and/or personal information being shared (Strand, 2000). This teaches students to be flexible in their approaches with

community members by being mindful in their communication and listening practices (Villar & Johnson, 2021). Furthermore, as opposed to focusing solely on academic achievement, CBR projects aim to prioritize community impact and accountability, exhibiting a sense of accomplishment through paying it forward to the community (Strand, 2000). These continuous collaborative efforts with community partners allow students to cultivate teamwork skills, empathy and a sense of purpose as they observe the real impact their research has on the community that they serve (Strand, 2000). The experiential approach aims to empower students' capabilities as an active participant rather than a passive one when producing knowledge as well as enrich their learning experience. A 2015 study by Cantor et al., using a Human-Environment Regional Observatory (HERO) program upholds the Strand 2000 study by further supporting that CBR teaches students to be comfortable with obstacles in the research process (Cantor et al., 2015). For example, by being given the opportunity to partake in the entire research process, students experience the ups and downs to research such as acquiring qualitative and quantitative data (Cantor et al., 2015). How it differs from non community-based practices is that in the case that a student is having difficulties, they have their community along with faculty to help them through it (Cantor et al., 2015). Ultimately, CBR showcases its use as an essential pedagogical tool that acts as a prototype for alternative research models and inspires students to be meaningful contributors to valuable social projects.

CBR and the Democratization of Knowledge

CBR works as an essential tool in distributing knowledge in an accessible manner by integrating students and community members as collaborative partners in the research process, linking communities between scholarship and community application (Mello-Goldner, 2019). Students are given access to diverse data sets and are able to produce insights that go beyond the

scope of what an academically-bound project can contribute (Mello-Goldner, 2019). In addition to Trent University CBR, other institutions like Pine Manor College, highlight this collaborative environment that combines the community members, faculty supervisor and student to build a diverse research team (Mello-Goldner, 2019). Together these teams identify the research questions to be answered, design research methodologies, analyze the available data and create a finalized project (Glazier & Bowman, 2021). This further provides students with soft skill development such as flexibility, rapport building, and self-reflection (Glazier & Bowman, 2021). These CBR projects are then presented in diverse ways such as regional conferences or the Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC) Celebration of Research. The conclusions from these projects allow students to produce results that may generate significant change within a community as well as benefit the students and become publishable findings (Mello-Goldner, 2019). CBR challenges the traditional academic priority and focuses on creating a well-rounded student that represents as well as advocates within their communities to create long-term partnerships and potentially fulfilling professional opportunities (Mello-Goldner, 2019). However, it is noted that at times the student is not as well trained as the agency would prefer them to be, so looking at ensuring faculty along with the TCRC plays a part in preparing the student to be well prepared to work with the agency would be greatly beneficial (Karasik, 2020). Moreover, it is important to take into account the chance of short project timelines and limited funding for undergraduate CBR projects creating a stressful environment for a student researcher to be able to deliver what the agency is seeking while also producing sufficient work (Ryser et al., 2012). While CBR provides an opportunity to create accessible information and solutions, it is important to take into account its effects on the student researcher as well.

CBR's Contribution to the Community

Unlike traditional research, CBR explores the idea of giving back to the community, not only concerning community partnerships but the communities in which students are arising from (The Community Research Collaborative, 2021). Programs like the Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR), have the like-minded missions to that of the TCRC in that both focus on collaborative efforts that respond specifically to local needs for the purpose of engaging simultaneously in community and academic endeavors (Wallerstein et al., 2020). CBPR's lists their outcomes including focus on policy changes, community empowerment and sustainable partnerships which mirror the objectives of TCRC's projects which are to enhance social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being across Trent University and the Peterborough region. However, it is also important to look at the communities served with regard to the student researcher. For example, a program known as *Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity: Promoting Opportunities for Diversity in Education and Research* (BUILD PODER) partners community colleges with larger institutions to support underserved communities including the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students in regards to their research aspirations and giving these students the chance for professional advancement (Ashcroft et al., 2021). Similarly the TCRC implements CBR projects in various academic departments across the Trent University campus to give students a more immersive educational experience. By promoting students to conduct CBR projects, programs like TCRC, BUILD PODER and CBPR can highlight the vast number of benefits community research can produce for both the internal and external community such as practical experience, personal and professional growth, and relevant solutions.

In summary, this literature review examined what Community-Based Research (CBR) is, how it can be used as an experiential tool, its benefit for the distribution of knowledge and its utility within both internal student and external public community. CBR can be approached as a growing alternative to traditional academic research for its value in contributing a holistic participation in research. Furthermore, it takes the initiative to explore ethical and epistemological impacts on communities for the goal of enhancing community outcomes and encouraging applicable solutions. Overall, the TCRC aims to use CBR to foster a relationship between communities and academia for the prosperity of both the student and the collective.

Methods

Project Agreement

The first step to this project was matching with the TCRC, the host and signing a Project Agreement detailing all the pertinent details including project purpose, key research questions and terminology, deliverables and deadlines of the project with myself, the host, project coordinator, and faculty supervisor. Contact between myself and the TCRC was accomplished via monthly Microsoft Teams meetings to keep one another in the loop. I was provided with information about a previous CBR project "4706 - Telling the Story of TCRC Research", and "4720 - Research Poster". Although the student researcher of Project 4706 had a different research question in mind, their research was relevant in creating a background for my research and guiding the way in which I would format my research paper.

Literature Review

A first draft of the literature was conducted in September 2024. It focused on understanding what community based research is, how it functions as an experiential learning tool, how it democratizes knowledge and how it contributes to the overall community. The Trent

University Library and Archives, specifically OMNI, was used to access various databases to acquire peer-reviewed journal articles.

In essence, the literature review serves as a foundation to justify the purpose of the research. As well to observe a variety of opinions concerning CBR and laying the groundwork toward analyzing and comparing the results gained from this project.

Ethics Approval

I then began the ethics approval application through the ROMEO research portal on MyTrent which took three rounds of submissions prior to being approved. The ethics applications ensured my workflow of the project, that the risks and benefits were appropriate, and that participants were being provided informed consent along with anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process. I completed the TCPS 2: CORE 2022 certificate to acknowledge my understanding towards ethical conduct for research involving human participants. Additionally, I had prepared and drafted the survey questions, interview questions as well as emails that would be sent out to Trent CBR Alumni to ensure they contained correct wording and adhered to the ethical standards of the board. Through this ethics approval, I have taken the time to assess the ethical implications and have done this through making the participants anonymous and removing any identifying factors such as names, and employment that aren't necessary for the discussion of the research.

Survey via Qualtrics

Upon ethics approval, I proceeded to create the survey through Qualtrics, an easy to use web based software. The survey consisted of five sections, totalling twenty-three questions, for the purpose of gaining an introductory understanding of the participants CBR research and how it impacted their personal and professional trajectory. In order to ensure the data was usable and

consent was confirmed, I programmed the survey to begin with the consent form and not allow participants to continue until consent was received. This in turn ensured that the data received from the participants was in fact consensual, permitting the use of all the results obtained. Within the survey, I also had a section asking participants if they would be interested in a semi-structured interview. If they responded "yes" the survey was programmed to prompt them with a question asking for an email they could best be reached at. The survey was then reviewed by my host for final approval. With the aid of the Trent Alumni & Engagement Services, a list of individuals was compiled to send emails to as the TCRC did not have access to the contact information of the eligible Alumni. The survey was then sent out via email by the Trent Alumni & Engagement Services to approximately 900 emails. Moreover, I created a static post encouraging Trent CBR Alumni to take the survey where it was posted to the TCRC LinkedIn (@Trent Community Research Centre) and Instagram (@trentcommunityresearchcentre).

Semi-Structured Video Interviews via Microsoft Teams

The interview section was created to gain a more personal understanding of the participants' experience in CBR with the TCRC. The interview consisted of ten questions for the participant to answer. Prior to the interview process, I sent an email attached with a Microsoft form to the participants that answered yes on the survey and provided an email to contact. This form consisted of five possible dates including February 7, 8, 9, 21, and 22, 2025 and various one hour time slots ranging from 10am to 8pm to allow flexibility. Based on the answers received from the form, I sent out video invites to the participants using Microsoft Teams. Prior to beginning each interview, I checked in with the participant to confirm that their consent was still ongoing, and clarified any questions or concerns, as well as the right to refrain from answering any question they may not be comfortable answering.

Examining Results Using Braun & Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis

To analyze the qualitative data collected from interviews and surveys, I used Braun and Clarke's Reflexive Thematic Analysis method (Byrne, 2022). This method was used as it is flexible and emphasizes the researcher's active role in developing the themes (Byrne, 2022). This approach aligns well with the exploratory nature of my research on the experiences of past student researchers that conducted CBR through the TCRC. This process includes six phases. The first phase focuses on the familiarization of data where after transcribing the data I read each interview response repeatedly to capture any possible patterns that will help me better understand the participants' experiences (Byrne, 2022). The next phase involved generating initial codes which are used to identify any noticeable features in the data across each transcript (Byrne, 2022). This approach allowed the codes to be closely correlated with the participants words and meanings as opposed to being solely theory based. Through this phase, both semantic meaning explicit and latent meaning underlying codes were implemented to capture the depth of the data (Byrne, 2022). The third phase searched for themes by grouping the codes and finding similar patterns (Byrne, 2022). The next phase involved reviewing the themes to establish their validity and confirm they align with the dataset (Byrne, 2022). The fifth phase involved solidifying and defining the final themes that clearly communicate the main ideas they encompass and that reflect the research questions (Byrne, 2022). The final phase incorporates all the themes to create a narrative that can be tied to the broader research questions and highlight the participants overall experiences (Byrne, 2022).

<u>Results</u>

<u>Survey</u>

The aim of the survey was to collect both experiential and demographic data from former student researchers who had taken part in CBR through the TCRC. The survey was divided into 5 sections. Questions 1-10 focused on gathering background information about the participants, including consent, graduation year, community affiliations and general reasoning concerning their motivation to participate in CBR. Questions 11-13 focused on how CBR impacted their personal and professional development after graduation. Questions 14-15 examined what kinds of soft and hard skills may have been learned through CBR and how they were acquired. Questions 16-19 identified the broader economic, political, environmental, and sociocultural effects on their CBR experience. Finally questions 20-23 explored the overall experience that participants had with CBR, the TCRC and their host communities and any areas of improvement they may have. Participants also had the option to partake in an interview where the results would be examined in the Interview analysis. Ultimately, this design structure provided the ability to explore the CBR experience in a comprehensive form and organize the themes that will be identified and explored.

Familiarization of Data

In this phase, I started with going through the data set and reading through all 13 responses collected from former student researchers involved in the TCRC. The open-ended questions allowed for the exploration of participants' reflections on their experience with CBR, the skill development acquired, their growth both professionally and personally, and how the program can be improved. The process required multiple readings of the responses to gain a thorough understanding and to take notes of similar and opposing ideas, significant reflections or

the types of emotional tones. A variety of commonalities were observed including refined

communication skills, improved career alignment, and increased awareness around local issues,

providing a solid foundation for the coding phase.

Initial Coding

In this phase, codes were identified in a systematic format, analyzing each response line

by line. Through this process, I was able to identify a variety of hard and soft skills acquired by

the former student researchers. Examples of soft skills from responses included "open-minded,"

"communication," "problem-solving," and "teamwork." In comparison, hard skills were

identified in responses like "data collection and management," "presentation development," and

"interviewing." With regard to the transformative nature of CBR, I identified codes in statements

such as "it helped me get a job," "gained awareness of different lived experiences," and

"foundation to the work I currently do."

It was important to note some perspectives that were more directed towards areas of

improvement that the TCRC could work towards. Phrases like "unclear," "should be worth 2

credits," and "disconnected" had shed light on some dissatisfaction in experience and ways in

which the TCRC could work to improve the CBR experience. Through this form of coding, I was

able to give themes the opportunity to emerge on their own from the data as opposed to being

swayed by a pre-existing framework.

Generating Themes

After going through the survey responses to attain codes, I could now place them into

broader categories that revealed patterns and shared meanings. This process of thematic

mapping allowed for the creation of five distinct themes.

The first theme identified was that of **Improved Social and Community Awareness**. Involvement and reflection concerning social issues, systemic inequities and community dynamics had grown since participation in CBR projects. For some participants, it prompted them to reflect on communities and the large impact a student researcher can have on giving these communities a voice they may not have previously had. Their CBR experience provided a strengthened critical consciousness and empathetic nature. The responses that contributed to this theme were Questions 17 and 18 as well as Questions 12 and 13.

The second theme was **Skill Development Enabling Confidence**. Past student researchers described accumulating both hard and soft skills that were directly transferable to higher education, employment and community volunteerism. These skills included heightened communication, teamwork and public speaking along with more technical skills like project management, data analysis and interviewing skills. Primarily, these codes were obtained from responses in Questions 14 and 15 as well as the reflective questions in Questions 11 and 20.

The third theme was **Assorted Institutional Support.** This theme encompassed the past student experiences with the TCRC and host organizations throughout their CBR experience. This theme was the most varied in regard to positive and negative experiences. It appeared that relationships with Faculty Supervisors were normally quite positive, however relationships with Community Partners and Project Coordinators tended to vary. Regarding Project Coordinators, participants at times felt disconnected, or that guidance was limited when conducting their CBR projects. With Community Partners, it depended on whether the project was the first or consecutive choice. Those who had their top choice tended to have a better experience with their Community Partner as opposed to those who did not, highlighting a potential area of improvement regarding the matching process. These codes were reflected in Questions 21 and 22

which is important for this research to identify where the TCRC can improve to make the CBR experience better for prospective student researchers.

The fourth theme was **Career & Academic Catalyst**. The role that CBR had in shaping personal and professional trajectories was a recurring concept as well as one of the central questions being asked throughout the project. It was identified by a number of participants that their CBR experience with the TCRC directly contributed to accomplishments like securing a job, getting accepted into a graduate program or reinforcing the career path in which they want to pursue. This was noted in responses like "foundation to the work I currently do." The questions that made this theme most evident were questions 11, 12 and 16.

The fifth theme was **Opportunities for Improvement.** This theme arose from constructive suggestions participants provided primarily from Question 23. There was feedback regarding implementing structural changes to the CBR course that would reflect the large workload and community impact it has for student researchers. Expressing feelings of increasing the course credit value to be equivalent to that of a research thesis as it requires similar effort. Moreover, having more variety in Community Projects to ensure the student is getting the most from the project and that the community is getting the most from the student.

<u>Interviews</u>

This section focuses on the analysis of the semi-structured interviews (N = 7) that former student researchers consented to in the survey. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes and was composed of ten open-ended questions that allowed participants to speak on achievements, challenges, meaningful interactions, community involvement, personal and professional transformation. For anonymity, the interviewees are labeled A through G. These interviews were conducted to further support the survey responses as well as provide a raw and

deeper reflection on the CBR experience through the TCRC. I continued using the Clarke and Braun six-phase thematic analysis to be able to compare the survey and interview results and merge the themes together.

Familiarization of Data

To become familiar with the transcripts, I read them twice prior to taking notes to familiarize myself with the data. After, I read them again, this time taking notes on skills acquired, emotional tones, positive and negative experiences, similarities and differences and anything that particularly stood out during the interview. For example, I noted that Participant F noted having to "jump in headfirst" into their topic of sexual violence without prior experience. This highlights the deep learning and emotional vulnerability some student researchers may face in their research projects. Participant E in contrast highlighted learning about how to conduct respectful and reciprocal research and how it is used beyond academia.

Initial Coding

Similarly to the survey, I analyzed each transcript line by line and coded phrases that stood out and followed the notes that I took previously. I noted down phrases including but not limited to "Developing confidence from Celebration of Research presentations" (Participant A,C,E), "CBR leading to career path in community support" (Participant D,F), "Frustration with institutional limitations and burnout" (Participant G), "Balancing competing interests" (Participant B), "CBR opened my eyes to what exists outside of forensics" (Participant C) were just some of the codes identified.

Generating Themes

Through this phase, I identified five themes that came from comparing the codes across the seven interview participants.

The first theme identified was **Confidence through Communication**. This theme was widely apparent through all the participants as they had the ability to grow through various public presentations such as the Celebration of Research as well as having to communicate with their host organizations. Participant C identified gaining skills when speaking to non-scientific audiences. Participant E described the "confidence boost" they received from seeing their research applied in follow-up discussions. Finally, participant F mentioned "presenting the research… felt good to be inclusive."

The second theme identified was **Adaptive Leadership**. Similar to the survey responses, participants shared that often expectations were misaligned between supervisors, host organizations and the student researcher; however this pushed them to develop stronger problem-solving as well as advocacy skills. For example, Participant A noted they were "constantly checking-in" with their host as their needs tended to be unaligned. Participant B on the other hand worked to navigate tensions between the wants of their supervisor as well as the wants of their host organization.

The third theme identified was **Leading with Ethics and Empathy**. This theme reflected the student researchers ability to handle sensitive information and strengthen their emotional intelligence with communities they may not necessarily relate to. It also taught the ethical responsibility to be entrusted with sensitive information and be able to handle it properly. For example, Participant B had the opportunity to listen to deeply personal stories from mothers advocating for children with fetal alcohol syndrome. Similarly, Participant F shared having to develop their empathy skills surrounding sexual violence and implemented that experience into future leadership roles.

The fourth theme identified was **Finding Ourselves through Research**. CBR had allowed participants to reflect on themselves as not only researchers but as professionals as well. Participant D noted that "the concept of voice came out," highlighting having to understand the varying realities of rural and urban communities. Participant E, explained using their research to ground themselves in Indigenous knowledge systems and the importance of reciprocal research.

The fifth theme identified was **Examining the Structures that Shape us**. This theme highlighted the varying perspectives Participants had throughout their CBR experience. While some Participants, notably Participants A and E, praised their support from their supervisors and TCRC coordinators, some felt differently, specifically Participant G after noting "more supervisor support was needed." They expressed the effects this had on their overall confidence calling the experience "a learning experience" in terms of how research should not be conducted. These experiences are vital in understanding the gaps the TCRC has and how they can be better to ensure future student researchers don't undergo similar experiences.

Bringing Together the Survey and Interview Results

Validity and Reliability of Themes

After creating these themes, I revisited the responses to ensure their reliability as well as validity and that they were well represented across multiple questions and respondents. To do this I revisited each transcript and survey response to evaluate whether the codes and resulting themes were represented consistently across a variety of respondents. Moreover, whether they were well distributed across a variety of questions. Essentially, this phase allowed me to find meaningful relations to the themes highlighting internal homogeneity as well as making sure the themes remained distinct enough from one another highlighting external heterogeneity. Through

this process I was able to combine themes once again across both the surveys and interviews and create three main themes.

Defining, Naming, Interpreting and Reporting Themes

Upon refining the themes through the review process, I managed to create three distinct themes that captured the essence of participant experiences which include skill building, bridging academia and community and CBR as a Career Catalyst. The reason that these themes were selected were due to their alignment with the research questions concerning how CBR influenced both personal and professional trajectories, their clarity, and overall depth.

Regarding **Skill Building**, this theme takes into account the overall development of interpersonal, professional and academic skills accrued as a result of the CBR process. Participants frequently mentioned growth in confidence, academic writing, communication, public speaking and advocacy. These were skills that former student researchers either developed for the very first time or were able to significantly enhance them. For example, Participant B, found that when presenting their findings to their community partners was initially "nerve-wracking at first, but in the end, it made me a better speaker and more sure of myself." Another shared that their experience taught them to "ask meaningful questions" which aided with their overall research abilities. In essence this theme reflects just how much CBR has contributed to student development in a holistic way, most notable through preparing students to take their skills and use them beyond only academic settings.

When **Bridging Academia and Community**, former student researchers gained the ability to apply what they've learned academically and use it towards real-world, community rooted issues. Participants expressed a shift in the way they originally perceived research, going from needing it to get through university to having the capacity to create change through

collaborative means. It was an experience that provided deep learning with a community where student researchers may not have been familiar with and having to adapt their previous knowledge or academic language to contribute appropriately to their communities needs. Student researchers were able to be "a part of something bigger," which showcases the mutual learning that was able to grow between the students and community organizations.

Finally, the third theme of **CBR as a Career Catalyst**, showcased how CBR have continued to shape or grow student researchers' career paths. For some, this provided an opportunity to pursue graduate school whereas for others it gave them the practical experience required to enter the workforce. Former student researchers describe their CBR experience as providing them with resume-building, networking opportunities, job interviews and graduate school acceptances. For example, Participant E noted that their CBR project on their resumes made them "stand out when applying to my Master's program." This theme ultimately encompassed the ability of CBR to be a transformative experience in shaping their future professional journey's.

Discussion and Future Directions

Challenges faced during CBR

Throughout the CBR process, there were a few challenges encountered while attempting to complete their CBR projects. These challenges consisted of having difficulty when navigating the ethics approval process, having time constraints and lacking familiarity in how to go about formatting their CBR project. One of the primary concerns was being uncertain in how to properly structure and build surveys and professionally conduct interviews. This was due to the fact that many former researchers expressed this being their first time engaging with real-world stakeholders. Despite these challenges, student researchers were able to adapt to these

challenges, often learning by doing and relying on the support of their supervisors, community partners or past student examples. However, it is important to note that challenges are merely obstacles needing solutions. Through this understanding, the TCRC would benefit from creating further student resources such as survey templates, interviewing workshops and ethics navigation guides that will aid in streamlining the process and reduce initial apprehension for future CBR participants. As these survey and interview responses from participants as late as 2023, it is important to note that the TCRC has since implemented a Micro-Credential Opportunity that provides student researchers additional resources to help them succeed in their CBR journey (Trent University, 2024c). However, I believe that creating mandatory workshops like the Poster Workshop to help CBR students succeed would be beneficial in ensuring that they were provided the necessary resources to succeed in their research.

Long-Term Influence on Professional Growth

Regardless of these challenges, former student researchers reported and demonstrated significant professional and academic development. Upon examination of both the surveys and interviews, participants identified that their CBR project improved their research skills, public speaking, communication skills, confidence, and awareness surrounding community issues. It was observed that participants, although hesitant of having to navigate a research project on their own, were able to fully grasp the process of research from data collection, to analysis, to the presentation and finally to the final report. It was seen as a unique experience that varies from traditional coursework which involves following an exact rubric to conducting the CBR experience which challenges the student to create each part of the project from start to finish while involving a community partner. This experience was found to give student researchers something to strengthen their portfolios, or have a unique conversation topic. Moreover, it

solidified and clarified a passion for what the student researcher was truly interested in whether it was research, higher education, community-based initiatives or something completely different from their project. Ultimately, CBR always allowed the student researcher to take something away from the experience whether it was related to their project or not.

Impactful Interactions with the Community

The root of Community-Based Research, the community was notably one of the most powerful parts of the experience. Students were made aware of how much their work can showcase and amplify community organizations whether that be through finding solutions, addressing their needs or giving them a voice when no one else was willing to listen. It provided the student the opportunity to feel a sense of responsibility and know that their work was addressing something bigger than just a research question but for a future solution that can improve how the community operates going forward. It shifted the student researchers perspective from working on a project only to achieve a grade for their transcript to working on a real problem that can bring about tangible outcomes and make a lasting impact.

Shifts in Perspectives and Assumptions

From these interactions, student researchers were challenged to go above and beyond classroom expectations and question everything they once were taught. Student researchers were faced with contradicting ideas like challenging whose knowledge matters most or what research can look like. These questions incorporated further critical thinking in the student researcher. Traditional research for example has viewed success as proving a hypothesis or finding an answer to a problem. However, CBR challenged that assumption by viewing success as not necessarily finding that perfect result, but instead finding stepping stones that can contribute to meaningful improvements that will allow the community to continue to grow and ameliorate

what may not be currently working. The CBR experience has also shifted the power dynamic that traditional research can have and focuses on working alongside a community, ameliorating their appreciation towards participatory research to provide research that takes into account the qualitative voices of lived experiences and not just the quantitative data statistics.

Advice for Future CBR Students

Based on the voices of past student researchers as well as my personal experience with CBR, advice for future CBR researchers include four key ideas. Firstly, start early and stay organized, and know that things won't always go as planned, specifically with ethics submissions, and survey responses. Plan to adapt and embrace the non-linearity of real-world research as it will provide you with skills to deal with twists and turns. Secondly, be open-minded and flexible when choosing a research partner, you may not get the research partner at the top of your list, but know that the one you do get matched with is always an opportunity to learn something you didn't once previously know. Thirdly, always be open to asking for help whether that be from your supervisor, your peers, your community partners or your TCRC project coordinator, know that you don't have to go through your project alone. There are a growing number of supports available for CBR students, so don't hesitate to see how a previous student structured their research paper, or constructed their poster presentation.

Reflections on CBR Experience and Future Directions

Overall, this project gave light to the student perspective of CBR through the TCRC and demonstrated its ability to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-world measures. To improve the future of student researchers in CBR, it is recommended that the TCRC implements solutions for both the students and host communities. In regards to students, the TCRC should expand project availability across more disciplines that allow the student to

conduct research within their interests. Moreover, further resources should be implemented such as survey design templates, interview structuring workshops and guidance on ethics application process to set the student researcher up for success. Finally, it would be beneficial to have students complete a survey as soon as they've completed their CBR project that gathers qualitative data on their CBR experience for future research, as gathering survey responses from CBR alumni was a difficult task when contact information was limited. In regards to the host community, ensuring the TCRC identifies that the community genuinely needs the research being conducted and that it will be physically used upon completion to foster a sense of achievement for the student researcher. Additionally, having the TCRC project coordinator ensures that communication between the community and student researcher is frequent and that expectations are well balanced and manageable for the student, host and faculty supervisor.

<u>Conclusion</u>

In conclusion, Community-Based Research through the Trent Community Research Centre provided student researchers with more than just an academic experience. It pushed them out of their comfort zones, encouraged them to adapt and find alternative solutions, lead with confidence, produce results that can have real-world impacts and ultimately pave the way for personal and professional discovery. This research project illustrates how community-engaged research not only aims to equip students with transferable and practical skills, but it fosters a mindset that extends beyond their time at Trent. Through continuous evolution and investment into the growth of Community-Based Research through the TCRC, we can be rest assured that future student researchers can immerse themselves into an experience that will allow them to be curious, to collaborate and to help a community.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions for Past Student Researchers

The first 10 questions relate to obtaining information to get to know you, your contributions to community based research (CBR) & Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC), and interest for future opportunities.

1. Have you completed the consent form prior to beginning this survey?

2. What is your name?

3. Would you be interested in participating in an interview to give your testimonials of CBR

4. What active email can you be reached at, if selected for an interview?

5. What year did you graduate from Trent University?

6. Did you participate in community based research (CBR) with the Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC)

7. Why did you choose to do a CBR Project?

8. What degree major (program) did you conduct CBR through?

9. What community did you conduct your CBR through?

10. Would you be interested in attending a celebration of Community Based Research In-person on March 27th, 12-4pm in Peterborough?

The next 3 questions aim to observe how CBR with TCRC has impacted you post undergrad in personal and professional trajectory.

11. How has CBR impacted you post-undergrad in terms of personal development?

12. How has CBR impacted you post-undergrad in terms of professional development?

13. How has CBR changed your outlook on possible career options or academic journey?

The next 2 questions aim to identify soft skills (skills acquired naturally) and hard skills (skills acquired through technical training) that you had obtained via your CBR experience through the TCRC.

14. What soft skills did you acquire through CBR?

15. What hard skills did you acquire through CBR?

The next 4 questions observe how CBR has impacted you economically (your employment), culturally (how you perceive your cultural awareness), sociopolitically (involvement in activism & advocacy) and environmentally (partake in sustainable practices).

16. How has CBR impacted your employment?

17. How has CBR impacted your cultural awareness?

18. How has CBR impacted your involvement in activism and advocacy?

19. How has CBR impacted your involvement in sustainable practices?

These 4 questions aim to understand your overall experience with CBR, TCRC and your Host Community and what improvements you have for future considerations.

20. How was your overall experience with CBR?

21. How was your overall experience with the TCRC?

22. How was your overall experience with your Host Community?

23. What improvements do you suggest to the TCRC for future consideration?

Interview Questions For Past Student Researchers

1. Was there a particular challenge you faced during your CBR experience that shaped your personal or professional growth? How did you overcome it?

2. Was there a particular achievement you faced during your CBR experience that shaped your personal or professional growth? How did you accomplish it?

3. Can you recall a meaningful interaction or collaboration with your host community that left a lasting impact on you? How did it make you feel?

4. How do you think your participation in CBR has influenced the way you engage with your community today?

5. Looking back, what aspect of CBR do you think had the most profound effect on shaping your identity as a researcher or a community member?

6. In what ways did participating in CBR challenge your assumptions or broaden your perspective on community issues?

7. What advice would you give to current students interested in CBR, particularly in terms of how it might impact their future or their educational experience?

8. Can you describe a moment where you felt particularly proud of your contribution to your community through CBR?

9. How has the experience of working with the TCRC influenced your goals or aspirations for future community-based initiatives?

10. If you were to reflect on your CBR journey in one phrase, what would it be and why?

Appendix B

Interview Responses From Past Student Researchers

Transcript of Each Participant
Participant A *Interview Date - Thursday, February 6 2025* 1. The community partner, project, not everyone was on the same page, community partner wasn't always realistic. Stellar TCRC coordinator and helped navigate the project and scope with the host. Host wasn't super thrilled with results, based on findings only so much you can do, constantly checking in with the organization to make sure things are going well and dealing with what you have. 2. Presented work in celebration of research, not the most comfortable with public speaking, getting the opportunity really helped and gave me a good experience. Professional development, helped with masters applications stand out against other candidates; made them aware about student jobs. Led them to their current job ▮▮▮▮▮▮. 3. Host and them did not see eye to eye, host came and was not from area and brought a mug from organization and stress ball and was really sweet even though the project didn't go as planned 4. Most undergrads, not idea what networking was and its importance, did TCRC without knowing the doors it would open; yes organization and speaking, getting job and seeing all the organization and speaking with all community partners; adding everyone on LinkedIn, connection with career space, TCRC, professors; community at Trent and outside Trent (organization) 5. The approach was well done; monthly meeting but available when you have questions, not being suffocated or hand is being held; independent; their work and research being conducted there to help when you need; talk to professor and having people that know both side and aware of academic and community 6. At the time, project, didn't align with personal or academic interests; didn't know much about the organization; uneducated and indifferent; going through research process risk youth and alternative education setting; looking at mental health setting; aligning with your interests but found a new area that they didn't know they'd be interested in or lack. 7. Decide what way you work best, project with a partner, individually, capstone course, what method of CBR would be the best. Doing one, is it necessary, will not do harm; great way to network, future employers, get to know more about trent; career space education; do one you never know what you'll get out of it; more than research also networking; different from a traditional classroom setting 8. At the celebration of research; standing at poster and talking to all community organization that walk around, faculty, community, Cool research about this; haven't seen it before; useful information that can inform policies change the structural component of organization; different from research that focuses solely on results and more so providing future solutions 9. Definitely one of their interests; came back to work with TCRC. Instilled a sense of community; did

masters and volunteered with 3 organizations in Kingston; beyond research and peterborough they gave back to community; prompted them future in research; fascinated by TCRC coordinator; have all these friends that had networking contacts with other communities; leading them to apply to a job;

10. **Led them to impactful realizations!**
Not only personal journey what the heck I am doing after graduations; but changed their perspective on trent what they offer, community, what they are all about; office job that is more than that; challenging preconceptions on research community organizations; office work; they actually enjoys it more than they thought; loves seeing the projects even if they isn't familiar with it! Helping them decide the career they want; bad rep in terms of not doing traditional research; finding a professor that support that change it as well

Participant B
Interview Date - Friday, February 7, 2025

1. Big challenges dealing with balancing competing interests of hosts versus CBR versus supervisor versus what they wanted to do. Worked with a group of moms, not formal organization, unofficial advocacy group, super passionate about everything. We want this; Trying to balance their expectations with what was expected by the supervisor and coordinator.

2. Skill building, Didn't end of doing presentation of research, awards. Comfortable presenting, public speaking, communication, data was reaching through cold emails, reaching out online, being able to sensitive info for people they have never met before, which is rewarding yet uncomfortable

3.Host org a group of moms who came together to research housing for adopted kids with fetal alcohol syndrome; outlet to be heard as they haven't been heard; tell their stories when they were togethers; shared very personal stories; deep impactful stories about kids with disabilities and how it affects their life; giving up things to support kids; left a lasting impression

4. Definitely more vocal and better advocate in terms of whatever room or group step into / work with; feel more comfortable speaking to people, and advocating, stepping into more of a vocal role

5. As a researcher; did a interview; normally used to quantitative data; but when doing qualitative more people based; you never know what you're going to get talking to people; learning to work qualitatively; comparing interviews and observing themes and not looking for numbers or trends (its different); different way of approaching data and analysis

6. In a big way; never thought about of the impact of FASC more prevalent than autism; can be hidden; didn't realize the problem in community or justice system; tell stories about real frequent contact with criminal justice system shaped perspective; pursue crim law; so many different types of people to interact with and don't know what's going on behind the scenes; more sensitive; forward thinking; if they runs a court docket for court (being more sensitive to situations and people) Community awareness and its prevalence.

7. Speaking to a 1 or 2nd recommend it especially if they aren't going into straight science stream; chose not to do thesis wanted to go to law school and wanted more people based involvement; still research through academic and personal skills; great thing to talk about it in application and job interviews; strong rec for those interested in not straight science not a closing door; you can still do it as a main science but it gives different research; doing it independently; designing it by yourself; you are doing research;

literature review; interviews; scheduling; great skill for independence and balancing interests; where do you want to go and why would it be beneficial

8. Celebration of Research Day (didn't present) but it was packed with people; do your elevator pitch; somebody coming back and sharing their similar research; an issue that they never knew about; felt a little isolated; connect with people not in ptbo, wisconsin; yukon; hawaii; edmonton; someone from ptbo shows up to celebration of research;

9. I don't know if it really changed or influenced me; I already had a drive to give back and associate with the community; opened eyes to various different issues; always had that instance of helping and being involved in their community; TCRC did not necessarily change that.

10. **"Really diverse learning opportunity"**
so many different skills; time management, independence. Presentation, communication skills Haven't Met anyone who has done that in other schools; lot of people did a reading course or thesis; haven't met anyone who has done it

Participant C
Interview Date - Friday, February 7, 2025

1. Communicating results to a non-scientific audience, writing newspaper articles as opposed to lab reports, trying to communicate results that were not scientific, has stuck with them for the last two years as they do work with farmers, growers etc, gain confidence and skills to communicate with the audience today.

2. Being invited to give an oral presentation at Celebration; always being comfortable giving presentations; opportunity to reinforce those skills and communicate to a different audience; if students were prepared for environmental forensic or not. Achieved it by knowing that they wanted to give an oral presentation; get data to present orally and on poster and present in both cases; frame to meet that goal

3. Hard the host was the editors of the newspaper; communicated with them and with public never got feedback; Faculty supervisor very supportive a good supervisor makes a lasting impression; get to know faculty through CBR use as a reference; not an easy things having a good supervisor can make a difference

4. Open eyes to new community that they now engages with; open eyes to what available outside forensics that has problem solving, doesn't have to be forensics; reason why they did their career in environmental science to broaden their horizons now.

5. The freedom available to project; going into it; had so much freedom pick any topic and think people want to read about it; lead to their current research role; cater to their interest, for research, networking, not the case for everyone; take what you can from each connection and apply it to life and future

6. The celebration of research; see what others do, see issues in our community and them looking at students for help; housing, crime rates; need advocates to look at it, not their project particularly; proof of concept in their project

7. Try and take something from every conversation had small or large; trying to take whatever you can from convo and cater towards what you do; advocate for yourself to get a project that is meaningful in

the first place; allowing students to pick from entire list of CBR; forensics student can do something environmental and not being set to a specific list; allow them to get the most out of CBR for themselves.

8. End of CBR, faculty supervisor reached out and wanted to look at their data; to see the intersection of forensic and environmental science; hired a professor; wanted to do but didn't think it was worth their time; see that they left an impact on the university and forensic program.

9. Experience overall opened their eyes to research that caters toward a community not just a lab or publication and rather a community need; enjoy research; wanted to have a direct connection with a community; did not want to just report results to supervisor which isn't reasonable; directly working with a grower community and report back rather than keeping it peer-reviewed; science and community connection as opposed to separation

10. **"An experience that opened-new doors'**
because their project was so eye opening looking for somewhere else to go and in a dead-end and their project showed their possibilities that weren't initially visible in their eyes; and see what is available to them and others as well.

Participant D
Interview Date - Saturday, February 8, 2025

1. Project with partner, study with PTBO economic development corporations; studied economic impact of financial institutions and closures; ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮; bank closed; went out and did research to see impact and see next steps; mitigate the challenges; Not necessarily challenging; everyone was supportive; interview participants; (politicians; business people; community organization) everyone cooperative; time was a challenge; balancing project; classes; work schedule; up late on zoom with research partner; did during covid (never met research partner in real life; always on zoom; never met and interview participants in real life; range the region of reaching participants; wish they could have done more and really enjoyed it; more interviews; community survey; made the most of the time had

2. Completing the project was an achievement; develop all sorts of materials; literature review; interview questions;transcripts;posters; ethics approval; 100% worth it in the end; impact they made on helping these communities and making interviewees feel heard; banks weren't listening to them and this was an opportunity to do that

3. One interview in particular; interviewed ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮; owner of ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮; ▮▮▮▮▮ is small and distant from other communities; closest grocery store in the area; their store burnt down before the interview; financial institution (RBC) also shutdown; still did the interview; providing insights on use of cash and for a business (need to deposit it somewhere); impressed with resilience and adaptability of community and business; program to bring grocery to seniors; tight knit a community is; plans to rebuild and they have visited the store (made a lasting connection with the community)

4. Experience in this project has impacted their career and the way they have developed as a professional and research, works for ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮; this project helped go toward that path as they were impressed with working with participants and interviewees; mayors they interacted with and people they did their project with; helped decide where to go with their career

5. The concept of voice came out during the interviews they did; such a different perspective based on urban vs rural; public vs private; better understanding of what different groups faced and their perspective; rural specific; it is heard by people in power (ministry of rural affairs) but at the same time it is hard to translate into public policy; not always cost effective, grew up in city of ptbo; now ptbo county (more urban), surrounded by lakes and forests versus the village, ▮▮▮▮▮ only got high speed internet a couple years ago; seeing the differences in community and observing different lenses

6. Internet access; use it for everything; did realize how bad it could be in places, the use of cash and how important it is to some people (businesses and depositing daily); heard a lot of unreliability of ATMs (rural areas with internet are not reliable)

7. Choose a topic you are interested in as you will
Choose organization you could see yourself working for someday; their organization folded but now the staff that worked there work with him at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮; they would have worked for them if it was possible Get out of your comfort zone; interviews are scary but they were fortunate to have a partner; do something that you wouldn't participate in or participate in at their time at Trent; Trent experience enhance by outside experience

8. Hearing the enthusiasm from participants made them happy; every single one (10) fully engaged and

enthusiastic; gave great information; happy someone took on the project and heard; project over; report presented; didn't have any follow up (present to township or publish) it was never published or no speaking to councils but it would have been nice to have some follow up to see impact; they could have used report but they didn't have the opportunity to see; like to think they made impacts on programs and policies

9. Very supportive of community-based research; host right now for ptbo county and its going very well; see the strength of CBR to drive change and help community organizations; small organization who wants to do a project it can really be helpful to have access to student who can work on this as opposed to hire someone to do it; great experience for student; TCRC got a bunch of funding for mileage and other expenses to contribute to lowering barriers and helping research get done; big supporter of CBR; personally (this project helped him to want to work with communities and rural in particular) planned on going to Guelph for planning, with focuses on community work and didn't end up going as they got job with ███████; love what they do because of research project

10. **'Community enthusiasm manifests when you show interest"'**
Something about enthusiasm' what made this fun was the enthusiasm from participants; goes for a lot of projects; people are happy to speak to you normally when you are showing interest in your community and providing feedback. Drives the researcher and make them feel good

Participant E
Interview Date - Saturday, February 8, 2025

1. Going through the research ethics board review; robust process, never expected how much it was; supervisor up until 4am trying to get the review in by the date to get it back in time before the next semester; lesson was up until then was okay taking time and they'll get to it; if you really need something done, you have to bother them; Professors were very helpful

2. First thing is had first midpoint meeting with community and professor giving update on research; going into meeting they were scared and felt behind on the process tried to be as ready as possible; everyone was really happy with where they were at with their progress; overall they left the meeting feeling like they did a good job and that the community is appreciating their work and adding value to the community and research field; research poster had a lot of effort; and won best poster poster and was happy with their hard work; community partner was really proud.

3. The meeting definitely had a lasting impact, confidence boost saying they do know what they're doing; research practices in this and other course and applying to real world results; in a later meeting near end of project with everyone (preliminary research to inform the literature and background of another grad student) everyone was asking questions and was excited to see them work will continue on to broader research and higher education; put your email and not expect people to reach out and months later graduate student reaches out to ask questions concerning their findings. Had a follow up meeting to discuss as well as the community partner to see that their work has made a difference.

4. Definitely CBR approach putting the community first; now done their masters and talked about CBR and didn't realize in the field of research CBR is still new in PHD and hadn't heard of CBR. CBR is the best! Emphasize how important it is as it is communities starting it as they have questions; need help but don't have the resources, technical skills or people to accomplish; it is a reciprocal partnership; benefits both ways; community gets knowledge and networks; students gain technical skills. (serve inuit youth) Professor and community brought together through their project and continue together today

5. Influenced the reciprocity aspect; did undergrad in INDG Environmental studies (how to do reciprocal and respectal research with respectful communication); as a student you become aware of not wanting to disrupt systems of oppression, harm, violence research can perpetuate. CBR opportunity to establish a program, respectful research and benefit to the community where their needs are put forth and students are working together.

6. Had this idea it would be similar to assignments and no one would care; and a grade on their transcript and that's it. Every time they met with community partner highlight this is amazing and we can use this; asking for their opportunity and valuing their perspective; can we use this work this way; impactful of work; and did interviews with other communities doing the same research and it interested them; research and academia isn't just isn't within the university and has tangible impacts

7. Pick your project carefully; initially was going to do in third year picked a project that sounded good and just to do it (had originally had 2 parts research + event management part ie conference), met with community first before professor in third year; TCRC put in contact with professor and did not want the event management and said they need to hire someone to do event for them; it was all good originally, but the community partner saw their disappointment and they wasn't as invested afterward and everyone was super understanding. Really thought about it more and really think about, sparks interest; require

the methodologies you want to use; never say never; prefers qualitative over quantitative methodologies, when they signed up their next project; they wanted to do interviews and then was given the chance to; think about the topic and research methods; ask if it can be altered and meeting the same goals (community partner comes first); don't do it if its not a good match for you.

8. The presentations and follow-up emails asking more questions about their works and overall positive feedback, submitting the report, doing the poster presentation; everyone was really happy with the work, verbal and written feedback; asking more questions about it; its easy to be told you are doing good but its another to see engagement in the work through thoughtful questioning

9. Great for having this data base or catalogue of research projects and offering a space for community partners to come to to ask needs for research and be a matching service for researchers and research projects; wish they had it in them higher studies and make it easier to find places that require their skills; ensure that you won't be an extractive colonial researcher; create a research relationship and researcher; TCRC is good at maintaining relationship with community partner

10. **"The CBR project gave me the confidence and the experience needed to pursue a potential career in academia"**
because it's true and they didn't anticipate that CBR is something they can put on their resume and make a report for the community partner and have skills in participatory research; qualitative methodologies. A really great addition to a CV. Having that experience gives a confidence boost and now that they are here they always think back to it and continue to use them today.

Participant F
Interview Date - Friday, February 21, 2025

1. At the beginning, working with ▮▮▮ evaluated their conference, early in their career, didn't know a lot about LGBT learning pronouns, expression of self, etc. grew up in a conservative household when going to uni, first seeing so many new ideologies, really amazing specializing in lgbtq+ community identity finding, stemmed from CBR.

2. Their results of CBR was so fascinating, ▮▮▮ not overly impressed, conferences although exciting don't do enough with the information; now that they know people don't learn a lot at conferences, always try to use tools and technique so that people walk away with something how to implement; sexual consent is harder to understand as it is taboo, now it is better with me 2 movement; results of research and implementing results in personal and professional life

3. Amazing host; during research able to interact with both, volunteered at ▮▮▮ then did research there. The two ladies amazing, got them into counseling, one had amazing energy loved what they did; taught them so much; every conversation was approachable, non-judgemental, challenges with learning they were so patient; answer questions; sexual violence was quite new to them at the time; jumped in head first; always patient.

4. The ones who taught them the foundations they now use; remember getting a paper with grounding techniques and they hand their clients this to help them as well; keep it as a file now; started their whole career. Foundation for their career; crisis line. Faculty pushed them to do ▮▮▮. Did placement then CBR then worked for them.

5. Not much research to create the guide, recently went into private practice, college at Alberta; CBR impacted their eyes to have more self awareness and how they interacts within the world; the various communities to cater to; being more open minded; sexual consent conference intergrating themself, thoughts and beliefs; have conversations; made them more comfortable to have conversation especially in sexual violence and normalize it. Take the information and learn it, apply it to their broader community; first thing they did in their new role they were an RLC, Dons, education on sexual violence.

6. first thing they did in their new role, was an RLC, Dons, education on sexual violence. Gain an understanding on what is happening, 1/16 post secondary students are affected by sexual violence; more empathy and understand that anyone can go through something.

7. Keep an open mind always; can be the foundation for what's next; you may not ever end up using your program and vice versa; opportunity to broaden your scope outside your current classwork

8. Presented the research; to all the community members, have pronoun buttons, felt good to be inclusive and know their meanings; actually involved is when you know what it means

9. TCRC was awesome; helped more with methodologies of it all; how to write it; not a scientist at the heart; the structure is not their strong suit; got their paper to where it needed to be; not the biggest impact; forensic supervisor and host supervisor were more impactful;

10. **"Broadening my awareness"**
helped them understand more community issues; what we face even on campus; encompass so much;

the conference; writing and interviewing people on the phone; talking to people if they implementing it; love learning but not implementing; eye opening; now they always keep this in mind; how to actually to implement; be a good leader; how to actually teach people so they use the information; went on to do trainings.

Participant G
Interview Date - Friday, February 21, 2025

1. One of the challenges was getting people to respond for request for research; from that it forced them to pivot their research a little; had to change their goals a little bit; adapt and helped with empathetic with researchers and having to pivot; did it with a partner

2. Not necessarily achievement; completing course and project itself; adding to resume; current job of 4 years; saw that they did community research is how they got their job.

3. Not a strong relationship with host community; sat in board meeting + annual general meeting; sustainable community; dish rentals; working with community forced them to understand its importance; what they're doing is important; when they did the interactions;got to make terrariums and takeaway and more engagement of team building higher likelihood of people wanting to stay

4. Did not influence that much; Trent Community was temporary; when engaged with Trent in mind but hasn't pushed them to do anything different

5. Really showed the importance of how involved people are in the community and how ton of it is volunteer and people get burned out; appreciate how much work is needed in general community that goes unpaid and unacknowledged and noticed when its gone;reflect on in current life; such as in covid and became even more relevant

6. Before it broadened the underbelly work that goes into it all; and you don't see what goes on behind the scenes i.e unpaid work; look at this small community and what they are trying to do and what is important; current job have community researchers and if they are burned out is it helping or burdening them more; with limited amounts of time; empathizing small communities

7. Don't know how flexible; don't be married to six interviews; should have done surveys; take feedback; really focus on participants' shoes; put yourself in their shoes' do I want to talk to this person; put yourself in participants and community mindset to acknowledge what is most needed.

8. I don't have one; proud of finishing project; didn't hear from the community; take it as a learning experience

9. Did not think TCRC supportive; was not good experience; not wouldn't recommend; way more support it would be better; baby researchers; new to this; didn't have any information on how to interview people; more supervisor support; knows what doesn't work; work with community organizations; definitely bring up community is burned out; influenced by TCRC by sometime people publish or perish; should be as needed for community instead; better than shoving student out there; make meaningful partnerships.

10. **"A learning experience"**
learned how research should not be conducted; still learning ⅚ years later; should not have done that. Should think of every scenario (ethically); it was cool; design your own research project and put it

together; didn't love the topic; there wasn't a lot of opportunity at the time.

Appendix C

Figure 1. Trent Community Research Centre (TCRC) Logo

Figure 2. Survey Post for LinkedIn, and Instagram