Supporting Young Offenders in Ontario Secondary Schools

By

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Abstract

With minimal interdisciplinary research in the field, and a heightened likelihood of high school youth participating in illegal activities, Ontario teachers are remarkably unprepared for supporting young offenders at school. In the present study, qualitative interview methods were used to interview two mainstream secondary school teachers about their experiences supporting young offenders. Specifically, this included their perceptions of young offenders, their classroom experiences and strategies for working with these students, the supports or hindrances in this process, and their perceived impact on the education of young offenders. Both teachers have found themselves teaching in alternative education programs, without any specific training in this area. After analysing teacher perceptions of their own interactions with young offenders, several themes emerged. First, educators may offer greater support to students who they perceive to be more motivated, which informs their support for young offenders. Second, teachers demonstrate a mutual lack of communication and trust with students who are young offenders, and this could interfere with their provision of support. Third, teachers frequently reference peer relationships when discussing “high-risk” student behaviour. Finally, working in a supportive and collaborative team environment is reportedly desirable for meeting the support needs of young offenders in high schools.

Key Words: young offenders, delinquency, teachers, support, Ontario, high school
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Research Context and Problem

Adolescence, especially for males, is a time when increased hormones stimulate a need for physical activity, a need which is not met in many contemporary schools (Felson & Boba, 2010). Ontario secondary schools require students to spend long periods of time indoors, participating in activities and environments which are of a generally dormant nature. For youth, this atmosphere can be restrictive and unproductive (Felson & Boba, 2010). In addition, “some [youth] will be exposed to adverse factors that negatively impact their psycho-social development, and which may even contribute to offending behaviour” (Public Safety Canada, 2012, p. 1). Thus the adolescent period can be extremely conducive to offending behaviour.

While exact statistics vary among sources, when used in combination they compile an image of youth delinquency in Canada. It has been frequently found that the most widespread participation in youth delinquency occurs in grade nine (Crooks, Scott, Wolfe, Chiodo & Killip, 2007; Gomes, Bertrand, Paetsch, & Hornick, 2003) at an average age of 15-16 years old (Corrado, Kuehn, & Margaritescu, 2014; Wilson & Hoge, 2012). Most researchers have found that young offenders engage in their first police interactions at a very young age; usually around 11 or 12 years old (Corrado et al., 2014; Vitaro, Brendgen & Tremblay, 2000). Younger youth are more likely to express negative perceptions of authority, and it has been argued that delinquency is an extension of these perceptions (Chow, 2011). As is consistently found in most general statistics on crime, the majority of youth offenders are male (Corrado et al., 2014; Crooks et al., 2007; Gomes et al., 2003; Wilson & Hoge, 2012).

While there is some degree of diversity among studies based on province and city, the vast majority of Canadian youth in conflict with the law have been Caucasian (Baron, 2004;
Corrado et al., 2014; Mann, 2014). However, based on the size of the Canadian Aboriginal population, there has been a disproportionately high representation of Aboriginal youth among young offenders (Baron, 2004; Corrado et al., 2014; Mann, 2014). Interestingly, the proportion of female Aboriginal youth offenders is also disproportionately high when compared to Caucasian female youth (Corrado et al., 2014). Aboriginal youth are also likely to have been involved in comparatively more offenses, which are often of a more serious or violent nature, and are more likely to be living in foster care (Corrado et al., 2014). Furthermore, it has been repeatedly discovered that the majority of young offenders are of low socioeconomic status (Broeking & Peterson-Badali, 2010; Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014; Winton, 2012).

In their statistical report on youth crime in Ontario, the Canadian National Crime Prevention Centre reports that, “97% of youth [self-reported] having engaged in one or more delinquent behaviours in their lifetime” (Public Safety Canada, 2012, p. 5). Of these, 72% are male, between the ages of 16 and 17. Of all Canadian youth (age 12-17), about 6% had been officially charged of crimes, or “were dealt with by means other than the formal laying of a charge” (p. 6). Significantly, 22% of violent youth crime, and 20% of non-violent youth crime occurs between 3 and 6 pm; the time between the end of school and when parents may be returning home from work (Felson & Boba., 2010; Public Safety Canada, 2012). Two of the most common places for youth crime to occur are private residences (32%) and outdoor public spaces (23%) (Public Safety Canada, 2012).

With large unsupervised outdoor spaces, and a school schedule which releases students during a consistent and largely unsupervised time, the structure and design of North American public schools has fallen short of their potential for preventative risk reduction (Felson & Boba, 2010; McShane & Williams, 2003). Furthermore, the location of schools (in the city or the
country) and the size of the campus and student body have been found to have an impact on individual students’ risk of criminality (Crooks et al., 2007). More specifically, schools set in urban locations, and schools with large student populations, or large outdoor areas, tend to increase the offending behaviour of students at these schools (Crooks et al., 2007). This is possibly due to the lack of adult guardians\(^1\) supervising the students’ behaviour, and their increased freedom to act without being noticed.

Having all this in mind it can be seen quite consistently that males in high school are at highest risk of engaging in offending behaviour, a fact which should be particularly relevant in education. Interestingly, in my review I did not come across any academic literature which specifically focussed on best practices or recommendations for teachers who work with young offenders. Furthermore, it is surprising to me—as a teacher candidate who will undoubtedly be teaching high school males, including many from low socioeconomic backgrounds who are more commonly involved in offending behaviours—that there has been no training, guidance, advice or best practices in my teacher education program for interacting with and supporting delinquent youth. This gap in academic study and teacher training suggests a systemic neglect of this group of students in the priorities of the Ontario education system.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how Ontario secondary school teachers support and interact with young offenders in their current practice, in order to better understand how teachers support these students in their education. I will study this topic by interviewing a small sample of these teachers about: their perceptions of students who are young offenders, and their

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\(^1\) According to Felson and Boba (2010) a “guardian” is merely another person, whose presence acts a deterrent for potential criminality. This could be a stranger, a peer, etc. Guardians are not appointed to the role of deterrent, but deter criminality just by being present. A “handler” is someone who is specifically in charge of supervising the youth in a direct way, such as a teacher, parent or coach.
behaviour; their own experiences with, and responses to these students; their intentions in regard to their likely role as an influential adult in the lives of young offenders; their reported practices, and their perception of their impact through interactions and practices.

My goal throughout this study is to compile a collection of best practices which teachers can refer to when teaching students who have legal or criminal involvement. By integrating the findings of my own research study with a review of the advice and findings of other researchers and professionals in the area, my research has the potential to inform, and perhaps improve the support that Ontario teachers provide to students who are or have been in conflict with the law.

1.2 Research Questions

The central research question of this study is: how are Ontario secondary school teachers supporting and interacting with offending students in their current practice? Additional questions guiding my research are:

- What are teachers’ perceptions of students who have engaged either currently or previously in delinquent activity?
- How do teachers describe their experiences with and responses to this group of students?
- What are some of the strategies teachers use to engage young offenders, or to manage their behaviour at school? How did they learn these strategies?
- How do teachers perceive their overall impact on these students, both academically and otherwise?
- How are teachers supported or hindered in their interactions with delinquent students?

In addition, I hope that in conducting this study, I will help to initiate a consciousness among teachers of the significance of their interactions with young offenders.
1.3 Background on the Researcher

The study of crime, and particularly of youth engagement with criminal activity, is something that I have been fascinated by for a long time. This began when I was young as an interest in crime dramas, but over time has developed into a much deeper academic endeavor. Having studied undergraduate Sociology and Criminology, I was excited to have the opportunity to continue my research on youth in conflict with the law. The topic of this study is consequently an amalgamation of two passions: teaching and criminology.

Having grown up in an affluent, primarily Caucasian community, I found myself confronted during my post-secondary studies with the reality of the social privileges arbitrarily afforded to me at birth. I have unconsciously enjoyed and taken for granted my privilege in the past, and have been given opportunities which were potentially based on ascribed, rather than achieved characteristics. Because of this, I have come to believe that our society, and more narrowly the structure of Ontario education, caters to the needs of certain people at the expense of others. The reproduction of our social positioning is a reality faced by most, and disadvantage in adolescence can have ramifications which affect the entire life course. Among these implications is the increased risk of delinquency for youth who have experienced ascribed disadvantages, such as those associated with ethnicity or poverty (Public Safety Canada, 2012). I believe that all students should have the opportunity for success, which is why I find it problematic that Ontario education seems to prioritize the success of certain students.

With my previous research and background in this area, I have come to a committed belief that youth delinquency and the way it is addressed—two processes which are largely beyond the control of youth themselves—have the ability to drastically alter the life prospects of these youth. As a future teacher, this is a responsibility which I plan to explore further in order to
inform my own practice and be at ease with the ethics and effects of my actions. By educating myself on the statistics and current research in the area, examining holes in the present literature, and making connections between literature in the criminological and educational fields, I hope that I will accomplish this personal goal, and will contribute to the practices of other Ontario educators.

1.4 Overview

For this research I will be conducting a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with two purposefully selected teachers who have experience teaching young offenders in Ontario secondary schools. In Chapter 2 I review literature on potential causes and effects of youth delinquency, and the recommended ways to support young offenders in their education while helping to reduce their risk of recidivism. Chapter 3 consists of a detailed description of my research design. In Chapter 4 I report on my research findings, and discuss their significance to other research in the field. Particularly, I explore teacher practices and perceived outcomes in comparison with recommend practices and proven outcomes. Lastly, in Chapter 5 I identify and reflect upon the importance of my research to my own teaching practice, and on its general importance to the field of educational research.

Before I begin reviewing literature, however, a note on terminology is warranted. For the purpose of this study, “young offender” will refer specifically to youth between the ages of twelve and seventeen, who are currently, or have previously been in conflict with the law. With this definition in mind, the terms “delinquency” or “delinquent youth”\(^2\) will be used as an alternative for the same group of youth. While it is acknowledged that “deviant” and “deviance” are terms which are socially and culturally loaded, and which can allude to many varying

\(^2\) Delinquent terminology was very prevalent in the literature I reviewed, so I will use it in the same way throughout my research.
perspectives, for the purpose of this study these terms will be occasionally used as alternatives for “delinquency”, with the same previously mentioned focus on youth criminal behaviour. When not otherwise specified, the use of the phrases “at risk” or “high risk” will refer to the risk of participation in offending behaviour. Finally, for the purpose of this study, “student success” is used in specific reference to the Ontario government’s Student Success strategy (Ungerleider, 2008), as will be later discussed in my literature review. Student Success is not under any circumstances used with an arbitrary or subjective connotation.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature on young offenders. Due to the nature of this study, a much more relevant overview of literature in this area is provided by limiting the review to studies published after the year 2000, and only those conducted within Canada. This is because with varying laws, demographics, and social issues from country to country, it is neither applicable nor accurate to attempt a generalization to the Canadian context. Thus, I will be covering Canadian influences, causes and effects, and recommended supports for young offenders in Canada, in order to help reduce their risk of recidivism. In particular, I review risk factors associated with youth delinquency, both proactively and reactively, to understand the reasons why youth may participate in offending behaviour, and what factors beyond their control may increase their likelihood of delinquency. I then review the priorities of probation officers, who address the needs and risks faced by young offenders, and make recommendations for services and supports that they need in order to reduce their risk of recidivism. Finally, I connect these recommendations to the educational literature in order to understand the risks and supports that are present in Canadian secondary schools, and what areas are lacking. By doing so I develop a guideline for schools and educators, identifying recommended proactive and reactive methods of supporting these youth, and the areas where schools and educators could improve in their support.

Excepted from these criteria are two books published in the United States (Felson & Boba, 2010; McShane & Williams, 2003). These were included because of their reference to youth delinquency in the context of environmental criminology. Briefly, this is the study of criminological patterns within various environments, including manufactured environments such as schools.
2.1 Risk Factors Associated with Youth Delinquency

Throughout this section, I will be discussing the various risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of offending behaviour among youth. I will begin by overviewing the impact of relationships on offending youth, specifically when considering their relationships with peers and with parents. I will also consider the types of family structures which tend to result in higher levels of youth criminality. Next, I will focus on the impact of the neighbourhood dynamics, school community, and the educational experiences the youth has had. This is followed by an examination of the attitudes typically held by young offenders. I then focus in on the various implications of mental illness and substance abuse. Finally, I explore the impacts of childhood abuse and maltreatment, and the effects of experiences with child protective services.

2.1.1 Peer and parent relationships, and family structure. While some youth are early onset offenders, initiating their first offenses on their own, many are influenced by their peers to begin their criminal involvement. Even when only one individual in a peer group has pro-delinquent attitudes or participation in offending behaviour, this has been seen to increase the likelihood of participation among other peers in that group, (Baron, 2004; Crooks et al., 2007; Leung, 2004; Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014; Vitaro et al., 2000). This is especially the case with non-violent crimes and substance abuse (Baron, 2004). It is thus believed that criminality could be a reciprocal relationship between individuals and their peers (Leung, 2004).

While peers can have a strong impact, the individual’s own delinquent attitudes—or lack thereof—have the potential to significantly moderate peer influence (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Vitaro et al., 2000). Furthermore, there seem to be certain social activities and environments which are more conducive to promoting or reducing delinquency (Wong, 2005). For example, it seems that studying is a pro-social activity—despite being done individually—
because it fosters school connectedness, engagement with academics, and a participation and agreement with the activities society approves of (Wong, 2005). Consequently, it has been found that the more time a student spends studying, the less involved they seem to be with deviant activities (Wong, 2005). In contrast, Wong suggests activities like dating or spending time with friends seem to promote delinquent behaviour. That said, while there is evidence that later in life individuals tend to associate with those similar to themselves (Felson & Boba, 2010), it seems that during adolescence this is not always the case, with many youth able to remain unaffected by their friends’ behaviour (Vitaro et al., 2000).

Supervision by “handlers” or the presence of “guardians” (Felson & Boba, 2010), has in general been found to deter youths’ overall risk of delinquency (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014; Vitaro et al., 2000; Wilson & White, 2001). This is a role which can potentially be filled by parents. Adolescents who report feeling emotionally supported by their parents and feel a sense of belonging in their family have been shown to have less delinquent participation (Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014). Some research suggests that, when students spend more time studying, it could contribute to improved family relationships (Wong, 2005). Among youth in conflict with the law, it has been found that many have family members who also have criminal involvement (Corrado, Cohen, Glackman, & Odgers, 2003; Corrado et al., 2014; Mann, 2014). In general, the relationships youth have with their family can drastically impact their juvenile criminality.

Beyond family members specifically, the structure of families can also contribute negatively to deviance. Foster care is one of the most consistently cited living arrangements of youth who are in conflict or interaction with the law, and has been found to have an extremely significant impact in contributing to criminality and school drop-out rates (Corrado et al., 2014;
Public Safety Canada, 2012). Single parent families seem to be another common trend in family structure among young offenders (Public Safety Canada, 2012; Winton, 2012). These patterns could suggest a connection to the previously mentioned idea that “handlers” who are able to spend more time supervising youth are likely to reduce deviant outcomes.

2.1.2 Neighbourhood, school communities, and education. As has previously been discussed, many youth in conflict with the law are at high risk of dropping out of school, or have already done so. In most studies with young offenders it seems that around half of the participants are enrolled in school (Corrado et al., 2003; Corrado et al., 2014). Those who are still in school tend to have poor academic achievement (Crooks et al., 2007; Winton, 2012) and school discipline problems (Corrado et al., 2003; Winton, 2012). Poor academic achievement has been attributed to low student engagement (Winton, 2012). Because of this, research has been conducted on the importance of the link between delinquency and school connectedness (Crooks et al., 2007).

Schools have been found to be an important prosocial environment for youth, particularly among those who have poor family relationships, who have experienced abuse (Crooks et al., 2007; Hamilton, Wekerle, Paglia-Boak, & Mann, 2012), or for students who are from unsafe, unstable, poor, or high crime areas (Winton, 2012). With a more intimate context in schools (when compared to the neighbourhood community) and the increase in peer influence over family influence during adolescence, there is a lot of potential that “individual schools may constitute additional risk for individual delinquency or, conversely, offer protection against other risk factors” (Crooks et al., 2007, p. 270). When students feel like their school environment and curriculum connect with their individual needs and experiences, it is more likely that they will behave according to prosocial values and norms (Chow, 2011). This sense of connectedness can
also be found in community programs, and promotes a sense of pride and ownership in the care of communal spaces (Wilson & White, 2001).

Research on young offenders has also found that many have low school attendance and high dropout rates (Corrado et al., 2003; Corrado et al., 2014; Hamilton et al., 2012). Most studies report the highest grade level completed by young offenders was grade 9 or 10 (Baron, 2014; Corrado et al., 2014; Winton, 2012). This suggests that early school leaving, academic performance and school attendance are all closely linked to deviance (Corrado et al, 2003; Corrado et al., 2014). Among those more likely to drop out of school are ethnic minorities, males, and people of low socioeconomic status, those with disabilities, and those who are recent immigrants (Winton, 2012). Common predictors of early school leaving are behavioural issues, frequent absences (Winton, 2012) and low academic achievement (Hamilton et al., 2012; Winton, 2012). Those who intend to continue their education beyond high school have been found to show less delinquent involvement (Leung, 2004). Interestingly, among students interviewed in an Ontario study, about 27% believed that school was a waste of their time, and about 23% felt that at school they were made to feel like an outsider (Ungerleider, 2008).

2.1.3 Offender attitudes. The individual’s personal attitude is a risk factor for non-violent crimes and substance abuse (Baron, 2004), which extends beyond pro-delinquency beliefs to include other attitudes. Antisocial attitudes can be extremely risky for youth (Crooks et al., 2007; Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Vitaro et al., 2000), and association with prosocial peers (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015) or role models (Crooks et al., 2007) has been found to significantly reduce this risk. Anger has been found to be a significant predictor of crime (Baron, 2004; Mann, 2014), and in the case of violent youth offenders, anger and high self-esteem often seem to go hand in hand (Baron, 2004). Young offenders have reportedly been perceived by
many educators to be unmotivated and lacking in effort (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Young offenders often have a feeling of resistance or disrespect for authority (Chow, 2011; Mann, 2014). This attitude was found to be more prevalent in younger students, but was reduced when students enjoyed school (Chow, 2011). Some studies also suggest that when youth are suspended or expelled, it fosters negative attitudes, which are directed primarily towards the adults at school, and the school as an institution (Winton, 2012). In general, it is believed that a history of delinquency in the past tends to be a strong indicator of the potential for deviant behaviour in the future (Corneau & Lanctôt, 2004).

2.1.4 Mental health and substance abuse. The presence of mental health problems has been prevalent among young offenders (Corneau & Lanctôt, 2004; Hamilton et al., 2012; Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015), particularly among violent offenders (Corrado et al., 2003). Youth delinquency has been found to be more likely when youth have anxiety or depressive disorders (Corneau & Lanctôt, 2004). This could potentially be a cyclical relationship with deviance, as mental health issues have been found not only as predictors of delinquency, but also as a result of youth interactions with the legal system (Corneau & Lanctôt, 2004; Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Incidentally, mental health issues have also been linked with early school leaving (Winton, 2012). In general, it has been found that young offenders are much more likely to attempt suicide than other youth, and that suicide and mental health problems are usually a much more prevalent factor among females (Corneau & Lanctôt, 2004).

In addition to mental health problems, a majority of young offenders have also been found to regularly abuse substances (Baron, 2004; Corrado et al., 2003; Corrado et al., 2014; Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Mann, 2014; Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014). Substance abuse has been linked to behavioural issues at school, the risky use of leisure time, and the
association with delinquent peers (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Surprisingly, deviance has also been associated with higher levels of neighbourhood cohesion, potentially because it provides easier access to substances within the neighbourhood network (Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014). While the majority of young offenders have reportedly abused alcohol and marijuana, a large proportion of young offenders have also engaged in the use of hard drugs (Corrado et al., 2014). Furthermore, many youth report having family members who abuse substances as well (Corrado et al., 2003; Corrado et al., 2014). It is unclear in the literature whether substance abuse is thought to be a cause or effect of criminal involvement, or whether it is connected in a cyclical relationship. Nevertheless, the strong relationship between substances and criminality is notable and problematic.

2.1.5 Abuse, maltreatment and child protective services. Among youth in conflict with the law, a majority have been found to report contact with Child Protective Services (CPS) (Hamilton et al., 2012; Mann, 2014). Thus, one of the key predictors of youth delinquency is thought to be childhood maltreatment (Crooks et al., 2007; Hamilton et al., 2012). In general, it is believed that delinquency will increase with various types of strain, such as childhood abuse and neglect (Baron, 2004; Corrado et al., 2003; Corrado et al., 2014; Crooks et al., 2007; Hamilton et al., 2012; Wilson & White, 2001), insecure housing, (Baron, 2004; Corrado et al., 2014; Crooks et al., 2007; Hamilton et al., 2012), victimization to other crimes (Gomes et al., 2003; Public Safety Canada, 2012), or witnessing domestic abuse (Hamilton et al., 2012). The likelihood that these stressors will lead to future offences is thought to be based on the number of cumulative stressors, (Baron, 2004; Crooks et al., 2007), and the specific types of stressors present (Baron, 2004). Nevertheless, children have been seen to react differently to the strain in
their lives, so outcomes can be affected by a number of factors, including gender and age (Baron, 2004).

Linking CPS involvement with deviance could be the mental health implications of childhood maltreatment, which have been found to lead to greater psychological distress, a factor associated with higher delinquency (Hamilton et al., 2012), and which can hinder a child’s cognitive development (Crooks et al., 2007). Also linking offending behaviour with CPS involvement, are the connections between child abuse, lower academic achievement, psychological and behavioural issues, school absences, isolation from the school community and distrust of adults (Hamilton et al., 2012).

In the literature reviewed throughout section 2.1, it has been found that youth who are in conflict with the law often have a plethora of underlying factors, which influence their behaviour. Youth can be negatively impacted by things like the neighbourhood or peer group they are associated with. If they have parents or guardians around who supervise their time, and provide a caring home environment, some risks can be mitigated. For youth who have a hard home life, school can offer a caring safe environment, where they feel a sense of belonging. However, this can be undermined if they do not feel involved at school, are unable to see the relevance of school to their personal circumstances, or feel that they have other needs such as financial or basic needs, which should be taking priority over going to school. Finally, it has been found that there are very strong links between youth offending behaviour and anti-social attitudes, mental illness or substance abuse, childhood abuse and CPS involvement. With these personal risks in mind, I will next be looking at factors which can reduce these student risks.
2.2 Recommendations for Supporting Delinquent Youth, and Reducing Risk of Recidivism

In this section I will examine the various recommendations from professionals in the youth criminal justice field, focusing specifically on the types of supports needed by young offenders, and effective practices for reducing their risk of recidivism. Based on frequency of recommendation, or relevance to the purpose of this study, I have decided to focus this discussion around parental involvement; the specific supports and services needed, as recommended by youth justice researchers and probation officers; and the effectiveness of various diversion, deterrent and rehabilitation programs and practices.

2.2.1 Parental involvement. One study conducted by Broeking and Peterson-Badali (2010) takes a focus on the recommendations made by youth probation officers for supporting young offenders. One of the most consistently made recommendations by these participants is to promote the involvement of parents in helping reduce risk of criminality and recidivism. Once offending has occurred, parental involvement continues to be important throughout youths’ involvement with the law. For youth that do involve their parents, they found it is usually for emotional or legal support; but Broeking and Peterson-Badali found that the majority of youth do not report any parental involvement in their legal process. Interestingly, there seems to be a connection between the socioeconomic status, and the nature and extent of parental involvement. Their participants explained that this can be damaging in youth court cases, because many court decisions, for things such as bail, are influenced by whether or not the parents are involved. However, according to these participants, most youth will not ask to have their parents involved, will not consult legal counsel, and do not understand how serious their situation is.

2.2.2 Supports and services needed by juvenile offenders. While it is considered ideal to respond to the risks of youth prior to their delinquent involvement (Chow, 2011; Mann, 2014;
they often face multiple risk factors and have multiple needs, with varying outcomes (Corrado et al., 2003). This makes the identification of the individual needs and risks challenging, but crucial in preventing recidivism (Wilson & Hoge, 2012). In general, it has been found that probation officers are reluctant to recommend a punitive approach for youth, because the needs of each youth are so individualised (Corrado, Gronsdahl, MacAlister & Cohen, 2010). Above all, it has been found that probation officers tend to prioritize the non-criminogenic needs of their clients. These include things such as mental health services, housing and education (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Interestingly, it has been found that, “youth who perceive [that their] individually specific emotional and personal needs are being met by both the justice system and its corollary institutions [are] less likely to recidivate” (Corrado et al., 2003, p. 185). Unfortunately, the needs which are perceived as having the highest impact on reducing recidivism are often also the hardest needs to fulfill, due to lack of access or support from outside sources (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015).

Probation officers have suggested that it is important to help young offenders avoid the people and environments that have previously led to their trouble, helping them to strategize and set goals, and find supports to achieve these goals (Mann, 2014). It has been found that many of these youth are unable to manage the achievement of multiple goals at once, and so they need help with motivation, maturity, and cogitative or learning abilities (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). There has also been a reported need for more mental health services (Corneau & Lanctôt, 2004; Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015) which, if addressed, could potentially lessen the risk that mental health problems pose to youth (Hamilton et al., 2012).

Notably, probation officers have reported that enrollment in school is one of the most important needs for at risk youth (Corrado et al., 2003; Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). It has
been found that when youth in conflict with the law are actively attending school post-custody, they have a lower rate of recidivism (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). However, it is often very difficult to find schools where students with behavioural and academic issues are allowed to enroll (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). This is even more of an issue for students who are of low socioeconomic status, of an ethnic or racial minority, or who have parents who are less involved in their child’s probationary progress (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Furthermore, many young offenders do not have stable housing (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Ungerleider, 2008) and a large portion of them have been found to live alone (Corrado et al., 2014) which can make it much more difficult for them to get to school.

2.2.3 Diversion, deterrence and rehabilitation. It is advised by many probation officers that youth be diverted from the prison system, because there can be many negative side effects and regressions resulting from their exposure (Corrado et al., 2003; Wilson & Hoge, 2012). This could be because, similar to the effects of peers outside of prison discussed in section 2.1.1, exposure to and association with numerous delinquent peers inside prison could undermine the intended reformation (Corrado et al., 2003). Furthermore, “the purpose of sentencing … is to hold a young person accountable for an offence through the imposition of just sanctions that have meaningful consequences … and that promote his or her rehabilitation and reintegration into society, thereby contributing to the long-term protection of the public” (Youth Criminal Justice Act, 2002, p. 36-37). Thus, when the individual does not pose a significant risk to the public, it is usually preferable and more effective to avoid prison sentencing and divert them to community based programs (Wilson & Hoge, 2012).

Understandably, many youth have reacted better to sentences and punishments that they perceive to be fair (Corrado et al., 2003). Youth are generally more effective in reducing their
recidivism when involved in diversion programs, rather than on probation (Wilson & Hoge, 2012). These programs tend to be rehabilitative in nature, focusing on the individualised needs and programs discussed earlier in section 2.2. Referral to programs and the promotion of rehabilitation and reintegration of young offenders is a direct priority in the Youth Criminal Justice Act (2002). Interestingly, despite the probation officers’ and the justice system’s tendency to avoid punishment and focus on rehabilitation (Corrado et al., 2010), many youth seem to believe that punishment would be a more effective deterrent in reducing their specific criminality (Corrado et al., 2003). This could potentially be an area for further research.

Furthermore, it has been argued that the narrow focus on individual risks and needs might cause an oversight of the macro level and structural factors contributing to criminal deviance, which could result in further marginalization and criminalization of already vulnerable populations (Corrado et al., 2014).

Throughout section 2.2, it can be concluded that increasing parental involvement, both in the lives of youth and in their legal process, can reduce their risk of offending behaviour and recidivism. For youth, enrollment in school and enrollment in programs which address the underlying needs and problems contributing to delinquency, have been found to drastically improve the circumstances of at risk youth and of young offenders. With regard to deterrence, it has been found that a non-punitive, rehabilitative approach is more effective for reducing youth recidivism, and that prison or detention centers should be avoided as long as the youth is not dangerous. Generally speaking, it is recommended that the causes and not the outcomes of behaviour should be addressed among youth, in order to more effectively prevent future

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5 Here I am referring to the difference between general and specific deterrence. General refers to widespread deterrence, by way of example. Specific deterrence is only effective for the individual, by learning from their own experience.
offences. I will next be attempting to bridge the gap between youth justice research, and criminological research that focusses on schools and educational contexts.

2.3 Applying Professional Recommendations to Educational and School Settings

Throughout this next session I will be focussing on literature which connects the professional recommendations mentioned above, to the educational and school environment. With a gap in the literature on my specific topic, I feel that it is important to make connections between the literature on recommended supports for offending youth, and the literature on criminology within the school context. For my purposes I have focussed specifically on schools as moderators of the risk factors previously discussed, the Student Success/Learning to 18 (Ungerleider, 2008) initiatives, and the impact that overall school climate can have on delinquency.

2.3.1 School as a moderator of risk factors. As mentioned in the context section of Chapter 1, schools have been found to inadvertently contribute to youth deviance, beyond the individual’s personal risk factors, (Crooks et al., 2007; Felson & Boba, 2010; McShane & Williams, 2003). Yet, as the main source of positive social integration for children, schools have excellent potential to reduce the risk of delinquency for high risk youth (Chow, 2011; Crooks et al., 2007; Hamilton et al., 2012; McShane & Williams, 2003). This can perhaps be accomplished by implementing programs which address problem areas, such as strategies for building relationships, improving social skills and models for positive behaviour (Crooks et al., 2007; McShane & Williams, 2003). Schools are thought to: provide a safe community and sense of belonging (Crooks et al., 2007); reduce the psychological and behavioural problems among youth; offer support, routine and opportunity (Hamilton et al., 2012); present youth with positive role models (Crooks et al., 2007; Hamilton et al., 2012); and provide youth with clear means of
improving their future prospects (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Schools also organize time and reduce free, unsupervised time, and they offer more options for pro-social peers, which can help mitigate the risks encountered by young offenders (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015).

These positive effects are thought to be amplified by teachers, whose care may have the potential to offer emotional support to students who are lacking in close family relationships (Crooks et al., 2010). “Youth who sense that adults within schools care about them and who feel that they are a part of a particular school [community] are likely to do well in school. Success in school is likely to promote a positive dynamic of increasing opportunities that can place youth on a path to future success rather than greater risk and negative outcomes” (Hamilton et al., 2012, p. 32). Involvement with CPS in youth has been found to contribute to greater psychological distress, which is associated with youth criminality (Hamilton et al., 2012). However, school connectedness can combat the potential for the contribution of CPS involvement to delinquent outcomes (Chow, 2011; Hamilton et al., 2012; Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014). That said, general school connectedness seems to be related more to reducing internal risks, such as mental health problems or personal anti-social attitudes, rather than with external behaviour (Hamilton et al., 2012). It has also been found that, while school connectedness can reduce some types of crime, it is not as effective in reducing other types of criminal activity such as substance use (Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014).

2.3.2 Student Success and Learning to 18 initiatives. With the implementation of the Student Success/Learning to 18 strategies in Ontario, (Ungerleider, 2008) some drastic changes have been made. In light of the suggestions previously identified in section 2.2, it seems that implementing these changes could benefit offending youth and reduce their risk of recidivism. For example, when students drop out of school, or when they are suspended or expelled, they
seem to have trouble reintegrating, and have a decline in academic performance (Winton, 2012). These are two factors which my research has previously identified as contributing to deviance. In contrast, Student Success intends to reengage and improve the academics of struggling students, (Ungerleider, 2008), by focussing on progressive discipline, structuring gradually increasing consequences, accounting for the needs of the specific students, supporting students throughout the reintegration process, and implementing more programs which are directed to the proactive prevention among the general student body (Winton, 2012). Significantly, the idea of progressive discipline is directly aligned with recommendations in the Youth Criminal Justice Act (2002), where it is declared that youths’ consequences should be proportionate to their offences.

Student Success also focusses on supporting students at risk of academic failure or behavioural issues, by fostering caring relationships between students and their teachers, and designing appropriate interventions, which direct students to learn from their previous mistakes (Winton, 2012). The program encourages the early identification of students who could be at risk of dropping out, to ensure they get the support they need and are not overlooked by their teachers and schools (Ungerleider, 2008; Winton, 2012). This includes a focus on the transitional elements of school, such as an increased focus on the change between grade 8 and grade 9, and regular check-ins with grade 9 students to ensure they are adapting and progressing effectively (Ungerleider, 2008; Winton, 2012).

Supports offered by Student Success include programing for individual issues. These programs include mental health supports, small group or individual classroom settings (Winton, 2012), individualized time tables with classes that are of student interest (Ungerleider, 2008; Winton, 2012), and an attempt to improve student connectedness in their school by encouraging in-class and extracurricular activities (Winton, 2012). As previously mentioned in section 2.3.1,
this focus on connectedness, engagement, improving academics and improving the relationships between at risk students and their teachers, could go a long way in helping to proactively address offending behaviours. Again in line with the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the belief that crime should be prevented by directing youth to proper services and supports for their individual needs is addressed in Student Success (Youth Criminal Justice Act, 2002). Student Success also presents more options to students for their future, and helps lessen the stigma surrounding non-academic routes (Ungerleider, 2008).

Although Student Success has many positive aspects, there has not been universal support for the programs among educators and stakeholders. While Student Success has now been in place for a number of years, Ungerleider (2008) found that there seems to be a level of uncertainty remaining among teachers as to whether the program might deteriorate the standard of education, and whether it is really a positive and realistic way to prepare students for life after high school. By bringing students back to school who are disinterested, or who have been removed from the school due to behavioural or social issues, there could be disruptions to the learning environment, which demands more of the teachers’ time and could potentially affect the learning of other students. Ungerleider also found that some teachers thought students with problem behaviours are still not prioritized enough in their education (2008). These students have many needs at the personal level—such as mental health challenges, substance abuse issues or learning disabilities—but are also struggling at the structural level, with poor school attendance, low marks, and dissatisfaction with the traditional educational institution (Ungerleider, 2008; Wilson & White, 2001).

Furthermore, while Student Success seems to promote some extent of student accountability or commitment to their own success, there is apparently some question as to
whether teachers are able to achieve the Student Success goals on their own (Ungerleider, 2008). A majority of teachers reportedly believe that there are not enough non-academic support staff at schools, and that they are in need of better resources, and training to develop and promote specialization among professionals (Ungerleider, 2008).

2.3.3 School climate. It is believed to be extremely important that schools make an effort to provide a supportive and engaging environment, both in students’ academic and non-academic lives (Chow, 2011; Winton et al., 2012). Having a school which is perceived to be safe has been found to significantly reduce violent delinquency among students (Crooks et al., 2007). Some students have been found to only attend school because it is the safest place they have to go (Ungerleider, 2008). It is also important that students feel a sense of community within, and a connection to their school, (Crooks et al., 2007; Hamilton et al., 2012) which seems to promote student flexibility, and an ability to cope with adversity (Hamilton et al., 2012). A sense of connectedness can be fostered through academic achievement (Crooks et al., 2007; Hamilton et al., 2012), and connectedness has been found to contribute to the reduction of psychological and behavioural problems among youth (Hamilton et al., 2012). It is also believed that Student Success programing has contributed to an overall improvement in the school atmosphere, fostering a sense of care, respect, responsiveness and community (Ungerleider, 2008), and a feeling of teacher commitment and second chances (Winton, 2012).

In conclusion, throughout chapter 2.3 it can be seen that schools could potentially have a positive impact on reducing the risk of both initial criminality and recidivism among youth. This effect has been demonstrated somewhat, as educators increasingly support programs like Student Success and Learning to 18, and provide options, opportunity and support to students who would otherwise be overlooked in the traditional school system. However, there are still many
scepticisms and a lack of resources, which might get in the way of the program’s effectiveness. Nonetheless, the positive aspects can be maintained and improved upon with an ongoing effort to foster an inclusive and supportive climate, both by schools as a whole, and by teachers in their individual classrooms.

2.4 Conclusion

Throughout my literature review I have reviewed the research related to delinquent youth, particularly in relation to the causes and effects of delinquency, the professional recommendations for supporting delinquent youth, and the implementations of these strategies in the education system. This highlights the general need of supports for delinquent youth, and the importance of youth participation and achievement in the education system. Further, it addresses the questions about the feasibility of current goals and programs, the struggles and challenges faced by educators, and points to the need for further training, resources and staff in the area.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I had a difficult time finding research studies which specifically addressed the teacher supports for young offenders. For my purposes I joined research studies together across the educational and criminological fields, in order to sufficiently inform my study. This is not ideal, because it forced me to make my own connections between research, without specific academic support to validate these connections. While this could be a weakness of my own background knowledge, my much bigger concern is that there is not much clear or practical information for teachers to use in their own classrooms. It is likely still necessary for them to bridge these gaps between the different research areas, as I have done in my literature review. Without specific practices or recommendations to implement, it is not surprising that teachers have reported offending students as being under prioritized at schools (Ungerleider, 2008).
Through exploring how teachers perceive their experiences with supporting delinquent students, I hope to contribute to the existing research, and to emphasize the need for future research attention on the connections between young offenders in the justice system, and their needs and experiences within the education system. My research will approach the topic of supporting delinquent youth in their education, using semi-structured interviews with secondary school teachers in Southern Ontario. This study will address how teachers perceive the delinquent behaviour of students, how they perceive their own interactions with these students, and how they perceive the impacts of these interactions. In addressing how teachers perceive their experiences, I hope to identify and present a connection between recommendations and practiced supports for delinquent youth, and consequently to inform the priorities and practices of educators in Ontario.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

As previously described, this study will be focused on the supports that Ontario secondary teachers offer to students who are young offenders. Throughout Chapter 3 I will be providing an overview of my research methodology. Firstly, I will outline the general approach, procedures, and data collection instruments, then elaborate on participant sampling and recruitment. I will outline the data analysis procedures and review the ethical considerations relevant to my study. I will identify the limitations, as well as the strengths that make qualitative methods ideal for my study. Lastly, I will end with a summary of the decisions and rational I have made, based on their suitability for my research purpose and questions.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

In this study I have employed qualitative research, by reviewing a variety of relevant literature in the study of young offenders, and interviewing a small sample of teachers, using semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. There are many benefits of conducting qualitative research, which are particularly of value to me.

To begin with, it is important to specify what is meant by qualitative research. In short, this methodological approach focusses on the exploration of meaning and perceptions, in order to gain a better understanding of a given topic (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Qualitative research is often used to find meaning, rather than to test it (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Hageman, 2008) which is especially significant for my study, because I do not have a hypothesis regarding the topic. In a description of strong qualitative research, Tracy (2010) specifies eight identifying criteria. These are “(a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence” (p. 841). While
these are certainly not found in all qualitative research, they are for me a clear and concise foundation, to guide the development of my own qualitative study. According to Creswell (2007) qualitative research often begins with a problem, or what can be thought of as the reason for doing the study. This need often comes from a gap in the literature, as is the case with my study, where there is a lack of literature specifically on the supports young offenders get from their teachers at school. Creswell also explains that qualitative research is directed by a clear purpose statement, which directs the reader as to what specifically they intend to accomplish in their research. For example the purpose would outline if the research was exploratory, descriptive, etc., and how the research broadly describes their research at the onset of the study (2007).

Based on this understanding of qualitative research, I decided that it is the most suitable method for my purposes. I was looking to collect information on the experiences of real teachers, and wanted to get data that was as descriptive and detailed as possible (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). By using a qualitative method I could study in-depth the individual experiences of teachers, and understand the challenges that they have faced. Furthermore, I wanted to find out more about the supports teachers offer to young offenders, and the supports teachers receive in these interactions, in order to inform my own knowledge and practice, and perhaps to inform other teachers who are interested in this topic. Qualitative research is especially suitable for my study, because I began, not knowing which direction my hypothesis would go, and not trying to test a predetermined end (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

For this qualitative study, my data has been collected solely through the use of semi-structured interviews. Qualitative interviews are described as “a flexible and powerful tool to capture the voices and the ways people make meaning of their experiences” (Rabionet, 2011, p.
Interviews are flexible, inexpensive and quick, which makes them one of the more popular data collection techniques in the social sciences (Madill, 2011). As Rabionet (2011) describes, a fully unstructured interview can be risky, because one might not get focussed information from one’s participants, so the data collected might not be relevant to one’s research questions.

Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, use an opening script, open-ended questions which can initiate an open and organic conversation, and some prompts to be used throughout to keep conversation flowing if needed (Rabionet, 2011). A semi-structured interview is much more similar to a natural conversation than a structured interview (Madill, 2011) which makes semi-structured interviews ideal in small scale qualitative studies like mine, where specific experiences, memories and practices are sought, and individual insights are the goal, rather than generalizations or hypotheses. I hoped to gain insight into this specific topic, and to learn from the experiences of teachers who have knowledge in the area. This style of interview allows one to guide the participants, while still allowing for the possibility of spontaneous and unexpected data throughout the course of the conversation. It has even been suggested that, in the right circumstances, the interaction between the researcher and the participant could be similar to that between friends (Arvidson, 2013; Madill, 2011). This identifies a relationship of trust, which certainly implies a great deal of responsibility on the researcher’s part, but also an opportunity for depth in the data which might not be achievable in a more rigid structure (Carr, 1994).

For my study I thought it was very important to have some guidance and structure as a novice researcher so that I could keep my interviews focussed. Having the semi-structure helped me get the depth of information and detail that I needed in order to make my findings useful. For these reasons, my data collection was most suited to the technique of semi-structured interviews.
For my interviews I developed a few general questions, with some prompts to help keep the conversation going if we deviated from the general guide. As outlined in my interview protocol (Appendix B), I began by gathering basic demographic information on my participants, to set the tone of the interview, and make them more comfortable in the conversation. I then proceeded through a series of questions, which were each categorized based on my specific research objects. These categories are: teachers’ perceptions of young offenders and their behaviour, teachers’ experiences with delinquent students, teachers’ practices in these interactions, teachers’ training or support services to help them in these interactions, and the perceived impact of their interactions with the student.

Throughout, I guided the conversation with a series of related questions and prompts, to help the participants focus their thoughts on the information most relevant to this study. To begin with, I discussed school demographic questions. This was intended to set the tone of my interview, and to make my participants more comfortable. This also informed my understanding of the teachers’ experiences, as I was able to situate their experiences within a specifically described school context and get a sense of the social climate at the school. This was followed by questions regarding teachers’ perceptions of offending students. I asked participants to keep a particular student in mind while answering the questions, and if they had more than one experience than they were free to answer the questions about other students as well. This section included things like initial impressions of the student, the way they felt during interactions, and the way they perceived their relationship. Next I asked them to describe specific experiences with this student, and how they felt upon reflection on these events. I also asked them to share specific strategies and best practices with me. Finally I asked them to share the details of their training and education, both before and after becoming a qualified teacher, so that I could
understand how they were specifically prepared for supporting young offenders in their education.

3.3 Participants

In this section I have provided an outline of the criteria I used to select my sample of participants, and the ways that I recruited these teachers. Using pseudonyms, I have also provided an introduction to each of my participants, which explains their suitability for participation in this study, and some relevant biographical information.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria. In order to narrow down the pool of teacher participants, I set the following criteria. First, I required that throughout their career, the educator had professionally supported at least one youth who had been in interaction with the justice system, whether or not they were formally processed. In other words, legal charges were pressed on this student, which may or may not have been dropped by the complainant. The professional support the participant offered to the student should be in the role as a teacher in a classroom environment. Despite my initial inclination to limit participants to experiences within the last five years, I eventually decided not to set a time frame for when these experiences occurred. At first I thought that discussing more recent experiences would give a more current understanding of how teachers support young offenders at school. However, after beginning my research I found that the type of experiences I discussed with participants tended to have been very impactful and memorable. This makes currency less of a priority. Limiting the time frame would have restricted eligibility from otherwise insightful and valuable participants, which I believe would have disadvantaged my collection of best practices and supports for other educators in similar roles.
Second, these educators must have worked with students at the secondary level, in a publicly funded Ontario school. Teachers at the high school level are most appropriate for informing the supports of young offenders. This is because students in the intermediate grades, particularly around age 15-16 (Corrado, et al., 2014; Wilson & Hoge, 2012) are at especially high risk of engaging in criminal behaviour.

Third, I decided that for the purpose of this study, I would not limit eligibility to teachers had to be working only in an alternative education program or only in a mainstream program, but they must be employed by a publicly funded Ontario school board. Furthermore, if my participants worked in alternative education, it must have been in an alternative education program that is hosted in a mainstream school, rather than at a fully separate alternative school. This is because I wanted to study the typical supports available to teachers, and offered by teachers to young offenders in the Ontario public education system. At this time I was not be focussing on any extended training or supports which may be offered in specialized programs. While this could be a potential topic for further study, I believe that considering the purposes of my research it was more valuable to study experiences which could be encountered by any Ontario public education teacher during the course of their career.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures. As Marshall (1996) explains, qualitative research is rarely intended to generalize results to a whole population, and this is certainly not the intent of my research. The benefit of a small and purposive sample is that it allowed me to gather rich data that enhances my understanding of the experiences of the particular participants, and of what has motivated or hindered their behaviour (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016; Marshall, 1996). Thus, for this study I selected a small, purposive sample of teachers, which allowed me to locate participants with the most exposure to my topic.
Marshall (1996) explains that in a purposive, or “judgement sample” the researcher identifies specific criteria, based on the literature review and their purpose, and selects participants who are most suitable for meeting those needs. Purposive samples are non-probability samples, which means that the researcher uses their own subjective purpose and objects to determine what will be included in the sample, and what is important (Etikan, et al., 2016). This varies from other types of non-probability sampling, such as convenience sampling, where the sample is selected based on the participant’s practical convenience in participation, due to location or availability (Etikan, et al., 2016; Marshall, 1996), or theoretical sampling, which evolves throughout the research process, including new participants as theories emerge throughout data collection (Marshall, 1996).

Purposive sampling is done with the belief that each individual can provide unique and valuable information (Etikan, et al., 2016). As described in section 3.3.1, I had my own criteria, which I decided was important, based on my own priorities. This is not to say that other criteria are unimportant, but merely that for my purposes, and with my own position in relation to this study, that these were my priorities. This varies from probability samples, where everyone within a certain population has the same probability of being selected for participation (Etikan, et al., 2016). This is generally the type of sampling used in quantitative research, where large scale, generalizable studies are the goal (Etikan, et al., 2016; Marshall, 1996).

As is evident throughout section 3.3, the purposive sample is the technique I elected to use, and in order to find my participants I relied mostly on a snowball recruitment technique. This technique uses word of mouth, where potential participants spread the word to other potential candidates, and volunteer if they are interested. In other words, to collect my sample of participants, I used snowball to initiate contact with potential participants, and then selected
several people who were the most suitable according to my sampling criteria. This was achieved by researching and contacting key individuals within 4 Ontario school boards, as well as education scholars who have previously worked as educators, and providing them with an overview of my study. I also contacted the network of teachers I know, and ask them to spread the word. In this initial interaction, I provided my contact information as well. This step ensured that the identity of my participants remained confidential, because instead of people providing me with potential participants, they shared my information, and interested individuals could contact me. This also helped to ensure that they were willingly volunteering, and were not being coerced to participate.

3.3.3 Participant biographies.

In this section, I introduce my two teacher-participants in (non-identifying) detail, and also introduce the students who emerged as touchstones for each teacher: the student who most came to mind and encapsulated each one’s experiences with ‘young offenders.’

My first interview was with Macy, an Alternative Education teacher in Southern Ontario. She works in a community which she considers to be somewhat rural, but is increasingly becoming suburban, at a school with a lot of racial and ethnic diversity. In her interview, Macy focused on her experiences with “Brodie”, who is a Black-identified student at her school. Brodie had been caught on school property with drugs in his possession on numerous occasions. Macy very confidently believed that Brodie was also dealing drugs, based on witnessing this behaviour first-hand. However, she had not been involved with the administrators in relation to any repercussions for this behaviour.

Macy began her career as a mainstream English and Social Sciences teacher, and has been teaching for several years, including in the “Student Alternative Learning” program (SAL).
From her description, my understanding is that this is an alternate name for “Alternative Education”. She started teaching SAL because of a demand at the school she worked in. Macy’s alternative education classes are housed in the same school building as the mainstream classes, and she is still a member of the English department at her school. Because of this, I considered her to be a mainstream school teacher, rather than a teacher at an alternative school, or a specifically alternative education teacher. This made her well suited to participate in my research.

Macy described her shift into teaching alternative education as being challenging, and wishes she had some more training to prepare her in the area. She was knowledgeable in supporting mental health challenges through her educational background in psychology, and has taken professional development workshops on supporting mental health challenges. However she described finding difficulty in establishing connections with many of her students. Macy also found that her quiet personality made classroom management in alternative education more challenging to her when she compared it to mainstream classes.

My second interview was with Alec, a mainstream science teacher in Southern Ontario. While he is currently the science department head at his current school in a more affluent suburban community, he spent about half of his teaching career (thus far) in a lower-income rural suburb. In his former school, Alec describes a lot of socioeconomic diversity, and an increasingly recognizable wage gap among the students and families at the school. However, he says that there is not a lot of racial diversity, and that the teachers (being mostly white) are reflective of the student population.

Alec began his career as a teacher in the Canadian Armed Forces, and has been teaching in Ontario secondary schools for almost ten years. For part of this time, he taught the sciences in
a high school alternative education program. Like Macy, teaching in alternative education was not a career choice he made, but a role that he was required to fulfill based on the need at his school and in his board. To be clear, Alec’s alternative education classes were housed in the same school building that the rest of the mainstream classes were in. For Alec, shifting into teaching alternative education classes was described as being an easy transition. With his military background, and self-described imposing physique and voice, he felt that he may have had an easier time working with the challenges faced by many of his students, and with the challenges of teaching in an alternative education environment.

During his interview, Alec frequently discussed his experiences with a student called “Weston”. Weston is a white student, who is racially similar to the majority of students and teachers at his school. Weston was caught by police for stealing a large amount of copper wire from a construction site, which he was planning to sell. During his time teaching Weston, Alec says that Weston was wearing an ankle monitor to ensure that he was in class all day, because this was part of his probation requirement.

3.4 Data Analysis

After collecting my data I then analysed it. This was done through a fairly standard procedure of qualitative data analysis. For an example, to guide me through this process, I looked at the work of Manser and Mitchell (2012) who clearly outline the methods of data analysis. Interviews were audio-recorded, and then transcribed word for word. This data was then coded, using the research questions as a guiding tool. Each transcript was coded separately, into categories of data, and themes within these categories. These were determined based on commonalities and divergences between the data from each participant. Themes were then synthesized where necessary; to be most specific and relevant to this particular research study. I
also looked at “null data,” where the teachers chose not to speak about specific topics. This was important because I learned a lot from what they didn’t say, as well as from what they did say. One of the useful reminders that Manser and Mitchell offer is that researchers must critically reflect on their own research throughout, and to allow it to evolve as new data emerges.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

As a researcher, ethical practice, and ethical data collection are of upmost importance to me, and lengths have been gone through to ensure the protection of all parties involved in the research (Arvidson, 2013), including all of my participants, their identities, their students, their colleagues and their schools. As stated by Arvidson, the potential for moral and ethical issues is rampant in qualitative study, which makes it extremely important not to overlook them. Some examples of ethical issues which could arise, could be that the researcher meets and interacts face to face with the participants, meaning that their privacy could be more at risk in quantitative research studies (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2010), than some quantitative methods, such as an anonymous survey. Another issue could be the need for a high level of protection of collected data, to ensure that audio or video recording and any direct communication with participants, is not revealed in breach of confidentiality requirements (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2010). That said, all research should be ethical and consider the needs and protection of participants, so this is not just a consideration for qualitative researchers. As outlined by Townsend, Cox and Li (2010), qualitative researchers should follow the principles of autonomy, justice and beneficence in their practice. It is also important to note the caution scholars give in rapport between researchers and participants, where the trust and friendship could be considered inauthentic, and thus considered morally
unethical (Arvidson, 2013). With all this in mind, I have acknowledged the various ethical implications of my study, and have consequently taken the necessary precautions.

Prior to any interviews, participants were asked to sign a letter of consent (Appendix A) which states their consent to be interviewed, and audio-recorded. The letter outlines the study, and addresses any ethical concerns the participant may have. It also makes clear that their consent is for the participation in a 45-60 minute semi-structured interview. As previously mentioned, all participants have been given a pseudonym, which has replaced their real name in the study. To protect the identities of the participants, all identifying characteristics, and any information relating to their school and students has been also given a pseudonym, to remain confidential. Everyone has also been notified that they have the right to withdraw their consent to participate, at any time, and that they can refuse to answer any question. While there are minimal risks to participation in this study, it is possible that for some, the questions could trigger an emotional reaction. To prevent this, I made sure that all my participants were informed of the specific topic of my study before-hand, so that they were prepared to discuss the experiences I would be asking about. Furthermore, I reminded them throughout the interviews that participation was voluntary, that they could pass on any question they preferred not to discuss, and that consent could be withdrawn at any time. After the interviews were finished, participants had the opportunity to review their transcripts, and make any changes they felt were necessary, before the analysis. As specified in my ethics approval, I immediately removed all identifying information from documents titles, transcripts, etc., and pseudonyms were assigned to all people and places. All data was locked with password on my computer, so that I am the only individual who has had access to the original data. This data will remain locked and secure, and will be destroyed after five years.
3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

Although this study has been conducted to the best of my capabilities, there still remain a few limitations which must be addressed. The first of these is that, as a Master of Teaching candidate, my ethics approval limits me to collecting data from educational professionals, not students. While my research participants are extremely relevant and have a lot to offer in this area of study, my research could be enhanced by interviewing young offenders themselves. This would provide an idea of what types of supports they are looking for in their schools, and possible areas of improvement. Nevertheless, I have done my best to address the research objects within the limits of my ethics approval.

Another limit of this study is that, due to time constraints and my novice status as a researcher, I am not able to interview as many participants as I would like. While two teacher interviews provide enough data for the requirements of my MTRP, I would have ideally preferred to interview more teachers, to provide more data to work with (Kitto, Chesters & Grbich, 2008). Again, this is a limit which I have done my best to address, by selecting such exemplary participants. However, generally speaking, small samples and lack of generalizability can be seen as a limit to all qualitative research (Kitto et al., 2008).

With all that aside, there are also a certain number of methodological strengths in qualitative studies. Carr (1994) describes how the close relationship between the researcher and their participants can make the data they uncover more rich. The researcher also has the opportunity to observe their participants body language and tone of voice, which adds a different type of data to their findings. It also has a flexibility, which allows for deeper and more meaningful understanding than might be achieved, and for participants to raise points which the researcher might not have included (Carr, 1994). According to Hageman (2008), one of the
biggest advantages about qualitative research is that it is able to analyse the everyday, natural human experiences. In my particular study, this also offered the opportunity for teachers to reflect upon their own practice. This is beneficial to the teacher and can help them in their own career, which is a mutual benefit.

3.7 Conclusion

Throughout Chapter 3 I have explained and justified my use of qualitative research, and semi-structured interviews. I have explained my criteria for selecting my research participants, and how I recruited these teachers. Using pseudonyms I reported on the individual participants to identify their appropriateness as participants in this specific study. I have explained my process for data analysis, and my attention and care for the ethical collection and use of this data. Lastly, I discussed the strengths and weakness of qualitative research in general, as well as the specific strengths and weaknesses as pertaining to this study. I will now discuss my own research findings, in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

Throughout my MTRP so far, I have reported on types of struggles faced by young offenders, and the need for increased research and training for educators who work with this group of youth. I began my research with a combined interest in studying both criminology and education. I was able to bridge this gap by focussing on the question, “how are Ontario secondary school teachers supporting and interacting with offending students in their current practice?” This led me to focus my own research on teachers’ perceptions of their impact on these students; what supports teachers offer to students, and how teachers are supported in this role; how do teachers understand their role in the lives of young offenders; what types of training they have received; and whether they notice an impact of their perceptions on their interactions with offending youth. Employing a qualitative approach, I interviewed a small sample of two teachers in southern Ontario, in order to gain a greater insight into my area of study.

Throughout my conversations with Macy and Alec about their experiences with specific students Brodie and Weston, several themes emerged, which I will identify and discuss in depth throughout Chapter 4. The most significant themes are as follows:

1. Educators offer greater support to students who they perceive to be more motivated, which informs their support for young offenders.

2. Teachers demonstrate a mutual lack of communication and trust with students who are young offenders, and this interferes with their support.

3. Teachers frequently reference peer relationships when discussing “high-risk” student behaviour.
4. Working in a supportive and collaborative team environment was desirable in meeting the support needs of young offenders.

Throughout this chapter, I will describe each of my themes, provide an overview of the related data, and explain the significance of my data in connection to the findings from my literature review (Chapter 2). To conclude, I will summarize my findings and recap their significance in relation to other literature in the field.

4.1 Teacher Perceptions of Student Motivation

While the teachers I interviewed reported many barriers to supporting young offenders, there were some which stood out as reinforcing or challenging the findings from the literature I reviewed. One significant theme I found in my own research was that educators described giving increasingly more support with the perception of higher student motivation, which informed teachers’ level of support for young offenders. Based on their reported interactions I did not perceive this to be a deliberate decision made by the teachers—in fact, my participants reported the opposite. Neither stated an intention or even an awareness of being unsupportive to students who did not care or did not try. Rather, they both described an attempt to give the same treatment to all students, and a desire to equally help everyone in their class. Thus, it was through my own analysis of their reported interactions with offending students that this pattern emerged.

In my interview with Macy, she recalled experiences with a particular student named “Brodie” who was a known drug user and a suspected drug dealer. Macy said that she wanted to help all of her students, and described positive relationships with many of them. She also stated that she was willing to give Brodie the benefit of the doubt. However, she described struggling to connect with Brodie, and because of this their relationship seemed to suffer. Instead of being supportive of him as she intended, she seemed to have lost hope that he would be able to benefit
from her support, because in her opinion he seemed to be lacking effort. Macy said that she believed Brodie was wasting his second chance (having returned to school after previously being kicked out) and she expressed worry that he was deliberately trying to get himself kicked out of school again. She admitted, “like honestly, I just wanted to catch him. So that I could get this, this—this distraction, out of my classroom.” Because Macy perceived Brodie as being unmotivated, she describes herself as becoming cold and suspicious in her interactions with him. While initially attempting to be supportive, this shows how her perceptions of Brodie’s motivation may have made her more reluctant to support Brodie.

Macy also expressed a concern that Brodie’s behaviour would negatively impact the other students in her class. This is a belief which is reportedly common among teachers, and is echoed in Ungerleider’s review of the Student Success/Learning to 18 initiatives (2008). Ungerleider’s teacher participants reported having difficulty when trying to reintegrate students who are known to have social and behavioural issues, such as young offenders. The teachers thought it was disruptive to the learning environment, and took up a lot of their time. According to Ungerleider, this is especially the case for students who are involved in drugs, and other anti-social activities like bullying (2008). Significantly, Brodie was involved in drugs, so Macy’s concern converges directly with Ungerleider’s findings. Although there are many positive aspects to the Student Success/Learning to 18 initiatives (SS/L18), such as alternative education programs or keeping students in school until they are 18 years old, many teachers reportedly believe that SS/L18 could potentially contribute to deteriorating standards of education. Furthermore, Ungerleider found that many teachers thought SS/L18 initiatives did not prepare students realistically for life after high school.
In my interview with Alec there was also a very clear connection between student motivation and teacher support. However, unlike Brodie, who was seemingly unmotivated, Alec’s student “Weston” was intrinsically motivated to get his life back on track. While this was not within the control of either teacher, and does not suggest that one teacher’s support strategies were superior to the other, Weston’s own intrinsic characteristics seemed to lead to an overall more positive outcome. Based on Alec’s description, it seemed to be Weston’s motivation that helped him get more support from Alec.

In his descriptions, Alec said that Weston was “exceedingly bright”. Even though Weston’s crimes were very serious—having stolen extensive amounts of copper wire to sell—Alec jokingly referred to Weston as a “business man”. This signified Alec’s respect for Weston’s intelligence, and consequently for their relationship. He seemed to think Weston was just too smart for his own good and it eventually caught up to him and got him in trouble; however, I did not get the impression that he had lost hope for Weston’s potential. A central point in their student-teacher relationship was when Weston reportedly said to Alec that he thought he needed to get his life back in order. Alec told Weston that he and all the other teachers would be there to help him accomplish his goal. When Weston took that initiative to make a change, Alec and the other teachers were supportive in that process. This demonstrates these teachers’ desire to help those who want to be helped, or who are ready to accept help.

Both teachers’ accounts express a clear relationship between motivation and support. When Weston said he wanted to try, Alec was supportive; whereas when Macy thought Brodie was not putting in any effort, she believed supporting him would be hopeless. The interactions described by my participants aligned with the findings from my literature review, particularly in noting that delinquent youth are often perceived by educators to be unmotivated or lacking effort.
This is especially significant when considering that youth who are intrinsically motivated to pursue academic endeavours are less likely to be involved in offending behaviour (Leung, 2004). In other words, those who are motivated at school are at lower risk of future delinquency, and consequently in lower need of teacher support. Yet based on my small sample, these were reportedly the students who receive more support from their teachers.

Where this becomes particularly problematic is in combination with the reports of youth probation officers. According to them, being in school is very important for young offenders in reducing their risk of recidivism, but also very difficult to arrange because of schools’ general avoidance of students with behavioural issues (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Although it may seem to teachers that it is a losing battle to help someone who does not want to be helped, it is important to remember what Alec so clearly stated:

There’s, you know, lots of stuff that you have to take into account before you make any rash decisions. You can’t do that … and at the end of the day, you gotta remember, these are kids you’re dealing with, they’re not adults. So sometimes they’re irrational. Actually lots of times they’re irrational. So, you have to be the rational person, you have to be the person that, you know, makes the sound decisions. Sometimes on behalf of the kid. Or at least you can steer the kid towards making ... those decisions.

This advice from Alec articulated a potential solution to the theme of this section. If teachers decide how much support to give their students based on whether they seem to want or accept teacher support, then teachers are not only overlooking the degree of student need mentioned above, but are also relying on student rationality. As a society we already expect that youth are less rational than adults; this is the very reason why we hold them to different legal standards.
But those who have previously engaged in offending behaviour have demonstrated that for their own reasons, they have an even lower regard for convention than other youth. It is a disservice for teachers to allow a student’s own unconventional priorities to determine the amount of support they receive, when it is widely accepted that remaining in school is in the best interest of young offenders.

As was the case with Brodie, most youth who are in conflict with the law have not reported a realisation of how serious their situation is. They tend to make light of it and do not pursue the help they need (Broeking & Peterson-Badali, 2010). However, if offending students who are already in a precarious position do not prioritise their education, and are instead doing things to try to get kicked out, like Macy described, then it is crucial that teachers do everything they can to keep that child in school. This could make the difference in whether they return to criminality or get their lives on track (Hamilton et al., 2012; Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015).

4.2 Mutual Lack of Communication and Trust

Another barrier to supporting young offenders was the fact that, in these teachers’ accounts, they had a mutual lack of communication and trust with offending students. This seems to have interfered with teachers’ support, resulting in a potentially negative relationship. Weston and Brodie reportedly fit this pattern; however, I would further argue that based on my own findings the pattern of distrust could apply for their teachers as well.

At first teachers’ distrust of young offenders may seem like common-sense; if anyone does something wrong, then they usually have to earn back the trust they have lost. This was certainly reflected in Macy’s description of her relationship with Brodie. Despite her good intentions, Macy and Brodie seemed to have a negative relationship that was mutually lacking in communication and trust. He would ignore her, with his hood up and music on, and she was
sceptical of his actions. She described him as being “defiant” which suggests her belief that he was resistant to her on principle rather than because of what she was actually asking of him. This was perhaps because she was an authority figure, which is not a surprise in the study of youth crime. In convergence with the literature I reviewed, young offenders tend to be distrusting, resistant, or disrespectful to authority figures in general (Chow, 2011; Mann, 2014). However, Brodie’s resistance to her support again made Macy reluctant to be supportive.

Macy seemed to worry about the ramifications of supporting a student who might be putting himself and others at risk. While she reacted to his resistance in a way that I think most people instinctively would, in the case of young offenders, this stance can be problematic. Having positive relationships with pro-social role models, such as teachers, has been found to drastically reduce the risk of youth criminality (Crooks et al., 2007). This idea was reinforced through my analysis of the reported relationship between Alec and Weston. They seemed to have a positive relationship, which could have influenced Weston’s motivation for self-improvement. While causation cannot be proven, this suggested that teacher efforts to model pro-social relationships could be an important step in reducing risk of youth recidivism.

One of Alec’s reported strategies for interacting with his students was building a trusting atmosphere with his alternative education class, through open and frequent communication. During our interview, he often noted that if you did not take the time to build trust with students in alt. ed., then eventually you would “lose them”. Positive relationships can be built with young offenders, but this takes a lot of effort on the teacher’s part. However, this may have been more naturally achieved for Alec, because of his comfort and confidence as a teacher in these classrooms. Nevertheless, a determination to build relationships with his students was evident in Alec’s descriptions of his own efforts. He made time to socialise with his class, and showed
respect for their interests and hobbies by integrating them into his biology class. For example, he taught students about the effects of concussions on hockey players’ brains, and set up class fish tanks to promote peer collaboration. This reportedly piqued student interest and fostered skills which were relevant to other parts of their lives. Making school relevant to their lives is one of the practices recommended by Chow (2011) who found that students are more likely to adhere to prosocial values and norms if they feel like their school environment and curriculum connect with their own needs and experiences. This method was reportedly very effective for Alec in building rapport. He even scheduled in smoke breaks, knowing that these alt. ed. students would have trouble focusing for a full 150 minutes. Alec took time to get to know his students and to show that he cared about them, which helped them to trust and respect him.

Despite both of these teachers’ efforts at developing relationships with students, the logistics of education can also get in the way of building trust. Alec reported that even though they had a good relationship, the teachers and administrators had no choice but to keep Weston “on a shorter leash” in order to make sure he was not harming himself or others. This reveals an institutionalised layer of distrust, which interfered with his ability to support Weston. The same was true when Macy described how it was easy to find strategies for supporting a student who struggled academically. But for students involved with illegal activities, Macy explained, the first thing she had to prioritise was making sure that he was not doing anything illegal on school property. As she reflected, “that was always at the front of my mind. To worry about. And it’s pretty hard to do what you’re there to do. Like it was pretty hard to teach him.” Educators are in a position of high responsibility, and have to prioritise safety first. This is supported by Ungerleider (2008) who found that some teachers believed that the needs of students with
problem behaviours were still not getting enough priority. Unfortunately, this means that doing what is in the best interest of young offenders can often be placed on the back burner.

Nonetheless, Weston seemed to trust Alec, and reportedly began showing pro-social inclinations. This showed how positive the outcomes can be when teachers take the time to show they are trustworthy, even if they do not trust the students in return. It is important that teachers give young offenders a chance to change. If teachers act on their distrust, assuming that they will continue to make mistakes and watching them more closely than they do other students, it may only make matters worse. While the consequences like expulsion and suspension have begun to be reconsidered in SS/L18 (Ungerleider, 2008) they are still widely practiced. These punishments have been linked to youths’ negative attitudes about school, which are often directed towards adults who work at the school (Winton, 2012). Furthermore, the Youth Criminal Justice Act (2002) explains that sentencing is intended to not only hold the youth accountable for what they have done and give them fair and meaningful consequences for their actions, but also to “promote his or her rehabilitation and reintegration into society” (Youth Criminal Justice Act, 2002, p. 36-37). If schools are to follow the same principle, then consequences for young offenders should be aimed at promoting rehabilitation, instead of undermining these efforts. For young offenders, it is thus necessary to reconsider traditional consequences.

4.3 The Impact of Peer Relationships on High-Risk Students’ Behaviour

Throughout my interviews, these teachers frequently referenced peer relationships when discussing student behaviour. This was cited by both participants, who noted that being with the ‘wrong group of kids’ could have the power to derail the progress of students who were at risk, or who were already young offenders. As previously mentioned, there is an absence of literature
specifically on teachers’ perceptions of young offenders’ interactions with their friends. Thus, throughout this section I have investigated the convergence and divergence of my participants’ observations of young offenders, with what other researchers have found in their observations of young offenders. In other words, I will be comparing Alec and Macy’s findings with the findings of academic researchers.

In describing peer relationships among their students, Macy and Alec identified a variety of different factors. For example, when adolescents had behavioural issues but pro-social attitudes,\(^6\) being in alternative education classes was an effective strategy to help reinforce their pro-social tendencies, which can be helpful in reducing recidivism. This is because students who were strongly connected to their peers seemed to identify with being physically present and associated with them. Being physically removed from their peer groups set them apart as being different, which is something they were eager to reverse. Macy suggested that when students felt disconnected from their friends they were seemingly more motivated to be successful in her classes and return to their peer group. This finding aligned with the literature which reports the significance of individual adolescent attitude in moderating the potential for delinquent outcomes (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015; Vitaro et al., 2000). However, despite the sometimes positive impacts of peer pressure on young offenders, often the effects of peer pressure tend to be more negative.

This was the case for both Brodie and Weston. Macy described Brodie as being a distraction to other peers in the class, potentially an example of how association with one pro-delinquent peer can increase the risk of criminality for others (Baron, 2004; Crooks et al., 2007; Leung, 2004; Strohschein & Alvinelle, 2014; Vitaro et al., 2000). According to Baron (2004) this is especially true for youth who participate in substance abuse. Since substance abuse has been

\(^6\) By this, I mean that they were able to socialise positively and ‘appropriately’ with their peers.
linked to other in-school behavioural issues (Haqane et al., 2015), Macy was probably justified in the above-mentioned concern that Brodie would influence his peers to get involved in drugs. Similarly, Alec believed that Weston’s out-of-school behaviour had a big impact on his in-school behaviour. He even confided, “You know the saying, show me who your friends are and I’ll tell you who you are? That is the most true statement”. Alec seemed quite convinced that the behaviour of a student’s peers was extremely impactful on their own behaviour. Based on the above-cited research in this area, many scholars would agree with him. However, there was some research to suggest that despite the tendencies of adults to socialise with those who are similar to them; during adolescence many youth are actually able to remain unaffected by their friends’ behaviour (Vitaro et al., 2000). This inconsistency highlights the importance of teachers remaining open-minded, and not making assumptions about offending students’ behaviour.

Both participants also described experiences with students other than Weston and Brodie. When discussing students who were at risk of course failure or of dropping out, Alec described experiences with a current student, “Leila” who he described as being very sweet. However, when she recently became friends with someone who he described as being “troubled” and “struggling”, he noticed a shift in Leila’s behaviour. Consequently, Alec considered her to be on a ‘bad path’ and was planning to talk to administrators about her. Similarly, Macy found that some of the friends her alt. ed. students associated with were not what she would consider “safe and healthy” groups of friends. By Macy’s account, many students seemed to get in with “the wrong groups of friends”, which reportedly contributed to failing classes. She described many of her students as “suffer[ing] from social abuse [or] peer pressure”. With this being such a widespread problem for students in both of my participants’ alt. ed. classes, it reinforced the idea
that criminality could be a reciprocal relationship between the offender and their friends (Leung, 2004).

In a study (Corrado et al., 2003) on the impacts of youth socialising with delinquent peers inside prison, it was found that the aforementioned negative effects of peers could be amplified, with so many like-minded youth in the same place. This undermined the intended consequences of prison, and actually demonstrated more harm than good in preventing recidivism. While not all students in alternative education classes are inclined toward criminal behaviour, they do tend to share a generally negative opinion of school. When paired with the results of research conducted with incarcerated youth (e.g., Corrado et al., 2003), this suggests that concentrating youth with anti-school opinions all in one classroom could actually undermine the reformative intentions of alternative education programs. This validates my participants’ concern about having pro-delinquent students in their classes, and their belief that peer relationships and attitudes can significantly impact offending behaviour.

4.4 The Significance of Collaboration for Teachers

In Ungerleider’s review of the Ontario SS/L18 initiative, he found that although the programs did a good job in promoting student accountability, there was a reported level of uncertainty among teachers, as to whether they could achieve these lofty goals on their own (Ungerleider, 2008). This highlights the importance of collaboration between teachers, administrators, and other support staff, as an imperative factor in making SS/L18 initiatives a means of achieving student success. In the reported experiences of my own participants, this same belief seems to have been reflected.

After reviewing my transcripts, I found that when teachers were supported by collaborative team efforts, they seemed to be more comfortable in supporting young offenders.
This emerged through the discussion of hindrances, which ended up being similar for both participants. Both teachers were trained as mainstream teachers. Neither teacher had training or preparation in the area of alternative education, let alone in specifically teaching young offenders. In addition, neither teacher had any knowledge of the youth justice system. In his review of the SS/L18 strategies, Ungerleider (2008) found that this is a common hindrance among many teachers, who reportedly feel there is a lack of resources, training, and support staff to help students with behavioural issues.

Each of my participants reported that the majority of what they knew about teaching alternative education classes came from their first hand experiences on the job. With this in mind, connectivity for teachers, and their network of collaborators and support workers has emerged as being distinctly important to each participant. Through listening to their own descriptions, I found that working in a supportive and collaborative team environment was desirable to both participants in meeting the support needs of young offenders.

When Macy discussed the environment at her school, she described a general feeling of tension among the teachers. Initially she told me that most of the teachers only socialised with people in their own department. The teachers tended to be quite cliquey, and did not work together with other departments. However, after further discussion, she elaborated to describe a strained atmosphere, even within her department itself. She revealed that some teachers did not get along with each other, which rippled out to affect their department atmosphere as a whole. To amplify this even more, the teachers in her department were not together in a shared working space, but were physically divided in two separate offices. For Macy, who did not have any additional training in the area, and was already struggling to support Brodie, she was also hindered by the negative collegial atmosphere.
Notably, one of the things that Macy mentioned in discussing collaboration was that she felt there would have been a benefit to working together with other support workers who were involved in Brodie’s rehabilitation. While she did not specifically note which support workers would be most beneficial, this could include parent/guardian collaboration, working with probation officers, or collaboration with community youth workers or counsellors. As Macy describes, “Like honestly, I just think there needs to be more supports. And not just from teachers. Like guidance and admin too. There needs to be more to help these kids. To help them become successful again.” This suggests that in Macy’s experience there is a general lack of people at the school who are able or willing to work together to help students with severe behavioural challenges. She also describes how, despite teachers being well trained to teach, there are many issues where they do not have the knowledge she feels is necessary in order to meet the needs of the students. Recruiting help from other professionals who have specific expertise in the students’ particular areas of need could be a good use of collaborative efforts.

In contrast to Macy’s experiences, Alec described his colleagues in an effusive and nostalgic way (because Alec no longer worked at the school where he had these experiences).

The teachers were, like, they were locked together, like they were one unit, and it was, it was a beautiful thing…Like you can’t be an island in this profession. Right? You have to be, uhh, a team player, you have to collaborate with other people.

This description revealed a positive collegial environment, where teachers are very supportive of each other. In his manner of describing it, Alec revealed a comfort and joy in his relationships with other teachers at that school. Like Macy, Alec was learning through his own experiences and mistakes; but he was not doing it alone. As part of a team of teachers, Alec had a built-in network, offering emotional support, professional collaboration and guidance.
Macy’s struggle to teach and support Brodie could have likely been alleviated by a more collaborative effort among other teachers and professionals. For Alec, these struggles were eased by having support from other teachers, because he could learn from their mistakes, and felt connected and encouraged throughout a challenging teaching experience. While I did not find any studies which spoke to teachers or other professionals specifically supporting teachers in their interactions with young offenders, Ungerleider (2008) made note in his review of SS/L18 that schools which focussed on developing a caring and safe school environment were more successful in attaining the SS/L18 goals. One Student Success Team follows the motto, “Take care of yourself, take care of each other, take care of this place” (p. 26). While this motto does address other types of care, it notably references the need for teachers to take care of each other. This was reported to have a positive impact on the overall interactions between the staff and their students. Although both of my participants described a supportive guidance department and supportive administrators, being untrained for experiences with young offenders was a hindrance in their ability to support. This could have been helped by working together with others.

4.5 Conclusion

Throughout Chapter 4 I have identified themes related to my own findings on teachers’ experiences supporting young offenders in Ontario high schools. I have also analysed these findings and situated them alongside relevant literature, in order to develop some specific and tangible connections between educational and criminological research, which seem to be lacking.

Firstly, my findings suggest that teacher support for young offenders is informed by the teacher’s perception of student motivation. However, many young offenders do not prioritise their education, or realise that being in school is in their own best interest. This means that teachers need to step in and take a more active role in helping them see the value in their
education, rather than becoming less supportive. Secondly, teachers may have a mutual lack of communication and trust with young offenders, which can interfere with their support. When connected to scholarly literature, this finding reveals how important it is for teachers to show themselves to be trustworthy, even if they are unable to trust offending students. Furthermore, when combined with recommendations for sentencing youth, there is an apparent need to re-evaluate traditional punishments for offending youth, and for a greater prioritisation of their needs at schools. Thirdly, teachers often found a significant influence of peers on student behaviour, a finding which was validated by many other academic researchers. Due to the highly concentrated anti-school sentiments among students in alternative education, peer attitudes could thus undermine individual student efforts to prevent recidivism. Finally, I found that working in a supportive and collaborative team environment was desirable to both participants, who felt that they did not individually have the training necessary to be singularly capable of meeting the needs of delinquent youth. This demonstrates the importance of teamwork in meeting the unique and multifaceted needs of young offenders.

Next, in Chapter 5 I will discuss the implications of my findings more thoroughly. I will also make recommendations for other teachers and teachers’ education professionals, and suggest areas of further research.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0 Chapter Introduction

Throughout my research several themes have emerged, which I detailed in Chapter Four, and will recap below in section 5.1. I will then discuss the implications of my findings, both broad and narrow, and provide recommendations which I hope will help improve the in-school support for young offenders. Next I will suggest some areas which I feel need further academic inquiry, as potential topics for future study. Finally, I will end this chapter with a reflection on my MTRP, and conclude my research study.

5.1 Overview of Findings and their Significance

As discussed in Chapter Four, there were several themes which emerged from my interviews. While these were not themes that I expected to find, they were significant in answering my inquiry into how Ontario secondary school teachers are reportedly supporting young offenders.

First, I found that educators seemed to give increasingly more support with the perception of higher student motivation. In other words, teachers revealed through their description of their own actions that they were more supportive of students who seemed to be putting in effort. Based on this I inferred that this criteria informed teachers’ level of support for young offenders. This is significant because it suggests that for young offenders to receive adequate support from their teachers, they may need to overtly appear to be motivated. For students who have given up on the conventional education system, or who have focused their effort on discreet and personal challenges, teacher support may be more difficult to come by.

Second, there seemed to be a reported mutual lack of communication and trust between offending students and their teachers. In the case of my participants, this could potentially
interfere with teachers’ support of their students and result in negative relationships. This is significant because studies have found that many youth who are in conflict with the law have less trust for adults and authority figures than their peers (Chow, 2011; Mann, 2014). If support for students is built upon the foundation of a trusting relationship, then young offenders would potentially have difficulty building this type of supportive relationship with their teachers.

Third, I found that teachers perceive a connection between young offenders and their friends, with teachers reportedly noticing similar behaviour among groups of friends. If a student was a part of a particular group, teachers seemed to assume that they would participate in the behaviours of the group. Furthermore, if a student became friends with a new group, they assumed that the student’s behaviour would shift to become more similar to their peer group. My participants seemed to have expectations of students’ behaviour, assuming that students will behave in a similar way to their peers. This includes expecting the worst of offending students’ behaviours, and assuming behavioural similarities among students who associate with offending students. These assumptions are made without first-hand evidence to verify their truth. This could suggest that for young offenders and their friends, prior to being given the chance to get to know a teacher and show their true colours, their interactions are tainted by teachers’ behavioural assumptions.

Finally, based on my interviewees’ reports of supporting young offenders, there is some evidence to suggest that for teachers, working in a supportive and collaborative team environment was desirable in meeting the support needs of young offenders.
5.2 Implications

In the following section I will discuss the implications of my research. This discussion will include a focus on both the implications for the broader educational community and for my own practice as a teacher.

5.2.1 Broad implications: The educational community. When considering the broad implications of my research, I first want to consider how these findings may impact students. As previously discussed, my findings suggest that teachers may be more likely to support students who they perceive to be putting effort into their studies. Teachers do not seem to associate effort with high grades, so this is a subjective perception of student attitude. Significantly, many students who have been in conflict with the law feel that our current education system has underserved them (Ungerleider, 2008; Wilson & White, 2001). Because of this, they may be less likely to be perceived as putting in effort at school (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Consequently, students who have been in conflict with the law, and who are arguably among those in most need of teacher support (Ungerleider, 2008), may actually be at risk of receiving less support from their teacher when compared to support received by their peers.

Considering these findings, it next seems relevant to consider the importance of trust building between teachers and their students, particularly in the case of young offenders. My findings suggest the importance of teachers showing themselves trustworthy. I also found that it was important for teachers to treat all students with the same respect and trust, and not to treat offending students differently without just cause. If this trusting foundation is not set in place then student-teacher relationships can be hindered by scepticism. This was the case with Macy who was always expecting the worst from Brodie, and allowed her scepticism to prevent the development of trust. For offending students, teachers may simply be seen as another authority
figure (Chow, 2011; Mann, 2014), rather than someone caring and trustworthy. Based on my own findings, it seems that some teachers may be too open in their expression of distrust, and should be more private in these opinions. If they allow preconceptions or distrust to change the way they interact with offending students, then they will likely not be able to provide them with the support they need.

While this is problematic, one of the most consistent findings of my research was that teachers working with young offenders may not be trained to address the needs of these students, either in their pre-service training or their professional development. Although Nipissing University now offers an AQ in alternative education, for the most part there are very limited opportunities for teachers to receive training for the specific needs of these students. Combining my own research with the casual conversations I have had with members of alternative education departments in some Ontario schools (where many young offenders seem to be placed), it seems that many of these teachers have either their Co-Op AQ, or they have no additional training at all. This may imply that most teachers who teach young offenders are required to learn as they go, and are perhaps unprepared to support the unique needs of their students.

Finally, as has been suggested in my research, the role of school administrators is one that demands the consideration of multiple different needs and perspectives, from many diverse groups of people. When considering their role, it was suggested by one participant that administrators, by necessity of their job, may be required to focus more on the safety of the school as a whole, and the needs of the “greater good”. Unfortunately, this may mean that the rehabilitative needs and supports required by young offenders may not be a priority, making it difficult for them to get the support they need. While the preceding implications will
undoubtedly impact my career as a teacher, below I will elaborate on some of the more narrow implications concerning my practice specifically.

5.2.2 Narrow implications: My professional practice. After engaging in very interesting and informative discussions with my study participants, I have found myself feeling much better-rounded in my understanding of this research topic. While there were many bits of advice and information that they shared with me, one of the most consistent implications for my own practice was the importance of getting to know each and every student. With trust being such an important factor in developing relationships with students, it is imperative that I prove myself trustworthy. Teachers have suggested sharing minor information about themselves (setting boundaries of course) to offer points of connection with students. They also suggested how important it is just to show students that you genuinely care. In considering my own reflexive positioning, I am aware that I come from a background which many of my students will regard as privileged. With this in mind it is important to show my students that I am not looking down on them, and to present myself as an ally, whom they can count on for support.

I have also learned how important it is to avoid passing judgements about whether or not a student is trying. Effort is a very subjective concept, and as a teacher it is important that I remind myself that many students are going through things outside of school which make their education less of a priority to them (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). One of my participants was very clear in explaining to me that this does not mean that they don’t care; this is simply the reality of many peoples’ lives. Coming from a background where I was lucky enough to always be able to prioritise my education, there are many things that my students could experience which have not been part of my own experiences. As a teacher part of being supportive, especially to students who have been in legal conflict, is to be understanding of the many
demands in their lives, and to help them set educational goals which are realistic and individualised for them.

Finally, having learned that many roles as a teacher are taken on without pre-service or PD training, I am acutely aware of the fact that I am not an expert. For me this is a constant reminder that teachers are learners, and that I will continue to learn and grow as a practitioner and as an individual throughout my entire life. There are many things that my students will know more about than me—they will have life experiences and challenges that I cannot presume to understand. One of the most important implications my research findings have had on my own practice is the reminder to be humble and to accept that I am a learner too.

Having discussed the implications of my research findings for the educational community and my own practice, I will now provide some informed guidance in how to address these implications, in the recommendations section below.

5.3 Recommendations

Throughout this section, I will use the above-mentioned implications to make recommendations to major stakeholders for supporting young offenders. In doing so I will outline specific suggestions which can help improve the support given to young offenders, and improve the teachers’ preparation for these interactions.

To begin with, there are some notable needs in the area of teacher training, which should be addressed. In my own teacher ed. program there has previously been a cohort devoted to learning the pedagogies and supports for “at risk” youth. This is perhaps something that could be reinstated, so that a group of teachers in every graduating class would have greater expertise in this area. This would help with their own practice, but could also be very helpful teacher support, in collaboration with others who are working with high risk students. In the short term I also
recommend that teacher education programs revise the law/ethics courses that we are already required to take, to include information on the legal interactions that students might encounter. This is something that based on my research, many teachers are uninformed about. Providing information and resources to teachers during teacher ed. should be made a priority.

The Ontario Justice Education Network (OJEN) provides workshops and informative sessions for teachers and students. Attending their sessions could be a great professional development exercise for teachers, and is something that administrators can arrange immediately, to inform teachers in this area. Teachers should know that based on the literature I reviewed, many students who are in conflict with the law are unaware of how serious their legal interactions are (Broeking & Peterson-Badali, 2010), and often do not have adults in their life who are able to help them in this area. Because of this, I also recommend that teachers who work with young offenders make an effort to help them with obtaining basic knowledge and community resources for their legal needs. Teachers can arrange to bring OJEN in to speak at their school, either generally or in specific classes, and OJEN will run workshop to help inform students in this area. This could be a really helpful step in informing students and teachers on the Ontario justice system, and improving the support for both stakeholders.

In the case of educational policy makers, I do not think it is acceptable to have teachers working with young offenders who have not been offered any professional development in the area. Policymakers should require school administrators to offer PD for teachers, to help address areas of need, including primary needs (helping students find housing and food services, childcare service, employment services, etc.) and secondary needs (mental health, legal, and addictions services, etc.). This policy might take a little while to implement, but they can begin by encouraging school boards to increase their professional development right away. Teachers of
young offenders need to be prepared to teach students who may have to prioritise their everyday subsistence needs over their education, and they should not be alone in offering this support.

For administrators, although it is acknowledged that sometimes they are forced to make decisions for the greater good, I might also suggest that supporting young offenders actually is in the interest of the greater good. Our society benefits when its members are all contributing in what is socially considered to be a “productive” way. As recommended by the Youth Criminal Justice Act (2002) it is in the best interest of our society to improve the reintegration and reduce the recidivism of young offenders. Although it may be a challenge for administrators in the short term, supporting these students will benefit everyone in the long term.

When considering teachers, I think it is important that they refrain from making assumptions about whether a student is putting in effort, and to what extent. Having reviewed literature on the many diverse experiences that students can encounter, it is unfair for teachers to presume to know whether a student is trying, and what is reasonable effort for them to put in. Whether or not it is intentional, these types of judgements seem to impact the degree of support that teachers offer to students, making those who are greatly in need of their support unable to access it.

Finally, based on my own experiences working with teachers, and the remarks of my participants during interviews, I recommend that teachers try to avoid engaging in conversations about their students with other teachers, when it is not for a professional purpose. Based on the knowledge from my contacts, it seems that gossip among teachers can be very common. They learn things about students through word of mouth, sometimes hearing more through rumors than through their own observations. These practices may perpetuate bias among teachers, and perhaps make young offenders seem less trustworthy or more dangerous than they actually are.
Our society seems to have a fascination with crime and is inundated with media perceptions of crime. This can make young offenders the subject of fascination, and potentially the subject of gossip. Because of this, I would like to conclude my recommendations by encouraging teachers to approach all of their students with an open mind, and to avoid participating in the rumors and gossip. Teachers should treat all students with the same trust and respect. Our legal system has decided everyone is innocent until proven guilty, and similarly I think students would benefit from teachers treating all students as trustworthy, until proven otherwise. With these recommendations in mind, I will next make some suggestions to areas of future study.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

Although I have conducted this research study to the best of my current abilities, there are still areas which require future research, and which might be of interest to scholars in the field. While my research was possible through bridging a review of the literature related to similar topics, it was difficult to find literature which was specifically on the teacher supports for young offenders in their education. There appears to be a gap in this area, particularly within the Ontario or broader Canadian context.

Generally speaking, there also seems to be a disconnect between the recommendations made by criminological scholars for supporting young offenders in their education, and the realities of the educational experiences these students seem to have. With school being such an important socialisation and rehabilitative factor, it is arguably one of the most crucial elements in preventing youth recidivism (Corrado et al., 2003; Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). However, securing academic enrollment also seems to be one of the most significant challenges these youth and their probation officers face (Haqanee & Peterson-Badali, 2015). Considering this challenge, I would suggest that it is important for criminological and education scholars to begin working
together, or to expand the scope of their research focus. Interdisciplinary research will provide a more well-rounded perspective on the support of youth in conflict with the law, and may provide the opportunity to fill in holes which are currently lacking.

As mentioned in my findings section, there emerged through my interviews some evidence to suggest that collegial support may be connected to teachers’ support of students. While it was perhaps too indefinite a finding in my own study to remark upon anything beyond their desire for teamwork and collaboration, there seemed to be some suggestion that a strong collegial network at school may contribute to the support teachers give to their students. This could be a significant finding, and scholars may wish to pursue this lead in more depth down the road in their own research.

Finally, despite the racial and socioeconomic patterns in the study of youth crime, due to the constraints of my ethics approval and my own experience as a researcher, I was unable to address these variables in my research. Studying the variation in supports for young offenders from different racial and socioeconomic groups, from teachers of diverse groups, and between communities with varying demographics, would all provide more depth of insight into this research question. I have only just skimmed the surface, and there are still many avenues in understanding this question which have yet to be pursued.

Having shared my suggestions for future research, I will now proceed to share my final remarks, concluding my research study.

5.5 Concluding Comments

As a beginning teacher, it is very important for me to be reflexive and self-aware in my practice. I am cognisant of the fact that there are many students who have had experiences which are different from my own. As a teacher I can improve my practice by taking the initiative to
learn more about some of these potential experiences. I certainly still have a lot to learn, but it is my hope that having pursued this research study will enable me to provide better support to the young offenders I encounter during my career. Going forward, I hope that this research extends beyond the realm of my own practice, and can be used as a tool for teachers working with young offenders. Teaching students with delinquent histories is more prevalent than it may seem, and I hope that my research might provide some insight to help these teachers in their practice.

Supporting young offenders in their education is an area where there is not much readily accessible information. I hope that my research can be used as a jumping block for other academics to build upon and develop a better understanding of teacher supports in this area. Students with legal conflict seem to be underserved in the current educational system, and I hope that I have done a small part in improving their educational support. But if nothing else, completing this research will inform my own practice. I will continue to remember all I have learned and all I have yet to learn, as I journey through my career as a life-long learner.
References


My name is Nicole Kipfer and I am a student in the Master of Teaching (MT) program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on the support of young offenders in Ontario secondary schools. I am interested in interviewing teachers who have experience supporting young offenders in an educational setting. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one roughly 60-75 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time and not on school property. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper and informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded.

The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,
Nicole Kipfer
Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Nicole Kipfer and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: __________________________

Name: (printed) __________________________

Date: __________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview Guide

Supporting Young Offenders in Ontario Secondary Schools

Principal Researcher: Nicole Kipfer

Participants will not see this guide; it is a tool to guide each interview which will be conducted only by Nicole Kipfer, and will help keep interviews relatively consistent. Each meeting should be scheduled for about 70 minutes. If more time is needed, stop the interview 15 minutes early and ask if they would be willing to meet for a follow up interview.

START OF MEETING: (10 minutes)

1. Introduce self
   a. Who am I?
   b. What is my project?
   c. What am I hoping to learn, and why?
   d. What am I going to ask them about, and for how long
2. Present and discuss consent form (2 copies—one me and one for them to keep)
3. Answer any questions
4. Test audio recorder
5. Begin recording
6. State date and time of interview

INTERVIEW: (45-50 minutes)

DEMOGRAPHICS (set the tone; minimal needed for my purposes)

1. Where is your school located?
2. What teacher training have you had?
3. How many years have you been teaching?
4. Can you describe the social climate at the school where you work? (This might help shed some light on the type of schools young offenders often attend)
   a. Among students
   b. Among teachers/staff

PERCEPTIONS

5. How many students have you worked with who have been young offenders?

Keeping in mind the 1-3 students who are most recent/stood out the most/who you had the closest relationship with answer Questions 6-13 about each student separately.

6. Which school were you working at when you worked with student 1/2/3? (is this the same school you currently work at? (described above) ➔ if not ask location and social climate again
7. What were your initial thoughts in finding out that one of your students had a previous criminal history?
a. Did this perception change over time?
8. What was your relationship with the student like?
   b. Do you feel that their behaviour outside of class impacted their behaviour in class?
9. Were you aware of their criminal behaviour ahead of time?
   c. If so: How were you informed of this? How did this knowledge affect you?
   d. If not: How would this knowledge have changed your perception of the student?
10. Can you describe how you felt leading up to your first interactions with the student?
   e. Do you feel that their behaviour impacted your relationship with them?

EXPERIENCES
11. Can you describe a memorable interaction with this student?
   f. How did you react/respond to this situation
   g. In retrospect is there anything you would have changed about these interactions?
   h. Is there anything that could have been done to help you prepare for this situation?

PRACTICES
12. What strategies did you develop to help you interact with this student?
   i. Did you need to make any unique accommodations for this student?
13. How did you find this student responded to the classroom environment?
   j. Peer relationships
   k. Teacher relationships
   l. Classroom behaviour
   m. Assessment completion, timeliness, quality of work, care
   n. Grades

TRAINING
14. Have you had any training to prepare yourself for teaching this type of student?
   o. Any additional training?
   p. Peer/staff support any services available to teachers
   q. Professional development
   r. Word of mouth about the student?
15. Can you describe what preparation would be most helpful in these interactions?
16. What knowledge would you have liked to have prior to interacting with a young offender?

PERCEIVED IMPACT
17. What do you think is the role of a teacher in the life of a student with criminal background?
   s. What can or should teachers be doing?
18. How have your experiences with the student played out in the long run?
   t. OR How was the remainder of this student’s high school experience?
   u. Did they graduate high school? Do you know what they are doing now?
   v. Do you believe that you could have done anything to change this outcome?

GENERAL THOUGHTS
19. Did your classroom management style change at all when teaching this type of student?
20. What are your thoughts on the Canadian criminal justice system, and reformation in general?
   w. Thoughts on Canadian youth justice system

END OF INTERVIEW: (10 minutes)
1. Turn off recorder, and let them know it is off
2. Review consent
3. Thank them
4. Something you appreciate
5. Any further questions?