Guiding Graduate Student Professional Development: Progress, Pathways and Plans

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Abstract

The skills imperative has signaled the emergence of co-curricular professional development programming and the establishment of a new subsector in graduate education. In an effort to support the transition from academia to post-graduate work for students enrolled in research-intensive pathways, professional development offices have devised various educational methods, tools and guides to introduce students to a roster of professional learning opportunities and pathways. The aim of this research project was to understand how the skills imperative has been characterized in three distinctly different graduate student guides devised by selected GSPD offices. Through a comprehensive process of document analysis, eight socio-narrative themes were discovered as pedagogical, ideological and dialogical tensions. Proposed practices and socio-narrative criteria were developed as application for fostering professional development programmatic fidelity.

responsibility for the types of knowledge intended for goodness. The young men in my life - my sons; Evan, Malcolm, and Isaac, and my nephew, Ben -- for daring to live your own big wonderful lives alongside each other and being strong and tender together through immense loss and challenge.

And, lastly, I am immensely grateful and have the deepest respect and highest regard for my supervisor Maureen Connolly. Maureen is a coach, mentor and friend for so many graduate students. She has an uncanny talent for reaching deep, finding the unsuspecting gem, polishing it and letting it shine.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

'We are like sailors who have to rebuild their ship on open sea, without ever being able to dismantle it in dry-dock and reconstruct it from the best components' – Otto Neurath

The 'skills' imperative, which has been characterized differently across all sectors, is a global response to rapidly changing global economic forces influenced by globalization, automation, technology and demographic changes (Hadad, 2017; Rose, 2012; Sekuler & Annan, 2013). In higher education, the 'skills' imperative has been characterized as an 'expectation' gap between an employer and a potential employee (Collet, et.al., 2012; Harrison, 2017) and a skills 'translation' gap (Bridgstock, 2009) the individual's ability to make sense of, translate and articulate one's skills. Higher education policy makers and public sector decision makers in an effort to close the gaps have implemented policy directives and infused funds to address what is deemed as the 'experience' gap - the absence of employability 'skills' (Borwein, 2013). The 'talk' of 'skills' has become a perennial call for educational reform for practitioners and scholars in the undergraduate market, and more so, in the graduate sector (Edge and Munro, 2015).

The 'skills' imperative in the graduate world, however, is slightly nuanced. Recognizing limited opportunities for doctoral students in careers as academics, the graduate sector has been most responsive to change and the first to attend to the clarion call of the recent 'skills' imperative (Council of Ontario Universities, 2012; Rose, 2012; Sekuler & Annan, 2013). In the graduate world, one study estimated that nearly

50% of US PhD students take positions outside of academia (Council of Graduate Schools and Educational Testing Service, 2010) and within Canada it is estimated that even fewer than 25% will secure a full-time tenure track position (Charbonneau, 2011). Despite this reality, master's and doctoral enrolment in Canada has increased substantially by 109% and 130% respectively over a 20 year span between 1992 and 2012 (Looker, 2015). And, universities produce seven times more PhDs than the availability of faculty positions that doctoral training is traditionally geared towards (Edge and Munro, 2015).

The current culture of accountability in higher education has also convened a number of diverse stakeholders to interpret, express and frame the 'skills' conversations to their respective contingencies. Authored by funders, scholars, venture capitalists, policy makers, employers and higher education critics; the 'skills imperative' or 'skills agenda' has become the panacea to a 'crisis' characterized as a 'skills gap', 'skills mismatch', 'skills translation gap', 'education vs. training debate', 'expectation gap', and a 'discourse of crisis and responsibility' (Aspenlieder & Vander Kloet, 2014; Baker & Henson, 2010; Borwein, 2013; Porter & Phelps, 2014; Sekuler & Annan, 2013; Tomlinson, 2017; Hurrell, 2015).

In recent years, various cultural memes have signaled dismal career outcomes for doctorate level graduate students. There has been an emergence of 'quit-lit', a genre of testimonial literature from students who have abandoned their PhD, and 'post-ac' identities that refer to individuals who have dabbled in an academic career then shift away from academia altogether. And of course, the term most frequently used to describe PhDs who take on parallel or alternative academic posts within the academic

sector -- 'alt-acs'. These memes and emergent terms suggest a real cultural shift in career expectations for students pursuing graduate degrees (Maldonado, et.al., 2013).

To address this disconnect, some graduate education scholars have advocated for 're-imagining the Phd' and the entire graduate curriculum, including; multi-track paths, shortened time to completion, and negotiated assessments for degree completion. Some have proposed an adapted dissertation or thesis that more authentically reflects the individual's post-graduate career goals or entails the creation of a sector-relevant knowledge products (Porter & Phelps, 2014).

However, some scholars have proposed co-curricular, 'bolt-on' or 'parallel or stand-alone' programs to complement academic programming. One of the graduate sector institutional responses to this shifting demographic is the emergence and formalization of graduate student 'professional' development programs (GSPD) implemented on several university campuses and across Canada (Rose, 2012; Drummond, et.al., 2006; Refling & Borwein, 2014; Fallows & Steven, 2000). Customarily, professional skills development programs have been classified into one of three categories; supplementary - workshops and programming that complements PhD programs, immersive - experiential programming built into PhD such as internships, and transformative - restructured PhD programs that integrate GSPD training (Edge and Munro, 2015).

Commissioned by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada and the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS), Rose (2012) was instrumental in fostering a national conversation on the 'topic of professional skills

development for graduate students as an essential component of their graduate training'
(p. 2). After completing a comprehensive review of 'good practices' and an
environmental scan of priority skills inventories in the report entitled, '*Graduate Student
Professional Development: A Survey with Recommendations*', Rose (2012) laid the
foundation for a national benchmarking framework for the emergent professional
development sub-sector within graduate education. Rose (2012) adopting CAGS' working
definition of 'professional skills' as "behaviours that can be learned, that can be
improved with practice, that require reflection and the benefit from ongoing
improvement" also reframed the notion that the customary *graduate skills or academic
skills* developed throughout a graduate education were indeed, *professional skills* (p.3).
Recognizing the responsibility of graduate education to include the preparation of
graduate students for a breadth of post-graduate work has been a cultural shift. As such,
the number of GSPD offices across Canada has grown and is now considered an integral
service within many graduate schools.

Rose's (2012) report was followed by a number of subsequent reports (see Table
1 below) commissioned by CAGS including; a national catalogue of skills development
offerings (Phase 1) and a preliminary review of program assessment practices (Phase 2).
In the most recent report, Graduate Professional Development, Towards a National
Strategy: Phase 2, Mota (2017) provides an overview of program assessment
considerations and approaches, and also, identifies a number of inherent tensions in
program assessment. The aim of this report was to foster discussion on assessment and
ultimately take the 'initial step towards the creation of a general assessment tool'(p.2).

Table 1: List of Canadian Association of Graduate Studies Reports on Graduate Student Professional Development (GSPD) topics

Author/s	Report	Date
Susan Porter and Lisa Young	Canadian Association for Graduate Studies: Report of the Task Force on the Dissertation	September 2018
Celiese Lypka and Mariana Hipólito R. Mota	Graduate Professional Development: Towards a National Strategy Phase 1	June 2017
Mariana Hipólito R. Mota	Graduate Professional Development: Towards a National Strategy Phase 2	October 2017
Marilyn Rose, PhD	Graduate Student Professional Development: A Survey with Recommendations	September 2012
Ontario Council of Graduate Studies (OCGS)	(OCGS) Taskforce on Professional Skills Report	May 2011

Animating Interests of the Researcher

Socio-narratologist Arthur Frank suggests the orientation of a narrative research project arises from the fundamental or 'animating interests' of the researcher (Frank, 2010). In my previous community capacity building work, I integrated narrative methodologies which included participatory storytelling practices that fostered community development and created new forums for knowledge exchange. Later on in my career, intrigued by illness and healing narrative identities, I explored visual methodologies and identity theories to understand how women might reshape the constructs of 'survivor' in breast cancer support services. In my current work, I've become fascinated with socio-cultural materiality of story and narratives; mostly what stories 'do'. Stories 'act' in that they have the capacity to incite wars, sway an electorate, cajole a wounded heart or potentially encode practices within an institution.

And, this led me to explore socio-narrative ideas and methods as a research design for this project.

Institutions are storytellers, and like each of us, are socially bound by a 'mimetic desire' (Livingston, 1994) to provide a 'story' that appeals to the desires of the listeners or stakeholders (student, public, funder, granting agencies, etc.) and to perform an idealized 'self' to attain a degree of narrative resonance (Reissman, 2008). In the current 'skills moment' higher education policy makers have invited various stakeholders into reshaping and building of a new narrative about the broadening role of higher education and graduate education.

In my current role as a program co-ordinator for the Vitae Professional Development Program within the Faculty of Graduate Studies, I follow the national dialogues and track current reports on competency-based and skill development topics in the graduate education sector. Over the past six years, I've watched the grander narratives of the 'skills' gap pivot and shift generating a variety of priority skills-lists and programmatic approaches, not unlike other sectors' 'defining and refining' stages that accompany system-wide policy change.

More recently, the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) commissioned two graduate professional development (PD) environmental scans to determine the form and types of professional development activities occurring across Canadian university campuses. As one of the institutions responding to this survey, I completed the series of questions with a sense that we were still not asking fundamental questions. I searched for insights into what guided each institution's program

development and could not find any published philosophical approaches or operating frameworks. Beyond the notion of addressing labour market trends or merging various competency taxonomies, I hoped that if I could make sense of implicit conceptual frameworks, principles and underlying practices that might help formulate the next stage of PD program development and align objectives, outcomes and practices.

The skills discourse in recent years has shifted from identifying priority skills to skills acquisition and assessment. My interest in 'progress, pathways and plans' arose during a conversation with a member of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HECQO). At the *Work-integrated Learning (WIL) Symposium, 'Where there's a WIL, there's a way'* held to launch Ontario's WIL policy directive, a member of the HEQCO policy think tank succinctly summarized the dilemma, 'everyone knows the value, from government officials to policy makers and practitioners', but when it comes down to how to implement skills programming and how to measure skills acquisition; *'we are all stumped'* (The Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, 2016).

This really puzzled me. I had been reflecting on the traditional formative development approaches and the value of mentorship in graduate education and wondered if this new 'skills' acquisition tracking focus might be a misaligned reconstruction. The formative development model in graduate education is a well-established apprenticeship model. So, instead, I wondered how we might revisit or reconstruct our current practices from the approaches, resources and methods we already have available.

In previous work, I have cycled through similar legislated policy directives in wellness, health promotion, environmental health and the healthy communities' sectors. I have witnessed the 'idealists' that luxuriate in conceptual banter yet languish without application; the eager 'instrumentalists' with categorically precise and complex indicators of measurement and the 'pragmatist' who seeks on-the-ground operational strategies.

Through experiencing the rollout of various public policies, I witnessed the benefits of capacity building practices as steady routes for fostering all forms of personal, organizational and community capacity building and development. I sense that graduate student development approaches share a parallel path. I have also wondered if we had the occasions for more dialogue to advance our collective understandings within our 'professional development' communities of practice (CoP), among practitioners, this might just entail a nuance to practice and a slight adjustment of our 'sails'.

Peter Senge (2006), suggests that real and substantial organizational change and innovations happen on the ground, occur through discussion, in our shared conceptual frameworks, and within our communities of interest and practice. Innovation happens at the intersections where we bridge conceptual and theoretical boundaries and move beyond, what organizational learning scholar Garvin (1993) suggests as, our 'competency traps'.

Working to foster various forms of collaboration, I have also witnessed how our codified knowledge frameworks and underlying conceptual tensions are rarely foregrounded in our discussions about the skills imperative. And, I sense the absences of

these discussions between practitioners and the broader graduate community hinder our own expansion or adoption of new approaches and processes to support graduate students in their developmental passage through graduate school.

Background of the problem

The broader institutional commitment to assure 'professional development' opportunities for graduate students proactively addresses a number of supranational, institutional, societal and policy drivers in higher education. While there is a confluence of initiatives, frameworks and structural approaches, many professional development offices, initiatives and programs have yet to explicate philosophical underpinnings or an orienting conceptual framework. Some PDP programs have categorized 'skills' or competency lists, yet it is not clear, however, how they have adopted, unified and categorized their programmatic offerings. While, others have adopted certain professional qualities or embodied personal attributes as an orienting program approach, some institutions have implemented a 'pathways' approach integrating both curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Clearly, investigating these various approaches might yield patterns and provide clarity into underlying theoretical and conceptual families.

Purpose and Scope of Research

The aim of my research project was to understand how specific institutional partners of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Development Network (GPDN), formerly known as the Canadian Consortium of Graduate Student Professional Development Administrators (CCGSPDA), characterize the 'skills' imperative. I was specifically

interested in scanning a range of 'progress, pathway or plan' student guides to understand implicit or explicit conceptual frameworks communicated through these guides.

I have undertaken a qualitative socio-narrative approach utilizing non-obtrusive methods to identify implicit and explicit conceptual themes of professional development programs in the graduate student professional development (GSPD) network. My intentions were to utilize these insights in order to guide the development of a conceptual framework to assist with my own programmatic planning and practice. I had also hoped that insights from my project may help advance the current GSPD units benchmarking categorizations and support our collective organizational development.

Research Questions

1. *How do graduate student professional development (GSPD) offices characterize the skills imperative?*

2. *How do selected institutions demonstrate commitment for graduate student professional development?*

Significance of the Study

Collectively, post-secondary institutional policy makers extol the value and relevance of 'skills' required for the '21st century' and the 'knowledge economy', yet, the skills most often desired by employers are those 'soft skills' (interpersonal, communication, leadership, initiative, etc.) that reside within the personal and interpersonal dimensions of an individual.

The attributes of the individual are inextricably linked to the 'knowledge' and 'skills' and a constellation of these 'soft skills' acquired through what Tomlinson (2017) refers to as 'soft credentials'. Traditionally, the graduate student development model has been conceptualized as a wholistic formative process where the development of the academic 'professional' is forged through mentorship, socialization, and engagement in a number of self-directed development occasions.

Recent federal and provincial political agendas and converging policy directives have invested and funded substantially in human capital and now infused significant funds to shift to a 'skills' mandate with concomitant transformation in all structures and levels within and across the post-secondary systems.

My study aims to provide some helpful guidelines for this emerging context, more specifically, for individuals developing co-curricular professional development programming for graduate students enrolled in research-intensive streams of the graduate sector.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The 'skills' imperative in higher education has convened various stakeholders to interpret, express and frame the 'skills' conversations to their respective constituencies. For the purposes of this socio-narrative research project, I worked with Dewey's (1925) pragmatic theory of experience and Peter Senge's (2006) disciplines of a learning organization that both share conceptual borderlands with Frank's socio-narrative framework. The aim of a socio-narrative inquiry and analysis is not to map the co-construction of a discourse but to understand the multiple voices that shape a narrative

moment (Frank, 2010). Hence, Frank's socio-narrative interpretive framework was also instrumental in the overall analysis.

John Dewey (1916) has premised the value of learning and development as, 'Learning is not a preparation for life; learning is life' (p. 239). Dimensions of tacit knowledge, what we carry around with us or the 'knowing' connected to experience and judgment, is distinct from 'stock' knowledge; the type of knowledge that is explicated, documented and assessed. Clandinin (2007) suggests that Dewey's conception of experience is 'a changing stream that is characterized by continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social and material environment' (p.40).

As human beings, we story both our individual and social experiences to learn and make sense of the world around us. Contemporary narrative scholars (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006) suggest that narrative inquiry shares conceptual borderlands of many research traditions and what is most central, or a 'point of constancy', is that narrative researchers study experience as story (Clandinin, 2007, p.37).

Peter Senge (2006) defines a learning organization as 'an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future' (p. 14). He suggests, there are five distinct 'disciplines' that include; systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision and team learning. As separate disciplines, Senge (2006) refers to distinct disciplines, the Latin origin of *disciplina*, 'a developmental path for acquiring certain skills and competencies' (p.10) Together, they act as an ensemble of learning or 'a body of theory and technique that must be studied and mastered to be put into practice' (p. 10).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Graduate Sector: Professional Development Programmatic trends

A masters' education, once relegated to 'merely a bridge to the PhD' (Bertrand, F., Archambault, E., & Caruso, J., 2006) was based on a replication or apprenticeship model that served the broader socialization and development aims of the academic research community. Graduate education across the globe has undergone significant transformations whilst asserting to students and employers the value of research-intensive master's-level training for developing disciplinary expertise, research and professional competencies (p.i).

Graduate educated students with advanced research and innovation skills, in some reports, are considered vital contributors and leaders of future enterprises in both the local and global arenas of the new knowledge-based economy (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2011). Strategies to enhance the relevance and value of both the doctorate and masters' degrees, address a range of issues; time to completion, employment outcomes, and loss of lifetime wages. In recent years, some scholars have argued for 'reimagining the Phd' or more professional integrative approaches, in contrast to the reductionist or 'skills' training approaches, in which a student's research and assessment for degree completion is negotiated early and reflects broader individualized professional goals including a range of self-determined and relevant knowledge products (Porter & Phelps, 2014).

The growth of graduate student professional development (GSPD) offerings and the deliberate expansion of graduate student services has resulted in the formalization

of a new sub-sector of administrative offices that coordinate professional development activities. Deemed as an operational learning document, many of the administrative and relational practices gleaned from Rose's (2012) preliminary report reflect and continue to guide GSPD operations and programming at several graduate schools across Canada. Commissioned by the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Rose's report summarized the location of leadership, configuration of the office and delivery partners, and the formulation of explicit skills' inventories.

In the final assessment, Rose constructed a rubric of categorizations (Category 1 to 4) or a 'grouping of common approaches' along a continuum of coordinated practices and structures. For example, the following organizational structures and activities comprised what Rose (2012) regarded as higher ranking Category 1 institutes; a high level of GSPD activity, collected under one brand (ie. Vitae, Gradpathways, MyGradPath) centralized under a Faculty of Graduate Studies, institutional leadership, a dedicated staff person, a constellation of internal partners that deliver GSPD, central web portal on the Faculty of Grad Studies web site, link to a common calendar and some form of recognition (certificate, co-curricular record, transcript note). This foundational report is frequently referred to in the literature and guides many Canadian universities in their approach for establishing GSPD administrative models (Rose, 2012).

A second follow-up national report, commissioned by CAGS (2016) again surveyed the type and scope of GSPD programs noting several programmatic trends. Some of the trends that distinguished Category 1 & 2 institutions include; GSPD

programs thematically grouped by competencies, significantly higher level of GSPD

activity offering both advanced and entry level programs, a centralized communication

hub that proactively employed multiple forms, tools and devices to engage graduate

students. A recent administrative progress indicator of Category 1 GPSD units included

integrative curricular elements. Some institutions have implemented compulsory

professional development elements (linked to degree completion), a recognition feature

or record of completion or/and had some form of validation or recognition by the GS

supervisor (Lypka and Mota, 2017).

Over the past 2 years, a new professional alliance of GSPD administrators; the

Graduate and Doctoral Development Network, [formerly named *The Canadian*

Consortium of Graduate Student Professional Development Administrators (CCGSPDA)],

has convened. As a working group of the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies

(CAGS) the consortium serves as a knowledge sharing network and most recently moved

to establish national strategic priorities. Unlike the fully established teaching and

learning centres and fully developed scholarship for teaching and learning, this broader

conceptualization of 'professional development' for the most part, is an emergent

graduate education sub-sector. Hence,

Graduate Student Experience of professional development supports

Currently, the only national tool to capture the graduate student voice is the

Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS). Considered a proxy

measure for the quality of graduate education, the survey administered every three

years is the most comprehensive national graduate student satisfaction survey.

Completed by over 51,000 students across 48 universities (Arnold & Smith, 2013), this instrument is the only national tool to gauge graduate student experience. Comparing Ontario –based university survey results from 2010 and 2013, despite variations across disciplines and graduate pathways, graduate students across the years expressed dissatisfaction with workshops and advice relating to professional skill development options (teaching, careers within academia, careers outside academia and research positions) and future career options (Arnold and Smith, 2013). In a previous comparative study of GSPSS surveys (2007 and 2010), Zhao (2012) also reported similar patterns of graduate student dissatisfaction in career and professional development supports by graduate students. The only exception expressed by graduate students was in the teaching professional development supports, where higher rates of satisfaction were reported (Arnold and Smith, 2013).

Across the years, graduate students in research-intensive programs were more dissatisfied with the advice and workshops relating to career opportunities outside of academe compared to their peers enrolled in professional stream masters' programs (education, engineering, accounting etc.). And, the proportion of students giving positive ratings varied considerably among disciplines, with a general trend of STEM and health science students more likely to be satisfied (more than 50%). Students enrolled in social sciences and humanities reported the lowest satisfaction (38%) rating for the support and advice they received about career options both inside and outside academia (Arnold and Smith, 2013).

In a separate report analyzing 2007 CGPSS results, Sekuler (2011) discovered that only 53 per cent of graduate students positively rated the relationship of their academic programs to their career goals and only 40 per cent of graduate students had visited and used the services of their campus career centre.

Higher Education Internal and External Drivers of Change

Until recently, the 'skills gap' discourse or 'blame game' narrative shifted and what followed were numerous provincial and federal agenda drivers proposing ambitious 'skills' implementation plans to address proposed graduate skill deficits and enrollment gaps. The Ontario provincial strategy report (The Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, 2016) proposed recommendations 'to shift focus away from solely measuring traditional credentials – i.e., degrees and diplomas – to better recognizing competencies that speak to important skills in the workplace'(p. 16).

One of the ambitious skills-forward strategies proposed in this report was to ensure that every post-secondary student complete one work-integrated learning (WIL) experience. The rationale for the urgent skills-forward agenda was to help Ontario 'compete and succeed in a fast-paced economy, Ontario's workforce must be equipped with skills and opportunities that meet all the needs of the jobs of today and tomorrow' (p.2).

At the national level, the finance minister's Advisory Council on Economic Growth recently announced the creation of a national organization, the *FutureSkills Lab* (Advisory Council on Economic Growth, 2017). This federal economic think-tank serves as a 'laboratory for skills development and measurement' (p.2). Core functions of this

agency 'track innovative approaches to skills development; identify and suggest new sources of skills information and define skills objectives and inform governments on skills programming'.

In an editorial responding to the current multi-sectoral and inter-ministerial policy movements, Harvey Weingarten, Director of HEQCO, a post-secondary think-tank of the provincial government, acknowledged that the shift has finally occurred 'from content to skills'. With the political will and establishment of broad reaching policy agendas to mobilize multi-stakeholder partnerships, the greatest consensus appears to be in the unclear evidence-based implementation goals, approaches, assessment practices or impacts.

Culture of Higher Education Quality Assurance, Accountability and Sustainability

Another policy directive that has dovetailed with the 'skills' imperative and quality systems movement is the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework. Originating from the Bologna Process (1999), many international 'degree qualification' projects have emerged over the past 20 years to create consistent standards and alignment of degree credentialing across the globe (Tomlinson, 2017). In 2007, Canadian education ministers created quality assurance procedures and standards to harmonize with international standards (Councils of Ministers of Education, 2007).

The Degree Level Expectations (DLE), and Graduate Degree Level Expectations (GDLE), derived from this framework were intended to nest, scaffold and articulate learning outcomes and standards of practice across all levels of the higher education

system from lesson plans to programs and across institutions. From a systems'

perspective, this move was intended to afford greater mobility for students across

institutions. For stakeholders, the explication of learning outcomes was intended to

assure 'students, parents and future employers what university graduates will know and

be able to do' (Council of Ontario Universities, 2011).

The most ambitious lever of change in the current postsecondary system is the

Government of Ontario's differentiation policy framework process. Over the past two

decades, a deliberate investment and resulting enrolment growth, or what has been

referred to as the 'massificaton' of higher ed' during 2002-2003, entailed a substantial

80% increase in operational grants to Ontario universities (Ministry of Training Colleges

and Universities, 2013). The economic turn and impact of the 2008 economic crisis

resulted in enrolment decline which prompted governmental measures aimed to

'preserve and enhance educational quality and institutional excellence within a

sustainable cost structure'. (p.5). The subsequent diversification of investors and

marketization of higher education, beyond the primary public sector investor, resulted in

the distribution of financial burden and vested interests across all stakeholders;

governments, universities, private sector, students and parents. As a result, stakeholder

expansion also heightened stakeholder expectations which has thus garnered a

sustained interest in public education.

To address a potentially unsustainable funding model, universities across Ontario

were mandated to engage and propose a number of sustainability and differentiation

strategies through a self-generated strategic visioning process. By 2013, every Ontario

post- secondary institution was mandated to engage in the first stages of a system-wide strategic mandate process. Each institution identified and articulated unique strengths while ensuring alignment with the broader expectations of the provincial government's vision. Distinguished by six priorities, the provincial government's ambitious vision for the postsecondary education system encompassed broad expectations to satisfy stakeholders' diverse and complex interests, with priorities that aimed to; 'drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, and community engagement through teaching and research', additionally, *'they will put students first by providing the best possible learning experience for all qualified learners in an affordable and financially sustainable way, ensuring high quality, and globally competitive outcomes for students and Ontario's creative economy'* (Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, 2013).

Most recently, the province of Ontario announced a progressive performance-based funding model that will depend on ten specific university performance metrics (Crawley, 2019). Currently, only 1.4 per cent of university funding is tied to performance. Over the next six years, performance-based funding will increase annually by increments of ten percent reaching a maximum of 60 percent by 2024-2025. Four of these metrics will be tied to economic and community impact, while six metrics will be based on student skills and job outcomes. The student outcome metrics include; 1) graduate earnings, 2) number and proportion of students with experiential learning, 3) skills and competencies, 4) proportion of graduate employed full-time in a related/partially related field, 5) proportion of graduates in an identified area of strength 6) graduation rate.

The culture of quality assurance, accountability and sustainability and system-wide policy directives in higher education is transforming the core business model and institutional priorities and practices. These internal drivers of system-wide institutional change are also coupled with transformations in contemporary economic notions of performance and emerging career concepts.

Contextualizing the 21st century Knowledge-based Economy

The knowledge-based economy (KBE) is distinguished from the traditional economy (which is customarily characterized by a balance of trade and growth) in that production and mobilization of 'intangible intellectual capital' then becomes the key competitive advantage in a KBE. As a result, within this contemporary economic framework, the nested creation and cultivation of intellectual capital within higher education becomes codified and commodified within an organization, and ultimately in service to the economic advantage of a nation (Hadad, 2017).

Perennial and contemporary discussions about higher education are often linked to national economic performance, globalization, labour market forces and the impact of automation and digitization. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1996), 'knowledge is now recognized as the driver of productivity and economic growth, leading to a new focus on the role of information, technology and learning in economic performance' (p. 3) and those economies 'which are directly based on the production, distribution, and use of knowledge and information' (p.7). The OECD defines knowledge as embodied in individuals, otherwise referred to as 'human capital' and tied to an

economy accelerated by the exponential growth of information and communication technologies.

Emerging Career concepts in the Knowledge-based economy

In this current knowledge-based economy, career concepts have evolved from linear careers, where an individual orients their life work around their employer, to 'boundaryless' and 'protean' careers (Parry, Unite, Chuddzikowski, Briscoe & Shen, 2012). A traditional 'bounded' or 'organizational' career construct presumes to 'bind' the loyal employee to one organization and career progression would occur vertically through that same organization. Whereas, boundaryless career concepts transcend all bounded career concepts and entail horizontal movement across organizations and involve a number of familial, psychological and geographical influences (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). The 'protean career' concept is subjectively oriented, and as the metaphor suggests, the individual has fluid mobility and is dynamically oriented around deeper personal values. Both 'boundaryless' and 'protean' career concepts share conceptual boundaries in that the individual is guided by subjective values, goals and aspirations rather than in-service to the goals and needs of an organization or an ever-shifting labour market (Lyons, Ng, & Schweitzer, 2012; Briscoe & Hall, 2006).

Skills imperative and Re-focus on Experiential Learning

The higher education 'skills' imperative and resulting new WIL policy directives have driven a renewed focus on experiential learning and pedagogical innovations in the curricular world. In the co-curricular world, where graduate student professional development programming tends to be episodic and non-continuous, program

developers have relied primarily on autonomous and individualized methods of

reflection for documenting learning and achievement. One graduate student

professional development program innovation, identified in the latest CAGS report

(Lypka and Mota, 2017), is the individual development plan; a hybrid of the academic

progress file. The origins of this pedagogical tool that is based on individual reflection

and planning, can be traced back to earlier iterations of the quality frameworks originally

devised in the United Kingdom.

The Bologna Process (1999) is frequently referenced as a significant influencer of

Ontario's current degree qualifications framework, both the Dearing Report (1997) and

Burgess Report (2007) also proposed new methods for measuring and recording student

achievement (Council of Ministers of Education, 2008).

The Burgess group (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2009)

made recommendations to introduce a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

that would augment the classic numeric nomenclature of achievement, a 'single number

to sum up their achievements' (p.5) with a 'more sophisticated approach that better

represents the outcomes of student learning and encouraged personal development and

understanding in the context of lifelong learning' (p.7). The HEAR steering group

provided the rationale for providing an additional autonomous achievement report as;

> A summative system, which gives the appearance of 'signing-off' a person's education with a simple numerical indicator, is at odds with lifelong learning. It encourages students and employers to focus on one final outcome and perceived 'end point', rather than opening them to the concept of a range of different types and levels of achievement, which are each part of an ongoing process of learning that will continue beyond the attainment of their degree (p. 7).

The Dearing Report (1997), in addition to its comprehensive set of higher education reform recommendations, also recommended that all higher education institutions introduce a progress file that included both a summative institution-derived 'transcript' and the means for the student to monitor, plan and reflect on their development. This second component, was later refined and labelled as the Personal Development Plan (PDP) which included two components;

1) 'the individual personal record of learning, achievement and plans to help clarify personal goals and provide a resource from which material is selected to produce personal statements', and
2) a 'structured and supported processes' as represented in *Personal Development Planning: Guidance for Institutional Policy and Practice in Higher Education* (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2009).

Although many of the United Kingdom institutions readily adopted the academic transcript, the PDP and the progress report were less readily adopted (Burgess Report, 2007) and evidently absent from quality framework development process that occurred in Canada.

Reflection and the Autonomous Learner

Dewey's (1938) six phases of learning, for the most part, constitute the theoretical architecture for all curricular, experiential, work-integrated theory, and learning practices throughout higher education. Although Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory builds on Dewey's experiential learning theory, Kolb's learning cycle often underwrites structured curricular design and the current integration of work-integrated learning in higher education (Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2016).

However, in the non-integrated co-curricular world of graduate student

professional development, the student designs and curates their own professional

development experiences outside of their academic program expectations. Hence, I've

returned to Dewey's (1938) original notions of reflective observation, autonomy and the

structural supports to reflect on the basic tenets of his theories and the implications for

co-curricular learning.

The induction or entrance into a learning cycle or phases entail both a primary

experience, the learner's interaction with the material world, and a secondary

experience, where the interactions become the object or subject of the learner's

reflection (Miettinen, R., 2000). A perceived *uncertainty*, *failure or disruption* in the

predictable habits causes the learner to halt action and take notice. This primary

interruption impels the learner into naturalistic reflective thinking (phase 1). Reflection

or *intellectualization* begins as the learner cognitively searches for preliminary

explanations and continues to identify the problem or disequilibrium (phase 2). As the

problem is carefully crafted and refined the learner moves into (phase 3) *studying the*

material and social conditions and resources to formulate a tentative hypothesis. At this

phase, both the problem and solution are still ill conceived. The next phase (4),

reasoning, is characterized by what Miettinen (2000) describes as 'thought experiments'

(p. 66).

The learner evaluates all conditions, resources and hypotheses gathering insights

from previous experiences to formulate a 'working' hypothesis. In the fifth phase of the

learning cycle, this working *hypothesis is tested through action* in the material world.

Miettinen (2000) suggests that Dewey intentionally did not categorize nor conclude the

sixth phase in the learning cycle as a distinct outcome. The process (phase 6) is characterized by problem resolution providing the learner with a sense of control or new meaning constructed that then becomes a resource for the future.

Based on his early tenets of experimental learning, Dewey (1938) proposed that learning is based on trial and error and the learner's aim is to ultimately maintain a sense of dynamic equilibrium. Dewey believed that the learner turns to the world not only for survival but in order to grow and develop, hence, disharmony or struggle is what fuels inquiry. Deweyan scholar Aaron Stoller (2013) argues that the 'very structure of human experience is, characterized as much, if not more, by failure than success' (p. 25). And, 'that struggle becomes the generative force of inquiry' (p. 26). Failure, or disharmony, according to Dewey (1933), is essential to learning and ultimately instructs. And, impulsion, the strong urge to do something, is the entry place for all experiences.

Rodgers (2002) distilled Dewey's theoretical ideals into four essential criteria to assist practitioners in conceptually shaping reflective practices for the learner. These criteria include;

1. Reflection as meaning-making

2. Reflection as a rigourous way of thinking

3. Reflection in community

4. Reflection as a set of attitudes

O'Connell and Dyment (2013) argue that meaningful and deep learning depends on the quality of reflection and support Rodger's (2002) conclusion that meaningful

reflection is learned and depends upon the care and skill of the educator to foster 'good'

reflective practices with the learner.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research project is suited to a qualitative narrative inquiry design because it strives to elucidate and understand the storied context of the skills imperative in graduate education in relation to how institutions support professional or developmental practices and processes (Connelly & Clandinin, 2011). The purpose of this research is not to establish a 'truth' in 'essence' or to suggest attribution, but to describe the storied context in which institutions have aspired to adopt new practices and procedures responding to the skills imperative during this 'narrative moment'. Ultimately, my aim is to understand how selected GSPD offices characterize the skills imperative in their student guides and institutional documents to gain insights into underlying conceptual frameworks.

This research project encompasses the common elements that broadly characterize a classic qualitative research design in that it is; an in-depth inquiry, discovery oriented, both emergent and purposeful (Patton, 2002). The aim of a qualitative researcher is to observe the phenomena of interest as a complex whole rather than establish constraining conditions to isolate and manipulate variables to generalize or predict phenomena (Patton, 2002; Cresswell, 2007)

Research Design, Approach and Reasoning

Narrative inquiry is an emerging stream of qualitative research. Historically residing in the humanities and arts, it is distinct from narratology, the study of literary narratives. Narrative inquirers distinguish themselves in that they view 'story' as 'one if not the fundamental unit that accounts for human experience' (Clandinin, 2007).

Narrative researchers possess different affinities, foundational assumptions and philosophical traditions that ultimately guide the design and decision-making process.

Narrative, however, for all narrative researchers, is both a phenomenon of study and a method. As a phenomenon of study, narrative researchers in the social sciences have drawn on John Dewey's pragmatic theory of experience (Dewey, 1938). Dewey proposed two principles to assess the educative value and quality of an experience. The principles of continuity and interaction, he claimed, 'in their active union with each other provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience' (Dewey, 1976). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) identify and ascribe to Dewey's ontology of experience in that it is 'transactional, a site of relational knowing, views experience as temporal yet continuous, and possesses a social dimension' (p.39).

Most narrative researchers methodologically share a common interest in the study of stories or storied experiences; however, the approach, design and methods vary greatly. To illustrate, a post-positive narrative researcher might thematize text (or data) then numerically code, translate, conduct a statistical analysis to make predictions about a specific phenomenon. Whereas, a socio-narratologist (Frank, 2007) might explore the materiality of a story, in that a story is not merely the expression of an experience or a 'portal into the mind of the story teller' but becomes an 'actor'(p. 13). Stories, in and of themselves, are conceptualized as highly potent compelling actors in that they have the capacity to 'do'.

Russian literary critic and philosopher, Mikhail Bahktin argued that the narrator of a story is not just one singular voice; but is multiple. As they are told, stories are

assembled by the narrator to enact an ideal; finding resonance with the voices of others (polyphony) and yet distinguished and multi-vocal (heteroglossia). As socio-narratologist Arthur Frank explains that 'one voice always comprises multiple voices' (Frank, 2012, p. 34 in Holstein, J. & Gubrium, J.F., 2012). Every story contains story fragments and phrases borrowed from other narrators.

Narrative Data

In narrative research, story is data; and data constitute story. Contemporary narrative researchers, frequently use the terms interchangeably; however, distinctions are made particularly in linguistic, language-based or literary forms of research (Riessman, 2008; Frank, 2010; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). For most, 'story' is a kind of narrative that takes various forms. Story tends to be embodied whereas narrative has 'a robust life beyond the individual' (Riessman, p. 7). Story constitutes human experience and hence, entails the storyteller, the story and the story catcher or listener; a social dimension (Frank, 2010; Connelly and Clandinin, 2011; Mattingly and Garro, 2001; Riessman, 2008; Dewey, 1938).

Sampling and reasoning

As the intention of this qualitative research project was to explore meaning; not to identify the frequency or occurrence of a phenomenon, sampling strategies allowed for the possibility of pattern, saturation and salience to arise from heterogeneity (Patton, 2002). Three forms of data allowed for the possibility of triadic comparison and confirmation across all data sets throughout each stage of data analysis (Patton, 2002).

Data Form #1: Student Guides

Three 'student guide' documents were selected because they were identified as innovative tools produced by Category 1 ranked institutions (Brock University, Queens University, University of Calgary, University of Alberta) according to the CAGS most recent GSPD report (2016) (see student guides in Appendix C, D, E & F). Brock's Faculty of Applied Health Sciences traditional progress report, commonly employed to track graduate student degree completion milestones, served as diverse comparator as it represents a standard progress tracking form customarily utilized by many research-intensive graduate programs. I also included this form, because it is a sample of an institution-wide student self-tracking tool currently employed across many institutions. As mentioned previously, the Burgess Report (2007) recognized that institution-derived summative credential (degree awarded) is distinct from the student-derived formative report in that it;

'aimed to help make the outcomes, or results, of learning in higher education more explicit, identify the achievements of learning, and support the concept that learning is a lifetime activity, that is, that the honours degree is only one part of a long journey of learning'(p. 15).

Data Form #2: Structured Reflexive Journal

My structured reflexive journal served as a second data set. Patton (2002) suggests that the qualitative researcher 'owns and is reflective about her/his own voice and perspective' throughout the entire research process from design, analysis to the presentation of findings (p.41). Deliberate self-analysis is a crucial requirement for engaging in qualitative research, developing a credible voice and for conveying

trustworthiness. In this research project, 'triangulated reflexive design' entailed a circular process for documenting my insights, reactions and reflections throughout the research process. I deliberately questioned my own constructs of knowledge and perspectives *(self-reflexivity)*, the document studied (*subject/object reflexivity*), and the various audiences (reflexivity about audience/reader) while reflecting on how these complex perspectives informed my findings (p. 495).

Data Form #3: Institutional Aspirational Documents

And finally, the third data form was comprised of institutional aspirational documents (Strategic Mandate Agreements or similar documents) of the identified respective institutions as to gain insights on the existence and form of institutional policies and structural supports in place to support graduate student professional development. I anticipated that I might have access to mostly publicly available institutional aspirational documents (strategic plans) as most unit specific operational or strategic documents may not be fully developed at the time of this research, nor readily available. In the end, only one institution (University of Alberta) had a nest of three strategic and implementation plans; the institutional level, unit level (Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, FGSR), and a strategic/implementation plan for their professional development initiative (the IDP). With the paucity of data, I was unable to fully conduct a cross-institutional analytical comparative. Instead, I utilized Senge's (2006) five disciplines of a learning organization to deductively analyze and interpret the presence, absence and occurrence of the distinguishing features.

This socio-narrative analytical process was not intended to derive conclusive or deterministic understandings, nor understand the institutional processes that generated these 'progress, plans and pathway' documents, but to simply utilize one sample from each institution as a point of dialogical narrative analysis. In summary, three sets of institutional data from three universities (Queens, Alberta, and Calgary), and one document (Brock's progress report) were analyzed through three theoretical and conceptual frameworks (Dewey, Frank, and Senge).

Method: Document Analysis

In emerging fields of study, non-obtrusive research methods -- such as document analysis -- are employed as a preliminary method of inquiry into a topic that warrants further in-depth study (Patton, 2002). Institutional documents were selected to gain insights on how institutions characterized the skills imperative, subsequently support graduate student professional development and reference implicit or explicit conceptual frameworks. Hence, narrative data included publicly available institutional documents (student guides and aspirational strategic plans) and the researcher's structured reflexive journal. The purpose of document analysis was to examine both manifest and latent or coded meaning within the text and documents.

Manifest Analysis

Manifest document analysis is a systematic and structured process that entails a surface reading of the text for what is obvious and explicit. Bowen (2009) suggests the analytical process involves 'skimming (superficial examination), reading (thorough examination) and interpretation' (p.32). The 'first-pass' or read of the document is

intended to examine the content, architecture and design of the document. The

researcher creates a descriptive text noting these features (occurences/non-

occurences/salient features) along with providing plausible interpretations of the

distinguishing features. Plausible interpretations are inductively constructed from

manifest content into meaning clusters and when compared across documents various

convergent and divergent sub-themes are generated through second and third levels of

analysis.

Latent Analysis

As manifest content refers to the explicit, obvious and observable. Latent content

refers to the hidden and implicit content of a document. Universities, as like all

organizations, engage in narrative production and construct brand narratives in order to

refine and perpetuate institutional identity. These narratives are expressed both

textually and visually through mission statements, icons, print brochures, on-line

promotional materials and social media platforms (Veletsianos, et.al., 2017).

Institutional documents and forms represent the people, priorities, policies,

processes and relational practices. Latent analysis entails a deeper level analysis to gain a

glimpse into the deeper layers of organizational practices. Latent analysis entails

uncovering the implicit or hidden meanings behind the text and engages a deeper form

of analysis (van den Hoonard, D., 2012). The latent analysis stage is an interpretive level

of analysis and is typically guided by interpretive, theoretical or conceptual frameworks

of sensitizing concepts.

Multiple forms and layers of analysis

The analytical process in this study entailed multiple forms and layers of analysis. Each stage of manifest and latent analysis for each data form is described in more detail alongside the findings in Chapter 4. In addition, the process for constructing plausible interpretations from manifest content to meaning clusters and the generation of temporary themes for cross document and cross institutional analysis is illustrated in the figure below and in the appendices (see Appendices, Figure 2.)

Figure 1. Data Analysis Schema
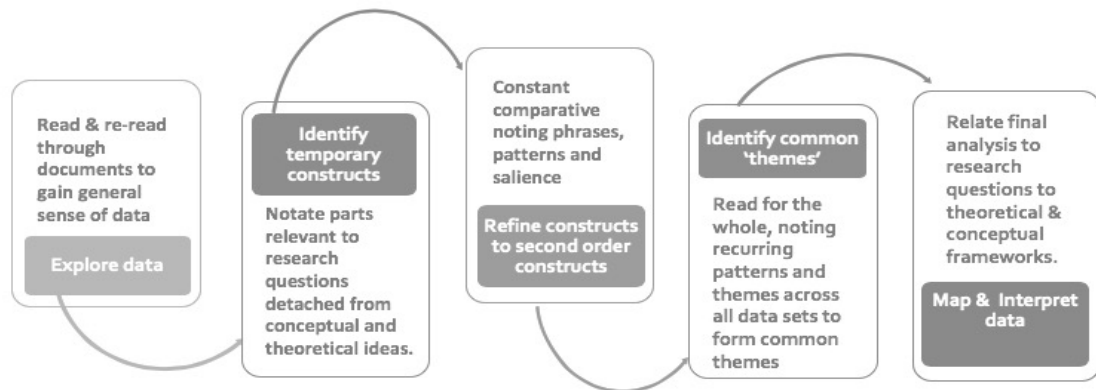
Analytical frameworks are employed as a lens to explore deeper meanings. For this research project, I used three theoretical and conceptual frameworks as inductive and deductive analytical tools to uncover deeper meanings behind the text and identify patterns and meaning clusters for cross-comparative analysis.

Three Theoretical/Conceptual Frameworks

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks employed in the latent analytical stage of this study share complimentary theoretical and conceptual borderlands. Narrative researchers often draw on Dewey's pragmatic theory of experience (Clandinin

& Connelly, 200) to conceptualize how humans live storied lives. Senge's (2006)

organizational learning constructs (for example; dialogue, experimentation, reflection)

are akin to Dewey's theoretical ideals and the six phases of learning in his learning cycle.

Both Frank (2012) and Senge (2006) recognize the social dimensions of narrative and

value of dialogue in learning. Although, I provide reference to each

theoretical/conceptual framework alongside my findings in Chapter 4, I would like to

provide additional clarification to Frank's (2010) socio-narrative conceptual framework

below before I summarize my strategies to assure trustworthiness in this study.

Dialogical Narrative Analysis

Socio-narrative research employs dialogical-narrative analysis as a

practice to understand the multiple voices contained within a narrative and to discover

various socio-narrative features within institutional documents (Frank, 2010). Arthur

Frank (2012) proposes formulating questions to understand how stories 'act' or the

social dimensions of stories. He proposes five broad categories of questions, to prompt;

current 'resources' of a circulating story (what are the character types, the plot lines and

tropes), *circulation questions* (to whom are these stories told, public audience or specific

community, who would understand or reject), *affiliation questions* (refers to what

groups would understand, 'who's in' and 'who is out'), *identity questions* (how does the

'story' attempt to shape, contest, or limit personal identity?) and a question Frank

suggests attempts to understand the conditions of vulnerability, 'what's at stake' when

this story is told (p.46). Frank's (2012) dialogical narrative analytical practice, as he has

prefers the term 'practice' over 'analysis', not only serves to understand implicit

narrative features but also in the process engages metaphoric speech and vignettes to produce vivid descriptions for the reader. For socio-narrative researchers, an interpretive turn in producing thick and rich descriptions is one strategy for assuring trustworthiness and transferability (Frank, 2012). I have also provided a summary of various strategies for assuring trustworthiness in qualitative research, and more specifically socio-narrative inquires, in the following sections. I have also summarized the various strategies and practices I employed in this study in attempt to assure trustworthiness in the table below.

Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers deploy a variety of methods or techniques to assure methodological rigour and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Cresswell, 2007; Kvale, Brinkman & Svend, 2009; Patton, 2002; Willis, 2007). Contemporary narrative researchers have been criticized for adopting what Torrance (2013, p. 365 – as cited in Loh, 2013, p. 3) has described as 'informed judgement' rather than an explicit set of tools or criteria for assuring 'quality' in narrative research. Loh, working from Lincoln and Guba's (1985) standards of practice of criteria for trustworthiness, assembled a consensus of criteria practiced by the most highly regarded qualitative researchers over the past decade.

Lincoln and Guba's (1986) four criteria for establishing trustworthiness in a research project include: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. 'Credibility' refers to the degree that the findings of a qualitative research project are 'believable' in that researcher's interpretation of findings resonate with the theoretical

frameworks applied. The researcher also establishes credibility through 'persistent observation'; the ability to attain a depth of knowledge and 'identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail' (p.304-305).

'Prolonged engagement' within the field of study is another practice that fosters credibility as it allows the researcher to develop an understanding and appreciation for various conditions, context and outliers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 301-304). 'Transferability' refers to the degree in which the findings and methods are considered applicable in a different context; researcher, design, analysis, discipline or methodology. The use of 'thick descriptions' not only allows for methodological transparency to help other researchers assess whether the methods are applicable in their own context.

'Dependability' is a form of methodological integrity that entails a constellation of practices and strategies to ensure the methods are rigorous and the findings are dependable. And, finally, 'confirmability' refers to how well the 'findings, interpretations and recommendations are supported by the data'(pp. 318-327). A researcher might employ a 'confirmability' audit to ensure that all raw data, notes, records, data analysis products are retained and documented throughout the research project.

A combination of strategies, tools and practices are employed to assure trustworthiness by many narrative researchers, and include; prolonged engagement, triangulation (sources, methods, investigators), thick descriptions, peer debriefing, audience validation, and reflexive journaling. Practices and strategies to establish

trustworthiness in my socio-narrative study are summarized in the third column of Table

2 below (adapted from Table 1. in Loh, 2013, p. 5).

Table 2: Summary of Practices for Assuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Criteria Lincoln & Guba (1985)	Practices	Practices/Techniques Integrated into this study
Credibility		
(pp. 305-307)	Triangulation (data sources, methods, theory, analysts)	• Three data sources (student guides, reflexive journal, aspirational text) • Three theoretical/conceptual frameworks – Dewey (1976), Senge (2006), Frank (2010) • Several forms and levels of analysis (manifest, latent, comparative, inductive, deductive)
(pp. 308-309) (Patton, 2002, p. 562)	Peer debriefing	• Interpretation check with supervisor, colleagues, target audience (graduate students).
(pp. 304-305)	Persistent observations	• Cultivated specific research interest, in-depth examination of topic area (depth of field)
(pp. 301-304)	Prolonged engagement	• Professional practice, years in field engaging in evidence-informed practice and broad understanding of the complexities and various social/political context that influence research topic (breadth of field).
Transferability		
(p. 316)	Thick descriptions	• Thick descriptions of design, methods and each step of data analysis • Thick description of data - manifest features of text followed by vivid descriptions of plausible interpretations
(Frank, 2012)	Metaphoric figures of speech	• Vivid descriptions and narrative tropes developed to illustrate various narrative features (latent analysis using Frank's (2012) dialogical narrative analysis). • Metaphors, tropes, vignettes to illustrate vivid experience for reader
Dependability		
(pp. 317-318)	Dependability audit	• Strength of research design; data/theory/sites triangulation, findings arrive from inductive process, and deductively from theoretical and conceptual frameworks. • Rigorous analysis
Confirmability		
(pp. 318-327)	Confirmability audit	• Transparent and thick descriptions of data collection and analysis steps, with rationale • Retained data reduction, analysis and synthesis notes. • Research proposal clarified intentions, expectations, motivations and new insights as they occurred.
(Silverman and Marvasti, 2008)	Application to practice or 'instrumental utility'	• Unexpected outcome of research project is the development of a socio narrative criteria for development of conceptual framework, professional development programming and assessing student guides • Utility of narrative tool to assess how student guides (documents) characterize the skills imperative and the potential impact on student interpretations.
	Application to policy	• Insights into policy development and implementation practices, and structural supports. • Potential contribution for establishing criteria for benchmarking standards.
All Criteria		
(p.327); (Patton, 2002, p.41, p. 299; Willis, 2007; O'Connell and Dyment, 2013).	Reflexive Journal	• Reflexive journal to reflect on self, methods, context, interpretations, and data.

Loh (2013) identified two additional practices that narrative researchers tend to employ in attempt to establish trustworthiness, they are; verisimilitude and utility (Loh, p. 9). Verisimilitude refers to whether the research is believable, has 'truthiness' and resonates with others. The quality of utility is gauged on whether the knowledge claimed can in some way broaden or deepen our understanding (Eisner 1998, pp 58-59) and contribute to developments in both practice and policy (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008).

Trustworthiness in Socio-narrative Design

Within the context of a qualitative narrative research design within the social sciences, Reissman (2008) asserts that the 'fixed criteria for reliability, validity, and ethics developed for experimental research…are not suitable for evaluating narrative projects' (p. 185). Instead, she proposes that the validity of a narrative research project relies on what she terms as 'situated truths' and commitments that are articulated at the outset of a project. Hence, the introduction and 'animating interests' sections of this thesis, clearly articulated the length and depth of my involvement and interest in this topic, as well as, my overarching approach and practices of my current and past work.

Sometimes these subjectivities are referred to as 'sensitizing concepts'. Ultimately, the narrative researcher must take great care to navigate the multi-context field of representation and be able to distinguish the dynamic modes as a narrator, interpreter, and reproducer of story. Frank (2012) proposes five methodological

commitments and practices that have been richly influenced by Russian philosopher

Bakhtin's dialogical notions to establish trustworthiness.

The first commitment of dialogical narrative analysis (DNA) recognizes the

distinction between discourse and narrative co-construction is that discourse is more

intrigued by the emergent story whereas DNA is interested in 'how *multiple voices that*

find expression in a single voice'(p.35). The second commitment relates to understanding

the power and privilege of the narrator or researcher in the telling of any story and to be

'highly suspicious of monologue' (p. 35). Considering the notion that stories have been

told by humans for eons and are inextricable linked to that humanness, Frank (2012)

reminds us that 'stories have provisionally independent lives' (p.36). This third

commitment is intended to recognize the *materiality of stories*.

The fourth commitment addresses the tensions between analysis and the

'unfinalizable nature' of stories. Frank (2012) suggests the researcher make explicit the

notion that by engaging in a research project we are attempting to make grand

conclusions when that 'story' studied, the interpretations and resulting narrative

production will continuously and simultaneously undergo revision.

Frank's (2012) last commitment to DNA practices is to refrain from the summary

of 'findings' particularly as it attempts to conclude a dialogue that undermines all of the

above commitments. The aim, however, is to '*increase people's possibilities for hearing*

themselves and others' (p. 37).

In addition to subscribing to the basic considerations for the qualitative

researcher to convey trustworthiness, I deliberately integrated Frank's (2012)

commitments by refraining from making 'grand conclusions' and being highly conscious

of my interpretations and role as a researcher/narrator in the co-production of

deductive 'findings' (p.35).

Chapter 4: Findings

Strategic plans, mission statements, forms and other documents produced by social Institutions are relevant forms of data. All bureaucratic documents and forms represent the people, processes, policies and priorities of an institution which then can 'sustain standardized practices' and establish 'relations of ruling' (Smith 1999, p.79). Through an intentional and systematic process, I examined four distinct graduate student guides or documents that characterize unique graduate student professional development approaches across four institutions. They include; a traditional progress report (Brock University), a pathway document (University of Calgary), a map (Queen's University) and a planning guide (University of Alberta). In addition, the document analysis process allows the researcher to draw plausible interpretations of the obvious features and the underlying values, ideologies and design of the forms and documents (van den Hoonard, 2012).

Manifest analysis: Graduate Student Guide documents

Manifest analysis categories or questions were derived from the basic one-word interrogative questions; 5W1H (what, who, where, when, why and how). Documents were explored in a similar dialogical process as a researcher would use to interview a participant in a qualitative study. Prodding questions or secondary questions were formulated iteratively upon re-reading of the documents. Additionally, as part of the 'first pass' (Bowen, 2009)(see Appendix G) or initial skimming of each of the documents; omissions and irregular occurrences were noted from each institution (p.32). For example, Queen's Career services has a copyright symbol, or claim of ownership, on their

Queen's Major Map tool. The title of Brock's Faculty of Applied Health Sciences Progress
Report includes a creation date (2009/2010). This occurrence then became a unit of
comparison to explore across other institution documents, as well as noted rare non-
occurrences.

The procedure for manifest data analysis entailed examining one institutional
document in its entirety. Below, I have summarized the plausible interpretations of each
document's manifest features as patterns and clusters in the table below. In the
following section I first provide rich descriptions of each document followed by plausible
interpretations for each of cluster of patterns summarized below.

Table 3: Plausible Interpretations Patterns and Clusters of Document Manifest Features

Queens University Grad Map	Brock University Progress Report	University of Calgary MyGrad skills	University of Alberta IDP
• Recruitment tool or student guide • No procedural instructions • Narrative out of sync • Customization as a reference or process • Recruitment tool • Cross-purpose, multi-authored, inconsistent voice • A map with four context • Services in fine print • Broken links and confidence • Absence of real humans • Imperative activities	• Charting progress for who? • Progress is…degree completion? • Not my progress path • If it isn't broken, don't fix it • Brocken link to progress? • Progress has date driven expectations • People for progress – pacers and completers • Narrow conceptualization of professional learning and development	• Hub of collaboration • Complex matrix of offerings • Institutional- wide priority • Branding forward • Pre-select an extraordinary identity • Is this my identity? • Whose plan is it? • Are graduate skills professional skills? • Too much? too early? • Doctoral candidate plan? • Just a catalogue? • Is identity a competency?	• We make no assumptions about your future • Multi-mentorship model • Merge institutional requirement with self-determined expectations • Normalizing professional learning • Grounded in pedagogy • Supported learning • Whole-person centred – unique and diverse • Departmental customization • It's reasonable • Safeguard privacy • Safeguard supervisee/supervisor relationship • Learn it here, do it there

Queen's Degree Major Map/Grad Map

Manifest Features

The Queen's copyrighted Degree Major/Grad Maps are generated for each

undergraduate and 130 graduate programs. It is a project primarily lead by Queen's

Career Services unit and the Manager of Advising Services. A recipient of the 2015

Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE) award for Excellence in

Innovation (Student Engagement), the maps are modelled after Georgia State University.

The purpose of the maps is noted as an asterisk in the bottom right hand corner of the

page as 'intended to provide suggestions for activities and careers' and to help students

'plan for success in five overlapping areas' of their career and academic life (Queen's

Major Maps, 2019). An online version of the Grad Map tool is also provided for students

to customize their plan.

Each Queen's Degree Map is framed as a tool or guide providing 'major-specific

advice on academics, extra-curriculars, networking, international opportunities and

career development all in one place'. The map resembles a matrix or rubric of

assessment and is horizontally oriented; directionally moving from left to right with

three columns and five rows of compartments for text. Each column, or x-axis,

represents rudimentary passage-of-time milestones through the program; beginning,

middle and end. The y-axis, or rows, categorize five broad 'overlapping areas' of success

as identified by the map authors. These five success areas, although slightly nuanced for

each program, include; academic goals, professional development, building skills and

experience, community engagement and expanding career options. Nowhere in the

document does it reference evidence-based practices nor how these broad areas of success were devised.

Each dimension or cell of the rubric, provides two or three concrete recommendations oriented around each area of success. For example, recommendations under the 'Achieve your Academic Goals' success category for students at the 'beginning' or 'diploma phase' of the Arts Leadership MA degree map, suggests that students might 'Develop relationships with a mixture of emerging and established practitioners who are joined in a common pursuit of professional innovation' and to 'Engage in the academic and professional training process with help from departmental supervisors, the Program's Grad Coordinators and the SGS Habitat' (a student support portal on the School of Graduate Studies website).

At the right side of the Degree Map is a call-out box with a response to two questions; 1. *What will I learn?* 2. *Where Can I Go?* The introductory paragraph responding to the first question (*What will I learn?*) states that *'A graduate degree in Arts Leadership or Arts Management can equip you with valuable and versatile skills'*. A bullet-point comprehensive list of eleven student learning outcomes highlights sixteen key words that express a constellation of skills ('Effective communication skills in multiple forms for diverse audiences'), attitudes ('Awareness, an understanding of sound ethical practices....and cultural sensitivity'), knowledge ('Knowledge and technical skills') and personal qualities ('Perseverance').

The second question (*Where Can I Go?*) responds by listing a number of potential career trajectories, including; 'many directions', further education (PhD) and a listing of

possible careers in the arts sector. Ten related career options are listed. A summary

paragraph advises students to take time to 'explore career options, build experience,

and network' in order to support a 'smooth transition' from university to the world of

work.

Accompanying the Degree Map/Grad Map is a one-page program

information/FAQ page that appears to be primarily a recruitment tool for prospective

students. The front side of the document describes the program structure (experiential

learning, capstone, practicum placement, course load, pathways, etc.), skills student gain

as an outcome of the program and the value proposition for why a student should

attend the institution. The reverse side of the document is an FAQ on application

requirements, the type of funding available and a panel or callout box that addresses 3

questions (How do I use the map? Where do I get help? What is the community like?).

Plausible Interpretations

<u>Recruitment tool or student guide</u>

Although the Grad Map appears to be a stand-alone document it accompanies

key documents customarily used to showcase graduate schools to prospective

students. Enrolled or current graduate students appear to be a secondary or tertiary

audience, as the support services (ie. workshop, key contacts) URL links highlighted on

the map are all broken suggesting that less attention is given to the person-to-person

supports in guiding students through these very complex planning tasks.

No Procedural Instructions

The stated purpose of the Grad Map is to assist students in charting, tracking and planning for a constellation of academic and personal success. However, there doesn't appear to include procedural instructions nor clearly reference the forms of support that might assist a student with the cascade of decisions, reflections and development opportunities that could support the breadth of success categories defined.

Narrative out of sync

The intended purpose of the mapping tool appears to be located narratively out of sync on the document. A reader is narratively oriented from top to bottom and left to right. The structures of text; the title, subheading, introduction, context setting and a statement of aim or purpose are customarily located at the top of a document. However, the purpose on the Queen's Grad Map appears behind an asterisk on the bottom right hand corner of the document. Customarily, this location or final line of text located at the bottom right edge of a document with the use of an asterisk symbol, signals the reader to thoroughly examine and question the content of the document for exceptions or a disclaimer.

Customization as a reference or process

The first clause of the sentence declares the intention of the maps ('provide suggestions for activities and careers') and the second clause ('*but*, everyone's abilities, experiences, and constraints are different') seems to retract the maps usefulness. This phrasing is confusing as it contains two contradictory independent clauses. The second sentence of this 'disclaimer' is an imperative statement that encourages the student to

customize their own map ('Build your own Grad Map using our online *MyGradMap* tool.)

Perhaps the purpose of the second clause, which reads as a platitude on difference, is to

simply reassure the authors and reader of the value of the customization version of the

mapping tool. One would think that the significant purpose of this tool would warrant its

top placement on the document with more elaboration on the unique value of the

planning tool for each individual student.

<div align="center">Recruitment tool</div>

Queen's Grad Map developers, Career Services and Program Advising units, are

traditionally student facing support service partners. These campus partners are relative

newcomers to the profiled recruitment arm of the university. Although the primary

audience of the Grad Map appears to be prospective students and applicants --- the

Grad Map addendum document enhances the classic 'prospect' book and showcases the

career service offerings as a new recruitment strategy.

<div align="center">Cross-purpose, multi-authored, inconsistent voice</div>

Throughout the document the subject, the student, is inferred. The possessive

adjective 'your' is interspersed with aspirational statements throughout the document.

Hence, this plays with the reader's experience of what or who the subject is in the text.

Upon reading the text, the reader can readily move in between voices of inconsistent

subjectivity; 'I should', 'one might consider' and 'you can'. Some of the suggestions

elaborate with a clear rationale while others are short (six words) and directive. The

style inconsistency and the sheer volume of program specific maps, reasonably suggest

the document was developed by a number of writers. However, the variations in voice,

tone, use of possessive adjectives, etc., give the reader a sense of being overly directed.

Map with four context

Additionally, the term 'map' is used in four distinct contexts throughout the set

of documents; a Major Map, My Major Map, a Grad Map and a campus map. This poses

confusion. Commonly, a map is understood to be a fixed symbolic depiction of a

landscape or a space and a campus map is a wayfinding tool through the university's

built environment. A major map is an institutionally derived administrative curriculum

planning tool used to determine what core courses constitute a disciplinary major. The

multiple references to 'map' in one document may potentially confuse the reader.

Services in fine print

Three graduate student services (Centre for Teaching and Learning, Expanding

Horizons and SGS Habitat) and six career-related services (Career Forum, career planning

workshop, LinkedIn site, Alumni Association, Career Services workshops) are featured in

the Grad Map as hyperlinks within the text. However, the links are embedded in dense

text and paragraph structure which doesn't allow for a quick perusal of services

particularly in the print version. With a document word count of over 1,000 words, this

forces the reader to read the entirety of the text or paragraph to understand the

reference to the service. Not only does it narrowly focus the range of service for each

service provider, this potentially dissuades the reader from exploring the full range of

offerings.

Broken links and confidence

Three general career workshops are referenced as a hyperlink which gives the appearance of a limited number of career or professional development workshop options. Also, several links that connected career services and workshops for students to customize their Grad Map; were broken. Symbolically, this suggests that access to additional supports might also be broken.

Absence of real humans

The absence and reference to real human supports are evident in the documents. For such a vast enterprise, only one individual (a Graduate Assistant) and her contact information (full name, title, email, phone, extension, unit, webpage) is listed as a key contact on the program FAQ. The Grad Map only references two job titles (Grad Coordinators and a Career Counsellor); otherwise, all other service supports (five) are referenced by unit name (SGS Habitat, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Expanding Horizons, Career Services, Queens Alumni Association). Considering staff turnover and the immense challenge to maintain and generate customized institution-wide maps, it is reasonable to omit key contact information from the map document. However, the absence of real humans, guides or coaches, gives the appearance of a lack of accountability of service or duty of care.

Imperative activities

The Grad Map document is embedded with roughly thirty-two activities and career related suggestions. Many of the suggestions adopt a commanding tone, as each suggestion is written as an imperative sentence beginning with a verb that customarily

aims to arouse some form of action in the reader. For example, the very first cell or call to action (top left hand corner) in the 'Achieve your Academic Goals' suggests that a student '*Develop relationships with a mixture of emerging and established practitioners who are joined in a common pursuit of professional innovation*'. Not only does this networking suggestion seem misaligned with the academic success category, but the understanding of the relational quality of rapport building, mutuality and authenticity of relationship development is absent in this over simplistic suggestion.

There is an inherent assumption in all of life that the 'map' constitutes what is real and by virtue of its formulation becomes a universal guide; the way, the path. The Queen's Grad Maps clearly claims to chart a path of options for transition milestones of the graduate journey; from registration to graduation. However, I wonder if the integrative service exercise in the creation of the tool was more valuable than the actual student uptake and usefulness of the tool. The Queen's Map is a fusion and iteration of the major map and a career map. Intended as a customizable student-centred planning tool, the former mapping templates have two very distinct aims. The major map is an institutional curricular planning tool, and the other maps degrees to potential careers which arise from a very selective family of career concepts and theories.

Brock's Masters' Progress Report

Manifest Features

The Faculty of Applied Health Sciences 'Progress Report Form' is a black and white one-sided document structured into two columns that follows the classic fill-in-the-blank, hand-filled intake form. The 215-word columned document follows the

customary flow pattern for reading; from top to bottom, left to right. The form title

'Progress Report Form' is located above the right-hand column with one supra-title

(2009-2010) and one infra-title (MA/MSc Candidate). The Brock logo and Faculty title are

located in the customary top left corner of the document.

The fields and type of information requested suggest that there is a progression

of information required at various milestones of the degree pathway. The document

does not have an introductory paragraph or instructions on the value or purpose of this

document, nor who should complete the form or when or where the form should be

completed. There is not a reference to a mandate or revision date in the perimeters of

the document. One assumes that the supra-title (2009-2010) is the form creation date.

The top left-hand column gathers basic student information (student name,

number, previous degree, institution, major, date of entry, program, degree

classification MA/MSc). The mid-section of the left-hand column is entitled 'Advisory

Committee' which marks the first inferred task or information the respondent must

gather prior to filling out this field. This first section of the form also requires a signature

or initial of approval from the (AD, R & GS). This acronym of title appears before fully

expanded version on the document.

Moving down the left-hand column, bold headings represent stages of progress

or institutionally important milestones. For example, the inferred sequential next step

or task after identifying a supervisor and three committee members under the heading:

'Advisory Committee' is the course completion section. The 'Course Requirements and

Grades' heading provides a blank space or field for one required and two elective

courses, and the date the coursework was completed. Subsequent bolded form headings in the left-column are; *Research Topic/Thesis Title* (Date Proposal Submitted to Supervisor), *Date of Proposal Defense* (Proposal Approved – Yes/No) and *Ethics Review(s).* Nine of the fourteen confirmation of date fields occur in the first column.

The sub-title of the top right-column of the document is; *Thesis Progress***.** Nested underneath 'Thesis Progress' are five bolded field headings primarily for collecting completion dates; Date *Data Collection* begun, Date *Data Collection* complete, Date *Data Analysis* complete, Date *First Draft* Submitted to Supervisor, Anticipated Date to Make Thesis Corrections. Three subsequent sub-headings, *Committee Approval of Thesis Defense, Thesis Defense* and *Program Completion*, and signatures fields comprise roughly 75% of the visual space of the right-hand column. There are forty-one form fields of which twenty-one of the fields request dates; four require a signature or initials (two from the Associate Dean and two from the Supervisor).

Plausible interpretations

<u>Charting progress for who?</u>

Although the purpose, rationale and value for charting the progress of thesis-stream students is not clearly evident on the document itself, the date and signature-driven elements of the form suggest that the charting of student progress also serves various institutional, department and faculty milestones. One can presume that the data collected, for instance, time to completion metrics, could provide the administration with metrics and insights on departmental and supervisory trends and patterns.

Progress is… degree completion?

The document is entitled a 'Progress Report Form' which clearly identifies institutionally derived important milestones for student progress or degree completion. As a non-traditional graduate student in this faculty, I did visit the Associate Dean's office to manually complete the various fields in the progress report and submit evidence for completing certain milestones (ie. digital copy of proposal defense presentation) over the nine years of my extended graduate journey.

Not my progress path

My non-linear path did not resemble the formulaic sequence of milestones or order set-out in this form. My advisory committee was selected long after my course work was complete and my literature review was well underway. The unanticipated milestones, in hindsight, that were most crucial to my progress, were perhaps collapsed or omitted from this institutional progress form. Decisions and incremental milestones were met as research questions were refined and the project design established. The painful winnowing of text and revisions were only made possible through extensive conversations with my supervisor. None of these crucial conversations, that supported very real markers of progress, appear on this form.

If it isn't broken, don't fix it

The decade old (2009-2010) form could possibly indicate that the form continues to be 'fit for purpose' as a system-serving tracking tool. The date of the form also corresponds with the expansion in the number of graduate programs across campus. Considering the rapid expansion and substantial enrollment growth in the Faculty of

Applied Sciences, the administration may not have had a need to revisit nor institutionalize through establishing relevant policies and procedures.

<div align="center">Broken link to progress?</div>

Although the student procedures and process for charting progress is not explicated on the form, the FAHS Graduate Student Guide and FAHS webpage provide basic instructions for completing the progress report in a 'call to action' box. On the website, the report is located underneath a nest of accordion boxes. The first box entitled 'Information for New Students', perhaps the most crucial orientation to procedural information, houses a broken link. Unfortunately, the symbolism of a 'broken link' impacts the user experience and may reflect an unspoken culture of service and accountability.

<div align="center">Progress has date-driven expectations</div>

The 'Progress Report' box lies below and includes the following summarized instructions; *All MA/MSc and PhD students are expected to begin their progress form and submit to the FAHS office by September 15 of the first year of the program. Students are then expected to update form in-person regularly as key milestones are met.* This clearly articulates the onus of responsibility and the expectation is that new incoming students should 'begin and submit their progress form in-person' within the second week of the first term. Other than attending orientation activities, it is doubtful that any form of actual progress is made so early in the term. This early connection to the Dean's office may serve to activate the student's progress form, and might also help to establish

student accountability to the process, the people and one's self. Centralized tracking of student progress may also generate metrics for other measures and accountabilities.

<u>People for Progress - Pacers and Completers</u>

For the duration of my graduate journey the Administrative Assistant for the Associate Dean of Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (FAHS) was the 'in-person' individual that every graduate student meets in the first few weeks of term. She hands you a pen, asks you to complete the first several fields of the form, asks how you are doing and when the conversation concludes, gives a gentle or expectant nudge of what step is next. In the era of form-fillable pdfs and other web-based tools, I was puzzled why I needed to walk to the other end of campus to fill out a simple line or date on a form with the Administrative Assistant looking on. It wasn't until I spoke to other students, did I understand the inherent value and encouragement she offered each of us. I realized that the 'form'; quite possibly kept all of us on track and moving forward. This staff person was the 'goal coach'; the person who reminded us of the guideposts, set the pace and did her part to establish expectations for students to see themselves as 'completers'.

<u>Narrow conceptualization of Professional Learning and Development</u>

The Brock 'Progress Report' form purely tracks research project and thesis development milestones and progress. The only implicit reference to personal or professional development is made on the website. The form is located in the 'Graduate Student Resources' sub-folder which is nested under the general FAHS main website tab 'Teaching and Learning'. Although 'teaching and learning' is a classical professional

developmental stream for graduate students pursuing an academic career, the

placement of this tab in the web hierarchy of the 'resources' link with 'Student

resources' and 'Teaching awards' presupposes an academic career trajectory and might

quite exclude the non-traditional graduate student.

University of Calgary's 'MyGradSkills Workshop Matrix'

Manifest Features

University of Calgary's 'My GradSkills' workshop matrix is a two-sided summary

or folded marketing flyer that promotes the workshops of the 'MyGradSkills' program; a

'source for academic support and career development'. The purpose of the matrix

document is to 'map out which workshops and resources are most valuable to you at

different stages of your degree, helping you to become an expert, leader, innovator and

communicator'.

Although not explicit, the focus on doctorate-related workshop topics and

milestones and the absence of language and topics relating to course-based or master-

level pathways, suggest the primary audience is the doctoral student. As a major

research-intensive university, University of Calgary's graduate student population of

6,000 students comprises roughly 20% of their total student population (30,000). It's not

surprising that the workshops highlighted in the matrix would more specifically target

the doctorate population as PhD students frequently experience persistence challenges

and require more career related supports.

Calgary's university and Faculty of Graduate Studies logo is displayed alongside

the branded program name MyGradSkills at the bottom of the document. Accompanying

the brand name is a signature black/orange colour scheme logo; which resembles a circular crest or badge with three bursting stars. This logo appears in the 2017 version but not the 2018 version of the document.

Plausible Interpretations

<div align="center">Hub of collaboration</div>

An extensive and diverse list of internal partners and a full roster of workshops suggests that this office works closely with a number of campus collaborators. The presence and positioning of the brand name web address alongside the Faculty of Graduate Studies indicates that MyGradSkills is an initiative of the Faculty of Graduate Studies which is explicitly identified on the website as a hub for providing a 'wide range of valuable resources, workshops, courses and activities in a single location'.

<div align="center">Complex matrix of offerings</div>

The 'workshop matrix' document does not refer to any specific individual or office other than an edge banner web link at the bottom of each side of the document. The University of Calgary 'workshop matrix' document, which is highly stylized and attractive, is most likely a print-based promotional piece used at person-to-person student engagement events to showcase the range of workshops.

<div align="center">Institutional-wide priority</div>

The MyGradSkills program has a webpage fully devoted to a breadth of professional development topics, events, opportunities and resources for graduate students. With a URL routed directly from the University of Calgary webpage, instead of a sub-directory extension linked from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, MyGradSkills is

not merely an initiative of student service partners but has obviously been recognized as an institutional-wide initiative and priority.

Branding Forward

The 'Matrix' document is identified as a 'workshop matrix' or simply the 'MyGradSkills Matrix' and is structured in a font forward graphic design style. Text takes up roughly fifty percent of the document space on the top half of the fold. The title of the front page of the MyGradSkills Matrix document contains four capitalized words stacked upon each other like an eye chart. These four words or aspirational identities are; LEADER, INNOVATOR, COMMUNICATOR, EXPERT.

Pre-select an extraordinary identity

The aspirational identities (Leader, Innovator, Communicator, Expert) are structured into four quadrants on the front half of the document that further refines the key skills for each identity. The tag or buy-line, below each category has an influential or proclamation tone i.e. 'Be confident in your skills and guide and inspire others' and 'Discover new ways of doing things and be a change maker'.

Is this my identity?

However, many of the subsuming key skills in the text refer to the traditional roster of academic tools and skills for conducting research i.e. reference management and research writing. Reflecting on these identities or attributes, I wonder how relevant, meaningful or impactful they might be for all graduate students I was also reminded of Sir Edmond Hillary's quote that distinguishes merit and conviction in action from simply

claiming a title; 'People do not decide to become extraordinary, they decide to accomplish extraordinary things' (cite).

Whose plan is it?

The title 'Plan your Professional Development' on the reverse side of the matrix document is a table of workshops offered across three columns (early, mid, late) and four rows (expert, communicator, leader, innovator). Interspersed on the table are six orange 'call to action' circles invoking the reader to 'attend', 'make', 'consider', 'compete' or 'join' a program or event.

Are graduate skills professional skills?

Although the 'optional' disclaimer is reinforced under each row heading, this doesn't balance the authority of recommendations nor the persuasive language that appears throughout the document. There also seems to be a disproportionate number of workshops available during what is typically the most structured and time constrained entry period of the graduate cycle and fewer offered during the least structured phase, as a grad student nears completion. Although 'professional development' is not defined, the academic themed workshops might lead the reader to deduce that graduate academic skills, in and of themselves, are professional skills.

Too much? too early?

Sixty-one workshops are offered. The majority of the recommended workshops (32) are offered in the 'early' column and eight workshops are offered under the 'late' column heading. Each 'early, mid, late' column heading further qualifies the timeline for attending workshops. Workshops offered at the beginning of the graduate journey predominantly relate to the skills needed for completing a graduate degree.

Doctoral candidate plan?

For example the 'late' column heading 'Prepare to graduate and find your career must happen at least a year or two before you plan to finish your degree'. The spacious allowance of time for degree completion seems to be more suited to the doctoral timelines.

Just a catalogue?

The workshop matrix does not provide a reference to a digital real time calendar, registration, nor indicate the location of the workshops; disconnected to a breadth of potential supporting web-based informational resources. There doesn't appear to be any reference to additional credentialing programs or transcript notes. The matrix appears to primarily provide a catalogue or menu of workshop offerings and 'right time' recommendations within the graduate cycle.

Is identity a competency?

The most distinct manifest feature of the University of Calgary's 'workshop matrix', is the categorization of workshops based on four aspirational identities (Expert, Communicator, Leader, Innovator). These workshop categories are also search filter

categories on the website to assist the reader in selecting workshops from the web-based calendar by the transferable skills. The classification of professional identities, categorization of workshops and assignment of learning outcomes with transferrable skills appears to be akin to a backward engineering or design process. In the transition to the new skills imperative, higher education institutions are engaging in extensive institution-wide competency mapping exercises. Categorical exercises distill degree level expectations with key labour market findings to create neat and tidy boxes where learning outcomes, workshops, transferrable skills get compartmentalized. Many of these categories, then shape institutional planning. However, aspirational identities or personal attributes rarely appear in these generic competencies.

University of Alberta's '*The ABCs*' document

Manifest Features

The double-sided document is an overview providing procedural guidelines of the institution-wide mandatory *Individual Development Plan (IDP)* and *Professional Development Requirement* established at the University of Alberta in 2016. The document is not a student-facing document but is a 'faculty/staff' resource guide. It was selected as a data source because it provided additional resources and cross-references to a number of supporting documents for guiding students. Although not clearly defined on the one-pager, the website identifies the value or purpose of the IDP as a tool 'used by professionals to help them achieve their life goals'.

Evidence of institutional commitment and endorsement is declared in the first line of text underlying the title; *'The University of Alberta Professional Development*

Requirement includes'. It then indicates the two components of the requirement: *1) an individualized career plan document called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and 2) the completion of eight hours of professional development activities inspired by the career plan.* The Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research professional development initiative's logo is a process or transitional concept graphic of three intersecting circles. Within each circle is an icon representing the education (book) to graduation (cap) to employment (briefcase) pathway.

The 'ABC's' are set-up on the first page like an alphabetical acrostic poem. Each letter (from A to G) represents one of seven basic sequential elements of the IDP requirement. The alphabetical process entails; A (Access the IDP workbook), B (Be specific), C (Complete the IDP), D (Deadlines), E (Eight hours of PD activities), F (Forms), and G (Goal Setting). The 'ABC's' pdf document does have several embedded weblinks that direct to more elaborate instructions and resources. The web resource pages on the website are consistent in style and descripting messaging with the 'ABC's' document. The first page of the document has three simple graphic design features; a signatory colour (green and yellow) bar across of the bottom of the page to frame the text, bolded green capitalized letters of the acrostic sequential steps that outline the IDP requirement process, and a simple series of process boxes to visually represent the relational roles and tasks along completion milestones.

The recommendations outlined in the 'ABC's' document consistently endorse the role of the supervisor or mentor as crucial to the completion of the IDP creation and professional development requirement. The word 'complete' (or completion) is used

repeatedly (15 times) throughout the document which amplifies the implicit imperative of completing the academic degree and the IPD requirement.

Two call-out boxes frame the right bottom corner of the first page and orient the reader to the deadlines (call-out box titled; *Deadlines for Completion*) and the process for completion (call-out box titled; *Completing the Professional Development Requirement*). The process box is a footer at the bottom of the page that provides each of the process tasks in point form. This first page provides three variations on a process theme that reinforces the requirement elements without becoming overly redundant. They include; the student and supervisor responsibilities, program exceptions, associated administrative tasks and completion deadlines.

The reverse-side of the 'ABC's' document is a text-driven procedural overview that connects the IDP development task to the second component of the requirement which is to plan and locate *'professional development activities that align with their individual career interests to fulfill the eight-hour requirement'.* Four separate paragraphs (entitled; Professional Development Activities Guideline, The Seven Skills/Competencies, What activities Do Not Fulfill the Requirement, Reviewing the Eight Hours of Professional Development Activities) address the types of PD activities that qualify for the University of Alberta PD Requirement. The competency development feature states that the activity must contribute to the acquisition of 'skills, knowledge or mindset' and be comprised of 1. *Formal training or active learning activity with an assessment component* 2. *Falls outside of research methods training, capstone project,*

thesis or equivalent and 3. *Supports the career goals and/or seven skills/competencies*

identified in the IDP.

A section on the document is devoted to clarifying the types of activities that do

not fulfill the professional development requirement. They primarily include all

traditional academic related activities (ie. academic talks, poster presentation, teaching

assistantship, research assistantship, mentor, info sessions, ethics review sessions).

The final section of the procedural side of the 'ABC's' document outlines the

responsibilities of the student *'to track and safeguard their own PD activities and*

gathering proof of attendance'. There are four different tracking options, which include a

google sign-in sheet at the event, presenter authorized declarations of attendance,

certificate of completions and professional development records produced by the

student's department. The IDP requirement developers full contact information (name,

title, office, email and phone) is provided at the end of the document.

Plausible Interpretations

<u>We make no assumptions about your future</u>

From the outset, the language used in the 'ABC's' document does not presume

students pursue traditional academic career trajectories nor assumes a projection of

such motivations. In fact, one of the first few statements of the 'ABC's' document

acknowledges that exceptions are available for 'students who are returning to graduate

studies after years of professional experience'. Although subtle, the invitational tone to

a diverse non-traditional audience appears to reflect a more progressive institutional

ethos. This also demonstrates an underlying respect for the individual who might be seeking additional credentialing rather than pursuing a scholarly passion.

<u>Multi-mentorship model</u>

The recommendations set forth in the IDP review process acknowledge the role of a career mentor as an equal and equivalent support person in the professional development process. Traditionally, the apprenticeship model places a tremendous responsibility on this central relationship between the supervisor and supervisee for the student's scholarly or formative development. This role expansion legitimizes the informal mentoring work frequently provided by staff in the broader graduate community. Although subtle, the supervisory relational clarification assures that the supervisor/supervisee relationship remains focused on scholarship endeavors and not empowering this relationship with decisions about a student's personal life or livelihood.

<u>Merge institutional requirement with self-determined expectations</u>

There is a substantive body of literature addressing global trends and issues in graduate education, which include; lengthy times to completion, doctoral attrition and graduate education reform. Timely completion rates and persistence strategies are fiscal-driven conversation occurring across all levels of higher education. The IDP is compulsory for every graduate student. The usage and frequency of the 'completion' term appears to be referential to the progress report and other discourses around degree completion. The repeated use of the terms 'requirement' and 'completion' in this professional development procedural document lends legitimacy and accountability to professional development planning and quite possibly fostered institutional buy-in.

Normalizing professional learning

Self-awareness, skill assessment and career exploration are basic tenets in many career-planning models. Although a brief list of competencies is included in the 'ABC's' document; priority skills, competencies or a roster of workshops are not. The explicit developmental tasks referred to in this document are self-awareness and career exploration. Hence, activities traditionally aligned to research project activities, such as, ethics training, conference presentations are explicitly excluded from the list of acceptable professional development activities.

Grounded in pedagogy

Developed by the teaching and learning team of the University of Alberta, this document is clearly a process-driven learning tool that cleverly embeds pedagogical practices. Additionally, the IDP requirement recommends each student conduct three in-depth career searches. Not only is this expectation attainable and reasonable but also contains the 'rule of three' or 'power of three' formula of perceived choice. Binary options create limiting decision-making patterns that might not lead to a thorough exploration of options.

Supported learning

The IDP or career planning process entails deliberate structured and supported reflective activities and career exploration that is directly inspired by the individual's insights. Without co-opting career curriculum language, the institutional messaging focuses predominantly on the value of creating a plan not showcasing competencies or the workshops for acquiring so-called market-driven competencies or skills. Reflection,

as a pedagogical tool and beyond the classroom, is a fundamental meta-cognitive practice that constitutes all forms of learning and fosters self-awareness. Students must enroll in a number of introductory workshops that are required to initiative an IDP. This tells the student that they are not alone in this planning process.

Whole person-centred: unique and diverse

The 'ABC's' document also reminds faculty and staff that students' have unique interests and are as diverse as their fields of study. This simile of difference and message to faculty and staff is that students are people first, not 'brains on sticks' as Jorge Cham parodies in his PhD Comics.

Departmental customization

It appears that the designers of the IDP requirement may have anticipated, explored and addressed potential barriers to adoption in their final iteration of the framework. Deferring to the department or faculty to customize the design and delivery of professional development program offerings for students in their respective programs clearly suggests the designers integrated flexible elements from the outset. The verification and guidance for completion of the requirement does not fall on the responsibility of the supervisor alone. In addition, each department and Graduate Program Director determines what verification or evidence of completion is required. This third party role of the department and GPD unburdens the supervisor/supervisee role from undue influence and additional administrative tasks.

<u>It's reasonable</u>

The eight-hour professional development requirement is not only very attainable but also a reasonable expectation for graduate students enrolled in degree pathways of various durations (ie. 18 months to five years). The provision of workshops to support the IDP development also count as activities to fulfill the PD requirement. If students take part in these workshops then, at the very least, they have engaged in a form of guided reflection and worked through this exploration with career planning specialists. The built-in relational component also creates an expectation that career planning is a social process and not an additionally isolating activity.

<u>Safeguard privacy</u>

There are several processes that safeguard the student's privacy and assure accountability that the institutional IDP requirement is implemented. The student's record of completion, not the IDP, is held within the department, not the faculty supervisor. The University of Alberta document extols the value that the student must safeguard their IDP. The form can be verified by a career mentor or the supervisor.

<u>Safeguard supervisee/supervisor relationship</u>

This also protects the privacy of the student's professional development and career plans without jeopardizing the supervisor/supervise relationship. Conflict could potentially ensue if a student's career plan is revealed and doesn't fulfill the supervisor's expectations. Verification for PD attendance and plan verification - is submitted to the program chair or GPD not the supervisor. The student determines the expansion of the

supervisor's role and inclusion in a dialogue about the student's professional

development.

<u>Learn it here, do it there</u>

Lastly, University of Alberta's IDP requirement at the graduate level mirrors the

professional development activities that typically occur in the world of work. The

equivalent annual performance review is an intentional reflection process for

professional development and goal setting in the workplace. Engaging in a skills-

reflection process to take stock of one's professional development and plan for the

future; is a set of development skills transferrable to all areas of work and life.

The next section of analysis will entail a summary of cross document salient

convergent and divergent features.

Graduate Student Guides - Cross Document Analysis

Salient Convergent Manifest Features

In this section, I will present a summary of common manifest features occurring

across all institutional documents (see Appendix A).

<u>Imperative to Support and Guide graduate students</u>

The most notable and anticipated manifest feature common to all institutional

documents is the imperative to support and guide graduate students as they transition

'through' and 'out' of graduate school. Each document refers to a solution; a program,

pathway, workshop or process aimed at supporting graduate student career or

professional development and growth beyond academic performance. Documents from

three of the institutions (Queens, University of Calgary and University of Alberta) all

assert the value for students in taking part in some form of professional development

activity in preparation for the future. Although, selected as a notable non-comparator

data set, Brock's progress report implicitly marks milestones supporting degree

completion; which is the penultimate goal of a graduate education.

Symbols of Sustained Institutional Commitments

Derived from observable manifest features of selected documents, symbols of

sustained institutional commitments were readily apparent in each of the documents.

Endorsements, devoted educational webpages, logo placements, and text declaring the

institution as primary author or sponsor; are emblematic of various forms of socio-

cultural, intellectual and financial commitments.

Deliberate Collaboration

A diversity of campus partners, hubs, portals, and references to multiple student

service partners suggest a collective interest and deliberate collaboration in program

development, implementation and delivery of services. Although evident and obvious by

virtue of my research topic, each institution asserts a distinct planning strategy and

underlying ethos that resonates throughout the language of their documents. And, thus,

presumes an institutional role or identity in relation to the student and their progress.

Tracking and Verification

Whether implicitly or explicitly, each institutional document integrated a tracking

feature for gauging progress milestones and accountability measures. Progress

milestones across all institutions were time-sensitive and measured against traditional

thesis milestones or academic stages (i.e. after course work, before comprehensives,

proposal defense, etc). Although participation in professional development activities is voluntary, each institutional document adopted a particular value proposition, persuasive language and tone to extol the value of skill enhancement, encourage participation, usher progress and assure completion. Each institution utilized various tools to verify student progress that included highly autonomous virtual self-tracking tools (Queens) to the 'pencil to paper' signature in the presence of a human witness (Brock).

Divergent Manifest Features

In the previous section I described the salient features occurring across all institutional documents. In this section, I will highlight how the documents differ across a variety of representational dimensions. The most notable contrasting feature of the examined institutional documents is the elements of design and tone of the text.

<u>Persuasive or Procedural</u>

Graphic design-forward documents from the University of Calgary's MyGradSkills workshop Matrix and Queens' Grad Maps were similar in that both institutions employed persuasive marketing language within the text and design (i.e. word selection, phrasing, sentence structure, use of colour, design and layout). The marketing documents tended to be charged with a recruitment up-speak tone (i.e. *'Feel confident moving into a leadership role in your existing workplace or look beyond it to new challenges'* or *'Prioritize diversity and find new sources of innovation')* and visually were busy and intense. Albeit exciting at first glance, the full repository of development opportunities and pathways paradoxically may overwhelm a student's decision-making

and immobilize the student from a breadth of developmental options. Whereas, the University of Alberta's IDP Requirement and Brock's Progress report were both procedural and instructive in tone and design.

The procedural or instructional documents (Brock and University of Alberta) tend to orient the reader to the overall framework of the program and the steps required from point-of- entry to completion. Organized systematically, the procedural-style documents were more informative, substantive and tended to follow a narrative structure; beginning to end, top to bottom. The persuasive features of the procedural documents were more driven by narrative logic then graphic design elements.

<u>Narrow Aspirational Identity as Motivational Context</u>

University of Calgary's 'matrix' document showcases aspirational identities (ie. Communicator, Innovator, Leader, Expert) as an educational value proposition and employs categorization labels for professional development curriculum. The first page of the 'matrix' document provides implicit conditional logic ('if you are a graduate student, then, you want to be a…') that presumes an individual's motivation or desire to possess a narrow range of professional identities or attributes. These identities then appear to host a subset of learning outcomes mapped and assigned to a specific topic within a wide roster of workshops. These professional identities then serve as thematic filters in the search bar of the online workshop calendar that also ascribes these identities to transferrable skills. Currently in the literature, pre-professional identity and inter-professional development are relevant pedagogies that have informed various professional fields of practice. So perhaps, this divergent feature or pedagogy of

professional identity development may have merit and worth exploring. University of Calgary appears to be the only institution in this study and across Canada that integrates this feature.

<div align="center">Human as guide (not the service, path, map, form or process)</div>

Another point of diversity is the presence or absence of human contact. The tradition of apprenticeship training in graduate education relies on the mentorship model of supported learning and formative development. This key relationship, sometimes referred to as an intellectual marriage, is the cornerstone of training for the academic field. However, scanning all institutional student guides, the equivalent supported practice in the professional development realm is clearly identified in only one graduate student guide (University of Alberta).

Supportive learning is fostered from the outset. The roles and responsibilities of the student, supervisor, mentor, department and Graduate Program Director (GPD) are clearly articulated in the document. Full contact information (name, title, role, email, address, phone) of two IPD requirement developers is located on the institutional document. Additionally, the first series of standard workshops to help students understand and engage with the IDP process were developed and delivered by the IDP requirement developers. This inherently suggests that the IDP requirement and professional development is explicitly supported not only by the institution but by specific individuals of the broader graduate community (faculty, staff, mentors).

<u>Personal Autonomy and Accountability</u>

From my experience, Brock's progress tracking form has an inherent personal accountability element that requires the student to sign-off on their progress that is then witnessed by the Administrative Assistant. There are several required sign-off signatures (Dean, Supervisor, student) for each milestone of the thesis-stream research project. Although a key contact person is not referenced on the form, the website explicitly names this person. Every graduate student is introduced to this key individual through email and other regular communications. Although it appears the form serves as an administrative reporting function, from my experience, the form was secondary. The Administrative Assistant ushered students to sign-off on the progress report, which not only affirmed progress but encouraged students to continue to take the next steps. Inadvertently, the staff person fulfilled a guidance role, as the form thus becomes an occasion for dialogue and accountability.

Graduate Student Guides: Summary of Patterns, Clusters and Themes

Manifest Cross-document Deductive Analysis

I derived *three* primary themes or dialogical tensions through a deductive process of re-reading, distancing and re-appraising both manifest features and my plausible interpretations of the text. First, I noted patterns then constructed a number of sub-themes or descriptions in attempt to define meaning clusters. I approached these sub-themes critically to reassess my analytical categorizations and discussed these findings and interpretations with my supervisor to confirm these sub-themes. Through a comparative analysis process, I then explored congruent connections and associations to

structural, conceptual, programmatic and individual components. Finally, I arrived at several comparative clustered meanings (or sub-themes) that were abstracted and aligned under three dialogical tensions which I've presented as themes below with questions to illustrate some of the various dialogical tensions.

Table 4: Summary of Cross-document Patterns, Clusters and Themes

Themes or pedagogical tensions	Clustered patterns
Between the *appearance of a cohesive learning cycle* and *educative curricular features*	• What happens when we foreground educative curricular features yet neglect a cohesive learning cycle? • How might any programmatic competency context optimize or delimit individual choices and outcomes? • What is the balance between procedural and descriptive, and persuasive and prescriptive elements in graduate student guide promotional materials?
Between the *autonomous learner* and *the abandoned learner*	• What are the implications for the learner in the presence of a human as guide versus the 'form' as guide? • What happens to the learner when programming has many options, fractured and discontinuous? • How might supported personal accountability processes and program verification measures optimally support both the learner's process and deliver institutional outcomes?
Between a *person-centred process* and a *competency-centred program*	• What happens when we make assumptions about the learner's motivational context? • What are the implications when program options prescribe linear pathways, aspirational identities and preclude the individual discovery process?

Structured Reflexive Journal: Inductive and Deductive Analysis

Reflexive journals and field notes are commonly employed by qualitative researchers to document observations, ensure intellectual rigour and provide data source triangulation (Willis, 2007). A structured reflective journal provides a space to think deeply, explore and clarify ideas, observations and theories (Patton, 2002). My structured reflective journal served as a second data source as reflexivity requires the observer to critically 'observe self as well as others' (p. 299).

I maintained a journal throughout my manifest data analysis process in which I made a total of 66 journal entries. These entries included my reactions to higher education reports published and conversations relating to my research interests, ideas and ruminations. Three question prompts ('what', 'so what', 'now what') were used to structure the reflective cycle or process. Initial ideas and observations were re-explored to understand the value and importance of an idea. The final re-reflection was aimed to foster deeper insights and construct meaning as plausible interpretations and implications of the idea were considered. To foster richer insights, I took time and space before returning to an initial insight or idea (O'Connell and Dyment, 2013).

Considering that the practical aim of this project was to uncover new insights and programmatic directions, I was still moderately surprised when at first glance I discovered that many of my entries were problematized with a tone of dissatisfaction and perpetual solution searching. In the preliminary analysis I immediately noticed familiar deductive patterns that arose from my analysis of the graduate student guide documents. I attributed meaning clusters through these patterns and compared them to

the patterns and clusters of ideas previously generated. I then re-read each entry

seeking revelatory phrases or ideas that diverged from these patterns. Reviewing pattern

outliers, I clustered and distilled these new patterns by returning to earlier journal

entries to further elucidate meaning. Below, I have summarized these clustered patterns

as questions illustrating ideological tensions underneath four superseding themes.

Table 5: Summary of clustered patterns and ideological tensions arising from Reflexive Journal

Clustered patterns	Ideological and dialogical tensions
Whole person-centred approaches	• What happens when the student is perceived as a whole person not simply a learner or consumer? • How might programming outcomes be different if the program goal is self-recognition vs. the ascription or reporting of key skills? • How might PD program branding detract from the value of inherent research skills or conflate positional and professional identity labels? • How might skill capacity or deficit mental models and approaches influence program content? • How does availability of content specialists influence or delimit understanding of professional learning and program offerings?
Develop comprehensive professional learning framework (principles and practices)	• What might happen if self-discovery and reflection become central elements in professional development offerings? • How might adult learning and formative development principles and practices (dialogue, feedback and self-assessment) shape programming? • What might happen if a comprehensive professional learning framework was devised through a collaborative approach?
Understand our motivational context, bias and assumptions	• How do our motivational assumptions bias the graduate student experience; academic programs & pathways and career outcomes influence professional and development programming?
Safeguard student learning supports in the competency taxonomy process	• What happens when the next think tank and labour market report prioritizes another set of key competencies or skills? • What happens when the institutional role is to qualify, assess and authenticate competency attainment: the behaviors, values and attributes of the whole person? • What happens when institutions spend more time building a competency taxonomy without considering the learning supports? (Dearing Report, 1997)

New themes arising from Structured Reflexive Journal

I clustered patterns arising from the text of my structured reflection and

compared these to previously developed student guide manifest themes. As I returned

to my reflective journal, I noted that these distilled categories of ideological tensions

(critiques, philosophical posturing and cautionary notes) referenced what I considered as

absent features and potential considerations for professional development offices. In

reflection, these new themes are refined interpretations of recurring patterns that I have

noted, yet not articulated, over the past six years. I collapsed two of these themes

arriving at three broad categories or themes. These three new distinct themes are;

1. *Comprehensive professional learning framework (principles, practices and whole person-centred approaches)*
2. *Our/their motivational context, bias and assumptions*
3. *Safeguard student learning supports within the competency taxonomy process*

An iterative summary of manifest and plausible Interpretation themes derived from both

student guides and my researcher structured reflection notes include;

1. Appearance of cohesive learning cycle and educative curricular ideals
2. Autonomous learner and abandoned learner
3. Learner-centred process and competency-centred program
4. Comprehensive professional learning framework (principles, practices and whole person-centred approaches)
5. Our/their motivational context, bias and assumptions
6. Safeguard student learning supports in the competency taxonomy process

Latent Cross-Document Deductive Analysis using Dewey's Theoretical Framework

In the previous section, I presented a systematic and iterative manifest analysis that included plausible interpretations of selected institutional professional and development graduate student guides. I've summarized these six key themes as dialogical tensions. Through the lens of Dewey's experiential learning theory and Frank's socio-narrative theory I reflected on the theoretical and conceptual relevance of these key findings.

Dewey's Experiential Learning Cycle

Based on his early tenets of experimental learning, Dewey (1933) proposed that learning is based on trial and error and the learner's aim is to ultimately maintain a sense of dynamic equilibrium. Dewey's (1933) philosophy distinguishes between several modes of thinking of which the concept of reflection, or reflective learning, is central. In addition to active experimentation, pedagogical scholars and educators recognize that deliberate and structured reflection is integral to experiential learning (Connolly & Frost, 2015; O'Connell & Dyment; Rodgers, 2002).

Summary of Latent Cross-document Themes through Dewey

Dewey's conceptualization of the learning cycle; the notions of failure and impulsion, absence of facilitator-supported reflection and the appearance of educative ideals were key themes that resonated differently throughout selected documents analyzed for this study.

<u>Appearance of Educative Ideals and Curricular Structures</u>

The appearance of familiar educative curricular terms, structures and forms occur in the text across all institutional guides. Each institutional graduate student guide employed various forms of customary language (i.e. Grad maps/degree maps, courses, curriculum, professional program/academic program, calendar, pathways, completion) or overarching curricular structures typically employed in program, course and class design yet failed to attain curricular integrity.

Bolt-on or co-curricular professional development programming is relatively episodic and non-sequential in comparison to the curricular and pedagogical rigour of credentialed academic programs. Both the Queen's Grad Map and Calgary's MyGradSkills workshop matrix appear to adopt a 'more is better' approach as both institutions list substantive 'program' offerings with 32 and 61 workshops, respectively. Episodic workshops create the appearance of an intentional curriculum yet the 'maps' and 'matrix' are not an authentic replica of the intentional scaffolded curricular design of an academic program. Both have the formulae of a cohesive learning cycle yet fail to include substantial references as to how the learner is supported at the course or program level.

Unlike Queen's and Calgary's student guides, the University of Alberta's IDP document and supporting materials integrate mostly process-focused terms, references and structures referring to learning cycle elements. The learner's process of self-discovery is the curriculum. Reflection, exploration, discovery, experimentation and action are inherent features of Alberta's IDP guide which are also quintessential

elements of Dewey's learning cycle and many career exploration models. Alberta's IDP

guide sets a context for professional learning incorporating authentic educative features

and structures.

<center>Failure and Impulsion</center>

According to Dewey, entry into an authentic learning cycle occurs when the

learner encounters a challenge or a problematic situation and experiences a 'felt

difficulty'. Failure is not conceptualized as a dismal point of no-return. Dewey

conceptualized failure with a perception of unconscious elegance; as one naturally

responds in an environment, accommodates new information and pivots towards

another encounter. The learner enters into what Connolly & Frost (2015) suggest is a

state of 'positive perplexity' followed by a strong urge to do something (p 52).

Professional development programs (Queens & Calgary) that provide sweeping

endorsements and recommendations for a suite of specific activities not only

presuppose linear career trajectories and esteemed professional qualities but neglect

the naturalistic entry way into the professional learning process which entails sequential

encounters of discovery and failure. Alberta's IDP, however, is foregrounded on a

learning process of personal reflection, experimentation and discovery. Grad students

must commit to exploring three potential career paths aligned with their personal skills

and interests. Undoubtedly, a route of choices and experimentation allows for both

'failure' and discernment. If this form of professional learning is socially supported

through dialogue and reflection this can foster opportunities for transformational

insights and trust in oneself to discover the continuous unfolding of experiences that shape one's 'career' or world of work.

<div align="center">Facilitator-supported reflection</div>

Structured reflection, ongoing support and regular meaningful feedback are essential for a learner to flourish. Queens, Calgary and Alberta all include recommendations that each student customize an individual success plan and engage in reflection. Queen's offers more resources then Calgary including on-line reflective guides. However, these tools appear to be unbound from any structured workshop, experience, facilitator or cohort of students. Each document provides links to fillable reflection forms, however, it appears that the student must negotiate these materials and the exercises independent of any guide or distinct supported learning occasion. Without a reference to the presence of a facilitator or instructor and community of learners, one might assume that the learner's reflective process is isolated and unsupported.

Alberta's IDP process and expectation requires students to earn the first segment of the professional development credential through a structured, supported and social learning environment focused on reflection. Explicit verification processes and the expectation of completion normalize co-curricular professional development activities. In addition, the integration of these essential structures for learning and the deliberate pedagogical design evidence the thoughtfulness of an experienced educational developer.

<u>Pedagogical Veracity</u>

Through a Deweyan lens of analysis, only one institution attains the pedagogical

veracity for supporting the learner throughout a structured, supportive and cohesive

learning cycle. The University of Alberta's IDP document and guide succinctly reference

the integration of structures and supports for professional learning in that students are

required to engage in reflection that is guided and supported. Thus, the learner is invited

to naturalistically engage in a process of professional discovery that is inspired by the

individual's inclinations, preferences and interests.

Latent Analysis - Frank's Dialogical Narrative Analytical Process

Clandinin (2007) suggests that narrative inquiry allows us to explore the 'social,

cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are

constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted' (p. 42). Arthur Frank (2012) suggests that

narratives 'act' in that they inherently engage dialogue and that any individual, or

institutional, 'voice' is always comprised of at least two voices (p. 33). Frank (2012),

integrating Bakhtin's notion of polyphony and heteroglosia, explores the social

dimensions of narrative in how the narrator voices resonate with others and how each

narrator or story teller reassembles story fragments in the telling of a story.

Analyzing the social dimensions of stories, or dialogical narrative analysis, Arthur

Frank (2012) proposes formulating questions to understand how stories 'act'. Referring

to this method of analysis as a 'practice' rather than a method, he proposes five broad

categories of questions, to prompt analysis. In order to further explore the latent

features of the graduate student guide documents, I adopted Frank's (2010) series of

open-ended questions that assisted in the discovery of various socio-narrative features. I

applied the following dialogical narrative questions to analyze the manifest features of

the graduate student program guides.

1. ***Current 'resources'*** *of a circulating story (what are the **character types**, the **plot lines** and **tropes**),*
2. ***Circulation questions*** *(to whom are these stories told, public audience or specific community, who would understand or reject),*
3. ***Affiliation questions*** *(refers to what groups would understand, 'who's in' and 'who is out'),*
4. ***Identity questions*** *(how does the 'story' attempt to shape, contest, or limit personal identity?),*
5. ***'What's at stake'*** *when this story is told (p.46).* Frank suggests this last question attempts to understand the conditions of vulnerability when stories are told.

Cross-document Analysis of Student Guides

For each graduate student guide, I systematically applied each dialogical

narrative question sequentially until I suitably exhausted the line of questioning. Seeking

interpretive gaps, I then reviewed the original document and summaries of my plausible

interpretations to compare and confirm these new interpretations. Once I completed

the narrative analysis across all documents, I then reviewed interpretations for each

question across all documents to identify cross comparison similarities and differences.

Current Narrative Resources

The character type, plot lines and narrative tropes comprise the key narrative

resources of existing stories (Frank, 2010). Understanding the fundamental narrative

resources provides insight into whom might comprehend, access and engage with the

story. For instance, University of Calgary, ascribed identities with aspirational desires

(The Leader, the Communicator, the Innovator, and the Expert) pre-supposes the

student's motivational context. It suggests that the character is pre-formed before the

student arrives and the journey begins. The plot line, similarly, suggests the journey is predetermined which thus limits personal exploration and delimits individuality and desire. This story line loosely resembles the genre of speculative fiction in that the assurances of the attributes bestowed on students seems somewhat magical yet also predestined.

The Queen's map also resembles a prescriptive and predetermined character type with accompanying congruent concluded plot lines and narrative tropes. The Queen's map is reminiscent of prime educational real estate brochure replete with an upscale wonderland amusement park. The character or student resembles a prospect or potential buyer entering into a complex conditional purchase agreement. The propositional narrative logic draws on multiple forms of success from multiple voices or perspectives. This process of 'narrative theorizing' has been referred to as a mechanism for building a linear storyline that logically lead to a set of outcomes (Pentland, 1999). Each condition for success (over 60 directives) is explicated on the map with the underlying assumption that 'everyone wins' but with a caveat, some don't. The map, characters and guide resemble, the ecstatic white rabbit in the novel *Alice in Wonderland* who takes Alice where she meets an onslaught of characters that pose pointless riddles with far reaching distractions (Carroll, L., Haughton, H., & Carroll, L., 2009). As in the novel, there is an undertone in the Queen's map document, that regardless of the advice on the map, Alice does wake up and the student ultimately succeeds.

The narrative plot lines of the Brock's progress report and the University of Alberta's IDP guide are similar in that both guides are structured as passageways with clear guideposts for degree completion. The conscripted completers (Brock students) and life goal seekers (University of Alberta students) both rely on the individual's determination for entry and passage into the journey. Time stamped guideposts (i.e. required signatures required for completing stages of progress) assure that the student gains entry into the next stage, meets the threshold guardian (Brock's FAHS Administrative Assistant), receives fragments of wisdom and is then oriented to the next stage of the journey. Alberta's IDP guide document is emblematic of the 'call to adventure'; the initiation phase of Joseph Campbell's hero journey (Campbell, 2004). Grad school is a passageway along life's journey. The student's inner-guide ultimately is tasked with envisioning, safeguarding and enacting life goals. Wise mentors (staff and faculty) assist the students in the process of creating a personal legend by reviewing 3 developmental paths (career options) and assure that the plans are aligned and arise from the individual's desires.

Brock's and Alberta's have similar passageway narrative tropes. However, Alberta's IDP is centred on the individual's reflective development which resembles the quest genre of fiction akin to Paulo Coehlo's *The Alchemist* (1998). Self-realization and personal legend making, through a process of discovery, drive the story line. Alberta's IDP guide requires adherence to the process (self-discovery and exploration) and has several threshold guardians to approve progress and passageway through key guideposts (professional development activities). The threshold guardian is a narrative

trope often symbolized as a figure or event that tests the individuals resolve and preparation for the next challenge (Campbell, 2004).

Brock's progress report measures stages of completion and each guidepost appears along a narrow linear pathway with passport stamps (academic signatures) that permits entry into the next stage. Imbued with powers, the FAHS administrative assistant role serves as threshold guardian for the individual who is sincerely committed to the process (Campbell, 2004). However, the non-traditional student who travels through the guideposts out of sequence may not receive the same keys. Although, one may ultimately arrive at the same destination yet potentially face alienation for non-compliance. Both institutions provide indicators of progress; guideposts, threshold guardians (additional guides - both inner guides and human guides) and clear expectations along their respective passageways.

The narrator, or author/s of the text in the guides, employ various narrative devices to inspire the character to act (Frank, 2010). Reliability of the narrator is determined by the reader, when the reader trusts what the narrator is conveying is truthful and complete (Olson, 2003). When the guide has an overtly prescriptive tone or sounds too good to be true, the reader needs to ascertain, for oneself, how it resonates or alienates.

Circulation Questions

Frank (2012) employs a line of circulation questions in his narrative dialogical analysis to understand 'who tells what stories to whom' (p. 45). This question considers what is being told in the narrative material, how is it framed and ultimately where the

story is intended to land. Understanding the specific group or communities of the narrative feature provides insights into who may understand or reject the story and narrative resources.

Calgary's Matrix document predominantly references professional development activities, academic cycles and aspirational identities that correspond specifically with individuals enrolled in research-intensive pathways. Master-level students enrolled in course-based or shorter termed graduate programs may not relate to the developmental schema or prescriptive outcomes proposed in the Calgary's student guide. Brock's Progress report, as the intended purpose, also conscripts those already initiated into a research-intensive pathway. Requisite compliance assures that all those conscripted understand the guideposts while very few students would reject.

Alberta's ABC/IDP guide provides a comprehensive overview of the individual development plan process as if it were setting the stage for each individual's unique and diverse odyssey rather than a specific affiliate 'group'. Although intended for faculty and staff (by title), the guide could be understood by various stakeholders; individual (student/learner), non-traditional student, faculty member, staff person, and departments. The expectation is for the seeker (individual/student/learner) to explore diverse life goals as is the customization considerations welcomed across all disciplinary and department units. Because the narrative plot line of the text foregrounds the individualized journey, the proposition or 'call to adventure' is almost irrefutable.

Queen's degree-to-career maps appear to make broad success and outcome promises by virtue of devising specific maps and success pathways for each program and

degree pathway. Narrative resonance is intended for student groups aligned by their academic program or disciplinary affiliations. It is quite possible that individuals who do not align with either their 'program group' alliance or with the narrow prescriptive narrative could possibly be interpreted as those that defy the 'success' claim, an outlier or non-compliant.

Deemed as a highly revered student guidance tool, the Queen's maps carry much cache (Kerr, 2015). Unlike the individual narrative resonance of Alberta's IDP guide, the customization feature of the Queen's map in some way makes a claim on Queen's reputation for student success. Multi-narrated text and complexity of tasks prescribed in the Queen's map has the potential to challenge authenticity and compromise the reader's trust in the narrator/s.

<u>Affiliation Questions</u>

Frank (2012) suggests, 'stories revise people's sense of self, and they situate people in groups' (p.33). Certain stories are told where people work and live while acting as a form of social currency. These social locations form narrative affiliate bonds where individuals tell and understand stories in exchange for membership. Affiliation questions ascertain what cohesive groups might best understand or relate to the narrative and those that may not identify with the social location and subsequently not connect to the story.

The 'graduate student' is the obvious affiliate group referred to in each graduate student guide. Other references to social groups in the text of all guides, include; professionals, unique (Alberta); leaders (Queens, Calgary); experts, innovators, change

makers (Calgary); student name and number (Brock); cultural leader, friends, peers, intellectual community (Queens) and applicant (Queens). The Queens' map refers to a number of socially connected student associations (friends, peers, intellectual community) and an expansive range of professional roles or identity outcomes. They include; PhD, Arts Administration, Production Management, Not-for-Profit Advocacy, Cultural Sector Marketing, Arts Facility Management, Community Outreach and Education, Development and Advancement, HR Management for the Arts, Business Management, Director for Performing Arts Organization, proponent of the Creative Economy, etc. The breadth of choice alone will no doubt appeal and resonate to a student reader attempting to explore, locate and imagine oneself in a particular social group, professional identity or career.

<u>Identity Questions</u>

Stories are potent in that they can shape or contest personal identity. Frank (2012) suggests that 'storytelling plays upon the tension between forces that would finalize lives and the imagination of life as unfinalized' (p. 45). The story listener or catcher is always in the space of negotiation; *claiming, rejecting, or considering various narrative identities* (Frank, 2012). This identity negotiation is always a product of available narrative resources and the expression of what Frank (2010) refers to as a repertoire of 'stock expressions' (p. 46).

Each institutional guide asserts various attempts to reinscribe, shape, limit or contest personal identity (Frank, 2012). Calgary's matrix attempts to conflate four predominant revered iconic academic identities while projecting motivations ('primary

reason for taking a grad degree is to become an expert..') and relational desires (

'become the kind of person people want to work with…') while limiting personal identity.

Queens' Map, although based on the degree pathway, offers an expansive range of

potential identities for the student during grad school and as they explore a range of

career options into the world of work or future studies. Alberta's IDP guide shapes the

student as a professional in preparation with the onus of responsibility to engage in a

process of self-exploration. The Brock Progress Report inadvertently contests personal

identity as it recognizes the student predominantly by name, student number and by

adherence to reaching sequential progress milestones.

<p align="center">Condition of Vulnerability Questions</p>

Considering the dynamic negotiation of social affiliation and personal identity,

Frank (2012) suggests that the act of story 'telling' and story 'holding' requires one to

consider the conditions of vulnerability. This dialogical narrative question prompts the

discovery of what is potentially at risk when a story is told (i.e. disruption, reflection,

etc.) and what must be done to assure the containment of identity and social location

(i.e. protection, negotiation, compromise, etc.).

I considered conditions of vulnerability for the individual institutions, the higher

education sector and the student in the story 'telling and holding' of various narrative

themes. Calgary's Matrix appears to uphold a narrowly conceived identity that may

appeal to the institution's best and brightest headed for a career in the industrial

innovation sector. The danger of proposing this narrow role of graduate training may

feed into the higher education's critics claim that university is expensive and

inaccessible. Instead of offering a breadth of professional development options to prepare students for a range of post-graduate options, the message of the 'Matrix' may inadvertently perpetuate the graduate outcome problems that it was initially intended to address. The student, who may not resonate with projected motivational context or aspirational identities, may dismiss or discount the propositional assumptions within the narrative. Those that adhere to the narrow identities may risk the loss of genuine personal discovery and career exploration.

Alberta's IDP asserts that mindset training and exploration are the most valuable lifelong professional preparation activities of a professional development program. Without explicit references to the possibility of various career outcomes i.e. career paths, trajectories, titles, roles or identities; the IDP guide author or narrator's credibility is qualified by institution-wide expectation of completion, global instructions (for each stakeholder), narrative clarity and coherence in the educational instructions. The mindset approach quite possibly nuances the traditional formative training model of graduate education. A mindset development model is personally relevant beyond academic training, fosters transformative and deep learning opportunities and holds its' own in the marketization of higher education.

Queens' map offers the student many idealized discipline-related routes or pathways for success. Fundamentally, the degree maps appear to be rooted on the basic premise of 'I am my degree'. From a sectoral standpoint, a degree-to-career recruitment strategy is an unreliable value proposition when detached from labour market evidence. Graduate level professional development programming was introduced to address

dismal employment realities for doctorate students and reframe career outcomes. Degree-pathway promises and attaching degree-to-career outcomes in recruitment materials perpetuates an institutional omnipotence fallacy particularly as higher education moves toward modularization, micro-credentialing and learner customization. The student or learner when visiting a Queens' map may also be confused by the numerous choices and decisions required for optimizing success. This might immobilize action, create disillusionment, or inversely create a false sense of outcome assurances for some students.

Brock's Progress report is a form that inherently holds a crucial framework for research-intensive thesis progress. Although the steps appear simple and linear, it has the potential to be a 'guide' as the relational components (administrative assistant) offers additional forms of accountability and guidance. However, not all 'guides' are potentially helpful when these important relational features are not understood, foregrounded or valued. Non-traditional graduate students and learners who may need to extend timelines and invert guideposts may need to customize a unique path with the assistance of coaching supports.

Summary of Dialogical Narrative Tensions

In the table below, I have summarized the narrative dialogical tensions discovered as a cluster of critical questions developed from Frank's guiding questions. Three overarching narrative themes were derived through Frank's dialogical narrative analysis and expressed as qualities of the narrative, they are;

Narrative coherence; congruent alignment of the narrative structures,
Narrator's reliability; reliable voice/s of the document, and,

Veracity of the narrative; the quality of being true or accurate.

As an overarching narrative theme, the veracity of the narrative, relies on the narrator's

reliability and the overall coherence of the narrative. Hence, the primary narrative

theme derived through narrative dialogical analysis was reduced to one single theme;

the veracity of the narrative.

Table 6: Summary of Narrative Dialogical Tensions of Graduate Student Guides

Frank's Dialogical Narrative Analysis	Summary of Narrative Dialogical Tensions: Graduate Student Guides
Narrative Resource Questions	How is the student characterized in the guide (graduate student, learner, whole person, professional, unique individual, consumer, etc.)?
	How has the institution characterized the graduate journey? Does it speculate on various outcomes or pathways?
	How has the institution clarified the motivational context; ascribed identities, aspirational desires, personal exploration or offer a value proposition?
	What are the terms for accessing student guide resources? Conscripted, prescriptive or invitational process of self-discovery?
	Does the narrative resemble an adventure or call to action? Necessary passageway? Idealized map?
	Does the narrative in the guide in anyway finalize student development and growth?
Circulation Questions	What audience or group of graduate students understand or connect best with the narrative message in the guide? i.e. graduate pathway, developmental schema, etc.
	Would the tone and language of the guide be understood by a specific or general audience of students, faculty and staff from a variety of disciplines and units?
	What audiences or groups may not understand or connect with various narrative elements of the student guide?
Affiliation Questions	How does the narrative in the guide situate people in various social groups? (ie. Friends, peers, intellectual community, professionals, etc.)
Identity Questions	How does the guide attempt to shape, claim, reject or limit personal identities or graduate student identities?
Conditions of Vulnerability Questions	What are the potential risks and conditions of vulnerability for the story 'teller and holder'?
	What are the potential conditions and degree of vulnerability for the individual? Institution? Sector? Over a specified time horizon?

**Summary of Themes - Manifest and Latent analysis of Student guides
and Researcher Reflexive Notes**

After the completing both manifest and latent analytical processes of both graduate

student guides and my researcher reflexive notes, I've reconfirmed and identified seven

distinct pedagogical, ideological and dialogical narrative tensions – they are;

1. Between the appearance of cohesive learning cycle and educative curricular ideals
2. Between the autonomous learner and the abandoned learner
3. Between learner-centred process and competency-centred program
4. Comprehensive professional learning framework (principles, practices and whole person-centred approaches)
5. Our/their motivational context, biases and assumptions
6. Safeguard student learning supports within the competency taxonomy process
7. Veracity of the narrative

In my final level of analysis, I explored the narratives of aspirational strategic

planning documents to gain insights into additional forms of institutional supports and

commitment to graduate student professional development.

Deductive Analysis of Institutional Strategic Planning documents

Institutional strategic planning documents are potent narrative data sources

because they contain insights into the leadership, institutional vision, strategic priorities,

implementation plans, commitment of resources and provide insights into an

institution's relational practices.

Utilizing Senge's (2006) concept of disciplines, or 'disciplina', of a learning

organization as a lens for analysis, I examined the narratives or executive summaries of

the aspirational sections of strategic planning documents of each respective institution

to garner insights on how institutions convey various forms of commitment to graduate

student experience, development, or professional (or career) development.

These 'disciplina' refer to an ensemble of developmental and relational practices

that support various forms of individual and organizational capacity building. Senge

(2006) argues that individual and institutional mental models are deeply ingrained (p.8).

And, an institution's ability to challenge and question prevailing and archaic assumptions

about roles, duties and titles through, what he refers to as, 'learningful' conversations or

dialogue, is where we open up to the expansion of ideas and unlock narrow mental

models. Senge (2006) also evolved the concept of the learning organization, in that it

rests less on the structure of the organization but the creative processes of the learning

units or communities within the organizational structure. Akin to the stages of Dewey's

learning cycle, Senge (2006) proposes that learning communities enact a cycle or process

of experimentation, practice and capacity building.

The fourth discipline, the practice of 'building a shared vision', is when a group of

individuals conceptualize a vision, mobilize resources to enact the vision and strike a

path forward that 'binds people together' in a common purpose of possibilities (p.9).

Aspirational elements or the shared vision of a strategic plan Senge (2006) suggests are

'vital for the learning organization because it provides the focus and energy for learning'

(p.192).

Deductive Analysis Themes: Aspirational documents

I searched for digital versions of publically available strategic planning documents

developed by each institution's respective Office or Faculty of Graduate Studies. In the

absence of a strategic planning document devised specifically for the graduate

community (i.e. Faculty of Graduate Studies – strategic planning document) I selected

the most current and readily available institutional planning document. The following

aspirational/strategic planning documents were publicly available;

1. Brock University Institutional Strategic Plan (2018-2025)
2. University of Alberta Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research Strategic Plan (2015 to 2018)
3. Queens' University Strategic Framework (2014-2019)
4. University of Calgary's Comprehensive Institutional Plan (2018)

Each selected institutional strategic planning document had a different time

horizon; Brock (7 years), Alberta (3 years), Queens (5 years), and Calgary (3 years). Some

institutions referenced many years of engaging in strategic planning processes and

referenced additional historical planning documents; for example, Queen's University

Strategic Framework (2014-2019) and the University of Alberta. Both the University of

Calgary and Brock University were similar in that each planning document and strategic

planning exercise arose from and referenced a mandated public sector policy-driven

expectation (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2013).

Similarly, all institutions identified three or four strategic priorities (Brock and

Calgary) or strategic drivers (Queens, Alberta). Some plans were oriented around

mandated priorities shaped by a constellation of factors that stemmed from provincial

funding and accountability agreements. Evidently, the two institutions with the longest

held independent strategic planning practices were the oldest and most established

institutions (Queen's and Alberta).

In all planning documents, graduate student development, both professional and

personal development, is often subsumed under the research pillar as a function of the

universities' knowledge production. Only one institution had demarked graduate student

focused development activities under an experiential banner in the aspirational section of a unit-level strategic plan (Alberta).

For the purposes of this narrative analysis, I focused on one unit-level strategic plan that most comprehensively reflects the conceptual themes of Senge's organizational learning practices. The University of Alberta was the only institution that had a publicly available unit level or faculty level strategic plan document. Unit level plans typically refer to specific operational and implementation objectives, customarily reference the human activities involved to implement and realize unit level goals and outcomes. Alberta's Faculty of Graduate & Research Services three-page document succinctly summarizes the vision, organizational objectives, four strategic priorities and a list of performance measures.

The University of Alberta had two additional publicly available planning documents; 1) the broader *institutional level* strategic plan and a 2) comprehensive strategic, operational and implementation plan for the *IDP* (individual development plan) *initiative.*

Building a Shared Vision

The first powerful line of the Faculty of Graduate and Research Services strategic plan simply states; 'The people who work at the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) believe in a simple truth: *smart people can change the world*.' It then qualifies how this shared vision is enacted; 'That vision guides how we work with students and our University Colleagues every day'. This vision statement eloquently espouses the senior leadership teams' regard for the collective expertise; of the FGSR

unit, the client group served (the students) and university colleagues (not distinguishing

roles nor titles). The visioning process, as described in the introduction, was the result of

a comprehensive consultation process involving campus, national and international

colleagues on topics related to the student experience and 'preparing students for

careers after graduation'. This also suggests that the senior leadership team from the

early envisioning stages welcomed dialogue in the formulation of its plan.

<div align="center">Team Learning</div>

Team learning reflects the capacity of the group to address and solve problems

with new synergies and a dynamic ability to readily adopt to change. The method

proposed by Senge (2012) to foster team learning entails two conversational forms:

dialogue and skillful discussions. By virtue of UAlberta FGSR's first strategic priority

(Service Focus), one can infer that collectively the members of this unit understand the

mission of their office and recognize that people in dialogue must do to actualize this

mission. The first paragraph reads; 'The team is keenly focused on providing top notch

service, and work is well underway to increase the satisfaction of both students and

departments.' New operational tasks are clearly explicated and evidence the types of

operational changes that would suggest team learning. They include; fully resourced

staff complement; staff development; new governance, policy and communication roles

and a renewed commitment to 'build stronger working relationships'. This last reference

to relational practices also suggests that the plan authors valued and deliberately built

relational outcomes into their plan.

Mental Models

Mental models, or axiomatic thinking, are considered the frames we use for thinking and explaining what happens in the world. Senge (1990) describes mental models as "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures and images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action" (p. 8).

Alberta's second strategic priority, which aims to 'comprehensively prepare students for careers beyond the university', suggests the designers of the plan may operate outside of the traditional mental models of academia. It contextualizes the importance of this priority by stating that; 'Excitingly, 85% of PhDs have careers ahead of them that they've potentially not yet begun to imagine or prepare for.' This statement upends the frequently cited dismal academic career outcomes for PhDs and reframes it into a language of possibility. The implementation plan also broadens graduate student professional development to include 'entrepreneurialism, mentorship, internships, and PD skills training' and also refers to the importance of implementing curricular changes to adapt to this new cultural reality.

Another potential indicator of the authors' fluid mental models is the reference to FGSR as a hub and lever of change for fostering interdisciplinary activity across departments, faculties and students (Strategic Priority 3). Proposed activities include establishing makerspaces, elevating the conversations about major societal issues and an indigenous outreach programs. Considering that many graduate offices primarily provide registrarial services, these proposed activities are part of an expanding role for grad study offices across the graduate sector landscape.

Personal Mastery

Senge's (2012) concept of personal mastery equates to personal growth and

actualization. UAlberta's fourth strategic priority (Solidify the academic mission of the

Faculty) encompasses a set of comprehensive quality improvements relating to teacher

training, quality assurance (academic programs) and supervision. Aspirational text in a

strategic plan is not an appropriate data source for providing any insights on the

personal growth activities of individuals. However, references in the text included the

creation of platforms and the facilitation of opportunities for enhancing individual

performance (i.e. faculty's supervisory and mentorship performance).

With an aim to 'build a stronger culture of supervision and mentorship', the

strategic plan suggests a number of innovative implementation activities to raise the

standards of practice. The document also references the context for implementing these

changes which include; the need to adopt to diverse learning styles, flexible program

delivery, preparing students for diverse careers, and responding to the changing

expectations of stakeholders.

Systems Thinking

According to Senge (2012), systems thinking is the fifth practice that is the

convergence of an ensemble of practices that are vitally important for shaping the

qualities of a learning organization. Some of the system thinking practices of a learning

organization might include timely discussions about causal relationships, understanding

the levers of change within the system, the integration of feedback loops and observing

patterns in outcomes over time. All of which entail real time, real people in real world

settings.

The only plausible interpretation I can make about system thinking practices from the UAlberta's FGSR strategic plan is that it references a substantial human resource commitment (three Associate Deans) to elevate the quality of the graduate education through a comprehensive multi-pronged approach with a diverse set of progress measurement tools. Hence, there appears to be a strong culture of leadership committed to exploring, implementing and measuring quality improvements.

Summary of Findings

In this section, I will summarize the eight key socio-narrative themes as developed alongside the interpretation of these findings in relationship to my research questions. Also, in keeping with the aims of the emergent and unfinalized nature of narrative inquiry, I recognize the challenge in cohesively summarizing socio-narrative themes when each form of narrative data (program guide/document, personal reflections, institutional strategic plan) ultimately represents a distinct narrative genre and potentially engages a distinct audience.

For the purposes of synthesizing, communicating and interpreting these key findings, I have categorized seven of these themes as *pedagogical*, *ideological* and *dialogical* tensions. I have identified these themes as tensions because although each of the student guides are distinctively different they collectively share similar tensions in how they espouse to guide and support graduate students. These tensions are;

Pedagogical tensions;

Theme 1: Between the appearance of a cohesive learning cycle and educative curricular ideals

Theme 2: Between the autonomous learner and abandoned learner
Theme 3: Between a learner-centred process and competency-centred program

Ideological tensions;

Theme 4: Comprehensive professional learning framework (principles, practices and whole person-centred approaches)
Theme 5: Our/their motivational context, biases and assumptions (narrative)
Theme 6: Safeguard student learning supports within the competency taxonomy process (program)

Dialogical tensions;

As the design of this inquiry entailed both triadic comparisons (data forms, conceptual and theoretical frameworks, institutions) alongside exhaustive and comprehensive inductive analysis, I addressed the inherent methodological tension of thematic reduction by capturing the dialogical narrative theme under one comprehensive *dialogical tension*;

Theme 7: The veracity of the story (Sub-themes: Narrative coherence and narrator reliability)

The last theme *(Theme 8)* was derived through both manifest and deductive latent analysis of the manifest features of one of three UAlberta strategic planning documents (Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research unit plan). Using Senge's (2012) five disciplines of a learning organization, manifest and latent features of the text suggested multiple forms of pedagogical, ideological and dialogical congruency demonstrating one form of institutional commitment to graduate student professional development.

Hence, this unique final theme was developed to represent multiple forms of congruency or what I have termed as 'fidelity'. Implementation fidelity, in the literature

(Carroll et al., 2007) refers to "the degree to which . . . programs are implemented . . . as intended by the program developers" (p.1). Or, simply, it means how the intervention proposed is successful at attaining the intended outcomes. This final theme developed is;

Theme 8: Comprehensive integration of professional development strategic and implementation plans

Discussion of Findings in Relationship to Research Questions

I recognize that my frame of reference is shaped by my role, prior knowledge, theoretical application and approaches. My analytical lens has shaped these findings and would be entirely different if I would have employed a social criticism, feminist theory or symbolic interactionism lens.

I felt the most unanticipated and fruitful insights arose during the very first stages of manifest analysis. Although an exhaustive analytical process (p. 29-61) that entails rich descriptions, the presence/absence and occurrence/non-occurrence of various guide features helped me to discern the subtleties of text and to devise a composite of both salient and divergent program architectural or macro features across all guides (see appendix A). I readily noted these programmatic structural features and suspended my interest in the glossiest superficial narrative features (ie. branding, marketing, persuasive languages, voice, etc.) knowing this would be attended to later during the latent analysis phase using Frank's (2012) dialogical narrative analytical framework.

In this next section, I will explain how these key findings or themes address each

research question, they are;

Research Question 1 (RQ1).

How do graduate student professional development (GSPD) offices characterize the

skills imperative?

Research Question 2 (RQ2).

How do selected institutions demonstrate commitment to graduate student

professional development?

When considering RQ1, *how do GSPD offices characterize the skills imperative,*

each institution's student guide had a distinctly different developmental approach and

programmatic design (progress, pathway, map or plan) for addressing the 'skills'

imperative. The first two themes (Theme 1 & 2) capture the most notable forms of

pedagogical tensions that arose across all professional development co-curricular

programming as represented in the student guides. Collectively, these four themes

below characterize the tensions in practice when adopting educative features

customarily employed in credentialed academic programming without attaining similar

academic standards or rigour they attempt to espouse.

Theme 1: Between the appearance of a cohesive learning cycle and educative
curricular ideals
Theme 2: Between the autonomous learner and abandoned learner
Theme 5: Our/their motivational context, biases and assumptions (narrative)
Theme 7: The veracity of the story (Sub-themes: Narrative coherence and narrator
reliability)

These first themes (*Themes 1 and 2*) were derived in the first stages of manifest

analysis and re-confirmed through latent deductive analysis using Dewey's theoretical

framework. Both levels of analysis provided an analytical lens for discerning the presence, absence and attention given to particular pedagogical structural features (comprehensive learning cycle, structured and supported reflection, instructional text, etc.) referenced in the guides. These pedagogical tensions perhaps also represent anticipated operational and organizational developmental challenges of this emerging subsector as it establishes itself in the co-curricular landscape.

Selected institutions also characterize the 'skills imperative' (RQ1) through the subject matter and student developmental approaches reflected in their professional development programs and respective guides. Some institutions showcase a robust catalogue of competency-centred professional development workshops (Calgary, MyGradSkills) or an extensive list of suggested activities (Queens, Career Map) that more than double the expectations of any undergraduate degree.

Each student guide espoused familiar educative curricular features or tools (ie. map, plan, guide, curriculum, requirement, completion, etc.) with varying degrees of attention given to the learner (*Themes 1 and 2*). Only two institutions incorporate measures to support personal autonomy paired with institutional accountability (Brock and Alberta). And, only one institution (Alberta's IDP plan) offered a process-driven program foregrounded on whole-person developmental tasks (self-awareness and exploration) in a series of compulsory structured workshops offered by a named and identified human; an educational developer.

Some institutions (Queens) reference specific learning tools (ie. reflection exercises) with the appearance of a cohesive learning cycle (experience, reflection,

conceptualize, experiment) yet without a reference to an identified facilitator or program it appears that the program is unstructured and unsupported (*Themes 1 and 2*). Verification processes ranged from highly autonomous virtual self-tracking (Queens) to highly supported, integrated and tied to degree completion (Alberta) (*Theme 2*).

Practitioners shape professional development programming implicitly through their *motivational context, assumptions and biases* (*Theme 5*) and explicitly through the narrative resources and features of the text used in promotional brochures/guides to describe these programs (*Theme 7*). One institution (Calgary) assumed a specific motivational context to rationalize the value of their program to students through the text of their student guide. Narrow aspirational identities (Leader, Innovator, Communicator, Expert) were used to categorize professional development workshops and programs that were clearly directed toward an academic or industry career trajectory. Another institution (Queens) merged professional and academic developmental goals alongside program advising and listed potential career outcomes in their Grad Map. Although intended to be a comprehensive map to illustrate the range of collaborative services, the cross purpose, multi-authored and multi-voiced document may inadvertently characterize institutional offerings as highly directive, prescriptive with complex expectations and ultimately questions the veracity of the narrative (*Theme 5 and 7*).

The 'truthfulness' of a narrative or story is dependent on a number of narrative or socio-narrative variables (Frank, 2012) (*Theme 7*). Narrative coherence is attained when the narrative makes sense to the reader/listener. It can be assessed simply by

observing the most superficial narrative structures of a text – beginning, middle and end

(manifest content analysis) --- or as Frank (2010) suggests, by attending to the complex

materiality of a story; as if one is in dialogue with the narrative, the narrator and oneself.

In the previous chapter, I have extensively referred to the nuances of socio-narrative

capacities to obfuscate and compel the reader and student. Through both manifest and

latent analysis I have provided a myriad of potential interpretations that address my first

research question; how selected GSPD offices have characterized the skills imperative in

various programmatic student guides.

Addressing my second research question (RQ2); *How do selected institutions*

demonstrate commitment to graduate student professional development, the relevant

themes are;

> *Theme 8: Comprehensive integration of professional development strategic and*
> *implementation plans*
> *Theme 6: Safeguard student learning supports within the competency taxonomy*
> *process*
> *Theme 4: Comprehensive professional learning framework (principles, practices and*
> *whole person-centred approaches)*
> *Theme 3: Between a learner-centred process and competency-centred program*

Across all student guides and aspirational documents, each selected institution

demonstrated various forms of commitment to graduate student professional

development at the policy, program and practice levels.

Aspirational texts of institutional strategic planning documents were a third data

form. Using Senge (2006) as lens for identifying a set of organizational learning

practices, I discovered only one institution with a nested set (three) of institutional and

unit level strategic planning documents (Alberta) that identified unit level values,

mission, vision, and a deliberate organizational learning culture. Operational and implementation goals and plans for supporting graduate student professional development (*Theme 8*) accompanied the overarching strategic plan. Unlike the other institutions in my study, the University of Alberta's IDP student guides and documents possess, what I consider as, a form of *pedagogical*, *dialogical* and *ideological fidelity.* Hence, this final theme, re-confirmed in both manifest and latent analysis, was derived from the presence of and specific references to a comprehensive set of pedagogical practices (The IDP, career exploration workshops, tied to degree completion, autonomous learner, supported and structured learning, etc.) (*Theme 8*) and strategic plans *(Theme 4).*

Compared to the other institutions selected for this study, UAlberta was the only institution that had a publicly available unit level strategic plan. Authors of the FGSR plan succinctly contextualized *(Theme 5)* current graduate sector issues and devised a comprehensive plan (including the additional IDP strategic, operational and implementation plan) for addressing quality improvements in graduate education (*Theme 8).*

By virtue of the availability of Alberta's multi-leveled (institution, unit and initiative) plans, one might infer that it reflects a more developed organizational capacity and an institution proactively responding to the current 'skills imperative' culture and public sector accountability. It also suggests the institution's commitment of significant human resources to both strategic, operational and implementation processes.

None of the student guides explicitly referenced or cited any learning principles (i.e. adult learning, experiential, etc.) or evidence-based practices to explain their GSPD approaches (*Theme 4*). The range of 'professional development' workshop topics were mostly oriented to academic progress or research related themes at one institution (Calgary) yet excluded from the roster of approved professional development topics at another institution (Alberta) (*Themes 3 and 4*).

Hence, selected institutions tend to conceptualize 'professional development' and the aim of GSPD differently which fundamentally influences the underlying logic, program design and key messages in their student guides (*Theme 7 and* 5). The underlying propositional logic of each institutional guide was oriented differently. Queens' Grad Map was primarily oriented around the 'major map' and degree-to-career outcomes for new prospects. Calgary's MyGradSkills' was primarily oriented on reframing doctoral education in preparation for industry by attributing narrowly defined aspirational professional identities. And, lastly, Alberta's ABC IDP document, was primarily oriented around the individual's developmental tasks of self-awareness, career exploration and skill assessment. As represented by the program descriptions in these guides, only one institution (Alberta) subscribed to a professional development program that was a learner-centred process (*Theme 3*) and evidenced the value of safeguarding learner supports (structured and autonomous, verification, tied to degree completion, etc.) (*Theme 6 and 3*). Other institutions (Queens and Calgary), appeared to focus on the breadth and number of workshops and activities to assure maximum coverage of priority competencies and subjective measures of student success (*Theme 6 and 3*).

The 'skills imperative' has spurred new collaborations and tremendous program innovations across the GSPD network. Comparing unique programmatic approaches (Queens, Calgary and Alberta), as represented in student guides, has provided an opportunity for me to deeply examine implicit and explicit conceptual frameworks, principles and underlying practices.

The aim of this socio-narrative inquiry was to utilize these new insights to guide my own program development and professional practice. In the following section (Chapter 5), I will conclude by discussing these research findings within the context of the current literature, provide future considerations and review the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusions and Considerations

The primary purpose of this qualitative socio-narrative inquiry was to understand how specific professional development units frame or characterize the 'skills' imperative and the institutional commitments and supports for professional development. Ultimately, my aim was to understand implicit and explicit developmental frameworks employed in the creation of professional development programming. Three institutions selected were identified by a Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) report *(Graduate Student Professional Development: A Survey with Recommendations, 2012)* as professional development units that were advancing professional development programming. This chapter includes a discussion of these findings in the context of the current literature and will conclude with a discussion on the limitations of this inquiry with considerations for future research.

Before I set out to discuss these findings in relationship to the literature, I would like to explain my professional approach. In my role, as the Training and Development Coordinator in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, I have been searching for the newest innovation or the ultimate 'golden nugget'; scouring the literature and observing professional development and skill enhancement activities from other institutions across Canada and the United Kingdom. I was drawn to each professional development program and graduate student guide in my study primarily because each office had been recognized for developing innovative programming by our national professional

development network. In setting a new direction for our Vitae Professional Development office and considering the context of the new skills imperative, I recognized the value of an in-depth analytical exercise to uncover what I interpreted as potential communication, programmatic and framework gaps for many of us.

In my role, graduate student feedback shapes all aspects of program design and delivery. I seek out and invite both formal and informal feedback to understand the graduate life-cycle; how students access information, resources and campus services; and, priority 'skills' programming in the context of students' needs, interests and preferences. As a non-traditional graduate student -- and an employee --- I recognize the professional and institutional imperative to improve equitable access of service. And, I've attempted to consider the broadest graduate student motivational context in my interpretation of the 'guides' described. Although I had previously skimmed each guide prior to undertaking my study, I could see fault lines and merit in each of the program approaches, and the communication of these programs through the selected guides.

As a result, I adopted a deliberate integrative document and narrative analytical process that entailed approximating manifest findings alongside both plausible and latent interpretations. Basically, I systematically engaged in one analytical process with one data source at a time -- describing preliminary findings -- so that I wouldn't jump ahead of myself nor muddle authentic discovery. And, although I've described this previously in linear terms, I envisioned these analytical and interpretive processes as resembling a hologram of Fibonacci's spiral; expanding similarly from the elemental inquiry of text and story in an attempt to understand programs, guides and plans.

Frank's dialogical narrative analytical process provided the opportunity to engage critically with the potential materiality of various narrative features of the guides and institutional documents. Thus, deepening my understanding of the narrative, narrator and how each guides' narrative features may be interpreted by the story 'catcher'; both graduate student and practitioner. This phase of inductive analysis, not only satisfied the intentions of a socio-narrative inquiry, but also, produced rich descriptions and unanticipated critical insights that generated a dialogical narrative analytical tool (see Table 1) that may have practical applications in my professional practice.

Surprisingly, ideological tensions or professional practice considerations for GSPD practitioners have yet to appear in any of the reports or literature that I've consulted. In fact, it appears that these tensions I've identified are at right angles to the program assessment and credentialing priorities identified in the most recent CAGS report (Lypka & Mota, 2017). Although co-curricular professional development programs at the graduate level have been established on several Canadian campuses, many of the GSPD offices have evolved well beyond the administrative formalization and taxonomy of skills' priorities earlier identified by Rose (2012).

In a more recent CAGS report, programmatic innovations including integrative curricular elements, compulsory and recognition features have been noted. However, more recently, and considering the current culture of accountability, key priorities outlined in this report have also included the development of program assessment methods *(Graduate Professional Development: Towards a National Strategy – Phase 1)* (Lypka & Mota, 2017). The second phase of this report (Mota, 2017), aimed to identify

'concepts, best practices, and challenges in assessment'--- also suggested the potential of connecting GSPD program outcomes to classic student career attainment (ie. employed in field, application of graduate skills, etc.) (p. 1).

Both reports acknowledge the value of creating a conceptual programmatic assessment framework, and suggest a potential move toward accreditation standards, yet cite academic learning assessment literature from the undergraduate and college sector. Considering this climate of performance and accountability, it appears that the conceptual work ahead is on a trajectory to construct measures, attempting to assess the outputs (program and student outcomes), before conceptualizing or reconceptualizing the quality of effectiveness of the inputs (learning theories, frameworks, approaches etc.). It's clear that more research is needed in this area.

These findings are particularly meaningful in the context of the current culture of transparency and multi-stakeholder accountability in higher education, but particularly for the highly astute graduate student. Institutional branding has become an accepted practice for academic program and co-curricular programming recruitment. GSPD offices might revisit the logic proposition of their office branding to assure that the program narratives are not overreaching; making attributions of program participation leading to skills acquisition, certain aspirational identities, or lead to narrow career outcomes.

Considerations and Applications

Since, the scope of my project is limited to a small audience, I will briefly outline (in bullet point form) the implications of my findings for my own professional practice.

And, perhaps, insights from this research project may also provide helpful guidelines for individuals developing co-curricular professional development programs at other institutions.

<u>Practitioner, Institutional and National Level (Practice/Theory/Policy)</u>

- In collaboration with traditional and non-tradition graduate students, assess and co-design professional development programming, progress tools and an IPD initiative sensitive to the broadest motivational context yet customizable to the individual.
- In collaboration with key campus partners (Centre for Pedagogical Innovation, Office of Research Services, Career, Co-op & Experiential Education and Library) create a community-of-practice to re-conceptualize professional learning, design and conduct research projects, co-develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for graduate student professional development, etc.
- Explore narrative methodologies to reconceptualize professional development, learning guides and supports.
- Beyond customary participation measures and satisfaction surveys, explore new qualitative metrics that align with graduate student transformative experience and post graduate outcomes.
- In consultation with leadership teams, determine the most efficacious institutional policy levers to impact meaningful outcomes and sustainable change.
- Develop a comprehensive integration of both strategic and implementation plans for key professional development initiatives (IDP).
- Revise current GSPD office benchmarking indicators to include professional learning frameworks and approaches.

Limitations of the study

This intensive narrative analysis did allow for a plausible and comprehensive exploration of narrative interpretations, deeper analysis of divergent programmatic trajectories and approaches and assisted in the development of a set of analytical questions to potentially expand benchmarking criteria. Hence, analysis, did not entail deductive conclusions on best practices but explored divergent programmatic trajectories and approaches.

I was not proposing to explore or identify priority skills or competencies or the acquisition of, the sites of learning, subjective assessments or self-acknowledgement aspects or any other learning variables. But rather, I closely examined a small sample of institutional documents to gain some insights on how institutions characterize the skills imperative and subsequently articulate support for graduate student professional development with an aim to construct a conceptual framework to guide my future work and practice.

Because the graduate student professional development subsector is relatively new, institutional best practices have not been established nor thoroughly studied; hence the number of institutional documents were limited. Additionally, in this climate of institutional competition, I anticipated that I may only have access to publicly available aspirational documents as most unit specific operational or strategic documents may not be readily available nor yet created.

Document and content narrative analysis are interpretive qualitative processes. The documents or 'guides' are merely textual representations of a service and program and cannot provide the intricate and complex relational facets of the people, practices, and service experience for graduate students participating in professional development programming. This representational dilemma is frequently cited as a critical methodological consideration in many qualitative and socio-narrative inquiries (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2007; Frank, 2012; Mattingly & Garro, 2000; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012).

The outcomes and key findings of this research project will have practical application in my current role; however, they are not as nearly as meaningful as the methodological insights that I've developed.

Future Directions

As a result of this research project, I would be more inclined to engage in research projects that explore multi-mentorship models, graduate student motivational context, pre-professional identity and strengths-based models for supporting graduate student development. At the program development level, I foresee the value of conducting research on individualized professional learning frameworks, implementation science and user experience for self-paced online skills translation. In the context of curricular and co-curricular integration, I wonder how the classic progress reporting process might be customized to better serve graduate students in their transition to post-graduate work and fields yet to be imagined. And, finally, this socio-narrative inquiry introduced me to the concept of how 'stories act' and the dialogical analytical process that will most likely shape my future research projects and professional practice.

At the outset of this thesis, I referenced a quote by philosopher Otto Neurath who was best known for sustaining a well-documented debate regarding the pragmatic constructs of scientific protocols (Cat, 1995). Neurath's general idea is that the basic premise of any construct, narrative included, contains partial truths. The whole truth or the original vessel, like the 'ship on the open sea', is unavailable to us. Thus, the best we can do, in the context of our own truth, is to remain aboard and repair one hole at a time in an effort to continually evolve oneself and one's knowledge.

As a result, this research project will help me to mindfully take note of various dialogical, ideological and pedagogical tensions that arise in my own work and will foster my continued research interests in designing 'high fidelity' co-curricular professional development programming for graduate students enrolled in research-intensive streams. And, perhaps, insights from my project may inadvertently advance professional learning benchmarking projects for graduate professional development offices and our collective organizational development in a continual effort to *reconstruct it from the best components'*.

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Appendix A:

Salient Convergent and Divergent Manifest Features of Graduate Student Guides

Structural and Design Features of the document:
- Standalone concise document to provide overview of program; dated (both creation and revision dates), clearly articulates purpose, audience and author/s;
- Follows a narrative sequential structure (beginning, middle and end) and has all narrative components; with an introduction, sub-headings, rationale, value proposition, body, closing, etc.
- References to the availability of both print/online versions
- Assures all URL address for additional resources or devoted webpage are live;
- Document layout utilizes essential information in call-out boxes to reinforce important programmatic features; time-constraints, procedures, etc.
- All process-based information depicted graphically and textually.
- Compartmentalize contact information, directory or calendar-based information in a format congruent to usage. For example, embedded ULR links to services in dense descriptive text does not support ease in navigating or accessing a service.
- Balance of both persuasive and procedural elements.

Word selection, tone, voice qualities and audience features:
- Consistent style, tone, voice and use of possessive adjectives;
- Word selection can inadvertently delimit audience; address both traditional and non-traditional students, all degree pathways;
- Clarify terms if customarily used in academic or curricular context to avoid readers' confusion (i.e. map, degree map, completion, supervisor/mentor, career curriculum, professional development, transferrable skills, etc.);
- Assess assumptions about academic career trajectories or ascribing a hierarchy of values to specific attributes;
- Assess interpretation of 'skills' discourse; assure practice does not delimit career prospects or imagined futures;
- Use whole-person references; guarding against delimiting and narrowing identities of 'the student'

Program features:
- Program aim and purpose clearly stated; supports a form of progress and development; built-in completion mechanisms; learner supported procedural documents with clear completion milestones (stages and time-stamped);
- Clarity in what constitutes progress; expectations, requirements and outcomes readily attainable by students enrolled in all degree pathways;
- Consider an integrative model of academic apprenticeship or formative development elements into other spheres of development (professional, personal and scholarly);
- Adopt a multi-mentorship approach; that may preserve the integrity and role of supervisor as scholarly mentor;

- Expand coaching and mentorship roles to others in graduate community.
- Normalize professional learning and behaviours (i.e. IDP, tracking, goal planning, reflection etc.) as a transferrable process to the working world;

Student-centred:
- Consider potential student burdens; fulsome workshop calendar has potential to create burden of choice and consumptive value when considering workshop attendance expectations,
- Adopt practices and approaches that foster student-agency; responsibility to self-exploration, safeguarding the IDP document, tailor PD workshops inspired by IDP(U ofA), etc.
- Transparent tripartite accountability (sign-off milestone accomplishment with GPA, supervisor and Dean – Brock);
- verification of IDP completion (GPD – Uof A).

Institutional leadership, commitments and administrative features:
- Consultative university-wide process throughout design and implementation phase;
- Customizable to all departments and faculties (UofA);
- Reference applicable policy directives; instituting a university-wide 'requirement' (UofA),
- Verification and progress supports ---- various forms of supported learning and accountability to staff identified as support people (Brock and U of A).
- Implicit and explicit recommendations and endorsements extoling various developmental and career values; unclear underlying assumptions or vested interests.

Author/Narrator:
- Clearly explicate goals and intentions of lead authors to determine fit-for-purpose; is the document intended to ease an administrative process or service, address an information or institutional services gap, integrate several institutional processes, or support student learning;
- Conscious of hidden assumptions and biases, for example: workshop completion fallacies -- translates to skills acquisition;
- Consider narrative coherence when adopting a multi-authored document and how that impacts narrator reliability and veracity of argument or value proposition.

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Knowledge-based economy (KBE); used interchangeably with 'knowledge economy', the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 1996, p.7) defines KBE as "economies which are directly based on the production, distribution, and use of knowledge and information".

Skills; the term 'skills' is loosely defined, without qualification, intentionally so as not to preclude definition, infer any limits through description, terminology or classification nor steer the research in a certain direction. Canadian Association for Graduate Studies has defined 'skills' as "behaviours that can be learned, that can be improved with practice, that require reflection, and that benefit from ongoing improvement".

Competencies; a competency area entails a constellation of associated skills, requisite knowledge and personal attributes required to perform a task. Competencies are not to be confused with 'competence'; the quality of performance or level of mastery.

Professional development; may include both formal or informal approaches and learning opportunities situated in practice, and most often refers to the activities associated with professional learning.

Professional Learning; refers to the continuous learning and development of the individual within the context of work.

Graduate student professional development (GSPD): are ancillary, concurrent non-academic professional learning opportunities to prepare master's and doctoral students for diverse career pathways.

Personal/individual/professional development planning (IDP, PDP); 'a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development' as defined in the *Guidelines on Progress Files* (QAA, 2001).
'The emphasis in the definition is placed on the individual's 'ownership' of the process. But the reference to the process being 'structured and supported' means that there is a challenge to, and possibly even an obligation on, higher education institutions to provide the structure and support that is needed', as stated in the Dearing Report (National Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997)

Higher Education (HE); of or pertaining to the post-secondary sector.

Research-intensive; for the purposes of this study, the graduate student population refers primarily students enrolled in research-intensive streams; a doctorate or master's

thesis or major research paper stream - distinct from a course-based or professional masters (ie. Engineering, accounting, etc.).

Graduate Student Professional skills: "Professional skills" refers to both academic skills and transferable skills and competencies of other kinds that graduate students will need to acquire as 'carry forward' or work-ready skill sets applicable in workplace settings of many kinds' (Rose, 2012).

Perceived or subjective employability: Perceived employability refers to ''self-perceived ability to attain sustainable employment appropriate to one's qualification level'' (Rothwell et al., 2008, p. 2).

Pre-professional identity (PPI); an emergent conceptualization of graduate employability and identity that is constructed and cultivated within a HE *landscape of practice* (Wenger, 2006); a 'complex collection of relevant and interacting communities which can enhance student learning in varying ways…a rich setting for students to experience and engage with different entities (communities)' (Jackson, 2016)

Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS)

Appendix C

Brock's Progress Report

APPENDIX B – Progress Report Form

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Program: _____MA _____MSc

Undergraduate Degree: _____

Institution & Year: _____

Major: _____

1ˢᵗ Registration Grad Prgm: _____

Advisory Committee:

Supervisor (NAME/EMAIL):

_____

Member (NAME/EMAIL):

_____

Member (NAME/EMAIL):

_____

Member (NAME/EMAIL):

_____

Advisory Committee Approved: _____
                    (initialed by AD, R&GS)

Course Requirements and Grade:
Required: 5N01 _____ Grade: _____

Methods: _____

Elective 1: _____

Elective 2: _____

Elective 3: _____

Date Coursework Completed: _____

Research Topic/Thesis Title: _____

_____

_____

Date of Proposal Defence: _____

Committee Members Present: _____

_____

Proposal Approved: Yes   No

Date: _____ _____
     (initialed by AD, R&S)

Ethics Review(s)

Human Ethics Review Required: Yes No Animal

Protocol Review Required: Yes No

BioHazard(s) Review Required: Yes No

Date Ethics Approval received: _____

Protocol Number: _____

Thesis Progress:

Date **Data Collection** begun: _____

Date **Data Collection** complete: _____

Date **Data Analysis** complete: _____

Date **First Draft** Submitted to Supervisor: _____

Committee Approval of Thesis for Defence:

Date of Meeting: _____

Anticipated Date To Make Thesis Corrections: _____

Suggested External Examiner: _____

Alternative External Examiner: _____

Suggested   Date   of   Defence: _____

Alternative Date: _____

Supervisor Initials on Behalf of Advisory Committee that the Thesis is Ready for Defence: _____

Thesis Defence:

Thesis Defence Date: _____

External Examiner: _____

Chair of Defence: _____

Defence Result: _____

_____

Thesis Corrections Completed: _____
                    (Supervisor initials + date)

Program Completion: _____
                         Date

Appendix D
University of Alberta's ABC of the IDP

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES & RESEARCH

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## The ABCs of the Professional Development Requirement
Faculty and Staff

The University of Alberta's Professional Development Requirement includes:

1) an individualized career plan document called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and
2) the completion of eight hours of professional development activities inspired by the career plan.

The ABCs are as follows:

A Access the IDP workbook. Students are required to work from the Individual Development Plan (IDP) workbook. Students who are returning to graduate studies after years of professional experience may wish to use the Individual Development Plan for Professionals (IDP Pro) workbook.

B Be specific. As part of their IDP, graduate students research three careers or goals, and these will be as diverse as the students and their field of study. Supervisors should review any departmental specific requirements for professional development and guide students to complete those activities as part of the eight hour requirement.

C Complete the IDP. Students receive guidance through a three part IDP workshop series and an IDP Online Workshop (Part 2). There are also tip sheets, an IDP Review Guide for Students, and an IDP Review Guide for Faculty.

D Deadlines. To help students take advantage of internships and other professional opportunities available on campus, there are deadlines for completion. The IDP must be finalized and reviewed by a supervisor or career mentor.

E Eight hours of PD activities. Students will find, participate and log the eight hours of PD activities that interest them, inspired by their IDP and/or advised by their department. The activity must meet the professional development activities guideline and be approved by the department to count towards the eight hours. The PD Opportunities Guide lists some of the available options.

F Forms. When both the IDP and eight hours of PD activities are finished, students need to complete and submit a supervisor/career mentor signed IDP/PD Completion Form to their department. The IDP is kept by the student.

G Goal setting. IDPs are used by professionals to help them achieve their life goals. We recommend supervisors or career mentors review it annually with students.

Completing the Professional Development Requirement

Students complete IDP
- 3 career paths/goals
- self assessment
- timeline

→

Students review IDP with supervisor/ career mentor and seek guidance for PD activities

→

Students complete 8 hours of PD activities

→

Students submit a supervisor/ career mentor signed IDP/PD Completion Form to department

→

Students review IDP annually with supervisor /career mentor (recommended)

Deadlines for Completion

- IDP
  - Within 12 months of a program's commencement for master's students
  - Within 18 months of a program's commencement for doctoral students
- Eight hours of PD activities
  - By time of program completion for master's students
  - Within 3 years of a program's commencement for doctoral students
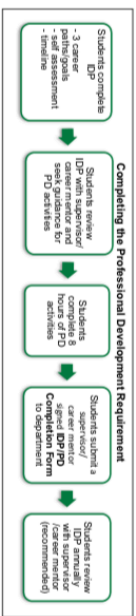
Completing the Eight Hours of Professional Development Activities

As students complete the IDP self-assessment of their skills and attributes in the IDP package, they should be able to identify their career goals and skill gaps. Students are encouraged to find the professional development activities that align with their individual career interests to fulfill the eight hour requirement.

Professional Development Activities Guideline*

A professional development activity fulfils the University of Alberta Professional Development Requirement if it contributes to the acquisition of skills, knowledge or mindset and includes all of these three components:

- comprises of formal training or active learning with an assessment component (self-assessment, reflection, quiz, write-pair-share, evidence of knowledge application)
- falls outside of research methods training, capstone project, thesis or equivalent, and required practicum
- supports the career goals and/or seven skills/competencies identified in the individual development plan

*Note: This updated professional development activities guideline applies to all sessions starting Fall 2017. Previous professional development sessions will still be recognized for professional development credit.

The Seven Skills/Competencies (As outlined in the IDP)

- Creativity
- Communication
- Confidence
- Scholarship
- Ethical Responsibility
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration

What Activities Do Not Fulfil the Requirement?

The following (unless otherwise stated) do not fulfil the eight hour requirement:

- Sessions used towards the Ethics and Academic Integrity Requirement
- Presenting a talk or poster
- Teaching Assistantships, Research Assistantships
- Serving as a mentor
- Information sessions to highlight resources or programs

Reviewing the Eight Hours of Professional Development Activities

Students are expected to conduct their professional development activities with the same integrity they apply to all other areas of their graduate program. Students are responsible for keeping track of (and safeguarding) their own PD activities and for gathering the proof of attendance. Students can demonstrate that they have attended sessions through a variety of ways. Departments will determine what they consider acceptable evidence. Options include:

1. Google sign-in is available at all FGSR events. Students receive a confirmation of their sign-in through email, which they retain as evidence of their attendance.
2. Students can sign a Declaration of Attendance. The presenter at the session/workshop also signs the form to verify attendance.
3. Many online courses provide students with a certificate of completion/participation.
4. Departments may choose to develop and use a PD record book. Students verify their attendance by having session presenters sign the document. Some departments record the Ethics and Academic Integrity Requirement this way.

Questions about the Professional Development Requirement can be directed to:

Deanna Davis, PhD
Professional Development Instructional Design Specialist
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
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Revised August 2017

Arts Leadership MA / Arts Management GRADUATE DIPLOMA *

MASTER OF ARTS (MA)/GRADUATE DIPLOMA (GDip)

	DIPLOMA PHASE	MA STUDY PHASE	MA PRACTICUM
ACHIEVE YOUR ACADEMIC GOALS			
MAXIMIZE YOUR PROFESSIONAL ARTS TRAINING			
BUILD SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE			
ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY			
EXPAND YOUR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES			

Visit careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps.html for the online version with links!

* This map is intended to provide suggestions for activities and careers, but everyone's abilities, experiences, and constraints are different. Build your own Grad Map using our online **My Grad Map** tool!

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

WHERE CAN I GO?

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Queen's UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies FAQs

What do I need to know to APPLY?

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- A minimum B+ average in the last two years of an Honours (4-year) Bachelor's program.
- Students with humanities-based backgrounds or from traditionally unrelated fields may also be considered for admission if they can demonstrate professional equivalency through prior experience in Arts administration.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Statement of Interest:** Applicants can submit a statement of interest of up to 2000 characters.
- Two reference letters, either academic or professional.
- If English is not a native language, prospective students must meet the **English language proficiency requirements** in writing, speaking, reading, and listening. The School of Graduate Studies requires the following minimum scores: TOEFL (paper-based): 550, (2) TOEFL iBT Writing (24/30), Speaking (22/30), Reading (22/30), Listening (20/30), for a total of 88/120 (applicants must have the minimum score in each test as well as the minimum overall score), or (3) IELTS: 7.0 (academic module overall and band score), or (4) PTE Academics 65.

KEY DATES & DEADLINES

- Applications will be processed as they are received.
- **Final application due:** January 15
- **Notification of acceptance:** As they are received and processed.
- **Classes start:** May 14

Before you start your application, please review the **Graduate studies application process**.

What about FUNDING?

There is no guaranteed funding for students. However, students may apply for Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant positions. Most students will also undertake a paid professional internship in the winter term.

Application FAQs

Application FAQs

How do I use this map?

Whether you are considering or have embarked on graduate studies at Queen's, use this map to plan for success in five overlapping areas of your career and academic life. The map helps you explore possibilities, set goals and track your individual accomplishment. Everyone's journey is different — the guide offers options for finding your way at Queen's and setting the foundation for your future. To make your own customized map, use the online **My Grad Map** tool.

Where can I get help?

Queen's provides you with a broad range of support services from your first point of contact with the university through to graduation. Ranging from help with academics and careers, to physical, emotional, or spiritual resources – our welcoming environment offers the programs and services you need to be successful, both academically and personally. Check out the **SGS HABITAT** for available resources.

What is the community like?

At Queen's, graduate students from all disciplines learn and discover in a close-knit intellectual community. You will find friends, peers and support among the graduate students enrolled in Queen's more than 130 graduate programs within 50+ departments & research centres. With the world's best scholars, prize-winning professional development opportunities, excellent funding packages and life in the affordable, historic waterfront city of Kingston, Queen's offers a wonderful environment for graduate studies. Queen's is an integral part of the Kingston community, with the campus nestled in the core of the city, only a 10-minute walk to downtown with its shopping, dining and waterfront. For more about Kingston's history and culture, see Queen's University's **Discover Kingston** page.

Queen's | DAN SCHOOL OF DRAMA AND MUSIC

Annie Bello, Graduate Assistant
(613) 533-6000 ext. 74336
bello@queensu.ca
sdm.queensu.ca/graduate-programs

Arts Leadership MA/Graduate Diploma in Arts Management Map

Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies

GRAD MAP FOR MA STUDENTS ⬇

DEVELOPING OUR CULTURAL LEADERS

Why GRADUATE STUDIES IN ARTS LEADERSHIP?

Ours is a laddered program where students can receive a Graduate Diploma in Arts Management with the successful completion of the first term, or choose to complete the MA in Arts Leadership with the successful completion of second and third terms. Students receive a 360° view of the arts industry with courses in arts philanthropy and major gifts, arts marketing, cultural policy, strategic thinking and planning, contract negotiation, industrial relations, and an introduction to financial and management accounting. They are exposed to, and taught by, top practitioners in the arts industry who provide a focus on experiential learning through live site research assignments and a final term practicum placement in an arts organization to serve as a capstone project. Graduate students and their work are an important part of an ongoing research process that provides the community with ways of understanding natural, cultural, imaginative, social and technological phenomena.

Why QUEEN'S?

Queen's offers its students a perfect balance of engagement with rigorous academic programs and access to first class practitioners and arts facilities. Both the diploma and ARTSL MA programs are cross-disciplinary – taught by a combination of instructors from the Dan School of Drama and Music, the Master of Industrial Relations program, and the Smith School of Business. In addition, the campus boasts world class facilities including a major Performing Arts Centre, Art Gallery, and Library - all with senior staff whose management experience adds to the practical teaching environment. At Queen's, graduate students from all disciplines learn and discover in a close-knit intellectual community. You will find friends, peers and support among the graduate students enrolled in Queen's more than 130 graduate programs within 50+ departments & research centres. With the world's best scholars, prize-winning professional development opportunities, excellent funding packages and life in the affordable, historic waterfront city of Kingston, Queen's offers a wonderful environment for graduate studies.

Program OUTCOMES

- Acquire institutional management skills
- Gain a comprehensive understanding of the tenets of the nonprofit sector
- Receive guidelines for strategic thinking and implementing organizational missions
- Benefit from advanced marketing and development training
- Learn integrated approaches to arts advocacy and cultural policy
- Discern the special nature of negotiating Arts-related contract and collective agreements
- Plan for capital development projects and the related community integration
- Understand and serve as a proponent for the Creative Economy

Program STRUCTURE

The five core courses needed to complete the Graduate Diploma in Arts Management are offered during a single summer session of study at Queen's. After successful completion of the Graduate Diploma program, a student may continue on to pursue the MA program in Arts Leadership through the completion of one additional term of coursework in the Fall followed by a second "capstone" term involving a practicum placement in the arts industry.

School of Graduate Studies

Create an impact
www.queensu.ca/sgs

Queen's

Appendix F
University of Calgary – MyGradSkills Matrix

MY GRADSKILLS

Professional Development for Grad Students

EXPERT
LEADER
INNOVATOR
COMMUNICATOR

EXPERT

The primary reason for taking a grad degree: become an expert in your field.

Key skills:
- Reference management
- Research writing
- Lab management
- Lab safety
- Thesis writing
- Supervisory relationships

LEADER

Be confident in your skills and guide and inspire others.

Key skills:
- Personal effectiveness
- Networking
- Career awareness
- Career searching

INNOVATOR

Discover new ways of doing things and be a change-maker.

Key skills:
- Entrepreneurial thinking
- Problem solving
- Business skills

COMMUNICATOR

Communicating is a key skill, in academics and in industry.

Key skills:
- Writing
- Speaking
- Teaching and sharing knowledge

Our partners: Career Services | Environmental Health & Safety | Graduate Students' Association | Health Science Library | International Student Services | Leadership & Student Engagement | Mitacs | Research Services | Student Success Centre Students' Union Wellness | Taylor Family Digital Library | Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning | Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation | Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking

Other resources: Entrepreneurship & Innovation Option for Non-Haskayne graduate students | Summer Incubator

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

ucalgary.ca/mygradskills

Plan Your Professional Development
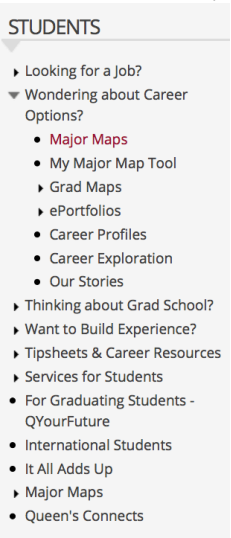
This guide shows MyGradSkills-endorsed workshops and a suggested timeline for when they may be most useful.

	Early	Mid	Late

Expert — This primary reason for taking a grad degree: to become an expert in your field.

Communicator — Communicating is a key skill in academics and in industry.

Leader — Be confident in your skills, and guide and inspire others.

Innovator — Discover new ways of doing things, and be a change-maker.

Consider an Entrepreneurial Thesis

Explore entrepreneurial training and support

Make an appointment with a Career Advisor

Compete in Three Minute Thesis (3MT)

Attend a Writing Bootcamp

Consider a Transformative Talent Internship

ucalgary.ca/mygradskills
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

August 2018

Appendix G
Example of 'First Pass' Manifest Data – Queens

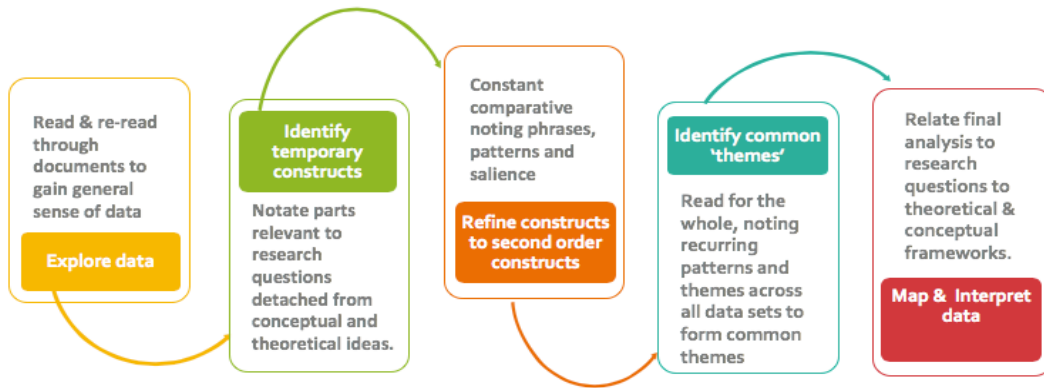| Document /Text 5 W and H.	Queens Copyrighted, Career Services, Queens University 2018-2019
PURPOSE OF guide/ progress/ pathway or plan	Degree Map for each Program Subtitle: 'Applying to and Navigating Graduate Studies' 'GRAD MAP FOR MA STUDENTS' 'Use this map to plan for success in five overlapping areas of your career and academic life. The map helps you explore possibilities, set goals and track your individual accomplishments. Everyone's journey is different – the guide offers options for finding your way at Queen's and setting the foundation for your future. To make your own customized map, use the online **My Grad Map** tool.'
Disclaimer of purpose	* This map is intended to provide suggestions for activities and careers, but everyone's abilities, experiences, and constraints are different. Build your own Grad Map using our online **My Grad Map** tool.
WHO	
The author/s	Careers, F of Graduate Studies, Grad Programs, Recruitment However, the acknowledgement to the Queens' key authors and original program model (Georgia State) is provided on the main webpage on career services *We would like to acknowledge the generous support we received from Georgia State University for their original idea of a Major Map tool, and the information they shared in the development process.* *The Major Maps were the recipient of the 2015 Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE) award for Excellence in Innovation (Student Engagement)* *Thank you to all the students and staff and faculty across Queen's who assisted with the project development, with special recognition to the project team of Sebastian Leck, ArtSci'15 (Project Assistant), Alice Zhu, Commerce'17(Project Assistant), Holly Matthias, ArtSci'16 (Communications), Joyce Hunter (Advising Services Manager, Faculty of Arts & Science), Christine Fader (Communications, Career Services), and Miguel Hahn (Project Lead, Career Services).* School of Grad Studies/ Expanding Horizons, not a lead link on Career Services:

Primary audience • 1st, 2nd, 3rd person. • Graduate Student degree pathways • All graduate students	Primary audience: Prospective students and applicants. Secondary student audience: Current graduate students
Secondary audience	Possibly Parents?
Endorsed: presence of Uni logo/size	Queens logo embedded in banner, together takes up 1/6th of the page. Top right of page. School of Grad Studies slogan 'Create and Impact' with graphic of Newton's cradle, a famous device used to demonstrate the conservation of energy.
Professional development branding/logo/slogan	'Expanding Horizons' is the branded name of Queens SGS Pro Development program. However, it is not a partner in the authoring of the grad maps.
Financial partners	Not included
External partners/resources	Not indicated
Internal partners	Not explicitly mentioned – however, implicit in the references and comprehensive nature of the degree map bundled with recruitment documents (that pitch the value of the program, faculty and institution),
Reference to support staff/faculty mentioned on guide	Several Student services offices are mentioned throughout the on-line guide – with hot links to services webpages. Degree maps are tailored to the Program and Faculty where the program resides. Additional 'diploma to degree' pathways are also featured in the degree maps.
WHAT (document features)	
Heading	Heading is customized for the specific academic program ie. Arts Leadership MA/Arts Management Grad Diploma
Subheading	No subheading
Orientation to purpose of the document	This appears as an astericks at the bottom right side of the map indicating * *This map is intended to provide suggestions for activities and careers, but everyone's abilities, experiences, and constraints are different. Build your own Grad Map using our online **My Grad Map** tool.'* And indicating on the bottom left-hand side, that an online version provides links! *'Visit careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps.html for the online version with links!* A clear instruction on the purpose, value and how the map could be used is not clear. The electronic version link, takes the reader to a website that explains: *'Need help navigating your way through grad school and beyond? Get program-specific advice on academics, research, networking, building experience, and launching your career all in one place. These maps provide suggestions - you don't have to follow all the recommendations. Use them to plan ahead, and find your own way at Queen's!* *While supplies last, print versions of the Grad Maps are available at your academic department, Career Services (3rd floor, Gordon Hall) or Graduate Studies (4th floor, Gordon Hall).'* This is the only orientation to the role and value of the maps. Almost like an abandoned tool...there is no 'what next', or suggestion on how to connect with an advisor after customization of the map. It appears as though Career Services is taking the place of the ultimate advisory body for consulting students about the degree maps ---- is this a variance on the 'degree guides' theme? This degree leads to this job?
Colour of background/	white

Colour of text	Dark charcoal grey, blue and white, Blue= links, white= headings, grey = content
Font style (bold, cap, serif, number of fonts, highlighted)	Arial/calibri, san serif Headings are capitalized, 2 fonts used, a third is used for the complete contact information name (times) almost like a business card font.
Document structured side A	Large 12X17 sized document. Side A structure is a matrix: • X- axis contains stages in the degree progress OR a early, mid, capstone progression. It appears as though each program customizes the progress milestone language that best fits the academic program ie. Getting started, Intermediate stage, wrapping up OR • Y-axis contains 5 broad goal categories: 1. Achieve Academic Goals 2. Maximize Training/Research Impact for MSc 3. Build Skill and Experience 4. Engage with Your Community 5. Launch/Expand your Career • A Call-out box, to feature important content: headings (capitalized) a) WHAT WILL I LEARN Which indicates that the student will learn 'valuable and versatile skills, such as' b) WHERE CAN I GO? This section lists a number of career areas.
Document structured side B	SIDE B: is entitle Grad Studies FAQ is another supporting document that is primarily a recruitment doc that features the program, FAQ about the application process, etc. Colour blocking is used: Blue, purple, yellow, red, amber, sage green in a hexagonal asymmetric graphic pattern (Queens logo centred)
Colour blocking	There isn't any colour blocking on the degree map: Colour is used horizontally as a progress arrow: to distinguish broad goal categories and segments dense **command toned/instructional text** into a continuum and goal. Colour blocking is used on SIDE B: the layout is not connected to SIDE A.
Word count	About 1,000 words
Number of workshops	Workshops are referenced within sentence structure, or student services description, so reader needs to read in the entirety of the text or paragraph to understand the reference to the service. Hard to determine number of categorization of workshops.
Reference to mission or mandate	No affective organizational statements that convey the value of, mission or mandate of the author of the document. Although copyrighted by Career Services, as the primary author. The only contact person is the 'Grad Assistant', full contact information that is located under the main heading 'What about Funding' on Side B of the program maps. It's difficult to detect what the aim of the document is…
Reference to calendar or prodev curriculum	*'Engage in the academic and professional training process with help from departmental supervisors, the Program's Grad Coordinators and the* **SGS Habitat***.'* *Check out professional development workshops from* **Expanding Horizons** *or the Graduate Student* **Career Forum** *to explore your career pathways.* *** Expanding Horizons is the Professional Development branded unit, within the School of Grad Studies. It is promoted initially in the first 2 paragraphs of the Diploma pathway.****
WHEN	
Call to action/ Call out	Three columns categorize basically a beginning, middle and end, time line continuum for activities to take place. 'Call out' language is used throughout. 'Check out' 'Learn about' 'Do some' 'Take Advantage of'
Published/updated	In 2018-2019 the document has a © symbol, indicating the ownership of the © license to Career Services.
Propose orderly sequence of activities, Begin and end language	Generally, there is a proposed sequence, but there isn't an explanation, rationale or logic to the order.
Self-determined, directed, language	** This map is intended to provide suggestions for activities and careers, but everyone's abilities, experiences, and constraints are different. Build your own Grad Map using our online* **My Grad**

	***Map** tool.* This * lowly asterisk (subheading located at the bottom right side of map), is the only default reference to self-agency, although the 3rd person narrator is dismissive and ambiguous.
Reference to academic cycle language	The column continuum is in reference to the academic cycle, but it's very loose and without actual time constraints or references to real time.
Pre-requisites for graduation	No reference to pre-requisites to graduation.
WHERE	
Guide located on website	On the Career Services web page… Home » Students » Wondering about Career Options? » Grad Maps
Navigation between webpages	First link in body of text is to 'Expanding Horizons' – takes the reader to the calendar of workshops. The second link doesn't work.
Multi points of entry or locations of guide on website	The links point to both the new website webpages of Expanding Horizons and the old website.
Hard copies available in what locations/multiple/	Hard copies, and web versions are offered as files alongside each other. On School of Grad studies page: Home » Graduate Programs **Programs & Degrees** • Health Sciences • Arts and Science • Engineering & Applied Science • Law And at the bottom of the Grad Program listing, webpage: another reference to the Career Services page. **Grad Maps** Need help navigating your way through grad school and beyond? Get program-specific advice on academics, research in one place. These maps provide suggestions - you don't have to follow all the recommendations. Use them to plan a Career Services website.
Physical Office or location mentioned in guide	'While supplies last, print versions of the Grad Maps are available at your academic department, Career Services (3rd floor, Gordon Hall) or Graduate Studies (4th floor, Gordon Hall).'
HOW	
Student Procedural instructions • Map • Guide • Calendar	Map with procedural directives. **My Major Map** Get what YOU want from school by tracking ideas, goals, and successes. Looking to take your degree and career plans to the next level? Use this MyMajorMap tool to make your own customized major map: MyMajorMap (PDF, 444 kB)	My Major Map (Accessible MS Word, 234 kB) https://careers.queensu.ca/students/wondering-about-career-options/my-major-map On the webpage, it references a PDF with instructions. My Major Map, is more about career planning – but it appears to be a tool for determining an academic decision. If you are feeling lost….then…you can attend a workshop, but the link is broken. And there isn't contact information to specific Academic Advisors.

	FAQs
	I'm feeling lost! How do I get started?
	Change can be scary. Many students feel confused and overwhelmed trying to figure out where to go and how to get there. The key is using this energy to take action earlier instead of letting it paralyze you Start by breaking things into smaller steps with the year by year plan. You don't have to figure it out all at once – just start at the beginning with a few ideas…
	How I pick the right major or plan?
	The "right" major is the one that fits you best. Reflect on things like your favourite subjects and related careers of interest. When you look at course descriptions or major maps, does anything grab your attention? Why? To get help check out the Choosing Your Major workshop, advice from Academic Advising in your department, or talk about options with a Career Counsellor.
Staff/Faculty Procedural instructions	No indication of consultation with a staff person, advisor, or anyone in an academic program. All the resource supports point only to a Career Consultants.
Certificates, transcript notes or condition of graduation	No indication of any form of incentive or acknowledgement, note of condition of graduation.
Tracking/Verification elements explained	Any offers of support directs students to career services; provided on a link on the 'My Major Map'. ALL the workshops are broken links. 'You've got skills' 'Choosing your Major workshop' 'Skills and Experience Workshop'
Tracking/Self-verification	There isn't any reference to reflection and 'tracking' is vaguely explained.
Who authorizes/verifies completion of progress, path or plan	Suggestion to take a workshop or schedule a meeting with a Career advisor – all roads lead to the Career Services. The text on the major maps and supplementary 'MyMajorMaps' worksheet --- propose the selecting a major is the major impediment to moving forward or progressing. It is confusing,

MY MAJOR MAP - *Get what YOU want from school by tracking ideas, goals, and successes.*

HOW TO USE THIS MAP:

1. Note careers of interest and skills/qualifications needed.

With some potential long-term goals in place, it will be easier to figure out what steps you need to take to get there! Need help figuring this out? Look at the Major Maps for ideas and then stop by Career Services to find out about all kinds of careers, what skills they need, and related programs.

2. Keep track of ideas and possible short-term goals

Note any interesting courses, clubs, conferences, exchanges, and other ideas that you come across on the map in the appropriate boxes. **Look at the Major Maps to get some ideas.** Get more ideas by talking to friends, profs, advisors or looking at websites like:

- AMS clubs: http://myams.org/clubs/clubs-categories.aspx
- Get Involved at Queen's: http://www.queensu.ca/learn/getinvolved

3. Track your accomplishments for future resumes and interviews

When you've accomplished one of your goals, this can be a great place to track all those little details you might otherwise forget. You can include key skills you learned or evidence of success. Check out the Skills and Experience workshop for ideas.

I'm feeling lost! How do I get started?

Change can be scary. Many students feel confused and overwhel to figure out where to go and how to get there. The key is using to take action earlier instead of letting it paralyze you. Start by b things into smaller steps with the year by year plan. You don't ha it out all at once – just start at the beginning with a few ideas…

How I pick the right major or plan?

The "right" major is the one that fits you best. Reflect on things l favourite subjects and related careers of interest. When you lool descriptions or major maps, does anything grab your attention? some help from Academic Advising, or talk about options with a Counsellor.

How do I figure out my career options?

You're in the right place. In fact that's one of the most valuable p university experience – a chance to explore, learn about the wor most importantly, learn about you. To go beyond the careers sug the Major Maps, stop by Career Services for drop-in advising, a c workshop, or a career counselling appointment.

WHY?	
Rationale for guide	Does not explain the partnership, institutional rationale for creating the maps, or the process entailed. There is a copyright symbol.
Value for students	Value for student is not clear on the primary document, the supplemental worksheet provides a very vague rationale about the value.
Context for grad student development	There isn't any evidence-based rationale, framework or literature to support their process or decision for adoption of the major maps approach.

Figure 1: Data Analysis Process

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS: Stage 1

1. Data set #1 (DS1): Grad Student Development Guides:
Progress, pathways and plans.
 Manifest and latent content analysis, make the obvious; obvious, the obvious; dubious, and the hidden; obvious. Combination of an inductive/deductive process.

	Obvious	Dubious	Hidden	Notes
Progress Document				
Pathway Document				
Plan Document				

2. Data set #2 (DS2): Researcher notes
 Read for the whole – note revelatory phrases, patterns and saliency. Noted embed deductive typologies. Combination of inductive and deductive.

	Revelatory Phrases	Patterns	Saliency	Notes
Entry 1				
Entry 2				
Entry 3				
Entry 4 etc.				

3. Data set #3 (DS3): Aspiration Documents from respective Universities.
 Open coding/ Inductive process: Read through data several times to create tentative labels or temporary constructs (see Thomas, 2009, p.198) detached from any theoretical or conceptual ideas. This is purely an inductive process using a constant comparative content analysis noting phrases, patterns and salience.

	Obvious	Dubious	Hidden	Notes
Document 1				
Document 2				

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS: Stage 2

Stage 2 analysis entails determining the connections between the patterns; the revelatory phrases that are salient and clustered across data sets to form common themes through a process of inductive and deductive reasoning.

	Documents	Patterns	Cluster	Themes
Data Set 1	Progress, Pathway & Plan Documents	Patterns, revelatory phrases, salience	Cluster	Theme
Data Set 2	Researcher Notes	Patterns, revelatory phrases, salience	Cluster	Theme
Data Set 3	Institutional Aspirational Documents	o/o, o/d, h/o	Cluster	Theme

DOCUMENTS ANALYSIS: Stage 3

Cross data set comparison and relate final analysis to research questions and theoretical & conceptual frameworks.

Research Questions	Dominant Themes	Theoretical/Conceptual Frameworks
1. Skills imperative characterized	Theme 1	
2. Institutional commitments	Theme 2	
	Theme 3	