An Investigation into Employee Engagement and Professional Development Policy
Creation and Implementation on Full-time Faculty Employees in the Ontario College
Sector: A Case Study

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
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Abstract

Concern for the importance of employee engagement amongst organizational leadership has been recognizable, albeit unevenly, wherever work processes require the enthusiasm, skill and judgement of employees in order to be successful. This point is identified in the industrial psychology and Human Resources literature at least as far back as the 1920’s, as exemplified in the work of Elton Mayo, for example, as well as other proponents of the Human Relations school. Today, in many sectors, the concern has returned. It is increasingly clear that engagement is linked to positive outcomes, both for individuals and for organizations. An increased interest in the engagement level of employees has highlighted the positive effects of employee engagement on organizational performance (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Kahn, 1992; Shuck, Rocco & Albornoz, 2011); however, I found in my literature review that relatively little is known about the impact of organizational policy creation and implementation on employee engagement. Complicating matters further is the existence of varied definitions and principles that made it difficult to compare findings and that contributed to challenges in the
current state of knowledge regarding employee engagement (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Saks, 2006). This research study was undertaken to extend and clarify an understanding of employee engagement rooted in an elaboration of concepts offered originally in Kahn’s influential ‘Engagement Model’ (1990). This approach argued by Kahn and his colleagues represents a key point of departure within the field of Human Resource Development (HRD) (Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck, Reio & Rocco, 2011; Shuck & Rose, 2013; Shuck & Wollard, 2010) by focusing on the employee experience. With this study, I aimed to fill an important void in the HRD literature (McGoldrick, Stewart & Watson, 2002). Examined in the context of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology specifically, this study’s contribution stems from a focus on understanding how employee engagement is impacted by the creation and implementation of professional development organizational policies, and how this affected the engagement of full-time faculty employees. Specifically, the objective of this study was to generate an exploratory and descriptive account of how professional development policy-making influences the engagement of full-time faculty at Durham College (Ontario, Canada).

This research examines the effect that the implementation of a professional development policy had on the employee engagement of full-time faculty employees. The evidence gathered through interviews was supported by systematic documentary review work. This study used thematic analysis to gain a better understanding of the experiences of participants. The interviews were defined by information rich quotations that were ultimately placed into thematic categories. Three key thematic categories emerged, and labeled as “Respectful and Valued Communication,” “Professional Development Roadmap,” and “Genuine Recognition.” This research presents a new framework for assisting college leaders to increase employee engagement and contributes to the HRD literature by illuminating theory-based strategies for
faculty employee involvement in the creation and implementation of professional development policies.

Key words: human resource development, employee engagement, organizational policy, full-time faculty employees, professional development, Ontario colleges.
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Acknowledgements

It has been said many times previously and my thesis is no exception, that one does not complete their thesis alone. First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Peter Sawchuk, my thesis supervisor. His guidance, direction and mentoring were critical to the completion of my thesis. Additionally, a very special thank you to Dr. Katharine Janzen and Dr. Brian Desbiens who agreed to serve on my thesis committee and provide guidance and encouragement throughout this process.

I would also like to thank Dr. Kathy Cowan Sahadath, who served as a supporter and sounding board for the many ideas and concepts introduced in my paper.

I would like to specially acknowledge the support from Durham College including President Don Lovisa, and most especially Dr. Elaine Popp who threw me a lifeline when I needed it most. I also want to express my gratitude to the 25 full-time faculty that stepped forward and voluntarily participated in my research.

To my four daughters who have always believed in me and motivated me to achieve the goals I have set for my life, thank you. To my very best friend, my wife (uxor) Debbie, thank you for always believing, supporting and encouraging me to be the best that I can and allowing me to reach for the stars. You supported and encouraged me to continue and finish my thesis, even when I faltered for a moment or two. You have always been with me along this journey, quietly encouraging and supporting me, plus being my chief editor. Your love, support and friendship were and continue to be my inspiration. You are the love of my life and so much more than that.

And one final thought:

“THE MORE THAT YOU READ,
THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL KNOW.
THE MORE THAT YOU LEARN,
THE MORE PLACES YOU’LL GO.”

~ DR. SEUSS
Chapter 1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore, describe and analyze the perceptions of full-time faculty employees at Durham College (Appendix J is the consent to name) in Oshawa, Ontario (Canada) with respect to employee engagement as impacted by the creation and implementation of professional development organizational policies. My hope is that the findings of this research will provide valuable recommendations to college leadership as well as fill certain, important gaps that I found in the HRD research literature more broadly.

Background of the Problem

One of the origins of this research is biographical. As a seasoned professional with over 38 years of senior management experience, I have always been intrigued and concerned with the impact that organizational policies can have on employee engagement. No matter what organizational policies, plans, purposes, procedures and supports are in place, in many ways, it is the employees themselves who must make use of, and thus activate, all of these elements as they attempt to define and direct their work. Indeed, this engagement process can take many directions (e.g., Lipsky 2010, p. 31). Street Level-Bureaucracy (2010) establishes the basic fact that “street-level bureaucrats” are “front-facing” public service workers that advance organizational policies and goals while effectively functioning as policy decision makers (Lipsky, 2010, p. 31). Lipsky’s valuable work was an insightful study of how public service workers function as policy decision makers in the day-to-day implementation of public programs. His study revealed how decisions made by overworked employees translate into ad-hoc policies that impact peoples’ lives. Lipsky maintained the need to strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector, such as healthcare, social services, education, and law enforcement. And, Lipsky’s work likewise raises the issue of how leaders in the public sectors
are developing new ways to align-street level (frontline) performance more tightly with organizational goals; however, they face several challenges, such as inadequate resources, media scrutiny, challenging fiscal efficiencies, and increasingly complex services provided to their clients.

Faculty staff, along with other employees at Durham College who do not formally create policy, would constitute a type of “street-level bureaucrats.” However, Lipsky’s argument diverges from the reality of the street-level bureaucrats in the Ontario college system in a salient fashion. Whereas Lipsky (2010) contended that the core dilemma of street-level bureaucrats revolves around overburdened employees grappling with public service resource rationing, the Ontario college system, and specifically Durham College, sees front-facing college faculty employees regularly underspend their professional development allocations annually (Professional Development: Budget and Actuals – Durham College, 2016). With the onset of financial crises and with it measures to create leaner and more austere public services, Durham College is somewhat of an anomaly in which public servants appear to have excess resources for personal development (Professional Development: Budget and Actuals – Durham College, 2016). Durham College has realized over a 30% growth in enrollment over the period of 2011/12 – 2017/2018 and continues to plan for modest growth going forward (Durham College 2016 Business Plan, 2016). This has not been the case for many colleges in the province who have realized reductions in enrolment over the past number of years and potentially into the future based on declining demographics (PWC 2016).

In an increasingly competitive educational services environment that continues to become more dynamic, organizations, and in this particular study, academic institutions, almost universally conclude that their employees hold great potential for generating and maintaining
organizational success (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2010). This realization has emerged among both practitioners and researchers in the field of HRD (Chalofsky, Rocco & Morris, 2014).

The Ontario college-sector provides the context for exploring these concerns. In this context, we see that the provision of a quality educational experience is paramount to the Ontario colleges’ success (Colleges Ontario, 2015a). By identifying and addressing the needs of employees, colleges can create an environment that both attracts and retains the best faculty whilst providing quality experiences for students. Without qualified, engaged, full-time faculty employees working at Ontario colleges, the commitment to offer quality post-secondary experiences could not be achieved. Innovative teaching and learning approaches, faculty development and support focused on student-centred learning facilitates opportunities for successful learning (Colleges Ontario, 2015b). Organizations increase their chances of positively impacting employee engagement by being as knowledgeable as possible concerning the key issues associated with policy development, the manner in which it is developed, and the way policies are understood and implemented.

In 2015, a new senior academic leadership team was appointed at Durham College and one of its goals was to address key issues linked to employee engagement. In direct conversation, Durham College’s academic leadership team expressed to my role as the Chief Administrative Officer, an interest in the fair and equitable implementation of the professional development policy in order to ensure that the college is employing a best practices approach. An employee engagement survey conducted at the college in 2014 that included faculty staff identified that enhanced professional development could contribute to improving employee engagement (Durham College Board Report, April 7, 2015). In this context, while the state of
employee engagement at the college is not entirely unclear, significant questions still remain. Similarly, we also find complications when we turn to the research literature.

As a practitioner and researcher in this field, discussion and scholarship around the employee engagement constructed in the HRD area has developed dynamically over the past decade (Storberg-Walker & Gubbins, 2007; Streumer & Kommers, 2002). For example, recent studies in HRD have focused on understanding the connections between work (Lawless, Sambrook, Garavan & Valentin 2011), the individual experience of work (Song, Kolb, Hee Lee & Kyoung Kim, 2012), and performance factors associated with an employee’s level of engagement within his or her work (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004; Shuck, Rocco & Alborno, 2011). These associations are linked to recent progressive movements in the HRD field, which support the humanization of work and places of work, the investigation into soft and hard approaches to human and resource development (Sambrook, 2011; 2012), and the increasing associations between human development, organizational structures, and the evaluation of performance within unified systems (Chalofsky, 2010).

Employee engagement is conceptualized within the HRD research literature as an employee’s cognitive, emotional and behavioural frame of mind in relation to organizational outcomes or performance (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). An employee’s cognitive frame of mind relates to their ability to problem solve and think logically and creatively in the workplace. An employee’s emotional frame of mind while at work refers to their experience of stress, pride, satisfaction, excitement and so on. A behavioural frame of mind is exemplified in an employee’s expression of emotion. This is often displayed through body language (intentional or unintentional) and is often understood by others as emotional intelligence.
It was noted by Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt and Diehl (2011) that employee engagement was an area of research with great, continued potential from a HRD perspective. Their initial research revealed several key factors responsible for influencing employees’ passion for their work and, through statistical analysis, they arrived at a set of key factors: organizational factors, job factors, and moderating factors. Organizational factors are influenced by the organization’s leadership, policies, procedures, and organizational systems. Job factors are shaped by aspects of the job, colleagues, or leaders. Moderating factors are guided by an individual’s perception of both organizational factors and job factors.

A dilemma emerges, however, from the coalescence of these scholarly contributions to the definition of employee engagement. The diversity in definitions of the term itself demonstrates the complexity of the concept, as different researchers approach employee engagement through different theoretical lenses. And, the result of this academic diversity poses a challenge in that there is no general consensus on what constitutes employee engagement, leaving employee engagement an ambiguous concept, left to be defined by whichever scholar is leveraged to establish a terminological framework. While science requires debate across alternative formulations, it is still important to note that for applied research as well as leaders, organizational policy-makers and employees seeking practical interventions, all this presents a serious challenge.

It is against this challenge that I turn to the work of William Kahn. The work of Kahn attempts to remedy and rectify the lack of a cohesive definition for employee engagement. This is done through an over-arching theory, which posits employee engagement as a multi-faceted construct (cf. Kahn 1990). More recent research offers some broader consensus in defining the characteristics of employee engagement, for example, as either emotional or intellectual
commitment to the organization (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005). As such, Kahn’s theory - while hardly the only approach considered in this research - is crucial in the authoring of this thesis as well as in achieving a comprehensive integration for the definition of employee engagement. The existence of the range of definitions for employee engagement, and Kahn’s attempt to pull these definitions together, were among the concerns that motivated this study.

While we can conceptualize employee engagement as a concept that exists in the realm of theory, in the present research it emerges empirically and analytically in relation to the creation and implementation of policy. Policy creation and implementation in organizations is defined as the documented set of guiding principles and procedures that an organization has established. They are typically created and approved by senior management or an oversight committee and have significant impact on the strategic success of the organization. Organizational policy has long-term implications for an organization and assists in determining its aims and methods or approaches (Selznick, 1969). However, I found there is a gap in the research literature as little attention has been directed to the impact organizational policy implementation can have on the construct of employee engagement. This identified gap in the understanding of the relationship between policy implementation and employee engagement provided an important, additional motivation for this research.

In summary, this study aims to address two important gaps identified in the HRD literature by improving the creation/implementation of professional development policies. One is the relationship of policy implementation to employee engagement and the second is the definition of employee engagement. Research concerning employee engagement and studies of corporate policy largely represent two distinct bodies of work that do not regularly inform one
another in literature. Although there are a wide range of disciplines that bear on the topic, HRD was selected as the central body of research for this study due to the importance/nature of its connection to work practices, employee engagement, organizational policy making as well as management of organizations as they exist today.

**Organizational Purposes and Rationale/Significance of the Study**

Building on the various origins and motives for this study introduced above, the purpose of this study is to develop a greater understanding of the experiences of full-time faculty employees in the process of professional development policy-making, an area that has not been thoroughly researched. In addition, this study will further provide an opportunity for employees to give voice to their experiences on the meaning of professional development and how this may impact their level of employee engagement. In the first instance, one of the most practical rationales for this study rests in the fact that this is an important issue for Durham College, the organization that employs me; and it is one in which the college offers a unique testing ground for the development of a deeper understanding. Durham College has invested in policies and practices that foster engagement and commitment in their workforce. In recognition of Durham College’s hard work in this area they have been named one of Greater Toronto’s Top Employers for 2016. This is indicative of the commitment and pride in Durham College and has led the researcher to draw on and share the personal relevance of this research.

**Personal Relevance of the Research**

As a senior human resource professional and chief administrative officer, I am responsible for ensuring that operations in the organization are conducted within the framework of the values and goals of the institution. Furthermore, I ensure that there is a supportive work environment where attention is focussed on creating a highly engaged and motivated employee
base. During my varied career, I have always been intrigued by what motivates employees to succeed at their jobs. In fact, even at a very early stage in my career while working for the Borough of Scarborough, I found myself in a leadership role where rules and regulations or policies and procedures came into play. How those policies and procedures were created and more importantly communicated to the applicable employees always piqued my interest, as I believed this was an area that could always be improved upon. Over the span of my career, I have worked at numerous large successful organizations and yet each organization used a similar approach to policy creation and execution. I always believed that there must be a better way, but I also believed that I needed a rationale and reasoning that would encourage people to do things differently. Through my continued academic studies and advancement in my career, I came to the realization that many organizational decisions are driven to improve productivity and reduce costs and there was not a real motivation to review the policy creation and implementations as a priority.

Upon joining Durham College in 2012, I was very pleased to learn of the mission, vision and values of the college because they deeply resonated with my personal values. The mission of the college is “The student experience comes first at Durham College.” (Durham College Strategic Plan, 2013-2016). In order to achieve such a mission, all employees must be focused on delivering that goal and employee engagement is a significant factor in achieving that purpose. Employee engagement is measured on a bi-annual basis at the college. When presenting the findings of a recent survey (2014), the Board of Governors and the senior management team expressed an interest in increasing the employees’ level of engagement. As I began looking at ways of improving the level of engagement at the college, I reflected back to my earlier concerns around policy creation and implementation and thought this would be an
excellent area to research in my doctoral thesis. As part of my research, especially when conducting the detailed literature review, my interests were elevated further through the identification of a gap where my research on policy creation and implementation could make a contribution to the scholarship in regards to HRD and employee engagement.

**Research Questions**

In response to the various gaps in the research literature, the organizational needs as well as the personal motivations I have briefly summarized, this study emphasizes a critical review and analysis of how organizational policy creation and implementation specific to professional development has impacted the full-time faculty employees at the study site, Durham College. Given my personal interest in the cause and effect of policy creation and implementation on employee engagement; the desire of Durham College to increase its levels of employee engagement and the identification of a gap in the scholarly HRD research literature on employee engagement, all provided the relevant input to guide the development of this thesis’s research questions.

The core research question for this study is as follows:

*How does the implementation and creation of professional development policies and procedures impact the level of employee engagement of full-time faculty employees at Durham College, in Oshawa, Ontario?*

This question serves as the guide for the assessment of the current scholarly conversation and provides a framework for the study’s specific research questions and its methodology. The additional layers of research questions implied by this overarching query are most appropriately addressed in Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology.
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

By way of introduction only, the roots of the study of faculty engagement within the faculty community can be traced back to Kahn’s influential work in 1990, originally derived from the field of psychology (e.g., Blau & Boal, 1985; Hackman, 1986; Kahn 1990). The theoretical framework that informed this study focuses specifically on Kahn’s study concerning the psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work, where he considered engagement at the physical, emotional and cognitive level across three psychological domains: meaningfulness, safety and availability. Kahn’s approach, I argue, represents the most influential attempt at a comprehensive integration across the multiple dimensions that constitute employee engagement, by addressing how engagement is influenced by three antecedent psychological conditions: the experience of meaningfulness of work (feeling that one experiences a return for the effort expended in working); the experience of psychological safety (feeling able to demonstrate engagement without fear of negative consequences); and the experience of availability (having sufficient personal resources to experience engagement) (Kahn, 1990; Kahn, 1992; Kahn, 2010). The power of Kahn’s approach is further enhanced by his demonstration that these three conditions were influenced by the nature of an individual’s work, the social environment, and personal resources and energy. In his 2010 study, Kahn advanced his claims by definitively stating:

Engagement is both very delicate and fragile, and quite resilient......People have a desire to engage. They have an instinctive drive to express who they are, and who they wish to be, and given a chance at work, they will do so. (p. 30)

Since Kahn’s original research, interest in engagement has developed further. Reviewed more comprehensively later in this thesis, this further development as it may relate to Kahn’s
work can be summarized as follows. Empirical studies and conceptual works on engagement have been discussed in the literature over the past 25 years and contributed to our understanding of the construct (Macey & Schneider, 2008; May, Gilson & Harter, 2004; Saks, 2006). However, although studies of engagement have previously occurred, such studies have been increasingly taken up by HRD scholars (Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012; Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

Kahn explains meaningfulness as the positive “sense of return on investment of self in the role of performance” (Kahn, 1990, p. 705). Kahn further describes psychological meaningfulness as a reaction to the individual’s sense of return for the psychological, cognitive and emotional energy contributed into the performance of a task. Individuals feel and realize meaningfulness when they consider themselves to be effective, relevant and not taken for granted, and that their contribution is needed, valued and wanted. Work meaningfulness indicates that individuals are more likely to devote their achievement to specific tasks rather than withholding. This action signifies the existence of engagement.

Building from this, the notion of psychological safety was described as the ability to show one’s self “without fear or negative consequence to self-image, status or career” (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). The certain, dependable, and clear conditions at work enable an individual to feel safer in their work-related activities, which in turn increases the opportunity for engagement to occur. The final domain was availability, and Kahn described this as the “sense of possessing the physical, emotional and psychological resources” (Kahn, 1990, p. 714) required to execute the task in a particular moment in time. This domain measured how attentive an individual was taking into account the various disturbances and interruptions they may experience in their workplace. However, Shuck and Wollard (2010) have extended this understanding of employee engagement by defining it as an individual’s cognitive, emotional and behavioural state that is
directed at fulfilling organizational goals. This was also aligned with May’s (2004) definition of
engagement, which also focused on the individual and how they approached their job
performance. There has been little research that broadens our understanding of the experience of
the employee. This study attempts to rectify the narrow understanding of the employee
experience by presenting the rationale for and specifics of a study exploring what impacts
employee engagement. This will be achieved through an analysis of the creation and
implementation of professional development policies for full-time faculty employees in one
Ontario college. The theoretical framework presented in Kahn’s 1990 Engagement Model acted
as a systematic review between this research’s purpose and the contributions from prevalent
literature, both in the psychological domain as well as emerging research from the employee’s
perspective.

Recent academic literature lead by Shuck (e.g., Shuck & Herd, 2012; Shuck & Reio,
2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010) has continued to build on Kahn’s original work and definition
from 1990. For instance, Shuck and colleagues identified employee engagement as a predictor
of work factors suggesting that employee engagement was a stronger predictor of positive
organizational performance. Their research identified a two-way relationship between employer
and employee compared to earlier constructs, which led to the finding that engaged employees
are more emotionally attached to their organization. Earlier work by Britt, Adler, and Bartone
(2001) also found that engagement in meaningful work could lead to perceived intrinsic benefits.
This job engagement is positively correlated to meaningfulness and the relationship between job
enrichment and engagement (May et al. 2004). Maslach et al. (2001) postulated a model that
also suggests that job characteristics are an important predictor of employee engagement. The
conversation regarding engagement began to shift with insights from these new findings. The
change from defining and measuring engagement to how engagement could most effectively and efficiently create an environment that leverages employee involvement was attributed to engage employees for optimal levels of performance. Shuck and Wollard (2009) agreed that all three of Kahn’s (1990) original domains were “important in determining one’s engagement at work.” This and other findings to be discussed later in this study have demonstrated the value of Kahn’s (1990) conceptualization as foundational for framing the construct of employee engagement. Or, as Shuck et al. (2011) summarize nicely:

The simultaneous investment of cognitive, affective and physical energies into performance-related outcomes represents something distinct and fundamental, differentiating engagement from other potentially related variables… Employee engagement is much more than what we see employees do; it is rather how employees experience and interpret the context around them and then accordingly behave. (p. 15)

Why was this important for the discussion in this research? While embracing Kahn’s original theory of engagement, I also rely on other theorists (Shuck & Herd, 2012; Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010) to buttress and complement the influential work done by Kahn. I contend that without an adequate understanding and more comprehensive definition of the phenomenon from the perspective of full-time faculty employees, there is less of an opportunity to expand our knowledge of employee engagement and of the influence of policy creation/implementation.

As a human resource practitioner, I employ a framework that is crucial to the ongoing survival and success of organizations’ HRD. Although there are a wide range of disciplines that bear on the topic, HRD was selected as the central body of research. HRD has been increasingly recognized as essential to organizational effectiveness covering various issues including
employee professional development, organizational change, and effective management of talent (Garavan & McGuire, 2010; Garavan, O'Donnell, McGuire & Watson, 2007). Evidence of the positive relationship between learning opportunities and the development of employee’s engagement has been observed (Shuck, Rocco & Albornoz, 2010); however, few research studies have concentrated on professional development and its influences on engagement.

The theoretical and conceptual model of the research in Figure 1 depicts the application of Kahn’s (1990) three dimensions of meaningfulness, safety and availability as a framework for examining the factors that influence employee engagement and organizational policy in the Ontario college sector. It identifies the essential literature that will be explored in relation to Kahn’s concepts associated with employee engagement. In addition, it illustrates the involvement of Human Resource Development (HRD) in this study as it focuses on all aspects of developing a superior workforce so that the individual can develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities. This framework also emphasizes research by Kahn (1990), Maslach et al (2001), Harter et al (2002) and Saks (2006) as important to building a basis for a deeper understanding of the intellectual, emotional and physical aspects of employee engagement. The research questions for the study were qualitative in nature and were developed based on this theoretical and conceptual framework as well as the literature review to follow.
Employee engagement has been conceptualized within the HRD research literature as an employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral frame of mind in relation to organizational outcomes or performance (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

Kahn’s theory (dimensions of psychological conditions – meaningfulness, safety, availability)

Relatively little is known about the influence of creating and implementing professional development policies on full-time faculty employees and their employee engagement.

It is anticipated that the findings of this research will provide valuable recommendations to college leadership as well as fill a critical gap in the existing literature and argue for further exploration into the influence that the creation and implementation of organizational policies has on employee engagement.

HRD researchers elect to study topics with a very narrow focus; lack of empirical research that investigates employee perceptions of HRD practices, employee engagement and organizational outcomes (Rurkhram & Bartlett, 2012; Shuck et al, 2011)

This phenomenon is evidenced by the difficulty in finding research literature related to the impacts organizational policies have on employee engagement.

Figure 1. Theoretical and Conceptual Model of Research
It is apparent that giving employees the opportunity to express their views and opinions upwards is a key driver of employee engagement (Deci & Ryan, 1987). In addition, employees want to be kept involved about what is happening in their organization. Employees want to be involved in the decision-making processes that affect their work. If faculty are given a say in the decision making and have the right to be heard by their supervisors, then the engagement levels are likely to be high (Robinson et al, 2004).

**Scope and Limitations of the Study**

All the relevant information related to research design, methodology and methods are described in Chapter 3 of this thesis, but by way of introduction the following can be summarized. This research includes a two-phased approach to gather and assess evidence. Phase One of the study includes a representative sample of the 22 English language colleges in the Ontario college sector. Of the current 22 English speaking Ontario colleges, all were requested to provide their professional development policy documents as a means of participating in the document analysis. This study did not include the two francophone Ontario colleges because they are somewhat unique among the Ontario colleges and because of the challenges of language translation and related costs. This study drew on a review of relevant policy and policy-related documents published by the participating Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) of Ontario as well as detailed qualitative research gathered from faculty interviews at Durham College. Phase Two of the study focused on full-time faculty employees at Durham College. By adopting a descriptive and exploratory case study research design, the experiences of full-time faculty employees at Durham College were interviewed in the summer of 2016. The focus of the study was on the influence professional development policy-making had on employee engagement.
Organization of the Remainder of the Thesis

Having provided an overview of the study in this chapter inclusive of some introductory statements on theory and research, in Chapter 2 I present a comprehensive review of the relevant bodies of literature associated with employee engagement, policy development and human resource development with emphasis on the role of employee engagement in influencing policy creation and implementation for institutions.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological framework for this study, providing the relevant information regarding data collection instruments and procedures, methods of analysis, sample descriptions, ethical issues, and initial findings. Chapter 3 also provides a brief background on the research design and the specific steps associated with this research method (Bhattacherjee, 2012).

Chapter 4 presents the findings and provides an analysis of the document review conducted in this study. The findings convey the emergence of several themes depicting the relationships and meaning expressed by study participants. The document analysis helps uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover preliminary insights relevant to the research problem, which aid in developing additional questions to be asked in the in-depth interview analysis.

Chapter 5 provides the findings and a detailed analysis of the interview data collected in the study. Specific attention is spent demonstrating that the findings of this study answer the aforementioned research questions. Although not generalizable to other colleges, the findings of this study are informative to college leadership and potentially offer some exploratory considerations for other Ontario colleges as well. Specifically, this research identifies areas of
improvement for the administration of professional development policy, a core take-away from this study in contributing toward improved employee engagement.

The final chapter, Chapter 6, presents the conclusions, implications and recommendations for relevant policies and practice, and further identifies research based on the findings of this case study of Durham College. It is argued here that the resulting findings and analysis make a significant and original contribution to the scholarly literature and research on employee engagement and professional development policy creation and implementation. The results provide recommendations for college leadership in addressing human resource policy challenges associated with unique faculty needs in the area of professional development policy and employee engagement.
Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter provides an analysis and critique of the existing literature relevant to employee engagement within the context of the Human Resource Development (HRD) field. To set the stage for studying employee engagement at Durham College, this literature review presents topics related to the study. The literature incorporates research from several sources. Employee engagement is understood from many academic and practical perspectives: psychology, social, and organizational behaviour. However, there is far less research demonstrating the multi-faceted nature of this phenomenon and its applicability within organizations. This poses a challenge for HRD professionals to determine how to facilitate employee engagement and its effectiveness. The goal of this study is to conceptually explore each of the core facets of employee engagement within the context of HRD. Additionally, a variety of foundational books shed light on the participants presented here, especially in the areas of HRD and human resources development policy. And, in order to obtain even greater depth of appreciation, this literature review makes efforts to step beyond academic materials to include materials from professional associations, governmental agencies, the websites of Ontario colleges, Durham College and their Office of Research and Innovation, the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS), and the Conference Board of Canada among others. Such additional sources, I claim, contribute to a comprehensive picture of the history and engagement needs of colleges.

The growing recognition of employee engagement in the field of HRD (Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010) has been driven by the desire to improve employee engagement in work settings that could positively influence an organization’s results as well as employee performance and learning. Despite the growing interest in employee engagement and HRD
practices (Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck & Rose, 2013), we still have little knowledge about how employees perceive employee engagement in promoting professional development through policy development. The review began with a summary of the extant literatures related to employee engagement and addressed the link between employee engagement and HRD and the existence of different definitions of employee engagement. This review emphasizes research by Kahn (1990), Maslach et al (2001), Harter et al (2002) and Saks (2006), as these sources are important to building a foundation for a deeper understanding of the cognitive, emotional and physical aspects of employee engagement. The work of Lipsky (2010) and Lasswell (2008) is also incorporated, as their claims exist beyond the norms and typical areas of study.

Figure 2 presents this further representation of the relationship between the HRD literature by demonstrating how exploring employee perspectives provides a greater understanding of the experiences of full-time faculty employees in the process of professional development policymaking. Each area of Figure 2 was established by providing an overview of the current state and existing studies that, in turn, will be used to support my claims regarding my research questions.
Figure 2. Framework for Relationships of Research Questions and Analysis Process
I explored the employee engagement construct and how it remained underdeveloped in the HRD literature. With high levels of interest in this emerging area, there is a need to close the gap in theory, scholarship, and practice. The literature review identifies what is known to date regarding how the engagement of full-time faculty employees is influenced by the creation and implementation of professional development policy. I summarize what scholars in this core conversation put forth, where they agree, and ultimately explain how this conversation lends itself to the phenomenon under analysis in this thesis.

**Conceptualizing Employee Engagement**

**Kahn’s multi-faceted construct.**

The leading conceptualizations of employee engagement find their underpinnings in the consideration of workplace *psychological climate*. This psychological grounding is viewed as an antecedent variable, which influences the development of employee engagement. Kahn’s (1990) concept of *psychological climate* incorporates the role psychology plays in employee engagement and is defined as the interpretation of an organization’s environment in conjunction with an employee’s perception of wellbeing (Brown & Leigh 1996). Kahn connects employee wellbeing to employee connectivity with work experience (i.e. employee engagement), while situating the concept of psychological climate within a number of additional psychological work environment sub-variables for clearer evaluation.

William Kahn is widely recognized as the first academic to research and write about engagement. Since his original research, interest in engagement has grown, resulting in a significant number of related publications. Along with this growing interest, there has been considerable uncertainty about the definition of engagement. Existing literature on employee engagement is complex and it is questionable as to whether it is suitable for applied research.
Employee engagement research has been perceived as an area of study beset with inconsistent definitions. For example, work engagement, job engagement, role engagement, and organizational engagement are all related variations in the measures and theoretical foundations. The most widely used definition of engagement and the roots of engagement within the academic literature can be linked to the work of William Kahn. Khan’s definition envisions engagement as multifaceted, comprising three dimensions: affective, cognitive, and energetic meaning how a person feels, thinks and is motivated to act. As of 2016, Kahn’s 1990 work has been cited over 4,000 times, and is ranked 3rd overall in publications reporting original research on employee engagement.

Kahn’s research, discussed in the introduction, explores how an individual’s work fosters a sense of interest, challenge, and meaning, and how these factors influence employee engagement. Kahn changed the conversation significantly in 1990 by introducing the concept of personal engagement. Kahn found that people are more likely to engage in situations that they find meaningful. The arguments presented in subsequent sections justify why Kahn’s (1990; 1992) conceptualization of engagement is the foundation used for this conceptual model.

Employee engagement focuses on the positive and fulfilling aspects of doing work. For a person to be engaged, they need to be committed to exhibiting positive organizational behaviour.

Kahn (1990) originally examined several occupations and found that individuals are frequently hesitant about being members of groups and systems. He describes the outcome of this activity as ‘personal engagement’ and ‘personal disengagement,’ which refers to “behaviours by which people bring in or leave out their personal selves during work role performances” (Kahn 1990:694). Kahn’s (1990) qualitative study on engagement and disengagement is one of the influential studies in the current literature.
Kahn’s qualitative study on the psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement involved interviewing summer camp counsellors and staff at an architecture firm about moments when they felt engaged and disengaged at work. Disengagement was defined as the decoupling of the self within the role, involving the individual removing themselves during role performances (May et al., 2004). Kahn leveraged qualitative methods of observation, document analysis, self-reflection, and in-depth interviews for collecting data (p. 695) from 16 camp counsellors and 16 employees from an architecture firm. Kahn's study (1990) claimed that employees would engage themselves in situations when there were apparent benefits. The results demonstrated that individuals were engaging in situations with more psychological meaningfulness compared to those occasions with less psychological meaningfulness (p. 704). The data linked engagement to psychological safety (p. 708) and psychological availability (p. 714). Kahn's research brings forth a multifaceted framework for how employees engage or disengage in the workplace. Khan’s data pushed organizations to reevaluate their approach to aspects of human resources management such as employee relations and communications. Organizations were faced with major adjustments given a changing workforce.

To support Kahn’s three conditions, he claims that people ask themselves three essential questions in each role situation: how meaningful is this role for me, how safe is it to perform, and how can I accomplish this? He found that workers were more engaged in work situations that provided them more psychological meaningfulness and psychological safety, and when they were more psychologically available. Kahn (1990, 1992) in particular saw the interaction of the individual and the organization as central to issues of both psychological state and behavioral engagement. He noted that it was when people used their true personalities at work that they expressed feeling engaged and that they also performed to their greatest ability (behavioral
engagement). Kahn does not identify the aspects of self that might be preferred, although he does indicate that these include positive views of life, work, and values. For Kahn, work itself is the core of engagement. Kahn (1992) called this psychological presence an aspect of the interaction of an individual’s attributes and the work they perform. There is strong evidence to indicate that organizations can be a source of attachment and commitment for people, providing an opportunity to connect with the organization.

The theoretical and conceptual framework that informs this study concentrates on Kahn’s (1990) framework on the psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work, which considers engagement at the physical, emotional and cognitive level. Fundamentally, engagement is influenced by three antecedent psychological conditions: experienced meaningfulness of work (the belief that one experiences a return for the effort expended in working); experienced psychological safety (understanding that one was able to demonstrate engagement without fear of negative consequences); and experienced availability (possessing sufficient personal resources to experience engagement). Kahn (1990) claims that these three conditions are motivated by the nature of the job, the social environment, and personal resources and energy.

While Kahn’s concept of psychological climate lends itself well to my research on employee engagement, it is important to establish that a broader appreciation of the contributions of the discipline of psychology, and namely the field of organizational behaviour, remain out of the purview of this research. That is to say, I treat the arguments revolving around the study of psychological climate in the context of studies of HRD. My goal is to illustrate prior research and present a framework that guides my analysis. Figure 3 (placed at the end of this chapter) is a working model for how the research literature influences practice and conversely how practice
can influence the research literature. This benefits both researchers and practitioners through recognition of the various meanings the engagement construct includes and the research traditions that validate those meanings.

While Kahn’s (1990) model indicates the psychological conditions or the experiences that are necessary for engagement, it does not fully explain why individuals respond to these conditions with varying degrees of engagement. Other theorists and researchers that have tested Kahn’s model extend his theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement in new theories. The following review adds to the discussion while maintaining that, despite the gap in Kahn’s model, his work continues to provide one of the most relevant foundational supports for my own conceptual model and the research of this thesis.

**Theories and Models of Employee Engagement**

The existing literature encompasses several frameworks for defining employee engagement. The consensus is that the employee engagement relationship is a reflection of the employee’s cognitive, emotional, and physical energy that benefits themselves and the organization (Kahn, 1992; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Shuck, 2011; Shuck et al., 2013). Saks (2006) believes that there is comparatively limited academic literature on employee engagement, to begin with, because so much of the research is conducted in practitioner and consultant areas. Within scholarly discussions of employee engagement, importance is directed to the different aspects of engagement and its impact on organizational performance. In 2006, Saks published research that tested antecedents and consequences to employee engagement in the academic literature (Saks, 2006). Saks found a distinction between two types of engagement, job engagement and organization engagement, which he claims are connected yet distinct concepts. In addition, Saks contends that the antecedents and consequences of job engagement and
organization engagement differ in a number of ways. This suggests that the psychological conditions that lead to job and organization engagement, as well as their consequences, are not the same.

According to Saks (2006), the stronger theoretical rationale for explaining employee engagement can be found in social exchange theory. Saks argues that social exchange theory obligations to the work environment are created by interactions with colleagues who are dependent on one another. Saks (2006) claims that employees would choose to engage themselves to varying degrees in response to the resources they receive from their organization. Bringing oneself more fully into one’s work roles and devoting greater amounts of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources is an intense method for individuals to respond to an organization’s actions, as proposed earlier by the work of Kahn (1990). This claim suggests that employees demonstrate high levels of engagement based on high levels of resources and benefits provided by their organization. Saks’ (2006) argument provides a theoretical foundation to explain why employees choose to become more or less engaged in their work and organization. He distinguishes between organizational engagement and job engagement. The relationship between organizational engagement and rewards and recognitions implies that support from the organization and managers and procedural fairness, represented job engagement. These relationships are unconvincing and the empirical support for Saks theory is limited; therefore, it is Kahn’s (1990) definition of engagement, where employees and the amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources that they are prepared to commit in the performance of their role, that is the basis of this analysis.

By illustrating other diverse and relevant literatures, a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of employee engagement can be obtained. For instance, Maslach
et al. (2001) initiates a multi-disciplinary approach across academic boundaries for definitions of employee engagement. She and her colleagues conceptualize the theory of employee engagement as a progressive contrast to workplace burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). In several ways, it was Maslach’s work on burnout that led to new conceptual models with attention on engagement and its specific ties to the work environment. Similar to Kahn’s definition, I find support for Maslach et al when they argue that engagement is a psychological and emotional state, a ‘persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfilment’ (2001, p. 417).

Interestingly, Maslach et al. (2001) also suggest that while a lack of rewards and recognition could lead to burnout, appropriate recognition and reward is important for engagement. Similar to Saks’ support for social exchange theory, Maslach et al. posits that when employees receive rewards and recognition from their organization, they feel obliged to exercise a fair exchange by responding with higher levels of engagement. The model put forth by Maslach et al. (2001) suggests the importance of job characteristics for engagement. Job characteristics, especially feedback and autonomy, are consistently related to burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). To deepen our understanding of the social exchange theory perspective, if employees are provided with rewarding and interesting jobs they are more likely to respond with higher levels of engagement.

The models of Kahn (1990) and Maslach et al. (2001) both indicate the psychological conditions or antecedents that are necessary for engagement, but they do not fully explain why individuals respond to these conditions with varying degrees of engagement. In terms of Kahn’s (1990) definition of engagement, employees feel obliged to bring themselves more deeply into their role as compensation for the benefits they receive from their organization. When the organization fails to provide these benefits, individuals are more likely to detach themselves from their roles. The result is that the amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources
that an individual is prepared to devote in the execution of their work may be dependent on the benefits they perceive come from the organization. What is missing from this approach is a concentrated account of the role of employee’s perception in determining the level of engagement; and as such, in the present research, I concentrate on the process of employee perception as a key factor in employee engagement. Specifically, I seek to understand more about how perception relates to the way in which individuals make sense of their environment, the people around them, and the impact this has on their employee engagement. Saks social exchange theory claims that employees who are provided with enriched and challenging jobs will feel obliged to respond with higher levels of engagement. And while providing a theoretical foundation to explain why employees choose to become more or less engaged in their work and organization, Kahn’s (1990) definition of engagement, was all encompassing and provided the foundation for this study’s purpose. When an organization falls short in providing support to employees they are more likely to withdraw and disengage from their roles. The amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources that an individual is prepared to dedicate in the performance of their role may be dependent on not only the economic resources that Saks emphasizes but the socio-emotional aspects from the organization that Kahn relies on. Saks also considered socialization resources theory with its linkages to jobs demand–resources and the timing of training providing to new employees in an organization (Saks & Ashforth, 2000). And like the work of Lipsky (2010), Saks work offers deeper insights into employee engagement/policy stemming from Kahn, however his approach is outside the scope of this research.

In 2002, Harter and colleagues concluded that a key factor in increasing employee engagement is building an environment to support individuals. They conducted a review of
7,939 business units in 36 companies and found relationships between employee engagement, customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, and employee turnover (Harter et al., 2002). The findings of Harter et al. establish that increasing employee engagement and building an environment to support engagement has the potential to significantly increase business success. Reviews or meta-analyses help determine the strength of a particular finding/theory that can be generalized to the studied population at large. This additional research suggests that there is a connection between employee engagement and business results. The meta-analysis conducted by Harter et al (2002:272) confirms this connection. They found that, “…employee satisfaction and engagement are related to meaningful business outcomes at a magnitude that is important to many organizations”. An additional meta-analysis encompassing 199 research studies across 152 organizations in 44 industries and 26 countries examined data on business unit relationships between employee engagement and performance outcomes. The additional meta-analysis found that there are significant differences between business units and their engagement with productivity between high and low performers. The significance in understanding the results of this research is recognizing high performing business units and their ability to promote work engagement by convincingly showing the economic benefits of business units with high average levels of engagement.

Kahn (1990), Maslach et al. (2001) and Saks (2006), however, posited that engagement is centered at an individual level and must first influence individual outcomes before impacting business results. Importantly, there are notable differences in both definition and understanding of the term that employee engagement represents within different businesses. In the studies conducted by Harter, et al. (2002) and Maslach et al. (2001), it is apparent that key definitions lack analytical depth, such as strong theoretical support, and clear and consistent treatment of the
emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects of employee engagement. Maslach et al. (2001) implies that engagement is characterized by involvement and value, which are the opposites of their burnout dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of professional ability. For example, Maslach et al. argues that job engagement is associated with six work-life influences: workload, feelings of choice, recognition, social support, fairness, and value. This suggests that engaged employees have a sense of connection with their work activities and that they are capable of successfully navigating the demands of their work environment. These are themes on which there is common ground; they all define engagement to varying degrees by its outcomes and consistently suggest that engagement is something given by the employee for the benefit of the organization. Such engagement is accomplished through commitment, dedication, advocacy, discretionary effort, using talents to the fullest, and being supportive of the organization’s goals and values. They generally agree that the emphasis should be placed on engaged employees feeling a sense of attachment towards the organization in which they work. In this sense, the employees are not just investing themselves in their role, but in the organization as a whole.

The research literature in many of the behavioral and social sciences includes a multitude of definitions, interpretations and various studies with conflicting results. For the purposes of this study, I demonstrate that Kahn's definition of employee engagement reveals a strong theoretical rationale for further research and subsequent empirical work to support the relevance of his model (e.g., May et al., 2004) in order to strengthen its validity. Even though Kahn's (1990) theory of employee engagement is often discussed and accepted within the literature (e.g., Luthans, 2012; May et al., 2004), there is surprisingly little continued empirical research using his model. May et al. (2004), for example, establish the importance of Kahn's three psychological conditions for predicting engagement in their efforts to create a measure.
However, May’s findings extend the definition of employee engagement and introduce the concept of human spirit in the organization and describe engagement as a self-expression of fulfillment at work.

Kahn’s model was chosen for this study based on its theoretical clarity and empirical grounding through which it is able to analyze cognitive, physical, and emotional aspects to explain employee role performance. In comparison, other definitions of employee engagement that I discuss (e.g., Harter et al., 2002; Maslach et al., 2001; Saks, 2006) focus on the outcomes of engagement, paying attention to its psychological state. In this context, my claim is that these definitions often do not offer a clear rationale for how engagement is distinct from other concepts, such as job commitment and involvement. In 1989 McLagan introduced the Human Resource Wheel with the intent of identifying what is conveyed as HRD and differentiating the practical distinction among human resource development, human resource management and human resources information systems. In this theoretical model, HRD is defined to include training and development, organization development and career development. Areas such as compensation and benefits, employee assistance, union and labour relations, HR research and information systems, selection and staffing, performance management systems, human resource planning and organization/job design are outside the scope of HRD and outside the scope of this research. Most research on engagement is conducted within the psychological paradigm with a focus on the connection between various psychological states, or between engagement and processes such as leadership and perceived supervisory support. This creates limitations. A partial response to this is the concept of psychological climate, which naturally builds on and expands a conception of how these psychological states relate to one another. Simultaneously there is developing interest from an HRD viewpoint in engagement as it relates to organizational
culture and the development of relationships. I contend that these interests fit well with Kahn’s concept of psychological climate.

**Complementary Theories and Models of Employee Engagement**

While embracing Kahn’s original principles of engagement, this study draws on other more recent and related concepts in the research literature (Shuck & Herd, 2012; Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). This deepened, complemented, and added to the body of knowledge of employee engagement within the HRD field, with special attention to the role of policy implementation. Without an adequate understanding of the phenomenon from the perception of full-time faculty employees, there is less of an opportunity to expand our knowledge of employee engagement and of the influence that professional development policy creation/implementation has on employee engagement. This study provides insight into how faculty employees experience the creation/implementation of policy and how it influences their engagement. A summary of the empirical context in which these concerns are pursued is outlined below.

As stated by Deci and Ryan (1987), when an organization adopts a supportive work environment and exhibits concern for employees’ needs and feelings, there are meaningful employee engagement results. Employees are likely to feel secure and willing to engage more fully when management offers positive feedback and encourages them to voice their interests, develop new skills, and assists in resolving work related problems (Deci and Ryan, 1987). Despite the lack of empirical evidence that investigates the relationships of employee perceptions (Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012; Shuck et al., 2011), I propose that employee perceptions of HRD practices, such as professional development opportunities and employee involvement in the
policy creation and development process, are influenced by the relationship between engagement and workplace environment.

Purcell (2013) highlights that employee engagement is significantly higher when a sincere involvement of responsibility between management and employees occurs over issues of importance and when employees have a voice in the decisions that are made. Purcell’s (2013) study found a number of factors that are strongly connected to high levels of employee engagement. For example, higher levels of engagement were noted when employees were involved in decisions affecting their work, when they had the opportunity to provide their views, and when they were given flexibility over how to do their work. The common thread that connects an employee’s involvement and positive engagement level is effective communication and the amounts of information employees receive about how well the business is performing and how they contribute to business objectives.

Robinson et al. (2004) highlight the importance of feeling valued and involved as a key driver of engagement. This suggests that there are a number of elements that have varying influence on the extent to which employees feel appreciated and involved and therefore engaged. Robinson et al. (2004) state that this could be a useful indicator to organizations that aspects of working life require serious attention if engagement levels are to be maintained or improved.

Kim & McLean (2012) studied first-hand workplace engagement and performance and found that current studies confirm direct and/or indirect effects of work engagement on employee performance within an organization. Shuck, Rocco, and Albornoz (2010) also conducted a study that investigated employee engagement from the perspectives of employees. Their study was rare in that they utilized qualitative, semi-structured interviews and observations. Findings from their case studies are the motivation for this research study in that
they placed importance and emphasis on the experience of the employee within the workplace environment. Their emergent and integrated model offered a new framework, that when combined with the early work of Kahn as well as other contemporary theories, became the foundation of this thesis.

The workplace environment is essential for having engaged employees and this consists of co-workers and supervisors, organizational policies and procedures, physical resources, and other unquantifiable elements, such as a supportive work climate and perceived levels of safety (Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2010). Providing employees with acceptable physical, psychological, social, and organizational resources enables them to perceive less job demands, to function successfully in their work role, and to inspire their own personal development; all of which add to their levels of engagement (Shaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Conclusions from a related study by Shuck, Rocco, and Albornoz (2010) provide support for the importance of positive workplace climates. They contend that managers do have the ability to create a workplace climate that is positive, empowering, safe, and meaningful for employees. Likewise, Saks’ (2006) opinion indicates that perceived organizational support predicts both job and organization engagement. One reason that explains this positive relationship regards the interchange that takes place between the organization and the employee, where employees are likely to respond to the support and attention from the organization by trying to perform well.

Building upon this awareness, recent articles in HRD literature have generated equally increasing interest in the concept of employee engagement in the workplace (Shuck, 2011; Shuck & Herd, 2012; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Employee engagement is characterized by a unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioural components at the individual level, where employees are deeply, attentively, positively and emotionally connected with their
work, resulting in higher efficiency, cost effectiveness and security in the work place (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Moreover, employee engagement also involves the emotional bond felt toward the organization, a willingness to engage personal resources (Shuck & Reio, 2011), and is dependent on whether an employee finds their work meaningful and safe (Shuck & Reio, 2011).

Businesses tend to be more interested in antecedent and outcome variables than in advancing a research stream. And practitioners are reliant on well-developed measures and seek to answer the many questions about employee engagement that have not been answered in the scholarly literature. Even though conversations addressing employee engagement have now been around decades, there exists a persistent problem in the academic literature in terms of agreement as to what exactly constitutes employee engagement. What is employee engagement? What does it mean to be engaged at work? Is engagement a behavioral element or a psychological state? The conceptual picture of what engagement definitively looks like has yet to be realized. Furthermore, there are many similar questions of how engagement might be measured through empirical research that have yet to be wholeheartedly agreed upon (Ferguson, 2007). In addressing these questions of employee engagement, a study by The Conference Board of Canada (Armstrong & Wright, 2016) argues that despite evidence that an employee’s engagement level impacts business outcomes, workplace engagement has remained low and unchanged over the last five years. Significant findings from this research indicate that relationships with managers are a critical influencer, employee demographics play a large role in engagement levels, long service employees and technical professionals tend to be less engaged than new employees and those in non-technical professional roles. Investing in leadership training, encouraging personal and professional growth and interesting work, and allowing
employees some flexibility and control, are some of the strategies and practices that promote engagement.

The report, *Leveraging the Science to Inspire Great Performance* (Conference Board of Canada, 2016), identifies best practices for improving employee engagement. These findings were of particular importance and relevance to this study. Decentralized accountability, interesting and challenging work and empowerment are seen as good investments for increasing employee engagement. There is a common recognition that workplace factors influence employee engagement in different ways and people in diverse occupational areas were motivated by various distinct workplace factors. For educators, interesting and challenging work along with a high degree of autonomy are seen as important (Armstrong & Wright, 2016). In order to connect theoretical knowledge to practice, as a scholar-practitioner, there needs to be clear associations between theory to practice. From a scholar-practitioner perspective, and with this particular research example in mind, I derive my interest in how full-time faculty employees experience professional development policy creation and implementation and I anticipate their stories to be an opportunity to see into their interpretation of engagement. There is tremendous value, in other words, in bringing together the contribution of the scholar and practitioner, promising significant gains in new knowledge of this topic and improvements to interventions within it. Each role has its contributions and limitations. This includes collaboration between HR professionals and academic researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of employee engagement. Evaluating the effectiveness of employee engagement would involve working closely with employees to design interventions that are sensitive to the distinctive organizational structure, policies, cultures, and the diverse features of occupations of interest and the related work that defined them.
Employee Engagement and the Human Resource Development (HRD) Context

The next portion of the literature review examines engagement from an HRD perspective, defining it as “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed towards desired organizational outcomes” (Shuck & Wollard, 2011, p103). These scholars observed that no model currently exists for understanding how HRD practice can guide the development of employee engagement. In addition, they found that there is an opportunity for HRD to take a lead role in furthering a research agenda for employee engagement. Interest and development in engagement has grown since Kahn’s original research. Empirical studies and conceptual works on engagement appear in the literature over the past three decades and contribute to much of the knowledge of the concept (Macey & Schneider, 2008; May et al. 2004; Saks, 2006). Engagement has gained the attention of HRD scholars in recent years (Kim & McLean, 2012; Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). With renewed attention, these authors studied literature across various specialities and fields of study and proposed an operational definition of employee engagement as a positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward organizational outcomes. Shuck, Rocco, and Albornoz (2010) explored the engagement construct from the employee’s perspective and found that relationship development in the workplace, an employee’s direct manager, and learning play critical roles in an engaged employee’s interpretation of their work.

Recent academic literature (Shuck & Herd, 2012; Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010) builds on Kahn’s (1990) work and definition that states employee engagement is a predictor of work and that work factors influence employee engagement. From Khan’s work, we see the conversation regarding engagement begin to shift with insights from these new findings, from defining and measuring engagement, to how can we more effectively and
efficiently create an environment that leverages our employees’ involvement in order to engage employees for optimal levels of performance. Shuck and Wollard (2009) agree that all three of Kahn’s (1990) original domains are “important in determining one’s engagement at work”. These findings suggest the framework Kahn (1990) used in his conceptualization was foundational for framing the construct. Shuck et al. (2010) explained best: “The simultaneous investment of cognitive, affective and physical energies into performance-related outcomes represents something distinct and fundamental, differentiating engagement from other potentially related variables… Employee engagement is much more than what we see employees do; it is rather how employees experience and interpret the context around them and then accordingly behave” (Shuck et al., 2011, p. 15).

In this next section, I introduce the subject of HRD and the contribution to successful business outcomes. When policies are visible and understandable, employees are more engaged. Furthermore, when employees believe that policies are created and motivated by the organization’s concern for high-quality service and their employee’s well-being they are more engaged (Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies (CAHRS), 2011). Employees are less engaged when they believe a company’s HR policies are motivated by a desire to reduce costs and/or exploit employees (CAHRS, 2011). This perspective is important because researchers have focused their attention primarily on intended HR policies as described by managers, and not the employees’ perceptions of them.

Research literature in the field of HRD and theories of employee engagement provide an opportunity for new strategies and frameworks related to engagement and how employees interpret the experience of engagement at work. Detailed chronologies of HRD have been created that chart the overall topography and change that have characterized this field of research.
and practice (Bing, Kehrhaun & Short, 2003; Hamlin & Stewart, 2011; Kuchinke, 2001; Stewart & Sambrook, 2012). As noted by Chalofsky, Rocco and Morris (2014), “HRD is a multidisciplinary field that has been shaped by the interplay of seminal theories and concepts from other social and behavioural science disciplines” (Kormanik & Shindell, 2014). HRD’s primary purpose is to create opportunities to assist employees manage and cope effectively with some of the challenging situations or concerns of everyday life in the workplace (Jensen, 1964). This position is reaffirmed in this statement that “HRD is both an area of professional practice and an emerging interdisciplinary body of academic knowledge” (Jacobs, 1990).

Employee engagement is conceptualized within the HRD research literature as an employee’s cognitive, emotional and behavioural frame of mind in relation to organizational outcomes or performance (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Indeed, work by Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt, & Diehl (2011) demonstrates that employee engagement is an area of research with great potential from an HRD perspective. The key basis of analysis for employee engagement stems from a psychological approach (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Luthans, 2000). Within the field of HRD, further definitions of employee engagement are articulated which both deepen and simultaneously expand upon this psychological approach to include elements such as emotional and intellectual commitments to the organization (Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005). Despite the general acceptance that employee engagement is a complicated construct, Wisdom, Croll and Burnett (2006) describe employee engagement simply as a ‘passion for work;’ a psychological situation that encompasses the three dimensions of employee engagement as outlined by Kahn (1990). As I argue, there are familiar themes that flow through all of these definitions and that the presence of differing definitions of employee engagement continues to create a vague state of comprehension as many studies investigate employee engagement through
varied lenses and perspectives. As a scholarly concept that has developed over time, engagement has been defined in inconsistent ways, creating terminological confusion. The difficulty in defining engagement suggests that the different meanings result in considerable variation in what is measured and how it is interpreted, thereby producing contradictory studies.

Given the challenges between scholarly and practitioner (HRD) conversations of employee engagement, there has been an increasing amount of energy committed to advancing an understanding of the relationship between HRD and employee engagement. This sounds very familiar to earlier discussions, rooted in the fields of organizational psychology for example, with regards to employees looking for greater meaning and personal development (Harter et al., 2002), and an opportunity to expand employee engagement research focusing on intangible benefits like the development of professional identity and development. All too often the linkages between studies that sit outside the field of HRD and those within the field of HRD remain under used. The developing interest in engagement from a HRD viewpoint provided the opportunity for this research to explore experiences for professional development. For example, how employee perceptions of HRD practices such as professional development opportunities and employee involvement in the policy creation and development process, influenced the relationship between engagement and workplace environment (Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012; Shuck et al., 2011).

While the diversity associated with the definitions of employee engagement are numerous and it may be frustrating for HR professionals, the variety of meanings are useful in that they offer HR professionals a wide array of approaches in practice. As noted by Shuck and Rocco (2011), employee engagement is something experienced by individuals within the context of their own personalities and the organizations, labour markets and societies they occupy. To
demonstrate this diversity, Sambrook (2011; 2012) investigates how employee engagement is regarded, managed and experienced by different public sector groups involving their HR professionals, managers and non-managerial employees. She advocates addressing long standing and contemporary research agendas for employee engagement in a different way from what I have discussed in this literature review. There is certainly value in looking at this area of study from a different perspective. She also finds these research agendas more likely to be suitable to other studies relevant to both academic researchers and HRD practitioners, such as workplace learning, and learning transfer. Sambrook advocates exploring the employee engagement agenda by focusing on the differences between individuals, as well as how engagement is affected by the job itself, organizational characteristics, demographics and sectors, for example. Sambrook’s (2011) view of employee engagement is firstly that employee engagement is comprised of positive thoughts, feelings and behaviours that individuals experience; and secondly, as an approach performed in organizations to increase staff commitment to their jobs and their organization’s goals. Her research shows the value of learning about individual experience but also the value of attending carefully to the actual practices of design and management of employee engagement at the organizational level. Sambrook’s view of employee engagement through a critical lens contributes towards strengthening an HRD practice that is focused on employee interests and experiences rather than largely on organizational interests alone.

Sambrook’s research is significant as it indicates the need to emphasize the employee engagement agenda on meeting both individual employee level needs as well as the organizational needs, whilst remaining sensitive to the business sector and its unique characteristics. Sambrook (2009), recognizes the complex and ambiguous nature of HRD and provides a concept analysis of the meaning of HRD, its key attributes, antecedents, and
categories or groups of employee engagement that demonstrated the methodological bases for effectively connecting HRD to the field of employee engagement. While Kahn’s (1990) framework emphasizes the interplay between a person’s individual and organizational context, and postulates that one’s psychological experience strongly influences their attitudes and behaviour, Sambrook’s skepticism leads to examining the effectiveness of current engagement practices with HRD theory and research. She complements Kahn’s seminal research in several ways as indicated above; however, her approach leads to employing an interpretivist methodology that enables researchers to consider both the psychological (personal) and the sociological (organizational/sectoral) elements of engagement, integrating researcher and participant accounts of being themselves. This is a significant development for this study as a means of illustrating the emotional experiences of engagement and emphasizing that employee engagement is principally an individual concept, and highly personal.

**Human Resource Development Policy (HRDP) and Employee Engagement**

Human Resource Development Policy can be broadly characterized as the policies and/or administrative regulations that businesses and organizations execute to increase performance. Accordingly, HRDP can be differentiated from a number of the more commonly known terms, such as workforce development policy, which has very distributed and broad outcomes. Human resource development theory and research possesses multiple dimensions, covering workforce skills and employment policies. HRD policies are closely inter-related and must be consistent with an organization’s broader development policies. They cannot be outlined in isolation. HRDP complements the specific terms of human resource development, whose main effort is to include organizational policies designed to instruct and provide direction related to employment conditions in businesses. The specific policies that organizations implement are designed to
affect a wide range of organizational, individual and societal outcomes, as opposed to organizationally driven policies which are created and implemented to enhance performance of a business (Swanson, 1999; Swanson & Holton, 2001).

There is general acknowledgement that HRD researchers tend to study topics on the individual responses to changes in how organizations function, and do not regularly take into consideration broader societal impacts (Barnard, 2005; Choi, 2009). The shortcomings of this type of attention are exemplified in how difficult it is to find existing research literature related to the impact of organizational policy on employee engagement. The research literature in this area is focused on human resource management related policy issues.

The development and implementation of human resources policy is a process that shares a number of commonalities with policy development processes in other institutional environments on both sides of the public and private sector divide. Policy is the expression of theoretical or experiential expectations about what is required to resolve a particular issue or problem (Tableman, 2005). The issue or problem which is to be resolved is the impetus for policy development. Factors that necessitate policy development range from the lack of existing ‘on the books’ policies to crisis response and organizational confusion. In his book on strategic management and sustainable development, Gane (2007) compares policy development to a recipe, in that policy is “either formulated in advance or in a prescribed manner, or [emerges] in response to events”. The intention behind this position indicates that policymaking is a continuous cycle, from management review to development and formulation, implementation and evaluation and reformulation. As an iterative process, this provided an opportunity for dialogue on policy development and its implementation after the process of developing a formal
policy had concluded. Establishing ongoing discussion provided opportunity for communication, employee involvement and experiences in implementing agreed policies.

Within the human resources context of policy development, there is a lack of scholarly items in publication that outline a specific HRDP development cycle. Organizations such as the HR Council are often left publishing policy development and implementation toolkits for organizations. While these toolkits are beneficial they, lack any sort of peer-reviewed or scholarly rigor, and, do not incorporate much in the way of theory.

The foil to this is the policy cycle within the political science discipline, which has a wealth of scholarly knowledge on policy development. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal comprehensively with this additional field of research, but nevertheless a few illustrative observations can be gleaned. Within political science the policy cycle is a device used for the analysis of the development of a policy element. One leading contemporary source in this regard summarizes the classic approach to the policy cycle model. Harold Lasswell’s (2008) five stage approach involves the following: (1) Agenda setting (or problem identification), (2) Policy formulation, (3) Decision-making, (4) Implementation, and (5) Evaluation (Nakamura, 1987). While Lasswell’s (2008) five-stage policy cycle is widely taught within the discipline numerous scholars have proposed, critiqued, and published their own variations on policy cycles. As a result, within political science and public policy there exists a range of policy cycles to choose from providing practitioners and scholars with different modes of problem solving and different levels of complexity for various policy development and implementation scenarios. This is a stark contrast to the current climate of research on human resource policy development and implementation where scholarly literature on policy cycles of HRD is severely lacking. Additional scholarship within HRDP is needed, at the least, to address this aforementioned lack.
but also to provide models for policy development that would be attuned to more complex situations, provide greater agility and responsiveness, and ultimately challenge longstanding norms within the field.

To reiterate, current literature has established that existing policy development and implementation processes within human resources typically follows a formal stage-based approach through a logical sequence of steps (Egger & Orvill, 2004). This approach is predicated on the assumption that policy development will always be rationally planned, while in reality does not exist in a vacuum. As a result, a critique of the “stagist approach” is the adoption of an iterative policy development and implementation process. Much of the discussion regarding iterative policymaking exists outside of the discipline of HRDP and implementation and resides in political science and public policy. However, HRD stands to gain as a field by drawing on iterative policy development, as what it offers is particularly germane to HRDP and implementation. In viewing policy development as an iterative process, the experiences and lessons learned by employees and management are more easily leveraged to inform and improve coordination inside the policy process (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2010). By moving away from a stagist approach and toward an iterative model, HR policy generation essentially shifts from a discrete procedural based approach to one that fosters and maintains communicative dialogue between steps (FAO, 2010). As a result of communicative dialogue being created between policy development steps, the development phase remains open even when the formal stage ends and policy has been implemented. Is this good for HRD? Is this good for employee engagement policy? When dialogue remains open after policies are implemented, experiences of employees are taken into account after formal development has ended, and policies can be modified or changed. This dialogue is viewed as a positive in regard
to employee engagement. Iterative policy development is more dynamic, and allows for faster changes to be made and re-implemented in order to respond to employee needs. While academic literature on HRDP and implementation exists, the field is relatively small when compared to similar policy development fields in disciplines such as political science. This is a hindrance to the discipline of HRD, as the same variety of policy cycles and methods of policy development that exist in other social science disciplines are not seen within HRD. Further interdisciplinary scholarship has the potential to address this gap and provide new insight into HR policymaking as well as offer new dynamic approaches to creating and communicating superior policy in a variety of complex situations.

The literature and research on policy and the influence of employee involvement in organizational policy development is sparse and largely dated. As documented by Selznick in 1969 and 1986, policymaking in corporations is defined as decision making with important consequences for the long-term identity of firms. Further research by Gold (1976), Kochan and Katz (1988) supports my own experiences where policy decisions are routinely made by top management groups and were typically approved by senior boards. While Kochan and Katz (1988) make significant contributions to the domain of industrial relations and labour practices, the closest reference they make to organizational policy influences within the workplace level (often front line representatives) and management is shaped by the constraints established at the strategic and bargaining levels.

The vast majority of organizations have a formal cycle of policy formulation and planning that follows a logical sequence of steps (Egger & Orvill, 2004). In *Human Resources Management Practice*, Armstrong (2001) establishes a nine point system for formulating or revising human resource policies: (1) Gaining understanding of organizational culture and shared
values, (2) Analyzing existing policies, both written and unwritten, (3) Analyzing external influences such as legislation, regulatory regimes, authorities and codes of practice, (4) Assessing areas where new policies are needed or existing policies are inadequate, (5) Consulting with management on existing policies and where policies could be improved, (6) Consulting with employees, (7) Consulting with union representation, (8) Analyzing information gleaned from the consultative process and draft policy, (9) Agreeing to policy with established stakeholders. Armstrong’s nine-point system is echoed in the policy development handbooks of a number of post-secondary institutions human resource departments. Cardiff University (2010) employs a similar five stage policy development process in which the needs for policy are identified, existing workplace conventions and policies are taken into account, the scope for proposed policies are established, a consultation phase occurs, and finally the policy is drafted, implemented and monitored.

The University of West London (2015) also follows a similar model of policy development with additional emphasis on communication of newly implemented policies through publication and increased support for those affected by the new policy. Excluded from Armstrong’s nine-point system for human resource policy development is the communication of competencies associated with implementing policies, something that the well-accepted inventory by Evers, Power and Mitchell (2003) finds as necessary competencies for today’s workplace. In some ways, the policy formation process is viewed as a key method in communicating new policy, as it is seen as the best opportunity for senior managers within an organization to communicate with the rest of the management team on participants of mutual interest and vice-versa (Brady, Carter-Ward, Prince, Schoenfeld, & Quayle, 2006). Generally speaking, however, the organization’s employee handbook and policy manual serves as the primary communicative
tools for new policies within an organization (Brady et al, 2006). In a non-scholarly context, the HR Council provides an extensive list of methods for substantive communication of new policies to employees within an organization. This includes employee handbooks and policy manuals, the use of organizational intranet and email, as well as workshops and policy training sessions for frontline employees who may be affected by new changes in policy.

Lipsky’s Discussion on Employee Involvement

Having reviewed the three core bodies of literature bearing on this study, I turn now to a broader set of observations and link them to the empirical focus of the work. These observations stem from a literature that does not directly name employee engagement and policy as its topic area but relates to my argument nevertheless. As mentioned at the outset, no matter the organizational policies, plans, purposes, procedures and supports put in place, in many ways employees themselves must engage with, make use of and thus activate all of these things as they attempt to define and direct their work. Indeed, this engagement process can take many directions (e.g. Lipsky 1980). Lipsky’s *Street Level Bureaucracy* provides insight into the dilemmas and in some cases, dire circumstances that front-line public servants (i.e. Lipsky’s ‘street level bureaucrats’) face. The caveat to this is that Lipsky’s work does match the research I undertake in a number of ways. However, an important overarching lesson can still be gleaned.

At a base level, the site for Lipsky’s research, the United States, is too different to draw any substantive comparisons between education sectors. Lipsky (2010) cites programs like educational vouchers and dilemmas such as senior teacher migration from low-income neighbourhoods, all of which are problems uniquely overwhelming American educators. While parallels can be drawn between increased demand for education services in the US and Canada, Lipsky correlates increased demand with a limitation of access, along with service rationing and
cuts. While Ontario has seen an increase in demand for college education, Ontario colleges have been able to meet demand accordingly with enrollment in the publicly funded college sector in Ontario growing by 57% from 149,130 in 2006 to 235,496 in 2015 (OCAS-College System Data, 2006; 2015). Over the last five years, postsecondary enrollment for the college sector in Ontario has increased by almost 20%, while enrolment at Durham College has increased by over 30%. In response to this increased enrollment demand, the Ontario colleges have introduced a number of new academic program offerings in areas known to have market need and student demand. Durham College has increased program offerings from 111 to 145 programs. Ontario colleges have expanded alternative program delivery modes, with a continued emphasis on online and hybrid course offerings, weekend delivery, and increased hours of delivery in the evenings. There has also been increased emphasis on accurately measuring space utilization and seat capacity to ensure colleges are maximizing space operation and an increased outreach effort to the traditionally under-represented populations such as first generation, indigenous, mature and international students. These outreach efforts are expected to have significant impact on student demographics and associated needs.

Lipsky’s research on public servants in education concentrates on non-postsecondary education and the problems therein. My research is directed at policy creation/implementation and employee engagement; whereas, Lipsky’s research serves as an in-depth look at existing pitfalls in public service funding, work conditions and practices, and how to rectify said pitfalls to improve client outcomes. Lipsky’s research is important and thorough, but it would have substantially more currency in Canadian scholarship if it focused on one of the other public service fields he covers in his research.
Despite the differences between Lipsky’s stream of research and my own, the points he makes regarding street-level bureaucrats within education are representative of full-time faculty within the college sector. As Lipsky writes, street-level bureaucrats had immediacy in their interactions with citizens and in their impact on people’s lives; they make policy application decisions on the spot, and said decisions are often distributed and allocated in different ways when determining who benefits from a policy. As a result of their position as the public face of policy delivery, and because they are being paid by the public and making redistributive and allocative decisions, public servants are often a lightning rod of controversy. At the present time, there is no available research to substantiate any links between my own scholarship and Lipsky’s claims that faculty employees are associated with policy application. Lipsky is an outlier source not taken up in HRDP or employee engagement research literature; nevertheless, his work, helps supplement/augment the application and offers deeper insights into employee engagement/policy stemming from Kahn. Despite this and the differences in research fields, Lipsky’s claims with regards to the role of faculty employees as street-level bureaucrats deserves attention in the context of the college sector. Further research could potentially converge on the role college faculty employees play in professional development policy creation and implementation, and the role of college employees as frontline policy decision makers.

**Summary of Chapter 2**

Stemming from my review of literature, two visual representations have been developed and presented in this chapter. In Figure 2, the relationship between my research questions and my analysis process demonstrates a visual explanation of the framework I utilized to guide my study. This was conceived after thoughtful consideration of how to address my research questions given the results of my literature review. This framework serves as a basis and
emphasis for forming my research process, informing the methodological design, and guiding the choice of data collection instruments. The features in the model directly align with the research questions.

A second and critical conceptual framework was also created based on this review of the literature (Figure 3 situated on the following page) regarding employee engagement and the broader concept of workplace psychological climate. This framework addressed the concepts I have identified in my literature review. I have recognized psychological climate as a broad concept that encompasses employee engagement and organizational policy. I determined and listed the relationships between the following concepts: the policy creation/implementation process, communication, active psychological state, nurturing the experience of work, employee experience interpretation, professional development, and relationship development and recognition, as they relate to employee engagement, organizational policy and psychological climate. I further identified the relationships between the concepts and each other and this was documented in the legend as a conceptual relationship, an inter-conceptual relationship, an influential relationship, or a gap in the literature. The framework was then applied and used systematically in my data analysis; this linkage occurs between the conceptual framework and the various themes and empirical-analytic claims about relationships in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 2 presented my analysis of the relevant literature and what I found pertinent to my topic of interest. There is an abundance of research literature related to the field of HRD and I position employee engagement within the HRD research literature as an employee’s cognitive, emotional and behavioural frame of mind in relation to organizational outcomes or performance. The presence of differing definitions of employee engagement is explored, as it
Figure 3: Concepts and Relationships from the Literature Review

- A: Gap between Policy Creation/Implementation and Employee Engagement
- B: Relationship between Communication and Employee Engagement
- C: Relationship between Professional Development and Employee Engagement
- D: Relationship between Recognition and Employee Engagement
- E: Relationship between Communication and Organization Policy
contributes to the vague state of comprehension because many studies investigate employee engagement through various different rules or procedures.

I argue that Kahn's (1990) original research, and definition reflects a strong theoretical rationale for researching employee engagement, while recent empirical work continues to support the relevance model, strengthening its validity. Kahn's model was chosen for this study based on its academic basis and its use of cognitive, physical, and emotional aspects to explain employee position performance. I expanded my literature review to include new conversations regarding engagement as it begins to shift the academic discussion with insights from new findings. Such findings include defining and measuring engagement in a way that would effectively and efficiently create an environment that leverages employee involvement in order to engage employees for optimal levels of performance. The review includes summarizing engagement theories and models that highlight and postulates the factors that affect engagement at the individual and work level (Maslach et al, 2001; Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

The inquiry carried out by Kahn (1990), recognizes that there are specific psychological states that need to be active in order for engagement to transpire. What Kahn (1990) does not fully clarify is why individuals reacted to these psychological conditions in a variety of ways. I have already established that there are noteworthy differences in the understanding of what the term ‘engagement’ represents; however, there are common themes on which many of the current researchers agree. Current researchers unanimously define engagement to varying degrees by its results. They consistently propose that engagement is to some degree provided by the employee for the value of the organization through discretionary effort, commitment, and being supportive.
of the organization’s goals. They agreed on the importance of employees being engaged and hence feeling a sense of connection towards the organization where they are employed.

Despite these findings - in theoretical, conceptual, and empirical terms - there remains much more to learn about the concept of employee engagement broadly speaking, as well as how it relates to policy and the Ontario college sector. This research study has undertaken a thorough review of the literature and research and connected concerns within the HRD field with the dialogue on engagement (Shuck & Rocco, 2013). Furthermore, this study proposes an exploration into employee engagement as a state experienced by the employee. This employee experience is both very encouraging and significant for the development of research on employee engagement and extends prior academic studies in important ways. Despite HRD’s importance, there is a lack of first-hand research that investigates the relationships between employee perceptions of HRD practices, employee engagement, and other organizational outcomes (Rurkkhum & Bartlett, 2012; Shuck et al., 2011). This thesis explores at length employee experiences and perceptions of HRD practices, professional development opportunities and professional development policy creation and implementation. This research is conducted utilizing an exploratory and descriptive research approach to gain a better understanding of the collective meaning or experiences of knowledge generated by identifying a wide range of individual employee experiences.

Similarly, bringing together the literature on employee engagement and HRDP adds to the understanding of how the literature informs my research questions. The questioning process opens exploration into how employee engagement participants interpret their experiences in a context of professional development policy and the impact on their perceived engagement. Answers to these questions generate new knowledge about how the creation and implementation
of professional development policy impacted participant engagement. Such potential impacts and results of employee engagement are the emphasis of this study and its interview protocol. This methodology will be detailed in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology, in Chapters 4 and 5 I present the findings and address a comprehensive analysis of these findings, and Chapter 6 presents the conclusions, implications and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 3. Research Design and Methodology

Up to this point, I have outlined how and why this research was designed to explore and critically analyze the experiences and perceptions of full-time faculty employees with their college’s professional development policy creation/implementation. Further, I have also discussed how and why the research aims to provide original insights into how these perceptions impact or otherwise relate to the faculty’s level of engagement as employees at Durham College. I will accomplish this with reference to a specific set of concepts rooted in the foundational work of William Kahn and others. To do this required research design, methodology and methods appropriate to task and goals. Thus, in this chapter, I describe the research design and methodology used in this exploratory descriptive study. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the research methodology. The procedures used in this study are then described in detail, which includes discussions regarding the research site, participants selected, my role in the study, the data collection, data analysis techniques, theme development and analysis overview, and ethical issues and implications.

Research Questions

The overall research question that precipitates this study is: How does organizational policy implementation and creation, specifically, professional development policies and procedures impact the level of employee engagement for full-time faculty employees in the study site of Durham College, in Oshawa, Ontario? Professional development policies for full time faculty provides the opportunity for attendance at conferences, workshop, seminars, courses, on-lining, degree completion, work experience or any other activity as agreed upon by the full-time faculty employee and their supervisor that enhances faculty development and supports the College’s mission statement.
In order to answer this a series of additional sub-questions must first be addressed:

1. What were the perceptions of the participants regarding their college’s implementation of professional development policy and procedures?

2. What were the perceptions of participating full-time faculty employees regarding their college’s process of creating professional development policy and procedures?

3. How did full-time faculty employees at this Ontario college describe their engagement in relation to the development and implementation of professional development policies and procedures?

Practically speaking, this set of research questions guides the exploration of how Durham College full-time faculty works with and applies organizational policy in the course of their daily work, and how, in doing so, they exercise subtle and not-so-subtle interpretations of policy. The perspectives and interpretations of full-time faculty are a core empirical contribution to the results.

**Research Design**

Given my focus on perceptions and the use of policy in consequential, subtle and not-so-subtle ways, and given an identified gap in the existing empirical research on the relationship between employee engagement and organizational policy, an exploratory qualitative case study is appropriate. Creswell (1994) defines qualitative studies in the human sciences as an investigation process aimed at understanding a social or human challenge, creating a complex picture and reporting comprehensive views all managed in a natural setting. Qualitative methods bring to the surface hidden or obscured meanings and offers images, interpretations and facts that might otherwise go unnoticed (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Qualitative studies utilize relatively small samples to produce a detailed, rather than exhaustive and generalizable, understanding of
the phenomenon (Bryman, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Polkinghorne (1989) suggested between five and 25 individuals sharing the same experience were sufficient for a qualitative study.

With regards to the overall mode of analytic interpretation, I note that Bhattacherjee (2012) proposed that engaging in an interpretive paradigm is a more fruitful way of studying social phenomena in the type of context that marks the need for this study. The design of this study emphasizes the interpretation of the experiences and perceptions of the participants involved. This is done through the interview process by encouraging participants to reconcile differences among their responses using their own individual perspectives. Bhattacherjee (2012) further explains that interpretivism carries implications for research where the researcher should adopt an exploratory orientation. This approach requires the researcher to understand the context of interviewee experience in order to arrive at an understanding of the unique preferences of the people concerned. Beyond an orientation to elements of the conceptual framework, the data should be structured as little as possible by one’s own prior assumptions (Gage, 2007).

The case study design is included within the research design as it is anchored in the details of the context of real-life situation, which provided a holistic account of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). The means of assessment were used to gain multiple perspectives on full-time faculty experiences. The data collection techniques are interactive processes in which engaging in one strategy (interviewing) leads to incorporating document analysis as a means of understanding the complexity of the case (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) contended that descriptive case studies present rich and detailed accounts of the phenomena under study and are useful in presenting information about areas of education where little research has been conducted.
In regards to this study, because there is limited empirical research on the topic, there is certainly a need to explore the current context to inform policy and planning decisions for the future. While Merriam (2009) and Creswell’s (2009) definitions aid in shaping the decision to choose a case study approach, Stake’s (1995) rationale for conducting a case study most resonates with this thesis’s research goals and perspective. He states that a case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case. A case study is pursued when there is a special interest in an organization or location. This special interest was indicated and articulated in the introduction. Stake (1995) recognized and supported this by indicating that there are circumstances in which a particular case, phenomenon, or experience, presents itself to a researcher as an opportunity for scholarly endeavor. Other options were considered for choosing the subject and research approach of this thesis, however the ability of the case study to provide, as Merriam (2009) notes, “a rich, ‘thick’ description of the phenomenon” offers a unique opportunity.

Merriam (2009) suggested that if the case study is to fulfill each of these expectations, then the primary data collection methods must be interactive with the people engaged in the phenomenon. It is important to utilize the language of interviewees to describe the nuances of the human behavior in the case. This case depended on the narrative language to explain an understanding of the participant experiences.

In a similar vein, Bhattacherjee (2012) describes qualitative analysis as the investigation of data dependent on analytic skills and personal knowledge of the social situation where the data were collected. In qualitative inquiries, making connections among situations and people must be the emphasis in order to understand the experience. This is echoed by Creswell (2009) who established that qualitative studies involve a process of understanding social challenges in
which the researcher makes knowledge claims based primarily on experiences. Through this study, participants were encouraged to examine their perspectives of professional development policy creation and implementation, how these perspectives are shaped, and how these perspectives influence their level of engagement. The case study approach facilitates exploration and in-depth analysis of phenomena within the environment using a variety of data sources. This confirms that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses, allowing for multiple aspects of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. Because of the limited research on the topic of employee engagement and policy implementation, this study provides an appropriate vehicle for exploration of the limited literature and research in organizations (Creswell, 1994).

Figure 4, Formulation of Research Approach, summarizes a number of qualitative approaches that are commonly used in research associated with the field of education and human resource development. Phenomenography, grounded theory, discourse analysis, action research, case study theory, phenomenology and interpretivism are research methods that I investigated. Each of these forms of inquiry asked different questions and were related to differing theoretical commitments, standards and criteria. I realized it was important to recognize that differences in methods of inquiry were not merely alternative ways of answering the same question.

Reviewing these methodologies highlighted two key points. First, that there are multiple perspectives that could make sense and have great applicability, and second, to pay attention to what resonated with me and tried to understand why that was. Exposure to the variety of methods of inquiry was illuminating. It was fascinating to me how the methodological “lens” and perspective of the researcher could impact research focus and results. What distinguishes methods from each other is based on their contrasting disciplinary roots. It was an imposing
assortment of methodologies. The rich variety of approaches reviewed provided insights into the selection of an interpretivist and case study approach based on my judgement applied to my research questions.

The theoretical spine for the research design is that of constructivism (Glesne, 2006) in addition to borrowed elements from an interpretivist approach, which utilizes a qualitative analysis methodology (Crotty, 1998). Constructivism is concerned with the unique experience of each individual in context, and the participant’s active role in constructing meaning. As such, interviews were conducted in the constructivist spirit of finding the unique context of individuals at work, with interpretivism complementing and adding additional rigor to the interviews through the use of evidentiary material in the form of document analysis (Yanow, 2007).
Figure 4. Formulation of Research Method
Methodology

Site selection and context of interview research

The site selected for one part of this study is Durham College. Established in 1967, Durham College is a multi-site college situated in Ontario’s Durham Region with campuses in Oshawa, Whitby and Pickering. The college has established teaching partnerships with York University, Trent University, and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. There are six constituent schools at Durham College with 315 full-time faculty who teach over 157 programs.

Durham College has set human resource goals to better understand the generation of professional development policies. In addition, Durham College has expressed its commitment to gaining a better understanding of how improved versions of employee engagement practices could impact levels of employee engagement among full-time faculty. At its meeting of June 11, 2014 the Durham College Board of Governors received a report on the recent employee engagement survey that was conducted in March 2014. It was generally noted that the survey had a strong response rate and compared results with the previous survey conducted in 2011 showing improvements in four broad categories. It was further noted that at a more granular level, slippage was observed in a small number of areas. A corporate plan was initiated with timelines and goals to address some of the key low performance areas. This research ventures into an unexplored area in the field of HRD in terms of how the implementation of organizational policies impacts the employee engagement of full-time faculty. This study addresses the full-time faculty employed at Durham College.
Durham College has grown to more than 12,000 full-time post-secondary and apprenticeship students and more than 73,000 alumni. Offering more than 157 full-time programs, in addition to more than 450 pathway programs, the college produces in-demand graduates who are successful leaders, entrepreneurs and business owners in fields such as culinary, hospitality, business, health care, science, the arts, information technology, emergency response and skilled trades. There are three staffing groups at Ontario colleges: faculty, support staff and administrative. In each of these employee groups there are full-time and various categories of part-time staff. For the purpose of this study, the attention is on full-time faculty.

In the fiscal year 2015-2016, Durham College employed 315 full-time faculty. The CAAT Academic Division of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) is the exclusive bargaining agent for the college’s full-time faculty including professors, instructors, librarians and counsellors. Faculty staff terms and conditions of employment are negotiated and set out in the Academic Collective Agreement (2014).

The provision of a quality educational experience is paramount to the success of Ontario colleges. The Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002 states that the objectives of the colleges are to offer a comprehensive program of career oriented post-secondary education and training to assist individuals in finding and keeping employment to meet the needs of employers and the changing work environment and to support the economic and social development of local and diverse communities (Services Ontario, 2010). By identifying and addressing the needs of employees, colleges create an environment that is beneficial to attracting and retaining the best faculty staff while providing quality experiences for students. Without qualified, engaged faculty employees working at Ontario colleges, the commitment to offer quality post-secondary experiences cannot be achieved. In addition, the
Province of Ontario and the Minister’s binding policy directive regarding Governance and Accountability (Colleges Ontario, 2013) required that each Ontario college ensure that an Advisory College Council to the President is established. This council provides a vehicle by which all staff, including academic faculty, and students can be consulted and can also provide input on significant college matters, including new organizational policy.

In considering this context of the Ontario college environment, there are acknowledged limitations with regards to site selection. For Phase One, participating colleges were not selected randomly, but rather they were a purposive sample. Phase Two of the study was conducted only at one specifically selected Ontario college, Durham College, located in Oshawa, Ontario, Canada. This study did not include the two francophone Ontario colleges because they are somewhat unique among the Ontario colleges and because of the challenges of language translation and related costs. This meant that these findings might not be generalizable to other colleges in Ontario or Canada. Although the findings will not be generalized to all Ontario colleges because of the aforementioned purposive selection, within these limits it was expected that an increased understanding of the phenomena explored and described would be of interest to other Ontario colleges nevertheless.

**Participant selection**

For this study, invitations were sent out to all faculty employees that had achieved at least one year of full-time service from an Ontario college and a number agreed to participate in the interview process. I wanted a sample that would be representative of the general profile of full-time faculty employees at the college. Part-time faculty were not included in the study group for this research, as by the very nature of their contracts, i.e. hours worked, they do not have the same opportunities for personal and/or professional development as full-time faculty.
Interpretative interviews are intended to be more akin to conversations than a structured interview. A battery of questions were developed by me, based on themes I identified in the literature and from my personal professional experience, to address the purpose of this research study (Appendix G). Two interviews were conducted as a pilot and field test of the interview questions. I wrote up the interviews and reviewed them with the thesis supervisor to ensure the questions were going to capture rich data/information, before getting approval to proceed with the remaining interviews. Questions were intended to build rapport and to describe feelings or thoughts about experiences. Non-leading probing questions acted as a specific design feature in the interpretative interviews as they directed the participants toward the phenomenon while still remaining broad enough to obtain meaningful responses without forcing a particular structure or way of responding upon the participant. The probing questions were informed by the content and data analysis collected in Phase One and were primarily concerned with the faculty employees’ experiences of professional development policy creation/implementation and the different ways they saw these experiences influencing employee engagement. Each question served as an opportunity to develop further probing questions in order to achieve a mutual understanding of the theme: How do you see current professional development policy creation/implementation at your college? What makes you say that? What opportunities have you had to influence how professional development policies are created and implemented?

The interviews were conducted with 25 full-time faculty employees and were conducted in person at the organization’s work site. Permission to audio-record conversations was obtained prior to each interview. To ensure accurate transcription as well as interpretive accuracy, notes were taken during the interviews. I conducted the interview transcription and brief note taking
myself. Data were collected primarily through the interviews. At the completion of each interview, the audio-recording was transcribed verbatim and reviewed by the interviewer.

**Recruitment of participants.** A sampling technique (Creswell, 1994; Patton, 1990) was used as a basis for the selection of participants for this phase. This involved providing an opportunity for all full-time faculty employees (315 in total) across the six schools at the study site to volunteer for the study with random sampling within each school. Initially, I was planning for a sample size of approximately 20 full-time faculty distributed over the six schools in the College. Since faculty travel back and forth between campuses, I was focussed on having a good representation by school as opposed to a representation by campus. I received responses from 27 full-time faculty. One employee didn’t have the full year of service, so I declined their participation. Subsequent to scheduling the interviews, one faculty employee forgot about their interview appointment and went away on vacation for the summer months. The result of the above changes meant that there was a sample size of 25 full-time faculty distributed by school as noted in Figure 9. This sample distribution is consistent with the distribution of all full-time faculty by school at Durham College.

**Participant Group Profile**

**Demographic variables.** The purpose of this section is to provide a comprehensive breakdown of the demography of this study’s sample. The sample included 25 participants. These data were collected through the Background Information Data Collection Form (Appendix H) provided to interviewees. The demographic information of interviewees gave greater shape to the sample and allowed for control for different external factors of the work environment in analyzing employee engagement.
Age. Ages of participants were grouped into categories: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+, and the option not to disclose. Of these groups 60% of participants fell within the 45-54 age group, making this the modal age group for the sample. Twenty percent of the participants were 35-44 years of age, 16% were 55-64 years of age, and 4% of participants were 65+. The distribution of age for the participant group roughly mirrors the full-time faculty population at Durham College (Durham College Human Resources Information System 2016).

![Age in Years](image)

*Figure 5. Distribution of faculty interviewees by age n = 25.*

Gender. Gender was grouped into three categories; Male, Female, and the option not to disclose. Fifty six percent of interviewees were male while 44% were female. The distribution of men and women in the category of full-time faculty at Durham College at 50.5%
and 49.5% respectively closely approximates the participant group (College Employer Council June 2016).

Figure 6. Distribution of gender of faculty interviews n= 25.

Language. Interviewees were asked to provide their first language. The Background Data Collection Form provided them with four categorical options; English, French, other, and the option not to disclose. One hundred percent of interviewees spoke English as their first language.

Job category. Job category was divided into four variables for response: professor, counsellor, librarian, and the option not to disclose. One hundred percent of the participants were professors within the college.

Education level. The Background Data Collection Form provided five response options for interviewees to establish their education level; high school, 2-year college, undergraduate university, post-graduate, and the option not to disclose. One hundred percent of
the sample had an education level that exceeded high school. The mode education level was post-graduate with 68% of the sample. Twenty-four percent of the sample had attended university as their highest level of education, with 8% of the sample having a highest level of education as a 2-year college diploma. The distribution of the educational level for all full-time faculty at Durham College is 38% Post Graduate, 32.8% University and 29.2% College Diploma/Certificate Durham College Human Resources Information System 2016).

![Highest Level of Education](image)

*Figure 7.* Distribution of educational level of faculty interviews n= 25.

*Employment.* This section asked interviewees the length (in years) of their employment at the college. Four options were provided; 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16+ years. The mode for years employed by the college was 6-10 years, which represented 32% of the sample. Twenty four percent of the participants had been employed at the college for 11-15 years; 24% of the sample had been employed at the college for 16+ years; 20% of the sample had been employed at the college for 1-5 years. The distribution of the length of service of all
full-time faculty at Durham College roughly mirrors the distribution of the length of service for the participant group (Durham College Human Resources Information System 2016).

**Figure 8.** Distribution of length of service of faculty interviewees, n=25.

*School breakdown.* Full-time faculty employees in this participant study group were aligned with a number of schools within the college. The college’s business is carried out by six constituent schools: (1) Business, IT & Management (BITM), (2) School of Health & Community Services (HCS), (3) School of Justice & Emergency Services (JES) and the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS), (4) School of Media, Art & Design (MAD), (5) School of Science & Engineering Technology (SET), (6) School of Skilled Trades, Apprenticeship & Renewable Technology (START). Full-time faculty employees in the participant group were representative of all of these schools.

Interviewees were requested to disclose what academic school they worked under in responding to the interview request (Appendix I). **Figure 9** shows the distribution of
interviewees by their academic school. The mode (as the most frequently occurring value in the data set) for interviewees by academic school is 16% of the sample size. MAD accounted for the lower portion with 3 interviewees (12%), while Justice & IS accounts for the upper portion with 7 interviewees (28%). Schools of Health, Business, and Engineering & Tech have interviewee populations that were closest to the mean population for each academic school of 4.2 (the average value of interviewees per school). The sample size is not skewed in that there was a similar representation from both the Justice School and the Interdisciplinary School of approximately 16% and 12% respectively. Organizationally the two schools were merged under one executive dean in 2015 and are illustrated consistent with the current organization structure. The sample above mirrors the distribution of full-time faculty by school (Durham College Human Resources Information System 2016).
Non-Respondents and withdrawals. One participant withdrew from the interview process.

Representation. The sample used for data collection is representative of the broader faculty population at Durham College. The distribution of Durham College full-time faculty by school is as follows: Whitby – 16%; Business – 15%; Health – 17%; Justice – 11%; Interdisciplinary Studies – 14%; Media Art & Design (MAD) – 13% and Engineering & Technology 14% (Durham College Human Resource Information System 2016).

Researcher’s Role

The purpose of this thesis suggests that a deeper understanding of the complexity of employee engagement can be understood by exploring full-time faculty employees’ experiences and the effects of professional development policy creation/implementation. Some of the theories reviewed and presented in the literature review are vague conceptualizations regarding
human agency in hypothetical situations and the anticipation of individual behavior. Many of
the philosophies embraced (either implicitly or explicitly) by academics are complex and express
an understanding of how organizations work, of how organizations and people reacted to being
involved and included in policy development, and how people were engaged in their work
environments. In order to connect theoretical knowledge to practice, as a scholar-practitioner
there are clear connections from theory and what works within an organization. Without this
experience, I argue, concepts and theories can remain an abstraction. From a scholar-practitioner
perspective, I am interested in how full-time faculty employees made meaning of their
experiences and anticipated their stories as an opportunity to see into their interpretations.

In preparation for writing this thesis, I opted to situate myself as a scholar-practitioner. Throughout 38 years in business, I have had many unique experiences involved in employee engagement and in building trusting relationships with employees. In addition to these experiences, I completed the Certificate of Completion awarded by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE). Working in accordance with all ethical principles outlined in the University of Toronto’s and Durham College’s websites, I followed the research conduct at each institution, as well as abiding by the conditions under the Durham College Code of Conduct. As I indicated earlier, I completed the Certificate of Completion awarded by the Tri Council Policy Statement (TCPS2: CORE) to control for researcher bias. The training and compliance with the Durham College policies on Code of Conduct, I was prepared for the steps that must be taken to minimize researcher biases. Further considerations were taken in the interview process by me to ensure the 25 participants recognized that although I am a member of the senior leadership team at Durham College, my role in this research was that of a researcher and not a member of management. I
made that distinction clear at the onset of each interview and at any time through the interview process if the lines or questions from the participants blurred that reality.

**Data Collection and Recording**

**Instrumentation.** The goal of this research was to provide results from a number of different perspectives. In the interest of abiding by the research method of providing replicability of the research design, I provide clear guidelines of how and why the data were collected. The caveat to this of course is that if the study were to be conducted again, it may not yield the same results, but it does allow for the possibility of reproducing the result and is a much stronger measure of validity than simple plausibility arguments. The interview guide instrument was developed for this purpose and was produced using Microsoft Word. The source of the interview question were created by the researcher, reviewed with the Thesis Supervisor and tested through pilot interviews with two full-time faculty employees. The results of those interviews were transcribed and analyzed. This information was reviewed and approved by the Thesis Supervisor before I completed the remainder of the interviews. The instrument was designed in soft copy format. The interview form was created as an approach to capturing interview notes during the meeting, as well as being supported by a tape recording and transcription of the interview itself.

Using the theoretical and conceptual framework that served to concentrate on the literature review, during the interview participants were asked to think about and reflect on the topic of employee engagement and professional development policy creation and implementation and how participants experience and make sense of these experiences.

For this research study a two-phased approach was used to gather and assess evidence. Phase One of this research involved issuing requests to the 22 publicly funded English language
Ontario colleges to voluntarily participate in this study by allowing access to their professional development policies for the purposes of document analysis. All professional development policies the ones provided directly by the colleges and those that I accessed on the respective college’s website were all accessible on their college’s website. An in-depth review and content analysis of relevant documents of participating colleges identified relevant themes associated with their professional development policy and procedures. The themes identified through this phase serves as the theoretical underpinning for the phase two interviews.

Phase Two was conducted through interviews with voluntary full-time faculty at Durham College. By leveraging the theoretical framework that served as the focus for the literature review in the interview process, participants were asked to think about and reflect on the topic of professional development policy creation and implementation and how participants experienced and made sense of these experiences. The interview transcripts were coded, analyzed and interpreted through the lens of the conceptual framework. The data analysis was inductive and included both similarities and variations in the ways participants made meaning of their experiences in relation to the experience of policy making/ implementation and their engagement as employees. Analyzing the text involved discovering themes, establishing thematic importance, and linking themes to abstract models (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

The primary data collection strategy used in the study was semi-structured interviews. A Data Collection Instrument and Interview Guide were developed (Appendix F and G), where possible questions were defined in advance, but not necessarily followed in a prescriptive way. By the use of this open approach, I was able to independently explore topics and engage in a natural conversation with the participants. This interview guide approach provided a degree of structure that helped to ensure that the interview or conversations did not deviate off topic and
that key aspects identified in the questions did not get overlooked. The questions in the thesis study and interview guide were open-ended. Open-ended questions provided participants with considerable latitude to frame and structure their responses. Questions began with general topics and gravitated toward more specific issues. The interview guide included follow-up probes that were used to encourage interviewees to expand on general responses. There was space provided in the guide for me to document notes observed during the interview or reactions and behaviours exhibited by the study participants. These notes supplemented the transcriptions from the tape recording of the interviews (described below).

A copy of the Interview Guide for Dissertation Study can be found in Appendix G. Additional data collection methods were used, such as Background Information Data Collection (Appendix H). Interviewing was a major source of data in this study; however, the document analysis and collection of demographic data were used to triangulate interview findings. These documents included information about implementation of other organizational policies, employee engagement initiatives, communications executed throughout employee engagement and policy implementations. As a researcher, I requested consent to access these documents (reference Appendix J).

In the process of conducting interviews, I utilized an approach proposed by Rubin and Rubin (2005). Their work highlights the importance of using a model called “responsive interviewing.” Responsive interviewing is a term for depth interviewing research. The responsive interviewing model “relies heavily on the interpretive constructivist philosophy, mixed with a bit of critical theory, and then shaped by the practical needs of doing interviews” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The goal was not to reach conclusive answers but to better understand how the interviewee understood and interpreted what they have seen, heard, or experienced.
According to the interpretive constructionist researcher, the goal of an interview is to find out how people perceive an occurrence or object and, most importantly, “the meaning they attribute to it” (p. 27). It is important to note that this framework served as a guide for this research. Rubin and Rubin explained this position in that a philosophy should not be a list of commands or instructions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 36-37).

My interview technique included three types of questions where I asked main questions, follow-up questions, and probing questions. The main questions were designed to highlight the core of the research problem and to stay attentive to addressing my research questions. The follow-up and probing questions helped ensure that I pursued an additional analytical depth to the data that were collected. The probing technique involved combining sub-elements of the question and was premised on clarification of what was expressed by the interviewees themselves.

Interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. Each interview was assigned a code, recorded separately, and labeled with the assigned interview code. Following each interview, I listened to the recording again, debriefed and made additional notes. I transcribed key words, phrases and statements in order to allow the voices of research participants to reveal themselves. I ensured that recording equipment functioned well and was prepared for setbacks. The interview setting (the participant’s work office) was free of background noise and interruptions. Field notes are often a secondary data storage method in qualitative research and recorded notes were part of my debriefing that followed each interview. It is crucial in qualitative research to retain data gathered (Lofland & Lofland, 2006) and record observations and important notes subsequent to each interview, without judgmental evaluation.
I debriefed following each interview and tested an understanding of the data gathered. I made every effort to provide substantial description necessary for the transferability of this study to employee engagement in academic institutions. The final technique to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability was to establish an auditable process that included a method of collecting data, documenting the transcribed interviews and placing all of the data collected together. I then evaluated this data equally (Moustakas, 1994), clustering, grouping and preparing process notes on methodological steps and decisions.

The interpretative data analysis process was demonstrated as an iterative one grounded in interview data. Once the interviews were recorded, they were transcribed verbatim. The interviews and transcripts were coded and each participant received a corresponding number that was used during the analysis and presentation of the findings. Each transcript was measured against two contexts, that as an individual making meaning of employee engagement and professional development policy creation/implementation, and as a collective story across all participant transcripts. In all transcript reviews, I adopted Bowden’s (2000) use of evaluating statements in relation to what the information yielded with regards to how full-time faculty employees understood professional development policy creation and implementation and how it impacted their employee engagement.

**Establishing Credibility: Validity and Reliability**

In this study, there are two phases in the interpretative process where validity was relevant (Sandberg 1997; 2000); (1) within the interview process while communicating with the research participants; and (2) in the analysis process while communicating with the text. In the first phase, participants were informed at the start of the interview that I was interested in their experiences of professional development policy creation/implementation. The interview itself
was a dialogue and conversation that was very free flowing and questions were only used as a
guide to the session. This was achieved by having developed a specific interview protocol with
open ended questions and suggested follow up questions to encourage discussion. In the second
phase of analysis, the focus involved the interview transcripts as a whole rather than looking at
transcripts out of context. This required that I look at the similarities and differences across the
transcripts minimizing looking at the transcripts out of context.

The development of the data analysis approach also influenced how I considered the data
that would be collected and its relevance to the research questions. This provided the
opportunity for me to follow a uniform approach to data analysis with each of the interviews.
This also increased both the reliability and validity of conclusions to be drawn in the subsequent
analysis and results sections of this thesis study.

Reliability in this interpretative study involved ensuring my interpretations were
controlled and checked throughout the process (Sandberg 1997; 2000). There were a number of
check points in this study where this took place: in the development of the research questions, in
the selection of the participants, while interviewing the participants, while analyzing the
transcripts, and in the reporting of the final categories of description.

Trustworthiness. The goal of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the fact
that the inquiry’s findings are important (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study considered
credibility as a fundamental part of trustworthiness. Credibility speaks to the true value of the
findings. Great care was taken to ensure participants’ original intent was maintained during the
transcription process. This involved rereading the data from the transcripts and accepting
inconsistencies and differences across the transcripts. Themes were developed through several
transitions of repeatedly reviewing transcripts and recognizing differing ways of viewing the
emerging themes and thematic clusters. This allows for a uniform approach to data analysis with each of the interviews that preserves the character of the interviewee’s statements. This increases both the reliability and validity of conclusions to be drawn in the subsequent analysis and results sections of this thesis study whilst maintaining the credibility and trustworthiness between researcher and participant.

**Data Analysis Technique**

My method of data analysis, through the lens of constructivism and interpretivism, involves using descriptive and evaluative coding of my interview transcripts and relevant documents associated with professional development policy. Using my theoretical and conceptual framework as an initial starting point (see Figure 1 and 2), I organized and coded my data. As my coding progressed, I categorized codes that shared similarities, creating groups that logically and intuitively fit together. Working with these categories and groupings, I utilized analytic memo writing (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) and searched for pertinent information that led me toward a deeper understanding of the experiences and challenges expressed by the participants.

Analytic memos (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) are write-ups or mini-analyses about what you think you are discovering during the development of your evaluation. I prepared these both during and after data collection. They were several pages in length and were intended to add depth to the perceptions and patterns that were emerging in the data. Throughout my evaluation, I would stand back and write about not only the process of collecting data, but more importantly, what I was seeing in the data (or not seeing). The memo helped summarize my major findings and they were insights and reflections on specific aspects of the analysis.
Prior to conducting the research, I completed the Certificate of Completion awarded by the Tri Council Policy Statement (TCPS2: CORE). However in addition to this training and my compliance with the Durham College policies on Code of Conduct, I researched the various forms of researcher bias when conducting qualitative studies and further acquainted myself with the steps that must be taken to minimize these kinds of biases. Through my research I learned to recognize confirmation bias, culture bias, question-order bias, leading questions and word bias and the halo effect. Having this knowledge provided me the opportunity to minimize researcher bias by knowing what to look for and how to manage my way around these common researcher tendencies.

**Document Analysis for Professional Development Policy – Ontario colleges**

Phase One reviewed and analyzed all professional development policy documents provided voluntarily by English speaking Ontario colleges. An in-depth review and qualitative analysis identified themes. Yanow’s (2007) claims that document reading can be part of an observational study or an interview based project influenced the research design in this study. There is support for documents providing background information prior to designing the research study, for example prior to conducting interviews. It was recommended that document review may verify observational and interview data, or they may contest or dispute. This equips the researcher with evidence that can be used to explain or challenge what is being said by participants, a function that observational data may support (Yanow, 2007, p. 411).

**Phase One – Process of Document Analysis.** The process for document analysis included: (1) setting inclusion criteria for documents; (2) collecting documents; (3) articulating
key areas of analysis; (4) document coding; (5) verification; and (6) analysis. An overview of each of these steps is provided below:

1. The inclusion criteria for policy documentation in the study was voluntarily provided or publicly available documents from English-speaking Ontario colleges. The publication date was noted. I requested such documents from Human Resource contacts within the college organizations.

The policy documents were originally reviewed and analyzed with reference to nine themes that were deemed to be important and relevant. I was clear as to what exactly was being analyzed and what was realistic to expect to be included in their professional development policies. These themes included the attention on learning, accountability and transparency, a culture of collaboration, attention to results, openness to improvement, trust and respect, a foundation in the knowledge and skills of teaching, supportive leadership, and communication plans.

2. Each document was analyzed to determine the extent to which the policy described, addressed or considered each of the identified ‘themes.’ Text relevant to each theme was highlighted.

3. Verification ensured consistency and reliability of the coding and assessment process.

The analysis of every document was read, re-read and reviewed by me several times. This involved developing a checklist from which I moved back and forth between design and research analysis to ensure that the data were systematically checked, concentration was maintained, and the data fit with the research questions being asked. The conceptual work of analysis and interpretation was monitored and confirmed frequently. This went beyond what is normally deemed sufficient for coding reliability (Morse, Barrett, Mayan,
Olson & Spiers, 2002) and ensured robust interpretative analysis and conclusions. Third party review was addressed through the analysis of the two pilot interviews with the Thesis Supervisor. Additionally, written updates were regularly provided to the Thesis Supervisor to keep him apprised and abreast of the progress being made while proceeding through the interview and data collection phases of this research.

4. Analysis - The data were then analyzed to determine frequencies in themes.

5. Policy documents were defined as those that expressed official organizational aims and strategies, and thus, policy documents were both easy to identify and obtain. Only documents the participating colleges willingly disclosed, either publicly via their college website or through direct contact, were analyzed; I did not have unrestricted access to documents in order to apply a sampling method. Documents from the public domain and those accessed through contacts each have their own considerations in terms of selection bias.

**Phase Two – Interview Data Analysis.** Outlined below in Figure 10, the data analysis process is demonstrated as an iterative one, grounded in the interview data. Once the interviews were recorded, they were transcribed verbatim. The interview and transcript were coded and each participant received a coded number that was used during the analysis and presentation of the findings. Although a preferred practice, the transcripts were not reviewed with the interviewees, due to time restrictions and the availability of the participants as they were away from the college on vacation during the summer months. Each transcript was measured against two contexts: as an individual making meaning of employee engagement, and as a collective story across all participant transcripts.
**Figure 10. Steps of Data Analysis**

1. **STEP 1**
   Familiarization with Relevance of Data

2. **STEP 2**
   Critical Analysis | Preparing for Themes

3. **STEP 3**
   Grouping Themes

4. **STEP 4**
   Thematic Networking

5. **STEP 5**
   Collective Experiences of Themes

6. **STEP 6**
   Relationships between Themes and Interpretations

**Phase 1**
- **DOCUMENT**

**Phase 2**
- **INTERVIEW**

Links to research literature through claims and concepts

New learnings through research
Numerous descriptions of different researchers’ approaches to analysis (Akerlind, 2005; Bowden & Walsh, 2000; Marton & Booth, 1997) are reviewed with individual scholars having slightly different methods of reading transcripts or developing and reviewing themes. Figure 10 provided a visual representation of the data analysis, demonstrating the traditional procedures and the actual approach used. The following outlines the steps involved:

Step 1: The first step in the analysis of the transcripts involved familiarization with decision making on relevance of collected data. Each transcript was read in its entirety, with comments added to summarize the general tone of the interview. All transcripts were reread and recordings were listened to again to better understand the context and implied meaning of the comments. More notes were then added and comments that had little relevance or did not appear related to employee engagement were omitted from further consideration or analysis. These activities were repeated and reviewed with taking into consideration personal biases and experiences. Data analysis aimed to develop a representation of full-time faculty employee’s experience with employee engagement.

Step 2: In this step of the data analysis, I moved beyond looking at all data statements as having equal value (Step 1) and attended to statements that emerged as relevant to the phenomena being investigated. After refining the data, the remaining parts of the data were transferred to the Step 2 analysis spreadsheet and identified as critical analysis statements associated with employee engagement and policy creation and implementation. It is at this stage where the individual respondent’s experience was extracted via common elements of the phenomenon of interest. These significant statements were extracted from each transcript preparing for creating categories of themes from the aggregated meanings. The list of key
concepts summarized in Chapter 2 was used to connect evidence in the data (Step 1) to (Step 2) critical analysis. Applying Figure 3 from Chapter 2, each transcript was read and-re-read while taking notes about themes in the data, writing analytic memos, connecting statements with theories and empirical claims from the literature and assessed against the statements in the data.

Step 3: The next step in the data analysis involved grouping themes from what all participants said about employee engagement and what participants said about other experiences that may or may not have been related to employee engagement. Similarities and differences between groups were identified revealing key qualitative variations in the understanding of employee engagement. Using an analysis spreadsheet by participant, comments were grouped or categorized based on conceptions described in Step 1 and Step 2. Data associated with the phenomenon in question, employee engagement, was narrowed down to selected quotes from all the interviews. These selected quotes made up the data group and allowed me to shift from the individual transcripts to the meaning embedded in the quotes. The collected and organized data were analyzed in order to identify the various ways the participants understood or experienced the phenomenon of employee engagement. This step was continued with individual transcripts and involved summarizing each transcript with critical statements about the meaning of employee engagement for each participant. The transition from analyzing the transcripts of each participant to analyzing the collective data across the themes involved grouping the variations into themes. This meant creating a new spreadsheet for each theme. Relevant participant comments or quotes relating to the theme were transferred to a new spreadsheet and initiated Step 4.

Step 4: The next step involved developing conceptions or ways of experiencing how the phenomenon was understood and experienced in all 25 transcripts. As a result of the
conversation between myself and participant, a set of themes emerged. Each theme described a particular way in which the phenomenon, employee engagement, had been perceived. Together, the set of themes describe the variation in how the phenomenon was experienced. Since the themes describe different perceived aspects of the same phenomenon, they are logically related to each other, often in a comprehensive structure. Because these themes are discovered within the data (Bowden, 2000), quotes are used to exemplify and clarify the themes; however, they are only a subset of the whole interview. My intent at this stage was to identify themes that were inclusive of the variations, unique in describing distinctive aspects of understanding employee engagement, and to present as few themes as possible (Marton & Booth, 1997). These themes are essentially constructed by grouping parts of the transcripts together according to similarities and differences.

Each theme represents one way of experiencing or being aware of employee engagement. There were three criteria for judging the quality of the themes developed in a study (Marton & Booth, 1997): the individual themes should stand in clear relation to employee engagement so that each theme tells us something distinct about a particular way of experiencing employee engagement. In addition, the themes have to stand in a logical relationship with one another and as few themes as possible should capture the critical variation in the data. Therefore, the themes were not ones with which any one person would specifically relate; rather, they were discoveries that incorporated variations of discussions with a specific number of people interviewed at a specific time.

Step 5: The logical relationships between the themes were then expressed. The emphasis on uncovering a framework, as revealed through the themes, was based on evidence from the data collected. This was fundamental to the research and was an important factor in establishing
the validity of the analysis. The outcome represented the way in which the individual ways of 
experiencing employee engagement may be combined to form a holistic picture of the different 
ways of perceiving employee engagement amongst the participants interviewed. It was an 
interpretation of the phenomenon, the collective experience of the act of employee engagement 
as seen by full-time faculty employees in this particular group. Through interpretation, it was 
based confidently on the data provided through the interviews. The data analysis process 
conveyed an outcome that presented a window into the participant’s experience of the 
phenomenon, in this study, employee engagement. This glimpse into the participant’s 
experience provided a valid and rich understanding of the meaning employee engagement had on 
the participants as well as demonstrating a rigorous research approach.

Step 6: This final step involved the outcome and portrayed the logical relations between the 
themes and the interpretations that have been made out of the analysis of all the interviews, 
creating a set of different ways of experiencing the phenomenon of employee engagement. The 
themes captured the importance in the data in relation to the research questions and enabled a 
deeper examination with each participant’s contribution by using thematic analysis (Attride-
Stirling, 2001).

Theme Development and Analysis Overview

Finding the insights within the interviews that answered the research questions came 
from the participants themselves. To facilitate my research goals, the audio recordings of the 25 
interviews were transcribed. To address the gaps in the current literature (Figure 3), I decided 
that the research method should focus on identifying themes within the participants 
understanding. This provided the scope for further investigation and as I outlined in Chapter 3, 
the most appropriate method of analysis was a thematic analysis that complemented my
interpretative research method. Thematic analysis can be used to make sense of seemingly unrelated material and to analyze qualitative information systematically to gain knowledge and empathy from data gathered (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Clarke & Braun, 2013). This method enabled me to develop a deeper appreciation for the group of full-time faculty staff that I was researching. By applying a thematic analysis process to the data (see Table 1 below for a summary description of the analysis process), I discovered broad patterns that allowed me to see themes that emerged from the data. Each theme captured something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represented a level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. The importance of each theme is not dependent on quantifiable measures. Each theme portrays something important in relation to the overall research questions and involved searching across the data set, the group of interviews, to find repeated patterns of meaning.
Table 1. *Phases of Thematic Analysis (adapted from Braun and Clarke, 2013)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF ANALYSIS PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 Familiarization with the data | • Transcribing the data from interviews  
• Rereading the data and noting significant ideas                                              |
| 2 Identifying interesting patterns | • Identifying interesting aspects of the text in a systematic way across the entire set of data  
• Collating the data relevant to patterns                                                       |
| 3 Searching for themes    | • Collating patterns into potential themes  
• Gathering all data relevant to each potential theme                                             |
| 4 Reviewing themes        | • Confirming that themes work in relation to initial patterns  
• Confirming that themes work in relation to the entire set of data  
• Reviewing the data to search for additional themes  
• Creating a thematic map of the analysis (see Figures 16 and 17)                                 |
| 5 Defining and naming themes | • Ongoing analysis to refine each theme and overall story the analysis is portraying  
• Creating clear definitions and names for each theme                                              |
| 6 Producing the findings  | • Selection of powerful, compelling quotes from data  
• Final analysis of selected quotes  
• Relating the analysis back to each research question, concepts and literature review            |

This thematic analysis process described in Table 1 above was applied to the transcripts and produced key themes that were evident in the data. These themes were viewed as essential in determining the perceptions of all the participants. I then portrayed the network via a collection of the textual data and organized the information into a network diagram. I applied
Attride-Stirling’s diagram (2001, p.388) as a guide in the development of my mapping. Figure 11 below is an example of Attride-Stirling’s portrait of a thematic network.

![Thematic Network Diagram](image)

*Figure 11. Structure of a thematic network (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 388)*

Thematic networks break down the textual data into manageable categories of patterns and themes. To assist in understanding the elements of the thematic network an explanation of the definitions involved was warranted. Basic themes are straightforward assumptions of the collected data. They are clustered together and start to complement each other as they begin to form organizing themes. Organizing themes assemble basic themes into similar categories, forming a line of reasoning or position about the situation. Global themes categorize and clarify
organizing themes into one insight that summarizes the all-encompassing issue. The thematic network analysis process included a map that illustrated the themes that emerged when the data were analyzed. I began to construct the thematic networks by organizing the basic themes in a similar fashion. The meaning of the basic themes and their relationships to each other were explored, allowing them to be grouped together under organizing themes. The next step of the analysis was to group organizing themes into a higher classification, or more encompassing themes. Clustering themes had important implications for the results of my analysis. The organizing themes began to illustrate the relationships with the basic themes and further revealed important connections and unexpected results. The relationships and meaning within the organizing themes were then explored to reveal global themes. These global themes represented the overall views of what was said in the interviews, leading me to identify broad based truths that were related to the research questions. The basic, organizing and global themes were then illustrated in a map that graphically shows the interconnected relationships between themes. One or more global themes may emerge from the interview data (in this study three global themes emerged) and each of these global themes was at the center of its own thematic network. These networks allow the reader to see the progression of the relationship between the insights and observations expressed by the participants and the conclusions I have arrived at. The links between the themes are interpreted so that the patterns are evident to the reader and the themes are fully understood. What is important at this stage is not only to describe these relationships, but also to understand them. What do the relationships between the themes reveal and how do these discoveries lead to the global themes? The thematic network and the underlying conclusions are tied back to the objectives of this research and reveal what has been discovered about the research questions and any underlying theories. This is the step that allowed the
research questions to be answered, and also revealed gaps in the research that suggest an opportunity for further inquiry. This approach resulted in a graphic illustration of these ideas and their relationships and is presented as Figure 17 in Chapter 5, Interview Findings and Analysis.

**Ethical Issues/Considerations**

I am aware of the ethical issues involved in documenting and examining a study of participants’ work, and the respect for confidentiality that goes with establishing a trusting relationship. I protected the recorded notes through secure computer access features. I informed the participants beforehand that they would be asked to talk about their experiences and I did this through a number of vehicles, such as the interview guide and the informed consent document. I was upfront and clearly outlined the risks and benefits to the participants. It was indicated within the appendices that I had reviewed and approved the ethical responsibilities with the Ethics Review Board (ERB) and clearly documented and explained to the participants the guidelines regarding confidentiality and protection of anonymity. There were a number of personal details about the participants that were kept confidential in order to protect the participants’ identities. For example, location, name, title and associated school of each of the study participants were omitted from being reported in the study results in order to protect the participant’s confidentiality and anonymity.

Phase One. In Phase One, only documents that were publicly available (e.g., on college websites) or provided by the participating English language colleges in Ontario were included in the study. For this reason, there were no ethical issues.

Phase Two. The rights of participants in Phase Two were protected in the following manner. Since I am in a management position at Durham College, I am required to comply with
the Durham College Code of Conduct and declare any potential conflicts of interest, actual or perceived, and take appropriate steps to mitigate such conflicts. For this reason, the invitation to participate was sent out on my behalf. Potential participants were invited to contact me directly to arrange interviews, and if any employees currently had a line relationship with me, the interview would have been conducted by a third party. The question of real, potential or perceived conflict of interest in the researcher/chief administrative officer (CAO) dual role was mitigated by the fact that the CAO portfolio at Durham College is comprised of finance, information technology, communications and marketing, facilities and ancillary services and administrative staff in human resources, whereas the target participant group is full-time faculty, and fall under a different portfolio, namely that of the Vice-President, Academic. This real, potential or perceived conflict of interest was further mitigated by the fact that the researcher/CAO recruited 25 full-time faculty participants from a total population of over 300 full-time faculty, so that if an individual was not interested in participating, they could choose to ignore the recruitment request and be part of the over ninety percent of faculty who would also be non-participants. The researcher was mindful throughout the study that it was important to distinguish these dual roles.

The Invitation to Participate and Consent Form (Appendix D) informed the interviewees that participation was completely voluntary and that they would be non-identifiable in any reporting of the findings and analysis. Only coded numbers were used. With their specific consent, interviews were audio-recorded (augmented with field notes), and transcribed prior to their data being included in the study findings. Interview participants were informed that they could decline to answer any questions they did not wish to answer and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time until the data were aggregated; any data collected prior to
that would be deleted and not included in the study findings. All data were kept confidential and secure, accessible only to my Thesis Supervisor and myself. All identifiable electronic information outside of a secure server environment was encrypted, consistent with U of T’s data security and encryption standards.

There was minimal risk involved with the phenomenon under study and the protection of human participants, however approval was sought through my thesis supervisor Dr. Peter Sawchuk, from the University of Toronto’s Ethics Review Board (ERB) and Durham College’s Ethics Review Board. Following these approvals, during the months of May and June 2016, participants received an email request to participate in this research study as per the proposal (Appendix A, C and D). The email included a copy of the Informed Consent Form (Appendix A). All participants responded to the email invitation (Appendix D) and confirmed participation via a calendar invite.

Data were collected by semi-structured interviews (Appendix G), asking participants what employee engagement and professional development policy creation/implementation meant to them, how they made sense of their involvement in the process and how that made them feel. Unstructured follow-up questions during the interview were used to encourage further elaboration or to check participant’s meaning. Questions such as, “What do you mean by that?” or “Is there anything you would like to add?” provided opportunities for the participant to reveal their current experience of the phenomenon as fully as possible. The interview made up the core of the research data. Participants were asked to describe an experience(s) regarding employee engagement and professional development creation and implementation in the college and how it made them feel. They were not limited to talking about a particular experience and they were
asked to describe what they meant by the terms they used, to talk about their experiences, and identify what their role was, rather than describing what others did or said.

The data from these interviews were collected along with other data (for example, background data obtained from participants (Appendix H), as well as relevant documents and artifacts that were used for triangulation purposes. The interviews, dialogues and interview transcripts were analyzed and interpreted using the procedures outlined below. The data analysis was inductive and identified variations in the way participants made meaning of their experiences and will be discussed in the following chapters.

**Chapter Summary**

In summary, the transcripts from semi-structured interviews with full-time faculty reflected their experiences with professional development policy creation and implementation and the impacts this had on employee engagement. In Chapter 3, I described the research design and procedural methods used in this study. I detailed why this study site was selected, how the participants were selected, and how the research instruments were designed using principles and previous research as guidelines. Data collection is described, methodological assumptions and limitations declared, and ethical issues reviewed.

Reflections and the meanings associated with the experiences that comprised the data that were then analyzed will follow in subsequent chapters. The aim of the analysis was to identify and describe the impact on employee engagement by examining the ways faculty members experienced or understood professional development policy creation and implementation and to present the research findings in the form of connected or clustered themes. Results revealed by this research method and answers to the research questions will then be discussed. In addition, the discussion and recommendations chapter will review the significance of the findings to the existing literature on this topic.
Chapter 4. Document Review Findings and Analysis

Introduction

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to explore and describe the perceptions of full-time faculty employees at Durham College with respect to employee engagement as impacted by the creation and implementation of professional development organizational policies. Chapter 4 outlines the findings and analysis of the document review phase of this research and presents these findings relative to the theoretical and conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. To set context, the first section presents employee engagement in Ontario colleges. Following this overview, the demographics gathered through the document review is presented in section two of this chapter and in the final section, I describe the associated themes that emerged from the document analysis.

Employee Engagement in Ontario colleges

The provision of a quality educational experience is paramount to the success of Ontario colleges. By identifying and addressing the needs of employees, colleges created an environment that was beneficial to attracting and retaining the best faculty employees while providing a quality experience for students. Without qualified, competent and engaged faculty employees working at Ontario colleges, the commitment to offer a quality post-secondary experience will not be achieved. In addition, the Province of Ontario and the Minister’s binding policy directive regarding Governance and Accountability (UCAS – Ontario Colleges, 2015) requires that each Ontario college has an Advisory College Council to the President, established as a means to provide a vehicle for all employees and students to be consulted and provide input on significant college matters, including new organizational policy. This involvement has extended to a review of new organization policies and the opportunity to review and ask questions of senior management, however, the College Council does not approve new policies.
Involving full-time faculty employees in the policy development process would be instrumental in helping to properly outline any problems/issues and could identify key persons to consult. More importantly, college faculty could advise on the appropriateness of the method of consultation for decision-making and program implementation considerations during the policy development stages before it is put into practice.

**Document Analysis Findings**

There were interesting findings uncovered through the document review phase of my research. The intent of this review was to provide a sound base, informed by college policies and procedures, to support the core empirical findings and analysis found in the interview data and analysis phase. Similarly, the document analysis also provided a foundation to collect data in order to assist in establishing recommendations for creating content for policies and procedures for faculty professional development policy in the Ontario college sector.

An invitation to participate (Appendix E) was sent out to the Directors/Vice Presidents, Human Resources of all English language publicly funded Ontario colleges asking for their voluntary participation in my document analysis. At the same time, I did a web search and found 15 policies and/or procedures on the colleges’ publicly available websites. Upon acceptance, the colleges then agreed to provide a copy of their academic professional development policy and/or procedure. Seven colleges provided a copy of their policy and/or procedure.

A representative sample of policy and procedure documentation was analyzed from several regions across Ontario. Fifteen of the 22 English-language colleges in the Province of Ontario had publicly available documentation that met the criteria for the review and analysis. The college system in Ontario is organized into four regions. Each region has the following number of English–language colleges – western (n=6); central (n=6); eastern (n=5); and northern
The 15 English-language colleges included in this particular document analysis were western (n=4); central (n=5); eastern (n=4); and northern (n=2). The remaining seven English-language colleges did not have publicly available policies and procedures related to faculty professional development; however, the documents included in this document analysis are representative (n=15; 68.2%) of the total English-language Ontario college population. On the basis that colleges can be identified as small, medium and large, the representation of the participant group of 15 colleges can be further classified as four large colleges, seven medium colleges and 4 small colleges.

In my examination of the available English-language, publicly funded Ontario college policies and procedures related to faculty professional development, I was able to distinguish that while there were numerous similarities in these policies and procedures across the college system, there were also various differences in how they were implemented and administered. The first significant dissimilarity was the varying length of the documents included in the sample, from two to 35 pages. Ten of the colleges (66.7%) had publicly available policies and procedures, whereas one (6.7%) had only a policy and two (13.3%) had only a procedure and one (6.7%) had a document listed as a “college practice”. The titles of the documents were similar overall and included the following titles:

- Academic Professional Development Leave
- Professional Development Leave
- Professional Development Terms of Reference
- Professional Currency and Scholarship Policy
- Faculty Professional Development Fund
- Professional Development Policy and Procedure
The effective date, when provided, that the policy was most recently reviewed and/or approved differed over a ten-year timeframe, as depicted in the Figure 12. Over the ten-year period of 2006 - 2016, there was only 3 institutions or 20% (n=15) that reviewed their professional development policies within a reasonable timeframe (a normal review period of every two years is the accepted standard at Durham College). Three colleges, or 20% had no date of when their policy was implemented or planned to be updated and a further five colleges or 33% had a professional development policy on their books that was older than five years. The lack of a concerted renewal period for policies, specifically, professional development policies, in my view, is an indication of the importance placed on this policy by the respective college.
Figure 12. Most recent approval or revision date provided on Ontario college documentation related to faculty professional development.

Further analyses of the documents indicated the individual or committee charged with the approval or oversight of the documents and there was a wide range, as detailed in Figures 13 and 14 below. In most situations, where stated (n=4; 26.7%), the Senior Leadership Team was responsible for approving the Ontario college documentation relating to faculty professional development. In other situations, the Board of Governors, Academic Coordinating Committee, or Vice President Academic were responsible for policy approvals.
The individual or committee accountable for the oversight of Ontario college documentation were widely dispersed over the college sector. Most commonly, the Vice President Human Resources or the Executive Director Human Resources (n=3; 20%, respectively) was responsible for oversight. Additionally, depending on the college, the following individuals also provided oversight responsibilities: Academic Excellence Committee, Senior Vice President Operations, Vice President Academic, Director Human Resources, Associate Vice President Academic, or Chief Human Resources Officer.
Figure 14. Individual or committee accountable for the oversight of Ontario college documentation related to faculty professional development policy and/or procedures.

The documentation from all 15 colleges widely served similar purposes, which were to establish rules and procedures for professional development activities related to faculty employees. The number of terms defined within the documentation was limited, with many of the policies not defining any terms at all (n=10; 66.7%). Figure 15 illustrates the terms defined in the documentation from at least one Ontario college.
Figure 15. Defined terms in Ontario college documentation pertaining to faculty professional development policies and/or procedures.

Overall the 15 documents covered a broad array of topics. The various categories included in the documentation were outlined in Figure 16. All of the reviewed documents provided some level of information about the following areas: the roles and responsibilities of faculty employees in relation to professional development (n= 14; 100%); professional development leave (n=4; 26.7%); reference to the collective agreement (n=2; 13.3%); education tuition assistance programs (n=2, 13.3%); rules related to professional development applications (n=2, 13.3%); various programs related to professional development opportunities (n=2; 13.3%); and non-compliance implications (n=2, 13.3%). Approximately two thirds of the documents included in this analysis referenced, related, or linked college documentation to related policies and/or procedures (n=10; 66.7%).
Figure 16. Topics addressed in Ontario colleges’ documentation pertaining to faculty professional development policies and/or procedures.

Generally, the lengthier documents in this analysis (over 10 pages in length) included a significant amount of detail that was generally captured in related college documentation that
could best be classified as the procedural part of the application process for obtaining faculty professional development opportunities. The shorter documents (less than five pages) provided little detail on the actual process of obtaining faculty professional development and would require further interaction to complete the application process. One document of the sample group provided an employee checklist outlining eight steps to be followed. This was the college’s attempt to provide a flow of the activities that needed to be completed (from start to finish) in relation to their faculty professional development opportunities. It is interesting to note that some colleges have not seen the need for a separate policy on professional development. The rationale for that decision may be the fact that the collective agreement contained a provision that provided for faculty members to have a specified number of PD days each year or alternatively, professional development may be contemplated through another policy and procedure, such as a Faculty Appraisal policy.

The next step in the analysis process was to identify themes that emerged from reviewing the 15 documents. In order to establish the identified themes, I used a frequency analysis. The identified themes and their respective frequency are as follows:

- Focus on learning – 10;
- Supportive Leadership – 10;
- Results focus – 10;
- Teaching skills – 9;
- Improvement receptiveness -5;
- Collaborative culture - 3;
- Accountability and transparency – 2;
- Trust & respect – 2;
The themes identified above indicated only in part what one could expect as main themes coming out of an academic institutions’ policies on professional development. It was not unexpected that a focus on learning would be a major theme, followed by a theme of being results-oriented. Similarly, teaching skills was a major identified theme and intuitively that was to be expected. These themes are consistent, for example, with Durham College’s 2013-2016 strategic plan, especially as it related to the goals under the category “Our Students” (Durham College Business Plan 2016-2017; Durham College Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016). The colleges have made an investment in their faculty and they do expect a return on their investment, hence the focus on results. The portrayal of a supportive leadership was interesting in that it emerged higher in the frequency levels than the themes of trust and respect, accountability and transparency; this appeared, on the surface, to be quite a contradiction. It was very telling when the theme analysis informed the reader that the desired effect of having a supportive leadership that was assisting faculty in their professional development endeavours was not exemplified in the college-created documentation from a perspective rooted in trust, respect, accountability and transparency. Furthermore, one of the tenets of the college system has been to create a collaborative culture, evidenced by the direct interactions with the local communities. These interactions are realized through relationships with program advisory committees, applied research at local businesses, and co-op placements, to name a few.

However, in spite of those stated attributes of the colleges, one of the key related faculty policies, being professional development, did not appear to strongly support a collaborative culture, at least in the documentation that was analyzed. Another theme identified in the analysis was the element of a communication plan specifically related to the dissemination of information.
connected to the professional development policy. This once again was very telling in that the element of communication ranked so low on the frequency ranking. I considered this a potential sign of a much larger problem related to overall communications and its relevance as well as the importance placed on it by the respective colleges. Additional observations through the document analysis phase indicated a strong preponderance to process enforcement and compliance. There was an indication that the various professional development policies had an element of conformity and that was counter to the idea of providing a collaborative culture, where building and establishing trust and respect are paramount. Within the professional development policies there appeared to be an implied punitive element, which may have negative ramifications. For example, faculty may have decided to avoid professional development opportunities, which would negatively impact their level of engagement.

The next step in the document analysis was to conduct a review in relation to the key concepts and claims identified in the literature review in Chapter 2 and, as outlined in Chapter 3; specifically, the policy creation/implementation process and communication. The other key concepts and claims that have been identified will be explored in detail when I move to a discussion and analysis of the findings from the 25 interviews.

**Theme - Policy Creation/Implementation Process**

The evidence provided in the document analysis indicated a serious disconnect between the intended outcomes of developing a policy on professional development for faculty employees and the likely effects. It was noted that one of the outcomes of implementing such a policy was to demonstrate a supportive leadership at the respective college; however, the analysis did not support that outcome. What were the main reasons for this disconnect? Answers to this question as well as the effectiveness of the policy implementation process were explored as part of the
interview process with the 25 faculty members. Furthermore, the unintended effects of the policy creation/implementation process were also examined. The unintended effects were either positive or negative and the document analysis identified this as a serious concern that required probing in greater detail during the interview phase. The use of probing questions in phase two ensured that rich information would be generated in order to assist in recommending changes for future policy implementation. To conduct a comprehensive analysis, it was important to establish a fairness and equal access to professional development by all faculty members irrespective of the school or the program where each individual employee resides.

The document analysis indicated a serious issue around accountability and transparency and also the areas of trust and respect. This outcome created a greater need for me to establish this, in fact, was the actual perceptions of the faculty. If that were the case, then recommendations could be developed on how this should be avoided in the future. At no time through the document analysis did the issue of cost become an item for review or consideration. This had the potential, along with the other categories noted above, to produce very negative consequences for the intended professional development recipients. An example of a negative consequence includes faculty wanting to participate in a professional development activity as part of their annual plan, but, in the absence of any indication of a funding statement, this had the potential to build false expectations and disappointment with the policy implementation process. This item provided further probing questions that were explored through the interview process.

**Theme – Communication**

The theme of communication was only modestly identified in the document analysis. That in of itself was a serious cause for alarm. How well a policy was created and implemented was clearly contingent upon the steps that management took to clearly and concisely
communicate that introduction. Further, if there were issues with the implementation of the policy, faculty members needed to know specifically who to speak to in order to enable them to get their questions clearly answered and addressed. The lack of a clearly defined communication plan in the various professional development documents provided the necessary direction for me to cover this item in the probing questions during the interview phase.

At least two colleges in the system have taken the policy creation and development one step further and established policies and procedures related to creating policies and procedures. The expressed intent of this particular policy was to provide guidelines and support in the development, renewal and implementation of consistent and transparent policies and procedures that fall into the categories of academic, administration or employment. The Durham College Policy ADMIN-201 (see Appendix K) Policy Development and Renewal cited under Section 4 Policy Statements asserts the following:

4.1 Durham College Policies will be developed and renewed in the context of the following principles:

4.1.1. Respect for the mission, vision, values and goals of the College, all of which are reviewed and renewed as part of each Strategic Planning cycle.

4.1.2. Support for consistent decision-making and high standards of clarity, transparency and accountability.

4.1.3. Commitment to consultation and collaboration in the development of effective and implementable policies and procedures.

In addition to the Durham College policy and procedure ADMIN-201, there were related appendices and templates to assist college employees in the creation of policies and procedures
in a prescribed and standardized format that ensured consistency. Additionally, Durham College has created a policy entitled ADMIN -253 (See Appendix M) Administrative Decision Making policy and procedure. These documents were introduced in 2015 as a means to assist in strengthening the college’s institutional governance. These documents provide a mechanism to ensure collaboration and transparency by utilizing a systematic process of seeking approval, in the particular case of this research, when recommending a change to an established corporate policy or to create a new corporate policy. However, when specifically reviewing the procedure for professional development for Durham College (see Appendix L), there appeared to be gaps in the documentation that needed to be updated to provide a fulsome program that addressed the college’s and employees’ needs and requirements. For example, the Durham College Professional Development procedures discussed tuition reimbursement for various types of credentials but was identified by the interviewees as only one element of a comprehensive professional development program.

On the surface, a policy statement may appear to provide the requisite level of guidance and direction but it is really the related procedures that provide the step-by-step directions of how to properly execute the policies primary intent. As indicated above, the various documents (as detailed in Figure 15) were not universal in their design, nor were they complete in all the offerings that were made to the respective college faculty.

Given that the 15 professional development policies that were analyzed as part of this study were available on the respective college’s website, it can be concluded that these working documents provided processes that worked for the colleges to varying degrees. However, there was not one comprehensive document that provided a clear and transparent process that would inform faculty of the administrative process for acquiring professional development
opportunities at their college. None of the documents included information relating to funding or budget implications, and a limited number of policies included information related to the selection and approval process. The identified lack of a comprehensive approach to professional development policy implementation for college faculty provided a backdrop of detailed information to assist in the probing questions that emerged in the interview phase with the 25 college employees.

The themes of communication, professional development, accountability and transparency, trust and respect, collaborative culture and a supportive leadership were informed by the document analysis. These themes emerged from the respective policy document creation process following what has been accepted as generally strong components that could be included in a professional development policy (SACSCOC Board of Trustees, 2010). The test then becomes whether these elements of the policies were successful in achieving the desired results through the policy implementation? Identifying these themes through the document analysis process and including this information in the development of the interview questions provided a deeper and richer exploration of these areas of interest as it related to the potential impact on employee engagement. In addition to the probing questions included in the Interview Guide (Appendix G), the document analysis identified additional opportunities to ask insightful questions (Appendix G) that were utilized in the interview process. The information gathered through the document analysis phase and linked into the interview phase provided data to analyze and provided answers to my three research questions. Further, this information, when analyzed, was used to compare and contrast the key concepts identified in the literature review in Chapter 2, specifically the relationships of communication, professional development and
recognition to employee engagement; the relationship of communication to organizational policy and the identified gap between policy creation/implementation and employee engagement.

Chapter Summary

In summary, professional development policies from 15 Ontario colleges were reviewed and analyzed. An initial red flag was raised in that approximately 32% of the colleges did not have their professional development policies, if they existed, on their websites. From an openness and transparency perspective, commitment to faculty and quality, this was an area of concern. Further, the Annual Business Plans of many colleges indicated that their goal was to support faculty and staff by providing adequate professional development opportunities. For example, Durham College’s 2016/2017 Business Plan states “we will invest in professional development and training that will allow all faculty and staff to reach their greatest potential.” The evidence in my analysis did not support this claim. Further, the identification of this particular evidence served as a foundation for the interview phase where I gathered and assessed detailed interview data in order to answer my key research question: How has the creation and implementation of professional development policies affected the level of engagement for full-time faculty at Durham College?”

Through the analysis of the 15 policies, eight themes were identified. The themes of communication, professional development, accountability, transparency, trust, respect, collaborative culture and a supportive leadership were identified. Clearly, the professional development policies, as currently written, fall short of the stated goals. The deficiencies identified during this document analysis provided examples and areas for deeper examination and exploration through the creation and use of questions in the interview phase of this research.
These deficiencies also served as a platform to draw comparisons and identify consequences linked back to the key concepts identified in the literature review in Chapter 2.

The following chapter provides a detailed analysis of the findings from the interview phase of this research. This research was aligned with the literature review and research as noted and presented in Chapter 2. The final chapter of this thesis will present the original scholarly contributions and implications, followed by recommendations for future research.
Chapter 5. Interview Analysis and Findings

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to present the analysis and findings of the interview phase of this study in relation to existing literature and research. It begins by building on the presentation of demographics of the study participants. The data collected and analyzed was in response to the research questions posed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. The results of this exploratory case study provided compelling support for understanding and leveraging employee experiences in relation to professional development policy. This chapter describes the findings following a thematic analysis process, first identifying basic themes, then organizing themes, and finally establishing global themes (adopted from Attride-Stirling, 2001). This study employed a clear, replicable, and transparent methodology, outlined through a series of phases described in Chapter 3 to produce a thematic analysis. As an interpretivist study, I acknowledged that the individual experiences of the participants and the meanings they attached to them should also be considered in the wider social context of their meanings. Several figures illustrating the key themes are presented in the study results and have been developed and described to demonstrate their relationship. In the final section of this chapter, the identified claims from the literature of HRD and employee engagement are compared and tested using the analysis and findings of my collected data. This was visually communicated with the conceptual model of the study (see Figure 3 in Chapter 2) that represented the framework for understanding the elements of employee experience and employee engagement in relation to professional development policy.
Expanding Thematic Network for Employee Engagement

The qualitatively different themes for employee engagement that became apparent from the 25 interview transcripts is presented in Figure 17. As a result of the transcript analysis, full-time faculty staff identified three qualitatively different global themes, as indicated and defined in Table 2 below. The global categories have been labeled as “Respectful and Valued Communication,” “Professional Development Roadmap,” and “Genuine Recognition.” There are, of course, aspects of the participants’ perception and understanding that overlaps across the categories. I viewed this as a helpful interpretation of understandings and attitudes as it provided a collective story across all participant transcripts. The transition from analyzing the transcripts of each participant to analyzing the collective data across the participants assisted in grouping the experiences into categories.

The three global themes were described per the data obtained from participants and illustrated the different ways in which full-time faculty staff expressed and made sense of their experience of professional development and policy creation and implementation.

Table 2. Expanding Thematic Network for Employee Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>THEMATIC NETWORK DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respectful and Valued Communication</td>
<td>Employee engagement is enhanced by relationships and creating context through communication efforts and is crucial to the development of a positive work environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Roadmap</td>
<td>Employee engagement involves establishing formalized plans for professional development opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine Recognition</td>
<td>Employee engagement is evident when employees are supported, encouraged, and empowered through the recognition of good work.</td>
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</table>
I then constructed a thematic network establishing the basic and organizing themes around the global themes and represented it as a system and non-hierarchical figure (Figure 17). Reflecting on how participants described ways of experiencing employee engagement was a valuable and untapped area of my research interest. Marton and Booth (1997) have illustrated the significance of gaining understanding about human experience stating that, “in order to make sense of how people handle problems, situations, the world, we have to understand the way in which they experience the problems, the situations, the world that they are handling or in relation to which they are acting” (Booth, 1997, p. 111). There were various ways in which the study participants experienced or understood employee engagement. The global themes emerged from my study participants as they told their personal experiences about their relationship with employee engagement and professional development policy creation and implementation. The real discovery was not necessarily about employee engagement; however, it was about the apparent variation in the perspective that the participants had regarding employee engagement. Figure 17 shows the different levels of themes that guided the analysis, revealing the process of refining and grouping basic themes into organizing themes and then into global themes. The global themes captured the personal understanding of employee engagement, which was shaped by the expectations and experiences of full-time faculty employees. Moreover, it further reflected their understanding of professional development policy creation and implementation.

Figure 17 exemplifies the establishing and organizing of basic themes, which then leads to the development of the final three global themes. These final categories were all analyzed through my grouping process. It is a diagram of the basic themes, which together with the organizing themes, constitutes the network of the major global themes.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Culture of Collaboration</th>
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<td>New ideas are encouraged</td>
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<td>Focus on Results</td>
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<td>Two-way relationship</td>
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<td>Support</td>
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<td>Involvement in Related Activities</td>
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<td>Availability of Opportunities</td>
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<td>Two-way relationship</td>
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**Figure 17.** Thematic Network
Considerations were made not only of the story told within individual themes, but how these related to the overall story that was evident within the data. In addition, it was highly important to develop a descriptive category that conveyed an immediate indication of the essence of the theme. This was the final stage of analysis involved: choosing global themes that illustrated elements of all the themes. The global themes were viewed as essential in determining the perceptions of all the participants. To assist with the interpretation of the results from this network analysis, each section below provides a brief introduction, followed by a visual summarizing of the results, and finally ends with a narrative account, which includes data excerpts of meanings captured by each global theme.

**Respectful and Valued Communication**

Employee engagement is enhanced by relationships and creating context through communication efforts and is crucial to the development of a positive work environment. To illustrate, the following figure demonstrates that respectful and valued communication was supported by a collection of contributing themes and then classified according to the participants’ underlying story, which then became organizing themes. The organizing themes were then integrated to illustrate a single conclusion, or global theme.
Communication was the most recurrent theme across all of the interviews conducted. This was expressed in a multitude of ways, but a key observation was the connection of communications to the senior leadership team and most prominently with the President of the college. In other words, the interviewees expressed a desire to be involved in present and future college affairs. This was affirmed by the interviewees’ acknowledgment of the important role of town halls meetings, the annual Vice President Academic Kick-off, focus groups and roundtable sessions. These sessions played an important role for bi-lateral and multi-lateral feedback for faculty and administration. The notion of being heard, having a voice, and being listened to was extremely important for all interviewees. One participant (D006) summarized this well:

It means that I feel connected to the campus, to the people that I work with and the organization I work for. When I say connected, I mean that I like being there. I enjoy
what I am doing, I feel challenged by what I am doing and I feel like I have a voice in what I am doing. (D006)

Being heard was manifested in the expression for a genuine request of faculty employees to have the freedom to voice their own ideas in a comfortable setting. It was interesting to note that interviewees appeared to be satisfied with the internal communication processes of the Academic Council and College Council. A consensus across interviewees revealed that while senior management made a concerted effort to communicate with employees and keep them informed of the more global issues happening at the college, lower levels of management did not evidence this same effort to communicate. Despite the college’s organizational structure there still exists several levels where communications could and did break down.

Individual schools at Durham College, led by their respective executive deans, fulfilled and provided the context in the role, manner, and format of internal communication. In doing so they acknowledged that individual faculty members have varying needs for different levels of communication. The need for regular and consistent communication was expressed by the employee’s level of engagement, such that a higher level of engagement can be attributed, in part, to the need for enhanced levels of communications. This observation is supported by Evers, Power and Mitchell’s (2003) who claim that communication and competencies that are related to implementing policies provide a greater understanding of a faculty member’s perception of employee engagement. In some cases, responses were highly critical of existing modes of communication, be it through the Information Centre for Employees (ICE) or an oversaturation of information through e-mails. In other cases, responses supported incumbent methods of communication, praising intuitive systems and frequency. One participant summed this point up well when indicating, for example, that “ICE is fantastic, it provides us with a lot of information,
I think that idea of transparency and the availability of information allows people to become engaged at whatever level they would like to be.” (D011). With this qualitative and interpretive research, I have focused on understanding the way full-time faculty interpret and make sense of their experiences and their environment at Durham. I have relied on interviewing, observation and analysis of existing texts. Meanings have emerged from that research process and the three relevant factors identified have the most relevant interaction effects on one another.

Most responses regarding the theme of communication emphasized its importance in relation to employee engagement. Interviewees placed a high value on communication between management and faculty. Communication was not only linked to themes of engagement, but methods, such as face-to-face communication and interpersonal e-mails, were directly tied to sentiments such as respect and value within an organization. Claims from the literature review that advocated the analysis of the theme of communication were Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz (2011) and Shuck and Reio (2011): “Relationship development in the workplace, an employee’s direct manager, and learning play a critical role in an engaged employee’s interpretation of their work” and “employee engagement is much more than what we see employees do; it is rather how employees experience and interpret the context around them and then accordingly behave” (Shuck & Reio, 2011, p. 15). Shuck and Reio (2011) likewise wrote that relationship development in the workplace played a critical role in how employees engaged with and interpreted their work. Communication between staff, particularly management and faculty, was established as the primary direction for relationship development by several interviewees.

Relationships between staff and their supervisors were supported by my literature review where employee engagement was a predictor of positive organizational performance, thus emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between employer and employee. Face-to-face meetings
for recognition, communication, professional development opportunities, or even personal conversation were crucial to the development of positive workplace relationships and further engagement with one’s work. The following participant response indicates the importance of communication with regards to policy creation and implementation:

Maybe there needs to be something around the policy process that teaches faculty and staff what the policy development process is and what it looks like and who is the policy development community when you are working on that policy. There could be some argument as well that you want to be sure if you’re developing policy that you are maybe including the users of the service. (D015)

With regards to this claim, effective communication informed employees about aspects of their work environment, such as upcoming opportunities, changes, and their own performances. Robinson et al. (2004) emphasized the significance of feeling valued and involved as an influence on the extent to which the employee felt appreciated, involved, and therefore engaged. Robinson et al. (2004) further theorized that this could be a useful indicator for organizations in efforts to maintain or improve engagement levels. Shuck and Reio (2011) contended that employee engagement was how employees interpreted the context around them. Effective communication created a context that kept employees informed, alert, and in touch with management.

The topic of communication raised during the data collection process was expressed in several different ways: positive and negative views, communication as it related to workload, communication as it related to labour relations, policies, ICE, and professional development. Participant D008 suggested that, “when policies are changed we should be informed; that helps to keep us engaged. Here is the dilemma, yes what I don’t want is more meetings and more
emails. I think we all have to deal with information overload. Yet there are things that take place on a regular basis in my faculty or department that I need to be informed about” (D008). D017 stated that, “We need to do a better job at explaining to the faculty why these policies are in place” (D017). And D019 expressed his/her perspective as, “I am fine with how the college communicates its changes to policy. I am aware a policy is under review and I am fine with the process we have in place” (D019). D007 declared that ”People like their ideas to be heard, they like to voice their opinions” (D007). The importance of engagement through communication in policy development was supported by Lipsky (1980) who argued that organizational policies, plans, purposes, procedures, and supports are put into place by institutions; however, employees themselves must engage and initiate these things so that the engagement process can move in a positive direction.

Communication is a powerful tool that has an enormous impact on the success of any organization. Effective communication could increase employee engagement, boost workplace productivity, and drive business growth. Conversely, poor communication could have damaging effects. The participants in this study shared their experiences with supervisors who communicated openly and honestly, provided feedback, showed appreciation, and offered encouragement, resulting in improved individual performance. D004 conveyed his/her thoughts:

As long as you communicate we are looking at this policy because we have been mandated by the ministry or we are looking at doing this for these reasons and here are some opportunities you can get involved in and if that is communicated through whatever electronic means we use to contact staff and forwarded through the schools and it isn’t only at the start of the process but provides regular updates on the progress of the creation for the policy I don’t know what more the organization can do. (D004)
The experiences reflected in these statements indicated how critical communication was in developing a college that is committed to its employees and to their professional development.

As the interviewees stated, communication of professional development was a key part of substantive and effective PD. Communication must provide clarity on professional development parameters and limitations, as well as the details of how employees could access professional development and when certain opportunities were accessible within an employee’s career lifecycle. As several interviewees revealed, greater clarity in professional development opportunities would lead to better outcomes with regards to how employees pursued professional development. This request for clarity fed into the proposed professional development plan suggested by several respondents that would clearly detail what opportunities the college offered internally and externally, how opportunities were funded, and what options employees had with regards to taking PD during teaching semesters or outside of the school year.

**Professional Development Roadmap**

Employee engagement is establishing formalized plans for professional development opportunities. To illustrate, the following figure demonstrates that the professional development roadmap theme was supported by a collection of underlying themes and then arranged according to many participant stories that were indicative of and best described by the organizing categories. The organizing themes were then combined to illustrate a single conclusion or global theme.
Professional Development in the college sector was described by most interviewees from three basic perspectives; (1) professional development, (2) personal development and (3) teaching and learning. The interviewees noted that the college’s in-house professional development initiatives, particularly through CAFÉ (Centre for Academic and Faculty Enrichment), provided enhanced teaching and learning workshops as well as training sessions for new employees. The criticism that bookended much of the CAFÉ’s praise was that once employees exited their probationary period the level of support for in-house professional development appeared to be less structured and less frequent and the opportunities for full-time faculty to have ongoing training seminars and workshops had to be initiated by the faculty member. That is the CAFÉ was not viewed as actively seeking out opportunities for ongoing development for full-time faculty.

There were different interpretations of how professional development was administered at the college. This was largely dependent on the respective school and executive dean of the

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Figure 19. Theme map for Professional Development Roadmap
various interviewees. However, it was clear based on several interviewee comments that there were inconsistencies in administration of professional development funds across several schools at Durham College. Interviewees were not aware of the budgeted funds allocated for professional development in their school, nor were there individualized plans for interviewees as to how they could meet their professional development goals and targets for subsequent academic years:

We are told we have so much for PD and sometimes there are very short windows to apply for something and if the budget is used up, I don’t know what the process here is. I am not sure if funds get transferred from one pot to the other. It does seem like some people go on conferences and some don’t. (D005)

Certain interviewees took issue with disparities in professional development funding with certain schools receiving more funding than others, establishing what was perceived as a hierarchy of greater need within the school without that being formally communicated to all faculty members: “What needs to happen is a dialogue and it highlights PD for faculty and that dialogue and it isn’t tied to an evaluation but a more collaborative approach.” (D023)

Throughout the interviews, most participants discussed professional development in conjunction with the development of a ‘plan’ for the administration of advanced learning. The references for this proposed plan differed from subject to subject with terms such as ‘clear path’, ‘roadmap’ or ‘framework’ being used. Moreover, interviewees also emphasized the importance of the method of delivery for a professional development plan – whether it was personalized for each employee or tailored more generally to specific schools within the college. The following are several representative example quotations to support these observations:
I think that it means having the freedom to identify your own areas that you feel you need to improve and then going out and following that roadmap. A feeling that you must have confidence in your managers if you are going to address the areas that you feel you need to address. And that is something I will be looking into more going forward. (T001)

What is the path; how do you get on that path so that folks that want to develop in that professional manner have the opportunity to do so? (D012)

I think that it’s the college’s responsibility to help us pursue opportunities. Because the people who are really engaged and motivated and driven are going to look for those opportunities for themselves. (D015)

I would love it if we are told, “here is your personal PD budget for the year. Spend it as you can.” It would help me to feel more engaged to do PD instead of “please sir can I have some more.” And the other thing that I guess is I always get the feeling like you could be the flavour today but not tomorrow, and I am not sure if that is specific to my program, my faculty, or my school. (D017)

Differences aside, the thread that ties these statements together was the common desire for a plan that communicated short, medium, and long range opportunities for professional development. In-house as well as external learning opportunities, establishing performance targets to be met to obtain these expectations, and clarity on school professional knowledge and learning budgets and funding opportunities were all expressed as contributing toward a needed blueprint. Such a plan would provide a clearer path to available professional development opportunities throughout an employee’s career cycle. Many interviewees further examined the notion of a career plan to discuss how they would progress from a faculty employee to an administrative or management position within the college. Rurkkhum and Bartlett (2012), in
their examination of employee engagement, revealed positive relationships between employee engagement and employee behaviours when there was support for training and engaging in development opportunities, benefits of training, as well as formal career management support. The concepts of succession planning and career development were explored by many of the interviewees and they articulated a lack of a clear strategy to assist internal employees for future opportunities. The interviewees expressed a clear desire to have someone other than their direct managers/supervisors to speak to and perhaps even mentor and advise them on how best to prepare themselves for future opportunities.

Evidence of the positive relationship between learning opportunities and the development of employee’s engagement has also been noted (Shuck, Rocco, & Albornoz, 2010). Researchers found that organizations that were committed to various types of learning could significantly impact the level of engagement of their employees. Participants indicated the desire to discuss what the future potential opportunities were and what may become available over the next five years. Furthermore, the interviewees were interested in ascertaining what could they do and what the college was prepared to do in order to assist in making them prospective candidates for these opportunities for other faculty roles. Future opportunities that included advancement in academic roles such as associate dean and dean and other non-academic administrative opportunities. Participant D012 expressed it as:

Professional development is essential and not just for those who teach in a professional school. We need to be scholarly, not a mandate but an expectation of scholarship and research. PD is front and center of our thinking most of the time. (D012)

One of the key differentiators of the college system was that the professors were required to have industry experience in conjunction with the requisite academic credentials. A common
observation by many of the interviewees was the lack of a formal PD mechanism to provide faculty the opportunity to return to industry. This form of professional development would ensure that the faculty employees maintained a level of currency that could be brought back to the students in their classrooms. The conceptual tools best suited to unravel this theme were Shuck and Reio’s (2011) claim that employee engagement was much more than what we see employees do. Kahn’s (1990) notion that “employee engagement is a multi-faceted construct” ties well to this thesis’s contention that an institution providing substantive professional development is indicative to the level of employees and how well they perform their role as faculty members. Shuck and Reio’s (2011) further argued that employee engagement was generated by employees experiencing and interpreting the environment around them and how employees behaved, in return, was tied to this theme. Interviewees expressed that establishing formalized plans for professional development opportunities as well as consistency in its administration would be a more effective communicative tool for professional development. This perspective was also verified by Shuck and Reio: “Employee engagement is much more than what we see employees do; it is rather how employees experience and interpret the context around them and then accordingly behave” (Shuck & Reio, 2011, p. 15). While it was inferential that establishing a professional development plan would lead to better rates of employee engagement, these inferences were grounded in interviewees calling for the college to create a clear template for professional development across the career continuum. D012 points out, for example:

There are lots of folks that are doing lots of really innovative stuff and developing themselves for opportunities and then those opportunities are being appointed and they are not always it’s not always an open competition, so the question is like either, what is the
path, how do you get on that path so that folks that want develop in that professional manner have the opportunity to do so. (D012)

While all forms of PD were considered and noted by interviewees, both graduate and post-graduate education were particularly held in high esteem by most participants. Interviewees noted that over the past five to seven years at the college there had been a greater emphasis placed on academic credentials. Interviewees frequently reported that in order to be competitive within the college and to better secure teaching positions, faculty have opted to pursue higher levels of credentials at the graduate and post-graduate level. Participants reported that other contributing factors to the increased focus on higher levels of academic credentials were the introduction of degree programs at colleges that require faculty to have advanced credentials.

This was a surprising and unexpected finding within the data and was a notion that not been previously explored. Participants frequently discussed funding for additional graduate education, the importance of graduate and post-graduate degrees in the college sector, and the opportunities to pursue a master’s or PhD. While this theme was straightforward in nature (i.e. funding employee education creates more engaged employees), it highlighted an important theme that emerged within the sample: the gold standard for professional development within the college was funding for graduate and post-graduate education. Participants noted that the opportunity to having additional funding, supported by the college to pursue graduate programs including PhDs was a very positive motivator and not a negative one. Clearly the participants were of the opinion that with the breadth of program offerings at Durham College there were still an abundant number of programs that didn’t require a doctoral degree so the element of job security in this regard didn’t factor into the thought processes or answers. It is reasonable to say
however, those faculty that didn’t have an undergraduate degree were more concerned about credential’s and its impact for the future.

The method best suited to tease out this theme was to look at the impact that organizational policy implementation had on the construct of employee engagement. In this vein, one could understand policy implementation as the policies in place that govern the administration of professional development opportunities. The goal of utilizing this approach was to analyze this theme and to map out the impact (positively or negatively) that the administration of college level professional development had on employee engagement. Through the interviews, it was evident that the provision of graduate and post-graduate professional development was a major lever for inspiring positive engagement. Understanding the underlying methods of its administration are key for further analysis. D012 stated in his/her interview that:

I just felt there was enough encouragement and support from my family, the people I work with and my Dean and I know it looks good on the college if they have faculty with a PhD, so I know there is a reason why they encouraged me. (D012)

Through the interview process it was established that most respondents contended that professional development had a close, if not direct, tie to employee engagement. Despite caveats articulated by interviewees, such as the quality of professional development offered, funding of professional development, relevance to the field of teaching etc., the consensus was that effectively administered professional development had a net positive effect on employee engagement. Interviewee statements that linked communication to professional development provided the necessary data to infer from the thematic network illustrated in Figure 17.
Genuine Recognition

Employee engagement is evident when employees are supported, encouraged, and empowered through the recognition of good work. To illustrate, the following figure demonstrates that the genuine recognition theme was supported by a collection of contributing themes and then positioned according to the participants inspiring story that became organizing themes. The organizing themes were then combined to illustrate a single assumption, or global theme.
The thematic network is further expanded when the global theme of recognition is incorporated into the network. Specifically, how management communicated recognition, how employees interpreted it, and how it affected employee engagement. As a preface, it was worth noting that the global theme of recognition within the context of this thesis was understood broadly as a prevailing theme of recognition, support, encouragement, and empowerment either horizontally between faculty members or vertically between faculty and management. It was important to reinforce that this thesis’s emphasis was employee engagement. One can understand that communication as a global theme within the thematic network served as the main vector for the theme of recognition. At the tertiary level, recognition connected to the ideas established by Shuck, Rocco, and Alborno (2011) in that relationship development within the workplace, specifically between an employee and their direct manager, played a critical role in how engaged an employee was. In the interest of further expanding the thematic network, it was possible to connect the theme of recognition to the other tertiary concepts of employee engagement.
experience and interpretation of context. Figure 21 reflects the inclusion of these additional themes and claims in the literature and better illustrates the expanding thematic network.

Through the data collection process, I found that respondents acknowledged that there was a consistent theme of support, encouragement, empowerment, and recognition. Participants indicated that recognition and encouragement from others, particularly management, led to greater engagement; whereas, the opposite led to feelings of disengagement with their work. In the words of D015:

I think for me it [employee engagement] means, from a practical sense, employees participating in activities whether they are workplace related or social workplace related. But they are participating in things that cause them to feel part of something. They are doing so authentically with, like genuinely wanting to be there and be a part of it. So, I think when you have good employee engagement people are well immersed in their workplace and they enjoy their workplace and they feel as though they matter to their workplace. (D015)

In addition, another interviewee also stated that, “When asked to provide comments about issues, I feel my comments are valued to and listened to. Our comments were collected as part of the feedback. Again, this was informal but a way for our opinions to be heard.” (D022). These responses were perfect illustrations of the claims made by Robinson et al (2004), which state that if employees are provided with involvement in the decision-making process and they are heard by their manager then the engagement levels are likely to be high (Robinson et al, 2004).

Interpreting the data and connecting the nodes across the thematic network made the relationship between employee engagement and recognition became clearer. Communication acted as the main vector for articulating recognition from management to employees. As it had
been gleaned from the interview process, interviewees have not understated the impact that recognition of their performance had on how they engaged with their work. What went unstated, however, was how recognition worked to foster positive relationships between employees and managers, an argument Shuck et al. (2011) contended was a critical part of developing engaged employees.

When I applied the claims of Shuck et al. (2011) in order to understand the notion of recognition within the institution, it provided new depth to the process of simply acknowledging a job well done. These actions carried more weight in that positive recognition additionally contributed to better interpersonal relationships between faculty and management. When these relationships were looked at holistically and in conjunction with findings from the interviews, it was accurate to infer, based partly on the assertion by Shuck et al. (2011), that these relationships had contributed to greater employee engagement at Durham College, and similar results would occur at another institution.

In expanding the thematic network, the global theme of recognition was connected to Shuck and Reio’s (2011) claim of how employees interpret their surrounding work environment and the context it creates for them. This was a worthwhile connection to make and was evident in several interviews where participants commented on the value of recognition in the workplace. Building off Shuck and Reio’s (2011) point that employee engagement was greater than what we see employees do, the theme of recognition existed as more than just contact between a manager and employee over the acknowledgment of good work. As participants indicated in the interviews, recognition evoked positive feelings within employees and served as the mortar to the brick-like physical actions that built employee engagement. Recognition clearly has overt benefits, but as Shuck and Reio (2011) indicated, it operates on a subtler level of interpretation.
Among interviewees, there was a prevailing theme of support, encouragement, empowerment, and recognition, which was connected to how engaged participants felt within their respective positions. Positive recognition by management was viewed as a major driver in engagement. As such, participants who felt as though their superiors were recognizing of good work described feelings of being more engaged. Participants who felt as though their superiors were not recognizing good work described feelings of being disengaged, or expressed that future recognition of their work by management would lead to better engagement. Interviewees who raised this issue acknowledged that the culture at Durham College was one that fostered recognition and support among peers and colleagues. Furthermore, it was noted in several interviews that Durham College’s faculty retention was largely based on the culture cultivated by employees and management. Specifically, several interviewees cited face-to-face interaction with management as a major driver behind creating a culture of support and encouragement within the college. Like the importance of focus groups and roundtable sessions, celebrations, such as the annual employee appreciation event, were well received and viewed as important by interviewees. The caveat to this was the suggestion that more events could be done at a grassroots level within the schools to celebrate the successes of the various faculty’s accomplishments. It was noted that some schools do a better job of this than others with certain interviewees expressing envy (without animus) towards other schools. The recurring theme that came out in this regard was the importance of leadership within the college and how engaging the various levels of management needed to be. Management also needed to be more open to recognizing the positive contributions of all employees. This enhanced activity would promote more opportunities for increased engagement by all employees. For example, recognition should be given when faculty achieve a major academic milestone, such as the successful completion of
a graduate degree or research project, as well as when contributions are made by faculty members to an external governing body. Interviewee D002 asserted that:

The college can differentiate itself from other colleges in showcasing more of its faculty and you know that would be a morale boost for the faculty as well. From a marketing perspective, a promotional perspective, it could benefit the college. (D002)

In another example, participant D014 implied that:

[Policies are] just a way of establishing the rules of engagement….it really helps to guide how the employee would manage themselves based on the expectations. I think that they’re only understood if the person has a reason to read it. And that’s usually because something has come up or they are interested in something so if they wanted to do PD then they get to read through and they know exactly. I think that helps someone guide what they are doing. (D014)

It was interesting to note that in several of the comments provided by the interviewees, the notion of recognition was intertwined with a request for improved levels of communication and enhanced professional development. The constructs of communication, professional development and recognition linked into several areas within the sphere of the college structure. Elements such as trust in senior management, working relationships with the faculty’s management team, opportunities for personal and professional growth, autonomy, and recognition for positive contributions all surfaced in the realm of the discussions around increasing levels of employee engagement. The comments provided by the interviewees suggested that there were opportunities for the management team to model improved behaviours, like leadership and working relationships. This was implied that it would lead to improved employee recognition opportunities and ultimately provide the necessary environment and
opportunities for enhanced levels of engagement. T001 believed the process to be “kind of mysterious, so I would like more openness on how policy is designed. Does it come from the Board of Governors? Does it come from management teams? I don’t know what process is involved is making policy.” (T001)

The claim best suited in the conceptual framework for analyzing the theme of recognition was that of Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz (2011). Their assertion was based on the critical role that relationship development between an employee and their direct manager played in employee engagement. In the interviews, recognition for good work was often described as being meted out by a supervisor. As such, this belief seemed particularly suited to unpack the theme of recognition, encouragement, and support from direct managerial staff.

D012 observed:

I think a big piece of employee engagement for faculty in particular is the idea of being invited or recognized and particularly in education you spend so much of your time giving of yourself, being there for everyone else that a big piece of employee engagement has to be the organization recognizing that those individuals exist and what they are doing. (D012)

D002 expressed it best this way, “Because this is something new and exciting and something the college hasn’t really done before and we are getting into that area I have had the opportunities to provide a massive amount of input.” (D002) Participant D020 added to this perspective “Our team dropped everything to pull together above and beyond any normal working day’s activity, and when we have the chance, we can become more engaged.” (D020)

There was an emerging trend within the interviews that engagement in several cases was generated by recognition given by management. Positive recognition begets greater engagement.
Conversely, employees that felt as if they or their school went unrecognized were more likely to feel disengaged.

**Thematic Analysis Summary**

I created the three global themes based on how participants expressed their collective perspectives as full-time faculty staff. The global themes were a shared description of the way that the 25 participants understood and made sense of their experience of employee engagement and were not attributable to any one participant. Each theme described in detail below, includes an illustration of key aspects of the themes through verbatim quotes from relevant interview transcripts.

**Expressing Logical Relationships Between Themes**

A theme portrayed something vital about the data relative to the research questions and represented somewhat of a patterned response or meaning within the data grouping (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82). This method enabled the development of a deeper appreciation for the participants as a group. By using a thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001) to refine the data and determine broad patterns, themes emerged and communicated results that gave insight into the interviewee’s experience. Previously in Chapter 2, Figure 3 identified the concepts and sub-concepts that constituted my conceptual framework. This figure offered a foundation for the relationships between variables, as defined by my findings. It is a visual representation of my conclusions based on the significant claims identified from the literature review.

Figure 17 earlier, and Figure 21 below, illustrate the thematic network of Respectful and Valued Communication, Professional Development Roadmap, and Genuine Recognition and the linkages to the claims in the literature review, as indicated in Figure 3. Through the responses gathered during data collection and the establishing of the thematic network, I emphasized that
professional development played a major role in employee engagement, and that communication played a crucial part in professional development. Furthermore, if the line of reasoning put forth by Shuck and Reio (2011) was followed, the data infers that existing methods of professional development communication between management and faculty, in addition to increased methods proposed by participants in the data collection process, would provide positive gains in employee engagement. Following Shuck and Reio’s (2011) reasoning, employee engagement hinged on more than action, in this case professional development. As per Shuck and Reio (2011), employee engagement was built on elements such as tacit interpretation of actions from management. In this way, it can be inferred that employee engagement was built on not just large-scale initiatives that promoted PD for entire schools within the college, but also on small actions. An example of a small action includes a face-to-face interaction that informed an employee that there was an upcoming conference that may be beneficial to them. Many participants suggested personalized plans that prescribed and detailed professional development. These actions, big or small, played a major role in how employees experienced management, how they interpreted the consistency and the efficacy of PD administration, and ultimately how they engaged with their work.
**Figure 21. Significant Literature Linkages to Research Findings**

**Themes Supported by Literature**
- Lipsky’s policy creation and implementation
- Shuck, Rocco & Albornoz’s relationship development
- Evers, Power & Mitchell’s communication competencies
- Shuck & Reio’s employee experience / interpretation
- Rurkkhum & Bartlett; Shuck et al and professional development
- Robinson, Perryman & Hayday; Shuck, Rocco & Albornoz employee interpretation
- Shuck & Rose; Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt & Diehl active psychological state and nurturing the work experience

**Global Themes**
- Respectful & Valued Communication
- Professional Development Roadmap
- Genuine Recognition

**Organizing Themes**
- Communication Practices
- Employee Experience
- Participative Governance
- Candid Conversation
- Career Cycle
- Authentic Connections
- Positive Supervisory Relationships
Communication acted within the college setting as a super-ordinate theme, which encapsulated broader thematic organizing principles (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Shuck and Reio’s (2011) contention that employee engagement existed as more than what management saw employees doing, but rather how employees experienced and interpreted the situation around them and subsequently behaved (Shuck & Reio, 2011, p. 15), was evident in participant experiences.

Between the global themes of professional development and communication it was possible to establish logical relationships between how employees viewed communication as an integral part of an organization’s professional development strategy. In interviews, participants frequently connected the administration of professional development to how management communicated opportunities and avenues to pursue PD. Employees spoke at length about the different means of communication, be it face-to-face, e-mail, or through services like ICE (Information Centre for Employees) and how these mediums of communication played a critical role in the employee’s knowledge of professional development.

The literature review revealed that there were several factors that affected employee engagement. Factors from physical, cognitive, and emotional factors attributed to Kahn’s theory (1990). As well as factors connected to Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz’s (2011) physical environment in addition to broader elements such as leadership, recognition, working relationships, and autonomy. In reflecting on the literature, specifically the works of Kahn (1990), and Shuck and Reio (2011), this research has arrived at similar ends. This indicated a certain level of replicability between their research results and my own research methodology and findings.
Summary of Chapter 5

This chapter has provided a summary of the research findings of phase two, including participant background information and an overview of the three global themes that emerged from the thematic analysis. This chapter began by introducing the 25 participants in this study. Participants voiced their experiences about their own professional development, their active involvement or whether they were included in policy creation and implementation with the college. Employee engagement themes concerning communication, professional development and recognition emerged from the data, although the data indicated a strong preference for communication and professional development. Full-time faculty participants were positive about their experiences and the impact that professional development policy had on both the college and themselves. They tempered those positive comments with constructive critiques, and provided ideas for improving the environment for college leadership. The ideas presented would serve college leaders and the college well. Finally, the number of participants in this study was small. Thus, any researcher would be remiss in making generalized statements regarding the impact of professional development policy creation and implementation on employee engagement at this college. Still, the data offered a valuable insight into the experiences of full-time faculty staff. The data collected and reported here added substance to HRD and HRD policy development literature. In the following chapter, a discussion of the implications of these findings on the theory and practice of professional development policy creation and implementation will be included, as well as recommendations for action and further study. In addition, to further discussion of my research questions, the main intent of the final chapter is to examine, interpret, draw further inferences back to the literature and to assess the contribution made by this study.
Chapter 6. Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore, describe, analyze and present the perceptions of full-time faculty employees at Durham College in Oshawa, Ontario (Canada) with respect to employee engagement as impacted by the creation and implementation of professional development organizational policies. It was anticipated that the findings would provide some action items for Durham College leadership to consider to better meet the employment needs of its full-time faculty staff. By including the perspectives from key sources of information, namely full-time faculty employees and a document analysis, the findings provided a deeper understanding of the issues explored. This chapter presents the conclusions reached from the full-time faculty interviewed and on the findings and suggests implications for policy and practice as well as future research.

I will begin this section by addressing implications for policy and practice and suggestions for further research, as they relate to the three research questions explored in this study as well as the overarching research question: How does organizational policy implementation and creation, specifically, professional development policies and procedures impact the level of employee engagement for full-time faculty employees in the study site of Durham College, in Oshawa, Ontario?

Findings in Relation to the Specific Research Questions

Three research questions were examined and themes related to communication, professional development and recognition emerged. Interpretivism was used and explored full-time faculty employee’s perceptions of employee engagement and their experiences with professional development policy creation and implementation. These themes, as interpreted from the collected data, were discussed within the context of employee engagement experiences
as they related to the research questions posed in this study. Table 3 below identifies the sources of the data that answered each of the research questions.

Table 3. Sources of Data Addressing Each Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTION</th>
<th>DATA SOURCE</th>
<th>CLAIM</th>
<th>THEME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1: How do full-time faculty employees at this Ontario college describe their</td>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Communication, Active Psychological State, Nurturing the</td>
<td>Professional Development Roadmap,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employee engagement in relation to the professional development policies and</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>experience of work, Employee experience/interpretation,</td>
<td>Respectful and Valued Communications,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedures?</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Relationship development, Recognition</td>
<td>Genuine Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2: What are the perceptions of participating full-time faculty employees</td>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Policy creation/implementation process, Employee experience</td>
<td>Respectful and Valued Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regarding their college's process of creating professional development policy</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>/interpretation, Communication, Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and procedures?</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3: What are the perceptions of the participants regarding their college's</td>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Policy creation/implementation process, Communication,</td>
<td>Professional Development Roadmap,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation of professional development policy and procedures?</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Employee experience/interpretation, Professional Development</td>
<td>Respectful and Valued Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 on the following page portrays the relationship between the claims from the literature review and their relationship to each research question.
### Table 4. Claims in relation to each Research Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTION (RQ) ADDRESSED</th>
<th>CLAIM FROM LITERATURE REVIEW</th>
<th>REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ 1</strong> How do full-time faculty employees at this Ontario college describe their employee engagement in relation to the professional development policies and procedures?</td>
<td>Employee engagement has been primarily understood as an active psychological state that emerges within those conditions that promote the nurturing of the experience of work itself. Relationship development in the workplace, an employee’s direct manager, and learning play critical roles in an engaged employee’s interpretation of their work. Employee engagement is much more than what we see employees do; it is rather how employees experience and interpret the context around them and then accordingly behave. The connections between work, the individual experiences of work, and the unique performance connections associated with an employee’s level of engagement within his or her work. The communication of and competencies associated with implementing policies for today’s workplace.</td>
<td>(Kahn, 1990) (Shuck &amp; Rose, 2013; Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt &amp; Diehl, 2011) (Shuck, Rocco &amp; Albarnoz, 2011) (Kahn, 1990; 1992) (Shuck &amp; Reio, 2011) (Robinson, Perryman &amp; Hayday, 2004; Shuck, Rocco &amp; Albarnoz, 2011) (Kahn, 1990; 1992) (Evers, Power and Mitchell, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ 2</strong> What are the perceptions of participating full-time faculty employees regarding their college’s process of creating professional development policy and procedures?</td>
<td>That a large contingent of the faculty staff at Durham College would constitute street-level bureaucrats that advance the goals of the institution as well as advancing policy. Employee engagement is much more than what we see employees do; it is rather how employees experience and interpret the context around them and then accordingly behave. Employee perceptions of HRD practices such as professional development opportunities and employee involvement in the policy creation and development process influence the relationship between engagement and workplace environment.</td>
<td>(Lipsky, 2010) (Kahn, 1990; 1992) (Shuck &amp; Reio, 2011) (Rurikhum &amp; Bartlett, 2012; Shuck et al., 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ 3</strong> What are the perceptions of the participants regarding their college’s implementation of professional development policy and procedures?</td>
<td>That a large contingent of the faculty staff at Durham College would constitute street-level bureaucrats that advance the goals of the institution as well as advancing policy. Employee engagement is much more than what we see employees do; it is rather how employees experience and interpret the context around them and then accordingly behave. The communication of and competencies associated with implementing policies for today’s workplace. Employee perceptions of HRD practices such as professional development opportunities and employee involvement in the policy creation and development process influence the relationship between engagement and workplace environment.</td>
<td>(Lipsky, 2010) (Kahn 1990; 1992) (Shuck &amp; Reio, 2011) (Kahn, 1990) (Evers, Power and Mitchell, 2003) (Rurikhum &amp; Bartlett, 2012; Shuck et al., 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Addressing Each Research Question (RQ)

To speak to each of the research questions, an interpretivist research approach was used to examine experiences and variations in which the 25 participants, full-time faculty employees, experienced the phenomenon of employee engagement.

The research questions are repeated here for ease of reference:

RQ 1. How do full-time faculty employees at this Ontario college describe their employee engagement in relation to the professional development policies and procedures?

RQ 2. What are the perceptions of participating full-time faculty employees regarding their college’s process of creating professional development policy and procedures?

RQ 3. What are the perceptions of the participants regarding their college’s implementation of professional development policy and procedures?

Research Question 1

The first research question asked how full-time faculty employees at this Ontario college described their employee engagement in relation to the professional development policies and procedures? The research findings demonstrated that there was a very direct relationship between levels of an employee engagement and their exposure to professional development policies and procedures. The interviewees expressed that there were a number of concrete steps that could be taken, specifically through the administration of professional development that would provide greater opportunities to enhance levels of employee engagement. Among them were clear and concise communications regarding opportunities and strategies for professional development, as well as transparent and consistently applied PD procedures. The call for guidance and mentoring outside the context of the immediate supervisor was frequently
requested by interviewees and viewed as a crucial addition for the faculty. The most requested form of guidance and mentoring came in the request for a clearly defined career path for future faculty administrative positions and details on the requirements to be considered as a candidate for these future opportunities.

Each of the three themes was comprised of significant perspectives and experiences expressed by study participants that addressed each of the research questions. The results indicated that while similarities were shared across the participant group, there were differences revealed within the themes. This could be interpreted as the different ways in which participant’s structured or organized their awareness of employee engagement. To illustrate, the following quotes demonstrated that employee engagement “means that you are given the opportunity to learn in the area that is of most interest to you and hopefully that is aligned to the curriculum you are teaching because that in itself is more motivating,” and “you are given the chance to develop important ideas and important parts of yourself that are going to excite you even more about teaching and that you can immediately apply in the classroom.” (D008)

Participants felt that, as an employee, when you come to work you want to be immersed in the environment and “I want to go home wanting to come back to work tomorrow, and I want to be effective, at my job I want to be effective with the people that I work with and the people I have a direct impact on the students.” (D020) Participant D020 said it best perhaps, “Our team dropped everything to pull together above and beyond any normal working day’s activity. We knew it was great for the students, we knew it was great for the college and it gave us that opportunity to be our old industry selves again, and when we have the chance to be that person that we sometimes lose touch with, we can become more engaged.” (D020)
Respectful and Valued Communication Theme - Employee engagement was enhanced by relationships and creating context through communication efforts and was crucial to the development of a positive work environment.

The theme surrounding the understanding of college policies was one based on need and not necessarily want. That is to say, interviewees routinely responded that policies were only understood when they needed to be leveraged (e.g. for a grievance, professional development, taking a sabbatical, conflicts, etc.). Issues of communication of said policies were usually raised in conjunction with these statements.

D015 indicated:

[Policies] hold the employer responsible for making sure there is consistency and collaboration and equity. I think it holds the employee responsible that for upholding their part and then it gives managers as well as faculty the opportunity to look and see what the process is so they can follow the right policies and procedures otherwise you have chaos. (D015)

In another example, some interview participants indicated, “People like their ideas to be heard, they like to voice their opinions.” (D007) Participant D007 raised an issue related to Lipsky’s argument that policy makers needed to be agile; people and organizations were primarily reactive and policy is typically reactive, and in certain situations you’re unable to hold a town hall and focus group. How has this affected employee engagement? Would closed policy making and implementation have a negative impact? In a number of the interviews, participants contended that the institution should adopt individualized or school specific professional development plans. The justification of such plans was usually rooted in the interviewees’ desire for consistency and guidance in the communication and administration of opportunities for PD.
Professional Development Roadmap Theme - Employee engagement was establishing formalized plans for professional development opportunities.

Participant D020 connected his/her experiences as an employee who is engaged to professional development directly: “It means being able to grow my skill practice, expand my craft, whether it is teaching or expanding within my discipline. But not just me personally, it’s for the team or our students, we push professional development for our students, but as for me, it means having and taking advantage of the opportunities to become a better, more productive and more giving employee, so I can take something that is going to make me have different or enhanced skills and bring it back and share it with others.” (D020)

Participant D006 indicated that he/she felt very supported with regards to professional development: “We had a few lean years there and the books were really bad and everything got shut down and no one was allowed to do anything. But that’s understandable, but other than that little blip in time I felt tremendously well supported and I had taken advantage of everything from little things in the CAFÉ to conferences, I try to make sure I do something every year, whether it’s on campus or it’s something I have afforded off campus.” (D006)

Genuine Recognition Theme - Employee engagement was evident when employees were supported, encouraged and empowered through recognition of good work.

In many, although not all, of the interviews there was a prevailing theme of supportiveness and encouragement. This tied to the creation of engaged employees, in that colleagues, supervisors, and managers made time and effort to encourage employees to pursue various opportunities, which developed their skills and furthered their careers.
As an example and presented earlier in my thesis, participant D006 expressed, “[employee engagement is] knowing what is taking place at the college, the path the college is taking and how the college is supporting the community.” (D006)

Although many employers have created and implemented policies to support the work environment, positive benefits were not always realized or understood. As discussed in this research thesis, it is a gap that practitioners and researchers have overlooked. The following analysis was in response to research questions two and three, namely how both the experiences of professional development and the quality of communication affected the degree to which policies are perceived as promoting employee engagement.

**Research Question 2**

The second research question asked what the perceptions of participating full-time faculty employees were regarding their college’s process of creating professional development policy and procedures? The perceptions from the sample largely expressed that the college had done a satisfactory job with the caveat that there existed room for improvement in the PD policy and procedure development process.

Several participants felt as though there could be improvements made in the area of involvement. Such improvements include greater faculty involvement in the process of consultation, more effective communication of upcoming policy development opportunities, and better representation of faculty on the Academic and College Council. With regards to policy creation and implementation there was a recurring theme of involvement. Suggestions of this varied from greater faculty involvement in the process through consultation, greater communication of upcoming policy development, better representation of faculty on Academic and College Council, to simply maintaining the status quo. Despite subtle differences of
opinion, the emerging theme was that faculty wanted to be more involved and connected to the policy process by whatever means were available; essentially they wanted participative governance over their profession and the policies that shaped it (Lipsky, 2010).

Professional Development Roadmap Theme - Employee engagement was establishing formalized plans for professional development opportunities.

Participant D005 had significant input on the importance of policies:

Policies inform people of what not only the status quo is but what the rules of conduct are. Policies are put in place in order to protect the employer, employee and students essentially. It is a good way to communicate that everyone is on the same page, this is the expectation, this is what you ought to expect, this is what happens when policy isn’t followed, essentially you want to mitigate any risk the college may incur and the employees and students incur. Policies let you know what you ought to depend on as your time or tenure at the college increases. (D005)

Organizational policy creation and implementation did affect levels of employee engagement. Lipsky (1980) concluded that street-level bureaucrats were policy makers; they actually created policy through the many decisions they made in interacting with clients. In my study, the equivalent to the street-level bureaucrats were full-time faculty professionals interacting with their students. Lipsky’s theory of street-level bureaucracy explored what made street-level organizations and their employees tick, and if one could figure that out then it seemed to follow that one could do a better job of managing them and, in the process, building the capacity to deliver on its policies. My research suggested that involvement of full-time faculty staff in creating and implementing work policies influenced the positive beliefs and attitudes associated with employee engagement, and that this created the kinds of discretionary
behaviours that led to enhanced engagement. Faculty who were involved in the design and implementation of workplace policy also identified themselves as “engaged employees” and/or exhibited behaviours consistent with previous definitions of engagement. Through experiences expressed by the participants of this study, when provided with the opportunity to influence and make workplace decisions, faculty seemed to enjoy working in this environment. Participation in the creation process produced the behaviours indicative of highly engaged faculty: faculty expressed their ability to go beyond their job descriptions in order to contribute to organizational effectiveness, they sought out opportunities to expand their range of ability, knowledge and expertise, and they devoted more effort, knowledge and time to the organization.

My theoretical and conceptual framework, based on the work of Kahn (1990), supported the definition of engagement and its incorporation of the concept of employee willingness to discuss and be a part of work related initiatives. This culture of meaningfulness that Kahn described, occurred when people felt valued and were making a difference; essentially they felt as though they had influence and ownership over their work. Also important were rewarding and mutually supportive interpersonal interactions and a sense of sharing experiences with colleagues.

Respectful and Valued Communication Theme - Employee engagement was enhanced by relationships and creating context through communication efforts and was crucial to the development of a positive work environment.

While interviewees tended to be satisfied with the internal communication processes of the Academic College Council, and the communication efforts made by senior management, there were some outliers who indicated that there was not enough faculty on the Academic and
College Council, and that all faculty working in the organization should have a say. Participant D023 indicated:

So I guess it is kind of my role, I take information back to my school, I get their feedback but it puts more pressure on me to get their input and feedback. The policy creation process needs to be democratized and the argument that faculty do not have enough of a voice on Academic and College Council. (D023)

This was an important discovery about the quality and frequency of communication. Providing more opportunity for communication and making it easier for faculty to provide their input would lead to greater understanding for all those involved.

Professional Development as a subset of the genre of organizational policies provided rich examples of how the creation and implementation activities could enhance levels of engagement. Having equal opportunities for, and access to, career growth, development and training opportunities was considered important in enabling faculty to be engaged with the organization. For faculty to perform well, study participants indicated they needed to have the right skills for the job, and their roles needed to encompass work that the faculty knew how to do, but with opportunity to learn new skills and develop the role. Faculty noted that this development needed to be encouraged by their supervisors and the college, and when there was continuous recognition, faculty felt empowered and confident in thriving in their role. Effective relationships with supervisors and colleagues, making time for and listening to one another, and demonstrating trust were seen as essential to enabling faculty to be engaged with the college. Employee engagement, as expressed by my study participants, revealed that they were more interested in being inspired by their leadership and their students, as well as being valued for their contributions to the college.
The literature review revealed that a key component of employee engagement was the positive belief that there was potential for growth, promotion and/or professional development. Durham College has demonstrated a commitment to learning and professional development, which was an observation that was expressed by many participants. Interviewees understood this as preparing them for their next career step and that there were multiple options for ongoing professional development. This study recognized that professional development was beneficial to help motivate and retain faculty, and provided ongoing support for career goals. Based on the findings in my research one could conclude that in colleges where there will be declining enrollment in future years, it is still important for the colleges to invest in their full-time faculty through professional development opportunities to help maintain their faculty’s level of engagement. The findings in the research also indicates that many full-time faculty are very happy being in their current roles and are not necessarily looking for future advancement, however, it is also clear they want to maintain currency in their academic skills, knowledge and practice.

Research Question 3

The third research question asked specifically how participants perceived their college’s implementation of professional development policy and procedures? The majority of the interviewees did not express concern with existing college processes of creating organizational policies, specifically the policy and procedure regarding professional development. The majority of participants expressed sentiments of indifference towards policy implementation and expressed satisfaction with faculty representation on both academic council and college councils. What was most important to participants was the communication of updated policies and procedures to the college community. In this regard, there was a feeling that more work could be
done to better communicate when a policy was changed or introduced and the rationale behind those decisions. Suggestions ranged from division and/or departmental meetings, to better communications through Information Centre for Employees (ICE) or new and innovative ways to communicate, such as short YouTube videos or regular "Did you Know" articles.

Respected and Valued Communication Theme - Employee engagement was enhanced by relationships and creating context through communication efforts and was crucial to the development of a positive work environment.

Participant T001 indicated a preference “to have conversation at Academic and College Council before any policy is finalized, showing respect that the union is at the table, and at the very least that there would be opportunity to discuss concerns about a specific policy beforehand and before it is implemented.” (T001)

As an example, study participant D004 expressed his/her thoughts on communication:

As long as you communicate we are looking at this policy because we have been mandated by the ministry or we are looking at doing this for these reasons and here are some opportunities you can get involved in and if that is communicated through whatever electronic means we use to contact staff and forwarded through the schools and it isn’t only at the start of the process but provides regular updates on the progress of the creation for the policy I don’t know what more the organization can do. (D004)

In another example presented earlier and summarized here, participant D014 indicated that:

[Policies are] just a way of establishing the rules of engagement. And I think that it really helps to guide how the employee would manage themselves based on the expectations. I think that helps someone guide what they are doing (D014). The most important and recurring element within this theme is communication, which is viewed as crucial not just to engagement, but to
feeling respected and valued by the organization. In contrast to the above examples, Participant D019 does not feel that communication of various policies and procedures is necessary, “I have limited exposure to policies, I am not a policy kind of guy, there is a democratic process to have faculty represented and I am satisfied with that process and I feel I am properly represented.”

Communication was a key finding in relation to analyzing the factors that impacted employee engagement. Leveraging communications could help to create higher levels of engagement. Participants expressed a need to understand how their own role contributed to policy development, as well as feel informed about what was happening in the college. There was the desire to know how they fit into the overall direction of the college. Having formal and open communication between managers and faculty, such as having opportunities for upwards feedback and having access and influence to the overall business outcomes, was extremely important to the participants in this study. Interviewees expressed that when they were a part of the decision-making process, this enabled them to feel that they were being heard, and encouraged a sense of ownership in policy outcomes.

Engagement levels seemed to be affected by the working environment. When study participants indicated that they had the support from others to do their job and that there were strong relationships and a sense of teamwork enabling them to express themselves, engagement levels were reported as high. One of the most important factors impacting the expression of high levels of employee engagement was whether faculty participated in meetings and decisions that were directly related to their job and were given a platform to communicate their opinions about work-related topics. Most faculty felt highly involved in work-related matters, and felt as though they could give their opinion and were listened to by their supervisors. Participants expressed
several ways in which the college involved faculty, including annual communications, workshops, regularly updated intranet, faculty surveys, and team meetings. Some participants were very positive about these opportunities, but others felt they needed attention for greater collaborative idea sharing.

Further, one must take into consideration the unique attributes of the college environment. The organizational structure of the college environment is much flatter than an organizational structure one might find in a traditional broader public sector or government organization. The faculty report directly to an Executive Dean, so there are no layers of management to filter through on issues such as faculty performance, appraisal or development. In this environment, the faculty and supervisor have a much closer working relationship than in traditional businesses or organizational structures.

While there is a distinct purpose of some policies and procedures from a purely academic perspective, as one would expect, the employee and administration related policies are similar to what exists in other large business organizations. From a labour relations perspective, and it varies from college to college, the environment at Durham College was very mutual and respectful, and by and large with very few exceptions, the various differences of opinions between the Union and management were normally worked out to a satisfactory solution meeting the needs of both parties. Mutual respect, collaboration and cooperation were very evident in the comments made by the interviewees and there was a real belief in the mission that the student experience comes first at Durham College.

Given that this is a college and an academic environment, it was not unreasonable to come to the conclusion that professional development was an important aspect for the faculty of the college. The focus of this study was full-time faculty employees, and it was extremely clear
from the data that importance was placed by the group on ongoing professional development and how, when done correctly, or viewed to be done correctly, it had positive outcomes. In some cases where faculty felt that the professional development was not done in a consistent and transparent manner, it contributed to employee disengagement. Within each common theme, I recognized there were differences, indicating that one size does not fit all, supporting Kahn’s (1990) multi-faceted construct of employee engagement as how people involve and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during work accomplishments.

The review of literature over the past several decades suggested an abundance of research on the topic of employee engagement, scarce research on organizational policy development and implementation, and an ongoing challenge in realizing the depth of understanding specifically related to HRD and employee engagement. This study indicated that specific organizational policies, such as professional development, and their creation and implementation and the manner in which they were communicated had an impact on employee engagement. A brief summary of this interpretive study is now presented, followed by implications and future contributions to scholarly research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to chronicle the perceptions of full-time faculty staff at Durham College with respect to employee engagement as impacted by the creation and implementation of organizational policies, specifically policies and procedures related to professional development. Part of the impetus for this study was contextual: Durham College’s new senior academic leadership team had expressed an interest in pursuing best practices for equitably implemented professional development policies. In addition, the concept of employee engagement had roots in human resource development, an area that was particularly salient to
this study and one that had a lack of scholarship in the creation and implementation of professional development policies. Durham College faculty expressed relatively moderate levels of active engagement.

Chapter 1 introduced the study’s research challenge as an opportunity to understand the different ways in which full-time faculty staff experienced employee engagement and how organizational policies and their development and implementation and the manner in which they were communicated had an impact on these faculty’s level of engagement. Through the experiences of 25 full-time faculty staff at an Ontario college, Durham College, this study offered a possible extension to the current understanding of employee engagement and contributed to advancing human resource development theory. The opportunity that existed with an interpretive inquiry (Bhattacherjee, 2012) was one of new knowledge to be gained in the relationship to human resource development theories. This discovery involving full-time faculty members was intended to demonstrate how they envisioned and made meaning of their understanding of employee engagement through the creation/implementation of organizational policies and thus determined the impact those policies’ implementation had on the construct of employee engagement. The study followed the research question: How does organizational policy implementation and creation, specifically professional development policies and procedures, impact the level of employee engagement for full-time faculty employees at Durham College? Conducted at Durham College, the study utilized semi-structured interviews with 25 full-time faculty members to gather qualitative data. Interviews were analyzed and responses coded to give the study greater qualitative rigor. The study consisted of a literature review, document analysis, and thematic analysis that teased out specific conceptual tools and honed in on themes of particular salience to the study.
The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 concentrated on locating and defining employee engagement. Several different theoretical perspectives were particularly relevant to this study. This research proposed a theoretical framework for understanding employee engagement. Based on this theoretical framework and combined with a series of related empirical studies, I selected the research method, interpretivism. Chapter 3 detailed the research methodology, data collection, and data analysis procedure. A descriptive interpretivist qualitative method enabled a thorough understanding of the perceptions of full-time faculty staff. This study concentrated on describing how full-time faculty staff perceived their level of engagement in relation to the creation and implementation of professional development policies.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 presented the research findings from the document review and interview assessment, specifically focusing on the emergence of three qualitatively different global themes that were identified by full-time faculty staff: professional development roadmap, respectful and valued communication and genuine recognition. These chapters discussed the key findings. These main findings were further organized around the research questions where discoveries were made explicit through the process of thematic analysis.

The following section discusses the implications for scholarly conversation as it relates to the current literature used to frame the study, the limitations of the findings, and finally, a framework for organizing suggestions and recommendations for further research.

In the chapter summary, I present proposals for enriched ways to carry out this research and suggest possibilities for future research into college policy development.
Implications for Further Scholarly Research

The second chapter of this study involved a detailed review of the literature to identify the theoretical background and factors that located employee engagement and organizational policy creation and implementation. The literature review was designed to identify the nature of the previous research in this area of study (Figure 1, 2 and 3). In Chapter 3 the significant themes and the research interests, questions and approaches were identified in order to lay the groundwork for this study’s research purpose. Chapter 3 identified the context for this research as well as the appropriate research participants. In this chapter, I would like to demonstrate four areas where my research has made original and scholarly contributions: (1) My research area was a unique opportunity to conduct a study in the college sector in this particular area of research; (2) The research methodology used has added great significance to existing knowledge by the methodology adopted. By reviewing empirical studies on the subject of employee engagement and using an interpretative case study approach, new perspectives were gained to prior research studies in this area; (3) My ability to discover new knowledge as well as add to existing knowledge about a trending or new issues in the workplace is also valuable. Through asking the right questions and doing a thorough data analysis, the study has contributed toward solving current issues in the college environment from the findings of the study; and (4) Developing a unique approach and model has made a meaningful contribution to knowledge in this area by using a different approach to solving an identified problem. A new conceptual framework has contributed to existing knowledge on organizational policy creation and implementation and its effect on levels of employee engagement; Professional Development as a subset of the genre of organizational policies provided rich examples of how the creation and implementation activities
could enhance levels of engagement. Communication was a key finding in relation to analyzing the factors that impacted employee engagement.

From the literature that I reviewed to date, I knew that there had been little research undertaken with regards to the influence that professional development policy creation and implementation in the education sector had on employee engagement. What had been researched quite extensively was human resources policies, and employee engagement survey implementation as viewed by practitioners. There had been little research regarding employee engagement that involved college participation. Therefore, I recognize that the discoveries I have made surrounding higher education have been an original contribution to knowledge. There has also been little academic writing about employee engagement and professional development policies, as it has been previously examined more from a social science view, stemming from definitions of employee engagement as opposed to emanating from the more business minded and practical view which focused more on a person's ability to do jobs and the influence this had on company and or educational policies. Therefore, in an area that has been under explored, the research conducted has provided new insight into how the current policy systems are created and operated and possibly where new systems and new involvement would be beneficial.

Being one of the few studies that explored employee engagement and professional development policy creation and implementation, this thesis contributes to the pool of knowledge about employee engagement in general and meaning associated with professional development in several ways. This research puts forward an emerging and integrated thread of knowledge and research for the future and added one more step for researchers in integrating several streams of thought related to employee engagement.
For many years, employee engagement has been a growing priority for human resource professionals and organizations. Emerging evidence of the impact of engagement on business success has sparked new research and a growing interest from both practitioners and scholars. The purpose of this research is to provide new insight into how employee engagement within the college sector, and in particular using one college as a case study, was viewed and understood by faculty themselves. This research has shown that the faculty experience was an important and complex issue, requiring professionals in the field of human resource development to evaluate the close connection between faculty’s physical, social and cultural environments. This finding has indicated a need to more actively solicit, analyze and engage in ongoing conversations with faculty. Having access to the collective faculty voice can help leaders improve productivity, achieve business goals, and build a better connection between employee and the organization. To better understand this, senior management must listen to faculty and their experience, understand the extent to which faculty are willing to participate, and provide opportunities for faculty to share their opinions. Study participants consistently identified the importance of sharing their voice so that insights could be learned from their input, and so that the collected input could be used to influence future decision-making. Overall, a clear majority of study participants were willing to share, and they likewise felt supported and believed positive action would result from greater communication between the college and full-time faculty employees.

It is apparent that the existing literature is limited in its examination of employee engagement within the context of organizational policies and their development and implementation. Interesting insights from Lipsky’s (2010) seminal work on street level bureaucrats spoke about the disconnect existing between those who govern or manage and front-line level employees. My interpretation was a similar disconnect on the axis of policies
within the college sector. Management played a major role in shaping and implementing policies, but the reality for front-line employees (faculty) was that scheduling and workload did not permit faculty to invest themselves heavily to understanding on-the-books policies. As such, faculty only researched and attempted to understand these policies when the need arose (as it was mentioned in the emerging theme).

This posed further questions regarding employee engagement along the lines of limitations to the scope of the term. Did the realities of being college faculty mean that engagement could only go so far (i.e. engaging with teaching vs. engaging with policy or other high-level administrative matters)? However, the literature has not advanced to consider the following: an analysis of the effect on employee engagement through the creation/implementation of organizational policies nor the impact organizational policy implementation had on the construct of employee engagement. Based on this review, insight into the limitations in current knowledge and research with employee engagement and the creation and implementation of professional development policies were explored through an interpretivist methodology and provided an opportunity to reveal what full-time faculty staff perceived through their interview responses.

While Shuck, Rocco, and Albornoz (2010) explored employee engagement from the perspectives of employees, this study had opened up the door to research that showed that faculty experience was an important and complex issue, requiring further research to examine the close connection between faculty’s physical, social and cultural environments. As a starting point for Shuck et al.’s contemporary approach, my primary aim in this study was to reexamine the concept of employee engagement from a new perspective. So far, many studies on employee engagement have focused on the wide range of definitions, measurements and surveys, and how
it has evolved from other areas of research, such as job satisfaction and states of physical, cognitive and emotional expression (Kahn, 1990). In this study, I shifted the focus to the faculty experience as an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to knowledge by using a different approach to solving identified challenges associated with employee engagement. My theoretical and conceptual framework looked at the social constructivist viewpoint where the construction of meaning was shaped, and knowledge constructed, through discussion with peers and colleagues, and through reflection. This social constructivism was observed in this group of full-time faculty staff. This demonstrated a connection between the constructivist view of employee engagement and the way full-time faculty staff viewed professional development policy as it influenced employee engagement. Social constructivism in relation to interpretivism and employee engagement (Crotty, 1998) stresses the unique experiences and meaning making of individuals.

A number of authors in this literature review viewed employee engagement as a socially constructed context within which employee engagement took place in the work environment. The theoretical viewpoints on the connections between work, the individual experiences of work, and the unique performance connections associated with an employee’s level of engagement within their work (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004; Shuck, Rocco, & Alborno, 2011) were reviewed and explored. Employee engagement theories were first viewed through traditional theories and models (Kahn, 1990; 1992; Shuck & Rose, 2013; Zigarmi, Nimon, Houson, Witt, Diehl, 2011). These theories then advanced to speculations of the employee experience (Shuck, Rocco, & Alborno, 2011; Shuck & Reio, 2011). Employee experience hypotheses concentrated on relationship development in the workplace, an employee’s direct manager, and emphasis on the critical role that an engaged employee’s interpretation of their

The major theoretical contribution of this research was the conceptual model that integrated several streams of literature and attempted to explain the phenomenon of employee engagement in an expanded context. The theoretical framework for this study was based on a broad, multidisciplinary review, and was structured around the following literature and theoretical framework: social constructivism in relation to interpretivism and employee engagement (Crotty, 1998; Glesne, 2006). This described the unique experiences and meaning of individuals and the engagement that they perceived to influence professional development and the related policy creation and implementation processes. The constructivist lens provided a fresh view into the role of employee engagement, the college environment and the participants.

Employee engagement and organizational policy creation and development will continue to be important fields of study for both researchers and practitioners. This thesis has described the interpretations that full-time faculty staff had about employee engagement in relation to professional development policy creation and implementation. In relation to the research in the areas of employee engagement, professional development policy and organizational policy creation and development in general, these findings were consistent with the literature cited earlier and reviewed again in this section. The study found that participants had expressed a detailed impression of the varied ways in which they perceived and experienced employee engagement. The current findings are logical in the context of the college environment.

HRD stands to advance as a field by adopting an iterative policy development approach for what it offers to human resource development policy and implementation: experiences and lessons learned by employees and management to inform and improve coordination inside the
policy process. Interesting results included the importance of graduate and post-graduate education, which were held in particularly high esteem by the majority of participants. As mentioned earlier, participants frequently discussed funding for additional graduate education, and the importance of graduate and post-graduate degrees in the college sector. This could be largely explained by two factors. The first factor is an increased emphasis of college administrators requesting college staff to have higher faculty credentials through the hiring process, which for the longer-term faculty’s perspective, was viewed as job security. The second factor was the move of many colleges to offer degrees and the resultant requirement for doctoral level credentials of the faculty teaching in those newer programs.

The importance of this research was primarily focused on demonstrating the applicability of the theoretical perspectives to understanding and explaining the employee engagement phenomena in relation to professional development policy within the Ontario college sector. The results of this study provided the full-time faculty that participated in the study with an opportunity to collectively review the research that they had participated in and supplied them with another perspective or window to better appreciate and understand the faculty’s relationship with the organization. While this descriptive interpretive study had shared individual perceptions, the research revealed insight into the collective experiences of the group of participants under consideration at a particular point in time. Insight had been gained into the original research questions posed in this study: what are the different ways in which full-time faculty staff experience and make meaning of their engagement through professional development policy creation and implementation; how do full-time faculty staff in an Ontario college experience and make meaning of their engagement through experiences with professional development policy creation and implementation; and how does professional
development policy creation and implementation contribute to creating new understanding of
employee engagement theories?

As increasing attention turns to understanding the nature of peoples’ employee engagement experiences, additional research methodologies would present new research approaches for understanding such experiences. For example, Phenomenography is a relatively unknown qualitative research approach that has potential for education sector research, predominantly when understanding one’s own experience is the goal. Phenomenography is a research approach that identifies and recalls the discourse of research participants. Associated with phenomenographic research are outcomes that emphasize the distinctiveness and variation in experience. This may contribute to understanding individual experiences of any phenomenon of interest in education and how this may impact the engagement of full-time faculty members. Understanding the variation in peoples’ experiences makes it conceivable in professional practice to encourage and contribute to inclusiveness and diversity in the approaches to important phenomena. Notwithstanding the recognized limitations of this particular case study, and the focus on Durham College, the new understandings from this research will be of interest to all of the Ontario English language colleges. Many Ontario colleges are facing similar faculty challenges and they are all tied to many of the same professional development policies.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Recommendations for future research are threefold. The first is to expand the scope of the study by involving different categories of faculty. The second is to initiate a new study by expanding on the findings of this research. The third is to conduct further research into the area of psychological climate. In addressing expanding the scope, future research in this area of scholarship could focus on the opportunity to study two theoretical frame sets, 1) the act of using
organizational policy resources and 2) being engaged in policy development. Future research in this area of scholarship should also include perceptions of part-time faculty members as they are impacted by the creation and implementation of professional development organizational policies. As mentioned earlier, Durham College has 315 full-time faculty members, however, they are double that number in part-time faculty, with approximately 100 partial load and about 44 sessional faculty members. That brings the faculty population to over 1,000 employees. As part-time faculty members continue to be a growing contingent within the college, it seems important to expand the umbrella for research beyond strictly tenured faculty. Part-time faculty members have a different set of experiences than their full-time colleagues, with different expectations, levels of access, and privileges within the college. Future research should delve into whether part-time faculty members have similar levels of engagement or disengagement at the college when compared to their full-time counterparts.

A new avenue of study for employee engagement and professional development emerged when the landscape shifted and created a difference between the various categories of faculty professional development. An example of this shift was the introduction of degrees at Durham College. This brought a new dimension to the college, as the mix of programs would include certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, graduate certificates and degrees. Further scholarship could highlight the role of professional development among the various programs offered by professors, what was seen as useful and what was seen as superfluous to their needs.

Throughout the study a number of faculty made recommendations in their interviews. These ranged from methods that could improve the communication of policies and professional development initiatives to personalized plans to map out professional development initiatives. Future research could involve a longitudinal study which would involve enhancing and
implementing some of these proposed recommendations, tracking their usage, and ultimately
surveying faculty again to determine their perceptions of said policy implementations and
changes.

An opportunity exists with future study to explore the different perspectives across the
internal departments or schools, as described above, within the research setting. The ability to
look at these sub-units that were situated within a larger case was powerful when you consider
that data could be analyzed within the departments separately (within case analysis), between the
different sub-units (between case analysis), or across all of the sub-units (cross-case analysis).
The ability to engage in such rich analysis only served to better illuminate the case (Yin, 2003).
This future case study approach would further analyze the complex events and behaviour
occurring within a complex, real-life context, Durham College in Ontario.

There is potential for exciting future research to examine other populations and other
academics organizations delving into the relationship between employee engagement and
professional development policy. This study focused on only one academic organization and
full-time faculty employees. Additional studies of the same purpose and design at different
academic settings may be well served to explore whether the same meanings, themes or
differences emerge. Another recommendation for future study may be the use of a larger sample
across colleges, which would allow for the findings to be generalizable to college faculty in
general (not just those from one college). Alternately, using or comparing samples from
different academic institutions (e.g. universities, elementary schools) could further expand the
current knowledge on employee engagement in the academic community at large.

The third area for future research is around the construct of psychological climate, a very
important element in the overall consideration of employee engagement. This research could
consider and explore broader contextual issues such as the nature of the structure of community colleges in Ontario, how the colleges are funded, labour relations and similar issues that could be traced as have an impact and a bearing on issues of employee engagement.

Earlier on in this study, I stated that my understanding of the concept of HRD is the development of human resources in organizations. This description defines HRD as the developmental process of individuals in organizations. HRD is often depicted as a development process of employees, related to improved individual performance and personal growth. The individual is then the focus of analysis. The working definition of employee engagement is expected to increase organizational performance, one of the crucial aspects of HRD research and practice. The findings from this research have implications for both professional practice and theory development in HRD, as it represents another approach to investigating the scope and extent of HRD’s involvement in employee engagement. The research suggests that strong enablers for improved employee engagement could be strengthened with enhanced communications.

**Implications for Policy and Practice**

My premise at the beginning of my research was that the manner in which organizational policies were created and implemented could impact employee engagement, and I narrowed the research to investigate professional development in an academic setting, specifically Durham College. However, there are broader implications to the findings that could serve as a model to senior leaders in the college sector and other academic institutions to increase their activities related to employee engagement. Are there other policies within an academic setting that could be analyzed to determine if those policies positively or negatively impact employee engagement? I believe that this research has established a connection for professional
development, but other policies, such as academic freedom, or controversial ones like Intellectual Property, could be further researched.

As noted in Chapter 4, many colleges in the system had prescribed templates and policies and procedures regarding the college’s respective practices on policy creation and development. That being said, I did not endeavour to create a best practices policy and procedure that would be applicable to all English-speaking colleges in the system. Rather, I provided a framework that could be used by Durham College leadership and outlined what I believed were the most important aspects to be included in a best practices policy and procedure framework as a result of the insights gained through my research. Through the document analysis, my research indicated that there were disconnects between the stated intentions of the professional development policies and procedures and in the manner they were written. A best practices framework for a professional development policy and procedure in the Ontario English speaking college sector should include the following:

Policy – key elements for an improved professional development policy should include the following main headings and related details:

1. Introduction - outlining how this policy relates mission, vision, goals and objectives of the college and linking it back to strategic business and strategic mandate agreements (SMAs).

2. Purpose – outlining the intent of the policy to support the ongoing development of full-time faculty employees.

3. Definitions – outlining the various types of professional development and the various programs that support PD at the college.
4. Policy Statement – outlining how the professional development policy supports the various principles of the college, such as respect, high standards, commitment to development, consultation, and collaboration.

5. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) considerations outlining the college’s commitment to accessibility and AODA standards.

6. Roles and responsibilities – outlining who is responsible for reviewing and approving all college policies and procedures. Delineating who is directly responsible for monitoring and assessing legislative and other requirements that aid in determining the life cycle of the policy for policy renewal.

7. Non-compliance implications - outlining the consequences of failure to comply with the policy and how it could impact the reputation of the college.

**Procedure** – key elements for an improved professional development procedure should include the following main headings and related details:

1. Introduction

2. Definitions

3. Procedure – This is where most procedures experience gaps with regards to providing the step-by-step instructions on how to apply, when to apply and what to apply for in regards to professional development opportunities. This is the area that could provide links to various types of professional development. Those links could include details and catalogues about in-house training programs, lists of external training programs for personal development, such as management training for senior faculty employees, lists of annual conferences and seminars and other related topics that will be of interest to the
various faculty. In this area, the procedure could outline the approval process, the timing of approvals, and the linkages to personal development programs.

4. Roles and responsibilities - this area needs to clearly delineate the various responsibilities of the faculty, Executive Dean, Human Resources, and mentees and their respective roles in supporting faculty professional development.

5. Communications Plan - There needs to be a plan put in place that when policies are reviewed and updated the approved policy and procedures are posted to the internal website and also the public facing website.

6. Related policies, procedures and directives - All too often a single policy and procedure does not stand in isolation of other college policies and procedures. From an open communication and transparency perspective all related policies, procedures, guidelines, directives and frameworks should be listed so the employee can cross reference and ensure they have all the information available to make an informed decision.

7. Additionally, a best practices procedure for professional development should include a timetable category that discusses how often the policy and procedure should be updated; and a category outlining the consultation process with all of the key stakeholders before sending for final approval and sign-off by the college’s senior leadership team.

**Dissemination of Findings**

There is an opportunity from the practitioner perspective to develop a comprehensive dissemination plan, a research summary document from this completed thesis that clearly and concisely summarized the key conclusions. The first priority in this dissemination plan was returning results to study participants. Dissemination to other stakeholder groups would follow. This document could be organized by (a) Key Findings and (b) Expanded Fact Sheets with
graphical images to illustrate findings of interest for the particular stakeholder group. A discussion of the major findings revealed a number of emergent themes related to the research questions and supported the engagement research completed by Kahn (1990), which outlined that employees must feel that their contributions to an organization are valued. This document would provide recommendations for organizational leaders.

**Personal Reflection**

Ontario colleges are the backbone of education in Ontario. Each year they educate thousands of first-generation college goers, providing students of all ages the means to advance, learn a marketable job skill, and/or improve their fundamental skills in reading, writing, and math. In other words, colleges provide the education and training that is foundational to a forward-thinking province. In this context, developing college faculty must hold the highest priority. Ontario colleges cannot expect college students to be successful unless the faculty of those colleges are engaged and prepared to achieve success.

The journey of moving through a doctoral program has been both exciting and overwhelming, one of growth and opportunity emphasized by collaboration, scholarship and research. This has provided new depths of understanding and personal experiences. This brief reflection included at this point in this thesis is really a learning conversation about self-reflection and a conscious review of experiences. The value of these experiences and the learning that can be gained from those experiences depends on how the experiences are interpreted. In conducting this research, I chose to embrace some theories and modified or set aside others, until I arrived at what I believed to be an integrated framework that fit with my experience and underlying belief system in the value of employee engagement. I have recognized the tremendous value in bringing together the contribution of the scholar and
practitioner, promising significant gains in my knowledge of the world and improvements to my practice in it. Each role had its contribution and limitation. The scholar brings the theoretical tools for analysis and critical reflection. The practitioner brings experience and access to multiple layers of practical knowledge. The scholarship of integration made connections between the disciplines and explored the wider relevance and usefulness of knowledge.

A predictable response for finding this research agenda speaks to the discovery of challenges, either by listening closely to what practitioners say are problems or by specifying the intellectual problems of how existing knowledge might be advanced or extended. Asking questions about what was actually going on, how one thing might resemble another, and how representations might be developed provided a preview into the initiation of my research agenda. This present study and the research using a descriptive–interpretive qualitative research method looked at employee engagement and extended the understanding of the professional development policy creation and implementation process. Participants were able to recognize the phenomenon from their own experience or feel for themselves the phenomenon. This became my challenge as a qualitative and interpretive researcher: to help the participants express their experiences as directly as possible; and to offer ways of understanding the phenomenon.

Data were obtained through document analysis and interviews with questions organized depending on the research questions asked. Interpretivism and thematic network analysis produced rich thematic descriptions that provided insight into how a phenomenon was experienced and was meant to explore the variation in how people described things and experienced them through their own awareness. This methodological approach used data analysis designed to increase the understanding of full-time faculty experiences with professional development policy making and its influence on employee engagement, a process that was
grounded in seeking differing experiences in employee engagement. The transition from analyzing the transcripts of each participant, to analyzing the collective data across the various themes, involved grouping the themes into categories. Each category represented one way of experiencing or being aware of engagement. It was this aspect of the research method that was really transformative for me. It was the interpretation of the phenomenon, employee engagement, and the collective experience of being engaged across this group of full-time faculty staff that conveyed a window into the participant’s experience of the phenomenon. This preview into the participant’s experience provided a valid and rich understanding of the meaning that employee engagement had to the participants as well as demonstrating a rigorous research approach.

The body of knowledge that I have been exposed to is not just information; it is the sum of knowledge from several professions that included traditional practices, as well as emerging and innovative theories. There are many benefits and values in this new-found access to vast amounts and varying degrees of knowledge. I feel encouraged to voluntarily contribute my knowledge and expertise to academia, organizations and research to help build competencies and knowledge creation.

In summarizing this reflection, interpretivism provided insight and discovery of new perspectives regarding the experiences of employee engagement and the notion that the development, implementation, and communication of organizational policies had an impact on employee engagement. The scholarship of integration that I have introduced in this thesis made connections between the disciplines, whether it was employee engagement, human resource development practices, dimensions of psychological conditions (meaningfulness, safety,
availability), or organizational outcomes, and it explored the wider relevance and usefulness of knowledge.

**Conclusion**

From the outset of this study I anticipated that this research would yield valuable recommendations for Durham College leadership with regards to employee engagement in addition to filling a void in existing scholarship on employee engagement and organizational policy therein. That assumption was proved accurate in that interviewees produced an abundance of information that contributed to the establishment of concrete recommendations to better administer professional development and craft better professional development policies. Previously in Chapter 2, Figure 3 identified the concepts and sub-concepts that constituted my conceptual framework regarding employee engagement and the broader concept of workplace psychological climate. This figure offered a foundation for the relationships between variables as defined by my findings. I recognized psychological climate as a broad concept that encompasses employee engagement and organizational policy. I determined the relationships between policy creation/implementation process, communication, active psychological state, nurturing the experience of work, employee experience interpretation, professional development, relationship development and recognition, to either/or employee engagement and organizational policy and psychological climate. I further identified the relationships between the concepts and each other and this was acknowledged as either a conceptual relationship, inter-conceptual relationship, influential relationship or as a gap in the literature. The framework was then applied and used systematically in my data analysis in Chapters 4 and 5, which is a visual representation of the following conclusions based on the significant claims identified from the literature review.
The paramount result of this thesis was the finding that faculty want to be engaged with their work. Full-time faculty wanted to view their profession as more than one that provided a pay cheque, but rather as one that added value to the lives of their students, developed the reputation of their institution, and developed their professional skillset. Through this research, I have learned that professional development sits at the locus of creating a substantive and vibrant career for faculty professionals. Providing professional development was mutually beneficial to the college. For faculty, it provides opportunities to grow as professionals, cultivates teaching skills, educates them on industry leading techniques, and helps them gain valuable credentials and academic tools. Professional development policy acknowledged that faculty are valuable members of an organization and communicated that they are people worth investing in. The administration of professional development opportunities created better relationships between management and faculty and was a net positive to employee engagement. For management, professional development worked to enrich faculty. It ensured the institution had faculty that sat on the cutting edge of teaching and knowledge and gave additional prestige to the schools in which they served. From an administrative perspective, professional development provided faculty the opportunity to serve as emissaries for the school, representing and showcasing the institution at conferences across the country and abroad.

When professional development was substantive and meaningful, when it was consistent in its administration, and when it was articulated to faculty effectively, faculty felt engaged with their work, their students, and the institution as a whole. While Durham College still has areas of improvement for the administration of professional development, the core take-away from this study is that professional development plays a crucial role in creating and maintaining employee
engagement. Future scholarship on employee engagement should incorporate professional development at the heart of the conversation.
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APPENDIX A - Informed Consent Form

Social Justice Education Department
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

University of Toronto

Informed Consent Form

All Full-time Faculty Employees

Durham College

Invitation to Participate in a Research Project Seeking to Understand Employee Engagement and Professional Development Policy Creation/Implementation

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Scott Blakey, a doctoral student at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. This study is supervised by Dr. Peter Sawchuk, OISE, University of Toronto. This research involves the study of professional development policy creation and implementation and its impact on employee engagement and is part of my dissertation study. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a full-time faculty employee at Durham College.

The study involves a face to face interview, to be arranged at your convenience. This will last approximately 60 minutes. The researcher may ask to provide feedback on the interview process to make sure that the process is clear, and does not pose an excessive burden on the respondent’s time. This may add another 30 minutes. The total time involved in participation will be approximately one to two hours.

The total time involved in participation will be approximately one to two hours with some brief follow up. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. The informed consent forms and other identifying information will be kept separate from the data. All materials will be kept offsite and stored on the researcher’s personal computer system. Interviews will be audio recorded and tape recordings will be listened to only by the Researcher. Audio recordings will be destroyed following immediate transcription. Any records that would identify you as a participant in this study, such as informed consent forms, will be destroyed by 2019, approximately 3 years after the study is completed.
You will be given a code number for any quotes that might be included in the final research report. If any direct quotes will be used, permission will be sought from you first. In any event, the participant’s actual name will not be used or identified in any way. The results of this research will be used in my study, published in my dissertation, and possibly in subsequent journals or books. As a participant you may decline answering any question you prefer not to answer.

You may develop greater personal awareness of employee engagement and Professional development policy creation and implementation as a result of your participation in this research. The risks to you are considered minimal, such as psychological/emotional risks (e.g., feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, or upset) during or after your participation. If that situation was to occur Employee Assistance Program cards EAP, will be made available to you at the interview office. Further a confidential phone number to an EAP counsellor is provided (1-800-387-4765). You may withdraw from this study at any time, either during or after your participation, without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, your data will be eliminated from the study and will be destroyed.

No compensation will be provided for participation.

As per TCPS2 article 3.2 (k) participants are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of participation in this research study.

You may request a copy of the summary of the final results by indicating your interest at the end of this form.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, please tell the Researcher before signing this form. You may also contact the supervising faculty if you have questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study. The supervising faculty has provided contact information at the bottom of this form.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, contact the Ethics Review Office, University of Toronto by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or by telephone at 416 946-3273.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Durham College Research Ethics Board, application number 116-1516. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact reb@durhamcollege.ca.

Participants please note that the researcher, also a management employee of Durham College, is required to comply with the Durham College Code of Conduct and declare any potential conflicts of interest, actual or perceived, and take appropriate steps to mitigate such conflicts.

Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Please sign both, indicating you have read, understood, and agree to participate in this research. Return one to the researcher and keep the other for your files. The Ethics Review Office of the University of Toronto retains the right to access the signed informed consent forms and other study documents.
NAME OF PARTICIPANT (please print)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

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416 978-0570 905 721-3012

Yes, please send a summary of the study results to:

Name (please print)

Street Address

City, Province, Country
APPENDIX B - Request to Conduct Research at Durham College

Research Project: An Investigation into Employee Engagement and Professional Development Policy Creation/Implementation on Faculty Employees in the Ontario College Sector

Research Site: Durham College
Researcher: Scott Blakey, Chief Administrative Officer
Ed. D Research Dissertation

Department of Social Justice Education Department
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

This letter provides you with an idea of what my research study is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this document carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Study Purpose:

Durham College has demonstrated its support for employee engagement and building a culture that enables employees to engage in their work. We know the importance when our employees feel positive about their workplace and its goals, and want to perform to the best of their abilities every day for the College’s benefit. This study will extend our understanding of employee engagement by examining the influence of employee involvement in the professional development policy development and implementation process and how it influences employee engagement.

Your Rights as a Participant:

Please note that as a participant, you have the right to refuse to answer questions you do not wish to answer. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, with no questions asked. Should you exercise your right to withdraw, you may still request and receive study results by contacting the researcher.

Providing Your Consent to Participate:

Your participation in this study indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a participant. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researcher or involved institution from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.
Research Study Significance:

There will be a focus on employee engagement, professional development policy creation and implementation, the importance of key roles for success, and the influence of employee involvement in this process. There will be an increased understanding and a broadening of the theories, insights and lessons needed to align the institutions leadership, structure, relationships, learning, and people policies and systems. This study will be unique in that few studies of this nature have been conducted in Ontario and Canadian colleges, and therefore will convey new insight and knowledge into the relationship of employee engagement, and the impact of professional development policy creation and implementation.

Research Design:

This research study is qualitative, retrospective and descriptive. Data will be collected via a number of sources of evidence: interviews, documents, archival records, and observations. Use of multiple sources of evidence for triangulation of data will be implemented and a qualitative analysis will enable the researcher to explore emerging themes.

Confidentiality and Treatment of the Data:

All information will be held confidential. You will not be identified individually at any time to anyone for any reason; data will be protected and coded to ensure that any quotes used in the study are not attributable to any individuals. Only the researcher will have access to interview data that reveals the identity of research participants. All audio recordings and transcripts generated by this research will be stored offsite and secured at the researcher’s residence. Audio recordings will be destroyed following immediate transcription. If you decide to withdraw from this study, your interview data will be destroyed. Upon completion of this study, all data identifying research participants will be destroyed. All data will be destroyed (documents shredded and electronic storage permanently erased) no later than December 31, 2019.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Durham College Research Ethics Board, application number 116-1516. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact reb@durhamcollege.ca.

As a participating organization (Ontario College providing a copy of their professional development policy) you will receive copies of any summary reports that arise during the course of this research. You are welcome to contact the researcher throughout the course of this study for new or updated information. If you have any questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, please contact the researcher. You may also contact the supervising faculty if you have questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, contact the Ethics Review Office, University of Toronto by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or by telephone at 416 946-3273.
Participants please note that the researcher, also a management employee of Durham College, is required to comply with the Durham College Code of Conduct and declare any potential conflicts of interest, actual or perceived, and take appropriate steps to mitigate such conflicts.

Thank you for your support of this research project.

Scott Blakey
May 19, 2016
905 721-3012
APPENDIX C - Permission Request Letter

I.D. 000000
Selected Full-time Faculty Employees

Durham College

Dear Participant:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research study conducted by me, Scott Blakey, while I complete my doctoral studies in the Department of Social Justice Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. This study is supervised by Peter Sawchuk, Ph.D. This research involves the study of and an analysis of employee engagement as impacted through the creation/implementation of professional development policies and how this affects the employee engagement of full-time faculty employees. Members of our full-time faculty employees will be asked to participate in this study because of their faculty role at Durham College. Their participation is entirely voluntary.

The study involves participation in an interview with myself, to be arranged at participant’s convenience during the month of June 2016. This will last approximately one hour. The researcher may ask to provide feedback on the interview process to make sure that the process is clear, and does not pose an excessive burden on the respondent’s time. This may add another 30 minutes. The total time involved in participation will be approximately one to two hours.

The information participants provide will be kept strictly confidential. The informed consent forms and other identifying information will be kept separate from the data. All materials will be kept separate from the data, on a server which is accessible only to the researcher. Any records that would identify you as a participant in this study, such as informed consent forms, will be destroyed by the researcher 3 years after the study is complete.

As this is a qualitative study, should there be quotes that might be included in the final research report; rest assured that participants will be assigned a coded number. If any direct quotes will be used, permission will be sought from participants first.

Participants may develop greater personal awareness of their behaviour in professional development policy creation/implementation and employee engagement as a result of their participation in this research. The risks are considered minimal, and there is a very small chance that you may experience some emotional discomfort during or after participation. Participants may withdraw from this study at any time, either during or after your participation, without negative consequences. Should participants withdraw, the data will be eliminated from the study and will be destroyed.

No compensation will be provided for participation.
You may request a copy of the summary of the final results by indicating your interest at the end of this form. If you have any questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, please tell the Researcher before signing this form.

You may also contact the supervising faculty if you have questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study. The supervising faculty has provided contact information at the bottom of this form. If at any time you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, contact the Ethics Review Office, University of Toronto by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or by telephone at 416 946-3273.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Durham College Research Ethics Board, application number 116-1516. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact reb@durhamcollege.ca.

Participants please note that the researcher, also a management employee of Durham College, is required to comply with the Durham College Code of Conduct and declare any potential conflicts of interest, actual or perceived, and take appropriate steps to mitigate such conflicts.

Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Please sign both, indicating you have read, understood, and agree to participate in this research. Return one to the researcher and keep the other for your files. The Ethics Review Office at the University of Toronto retains the right to access the signed informed consent forms and other study documents.

_______________________________________________________________________

Peter Sawchuk, PhD.    Scott Blakey
Chair and Advisor    Researcher
University of Toronto    Durham College
252 Bloor Street West    2069 Simcoe St N.
Toronto, Ontario Canada M5S 1V6    Oshawa, ON L1H 7K4
416 978-0570     905 721-3012

_______________________________________________________________________

Yes, please send a summary of the study results to:

_____________________________________
NAME (please print)

_________________________________
Street Address

_________________________________
City, Province, Country
Email Invitation to all Full-time Faculty Employees

Scott Blakey
Chief Administrative Officer
Durham College
905 721-3012
Scott.blakey@durhamcollege.ca
Personal email address: sblakey0856@rogers.com

Date  May 19, 2016

Subject:  Invitation to Participate in a Research Project Seeking to Understand Professional Development Policy Creation/Implementation Impact on Employee Engagement

Dear Full-time faculty member:

I am conducting a Research Study as part of my Doctoral Dissertation that aims to explore the influence professional development policy creation/implementation has on employee engagement. Durham College has demonstrated its support for employee engagement and building a culture that enables employees to engage in their work. We know the importance when our employees feel positive about their workplace and its goals, and want to perform to the best of their abilities every day for the college’s benefit. This study will extend our understanding of employee engagement by examining the influence of employee involvement in the professional development policy development and implementation process and how it is influenced. This study proposal was reviewed, approved and sponsored by Don Lovisa, President, Durham College and Elaine Popp, Vice President, Academic, Durham College. You are being invited to participate in this study because of your academic involvement at Durham College. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

I am inviting you to participate in my dissertation research study. I value your insights into how professional development policies are developed and implemented at Durham College, and I hope you take this opportunity to share your experience with me. The results of my study will shed light on the development and implementation of policies in organizations today and the impact on employee engagement.

Please take a few minutes to read the attached information/consent form. It will tell you more about the purpose of the study and how it will be executed, along with details regarding time commitment, confidentiality and informed consent.

For this study, I am seeking a sample of full-time faculty employees who:
• Are employed full-time at Durham College
• Have been employed for at least one consecutive year at Durham College
• Are available to attend a one-hour interview located at Durham College during the Spring of 2016 and into Fall 2016 time period
• Are willing to consider participating in doctoral research of employee engagement and professional development policy creation/implementation

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Durham College Research Ethics Board, application number 116-1516. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact reb@durhamcollege.ca.

Participants please note that the researcher, also a management employee of Durham College, is required to comply with the Durham College Code of Conduct and declare any potential conflicts of interest, actual or perceived, and take appropriate steps to mitigate such conflicts.

I want to thank you, for your time and hope you will choose to be a part of this exciting study. You may respond using your own personal email address or to either my work or personal address above.

Sincerely,

Scott Blakey
APPENDIX E - Invitation to English Language Ontario colleges

Social Justice Education Department
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

All English Language Ontario colleges

Attention: Directors/Vice Presidents, Human Resources

Scott Blakey
Ed. D Research Student
Chief Administrative Officer
Durham College
905 721-3012
Scott.blakey@durhamcollege.ca
sblakey0856@rogers.com

Date 2016

Subject: Invitation to Participate in a Research Project Seeking to Understand Professional Development Policy Creation/Implementation Impact on Employee Engagement

Dear Director/Vice-President, Human Resources,

I am conducting a Research Study as part of my Doctoral Dissertation that aims to explore the influence professional development policy creation/implementation has on employee engagement. Durham College has demonstrated its support for employee engagement and building a culture that enables employees to engage in their work. We know the importance when our employees feel positive about their workplace and its goals, and want to perform to the best of their abilities every day for the college’s benefit. This study will extend our understanding of employee engagement by examining the influence of employee involvement in the professional development policy development and implementation process and how it is influenced. This study proposal was reviewed, approved and sponsored by Don Lovisa, President, Durham College and Elaine Popp, Vice President, Academic, Durham College.

We are asking interested colleges in Ontario if they would like to participate in this study by providing a copy of your Academic professional development policy and/or procedure. Your participation is entirely voluntary. I value the contribution other colleges in Ontario and I hope you take this opportunity to share your experience with me.
The results of my study will shed light on the development and implementation of policies in organizations today and the impact on employee engagement.

Please take a few minutes to read the attached information form. It will tell you more about the purpose of the study and how it will be executed. Participation in this research will be strictly confidential and anonymity of participants will be assured. This study has received Ethics Review Board approval from the University of Toronto and Durham College.

Participants please note that the researcher, also a management employee of Durham College, is required to comply with the Durham College Code of Conduct and declare any potential conflicts of interest, actual or perceived, and take appropriate steps to mitigate such conflicts.

I want to thank you, Ontario college name here, for your time and hope you will choose to be a part of this exciting study.

Sincerely,

Scott Blakey
APPENDIX F - Data Collection Instruments

AN INVESTIGATION INTO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY CREATION/IMPLEMENTATION ON FULL-TIME FACULTY EMPLOYEES IN THE ONTARIO COLLEGE SECTOR: A CASE STUDY

Data Collection Instrument Guide

Introduction

Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the data collection approach and instruments that have been developed for the Investigation into Employee Engagement and Professional Development Policy Creation/Implementation on Faculty Employees in the Ontario College Sector study.

These instruments represent the core data collection requirements for the project. They have been designed to guide the data collection process, and provide a structured approach in order to ensure consistency in the dissertation study.

Instrument Overview

The following data collection instruments are included within this package:

- **Data Collection Instrument Guide.** The data collection approach and instrument has been developed to provide a structured approach to ensure consistency (Appendix F).

- **Interview Guide.** The interviews provide an open ended approach to interviewing key full-time faculty employees within the study (Appendix G).

- **Research Ethics approval.** This document has been prepared in order to comply with the Ethics Review Office, University of Toronto by email at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or by telephone at 416 946-3273.

- **Background Information form.** This document has been divided into categories of information to gather information on each participant (Appendix H).

- **Information Collection form.** This document has been divided into categories of information to gather information on each Ontario College participant in providing copies of professional development policies (Appendix I).
Using the Instruments

Each of the instruments have been developed in either Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel. The instruments have been designed to be used in soft copy format by editing a copy of the template, or in hard copy as a manual data entry form.

Assessment Process

Overview

This study is designed to provide a comprehensive insight into professional development policy creation/implementation is experienced by full-time faculty employees and its influence on employee engagement. This study will compile results through a broad range of approaches, including interviews, review of archival information and observations by the researcher. The results will be compiled to allow qualitative analysis which will identify common insights regarding the practices being observed, and the results that organizations are experiencing as a result.

Data Collection Approach

The following outlines the data collection approach and will be used to capture a picture of Professional development policy creation/implementation throughout the organization. The full scope of the data collection approach includes:

- **Interviews.** It is expected that a minimum of 25 participants should be interviewed for the dissertation study.

- **Document Review.**
  - **Professional Development Policies on Professional Development at Durham College** This review is designed to understand the processes, procedures and methodologies as they are defined within the organization (espoused theories), against which the actual approach (theories in use) evidenced in the interviews.
  - **Professional Development Policies on Professional Development at other English Language Ontario Colleges** (Information/Background: Use attached form (Appendix I to record information gathered and provided from Ontario Colleges).
  - **Employee Engagement documentation at Durham College** This review is designed to understand the processes, procedures and methodologies as they are defined within the organization (espoused theories), against which the actual approach (theories in use) evidenced in the interviews.

- **Observations.** In addition to the primary data collection, the following observations are also being sought as a part of the study:
  - **Overall impressions.** The researcher’s overall impressions of the environment, culture and perceptions of the employee engagement environment and how professional development policy creation / implementation is approached within
the organization are also sought. This can include description of key artifacts, cultural impressions, work environment and perceptions.

**Reporting the Results**

A study report will be produced that analyzes the findings from the interviews.

- A study report that will present the case study findings based upon the data collection process outlined in this document. This will provide a consistent analysis of professional development findings and observations of employee engagement across each of the interviews.
- A summary will be discussed with the Dissertation Chair and Committee members.

**Confidentiality Provisions**

This research project is being conducted under the auspices of the University of Toronto. As such, the study is subject to the Ethics Review Office review and approval, which governs how research can be conducted and is designed to ensure the protection and ethical treatment of research participants. The organization participating in the research can expect:

- Confidentiality will be maintained regarding professional development findings. At no time will an organization’s results be made publicly available, or publicly identified with the organization. Disclosure of an organization’s participation is voluntary; at no time will an organization be identified as a participant in the research without their express permission.
- The organization has a right to withdraw from participation in the research at any time. If the organization chooses to withdraw, the organization’s results will not be used in any form in the study.
- Individual participants have the right at any time to refuse to participate in the research. Each participant will be asked to sign a form acknowledging their willingness to participate, and that they have the right to decline further participation at any time. Interviews will be recorded only for the purposes of transcription. At the end of the research process the recordings will be destroyed.
- Information that is collected for data analysis will remove any identifying Professional development or personal information before being analyzed by the researcher.

**Data Collection Instruments**

Interviews are to be conducted by the researcher.

**Instrument Structure**

- The interview form has been designed to be used as a method of capturing interview notes during the meeting, as well as being supported by a tape recording and transcription of the interview itself.
**Data Collection Approach**
The Informed Consent form will be explained to each interview participant prior to proceeding with the interview, with a copy of the form signed by both the interviewee and the interviewer. A copy of the form will be left with the interviewee for their reference.

**Background Information Collection**

**Instrument Structure**
The data collection instrument has been divided into categories of information. Each category consists of a number of options:

- **Question.** The question identifies what information is being sought. Where appropriate, a check-box has been provided.
- **Options.** The options identify the detailed information that is requested for each question.
- **Answer.** The answer section provides a space to record the answer to each question and its options.
APPENDIX G - Interview Guide

AN INVESTIGATION INTO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY CREATION/IMPLEMENTATION ON FULL-TIME FACULTY EMPLOYEES IN THE ONTARIO COLLEGE SECTOR: A CASE STUDY

General interview guide approach – This guide is intended to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee; this provides a conversational approach, and still allows a degree of freedom and adaptability in obtaining the information from the interviewee.

Pre Interview Protocol

- Send email invite (attached in Appendix D) and place telephone call to the participants I want to interview two weeks in advance of the desired interview date. Provide brief introduction to research study and details provided in the email invite. If participant agrees to participate and interview, schedule the interview using Microsoft Outlook.

- Schedule sixty minutes with each person. Plan to meet in a private office/conference room to allow for undisturbed conversation.

Interview Protocol

- On the day of the interview, arrive a few minutes early and wait for the appointed time. Greet the participant and reiterate the purpose of your time together and how their responses will be used.

- Remind the participant that you would like to audio tape your conversation; explain why, how it would be used, offer the option of reviewing the transcript, and ask for their permission.
• Ask the participant to take a few minutes to answer the few Background Information questions (use Background Information Data Collection in Appendix H).

• Use the Interview Guide that follows to conduct and document the interview. Begin by recording the date, participant and interviewer names on the Interview Guide. During the interview, document notes as the participant speaks. This will be helpful as a memory jogger and in the event there are any difficulties with the recorder.

• Based on the range of possible responses to the open ended questions, there are a number of probes that can be used to assist participants in their reflection:
  - Could you explain that further?
  - What do you mean by that?
  - Can you tell me more about that?
  - What does XXXX mean to you?
  - When you say XXXX what are you thinking about?
  - What thoughts or feelings do you have when you recall these experiences?

• At the end of the interview, express your appreciation and remind the interviewee that their interview will be transcribed and analyzed to understand how Professional development policy creation/implementation influences employee engagement.

This document provides an outline for discussions with full-time faculty employees participants for this research study. These questions are representative and will be used to guide, rather than direct, the conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Information Data Collection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Information/Background: Obtain before interview if possible or at beginning of interview – use attached form (Appendix H).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Question - 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>What does employee engagement mean to you? (Probing questions: can you tell me more about that? Can you elaborate on that?)</td>
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<td>Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Interview Question - 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Can you give me some examples of employee engagement? (Probing questions: what do you mean by that? is there anything else you would like to say about that?)</td>
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<td>Notes:</td>
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<th>Interview Question - 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>Can you give me an example of a time when you felt engaged at work? (Probing questions: do you have a specific incident in mind? Can you share a bit more about that?)</td>
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<td>Notes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Question - 4</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can you give me an example of a time when you did not feel engaged at work? (Probing questions: do you have a specific incident in mind? Can you share a bit more about that? Is there anything else you would like to say about that?)</td>
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Notes:

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<th>Interview Question - 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>What does professional development mean to you here at Durham College? (Probing questions: how has professional development been provided at Durham College, what has been your experience with professional development at DURHAM COLLEGE?)</td>
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Notes:

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<th>Interview Question - 6</th>
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<tr>
<td>How have you been supported in professional development activities here at Durham College? (Probing questions: Can you give me an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)</td>
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Notes
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<th>Interview Question - 7</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policies are formal statements of principle that members of Durham College follow because they are important to our mission and operations. Can you give me some examples of why policies are important? (Probing questions: What do you mean by that? How do you view XXXX?)</td>
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<th>Notes:</th>
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<th>Interview Question - 8</th>
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<tr>
<td>The process of developing policy, in particular Durham College’s professional development policy, is an activity that involves research, analysis, consultation and synthesis of recommendations to produce an effective policy. What do you understand about developing and implementing policies? (Probing questions: what have you experienced here at Durham College? Can you tell me more about that?)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Notes:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Question - 9</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>How have you been involved/participated in the policy creation/implementation process at Durham College? (Probing questions: In what ways have you been involved/participated in policy development or implementation? What did you learn from your involvement or participation? Do you feel your participation has been valued?)</td>
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Notes:

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<tr>
<th>Interview Question - 10</th>
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<tr>
<td>What are your overall impressions of creating and implementing polices at Durham College? (Probing questions: do you believe it’s important to be involved in creating and implementing policies, what is your understanding of those that are involved in creating and implementing policies?)</td>
</tr>
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Notes:
In addition to the probing questions included in the Interview Guide (Appendix G) the document analysis identified additional opportunities to ask the following probing questions that were utilized in the interview process with the 25 interviewees:

Question 1.
What does employee engagement mean to you?
Do you think it is well understood?
Do you think employee engagement and other related concepts sometimes get mixed up or confused?
What is the best way to encourage or increase employee engagement?

Questions 2.
Can you give me some examples of employee engagement?
Are there other examples?
Do you think it is encouraged?

Question 3.
Can you give me an example of a time when you felt engaged at work?
What was it that prompted you to feel this way?
What can the college do to make you feel more engaged?

Question 4.
Can you give me an example of a time when you did not feel engaged at work?
Can you provide more detail?
What prompted those feelings
How could have this been corrected or avoided?

Question 5.
What does professional development mean to you here at Durham College?
How has it been provided at DURHAM COLLEGE?
Can you tell me more about your experience?
Is there something you would like to be done different?

Question 6.
How have you been supported in professional development activities here at Durham College?
Can you tell me more about that?
Has the approach been consistent or is it different in different schools?
Should there be a consistent approach to PD?
Do you take your 10 days of PD each year?

Question 7.
Policies are formal statement of principle that members of Durham College follow because they are important to the College’s mission and operations.
Can you provide some examples of why policies are important?
Are they easy to find?
Do you think the college policies are well read and understood?
Do you think the college policies fulfill the goal of being important to the college’s mission and operations?

Question 8.
The process of developing policy, in particular Durham College’s professional development policy, is an activity that involves research, analysis, consultation and synthesis of recommendations to produce an effective policy.
What do you understand about developing and implementing policies?
Can you tell me more about that?
Is there anything you would change?

Question 9.
How have you been involved or participated in the policy creation/implementation process at Durham College?
Do you feel you should be involved in policy creation/implementation?

Question 10.
What are your overall impressions of creating and implementing policies at Durham College?
What is your understanding of those that are involved in the process?
Are these the right people to be involved in your view?
Are there any suggestions you have to change the way policies are created and implemented at DURHAM COLLEGE?
If you were asked to participate in policy creation/implementation what would be your thoughts?
How should these changes be communicated?
## Employee Engagement and Professional Development Policy Implementation – Background Information Data Collection

Collected by: Scott Blakey | Telephone: | 905 721-3012

E-Mail: scott.blakey@durhamcollege.ca; sblakey0856@rogers.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>What is your age in years?</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ 18-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ 25-34</td>
<td></td>
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<td>☐ 35-44</td>
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<td>☐ 55-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ 65+</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Prefer not to say</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

| What is your gender?                          |        |
| ☐ Male                                        |        |
| ☐ Female                                      |        |
| ☐ Prefer not to say                           |        |

| What is your first language?                  |        |
| ☐ English                                     |        |
| ☐ French                                      |        |
| ☐ Other                                       |        |
| ☐ Prefer not to say                           |        |

Participant: ______________________

Date: _________________

ID: _________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your job category at Durham College?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Counsellor</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Librarian</td>
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<td>☐ Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Prefer not to say</td>
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<tr>
<th>What is the highest level of education you have completed?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ 2 Year College</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Post Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Prefer not to say</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long have you been employed with Durham College?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
APPENDIX I - Information Data Collection Form for Ontario College Policy Documentation

Employee Engagement and Professional Development Policy Implementation – Background Information Data Collection from Ontario Colleges

Collected by: Scott Blakey | Telephone: | 905 721-3012
E-Mail: scott.blakey@durhamcollege.ca; sblakey0856@rogers.com

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the college located?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- West</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Central</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- East</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- North</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not sure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information not available via public website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| What is the regional population of the area in which the college is located? |        |
|   - Less than 100,000 people                                             |        |
|   - 100,000 people or greater                                           |        |
|   - Not sure                                                             |        |
|   - Information not available via public website                        |        |
| Participant: ___________________                                           |        |
| Date: _____________________                                                |        |
| ID: ________________________                                               |        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the full-time faculty employee population at the college?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Less than 50 full-time faculty employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 51 – 100 full-time faculty employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 101 – 150 full-time faculty employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ 151 – 200 full-time faculty employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Greater than 200 full-time faculty employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Information not available via public website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College provided copy of policy on professional development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX J - Sponsor Consent

2000 Simcoe Street North
Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7K4
March 21, 2016

REB University of Toronto

Dear REB University of Toronto:

We are writing to inform you that we support the Ethics review application form of our colleague Scott Blakey who is a doctoral student in Social Justice Education Department at OISE.

Scott's thesis proposal, as part of his fulfillment for requirements for the Ed. D is entitled: An Investigation in Employee Engagement and Professional Development Policy Creation/Implementation on Full Time Academic Employees in the Ontario College Sector.

Durham College supports Scott Blakey's research proposal and we look forward to his findings and recommendations once the study is completed. We support that Scott has selected Durham College as the study site to interview full time academic employees as part of his research methodology.

We support and sponsor the research proposal submitted by Scott Blakey.

Yours truly,

Don Lovisa
President

Dr. Elaine Popp
Vice President Academic
1. Introduction

The Durham College Board of Governors is guided by a Governance Policy Framework that provides effective and coherent focus for the Board’s oversight of College operations and clear delineation between what constitutes Board Policy and what constitutes operational College Policies and Procedures. The Durham College Leadership Team (DCLT) is responsible for developing, renewing and approving all College operational policies required for effective administration of the College as outlined in the Board’s Framework.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to support the development, renewal and implementation of consistent, transparent and accountable academic, administrative and employment-related Policies that demonstrate effective and professional business processes at Durham College. This Policy is applicable to all employees.

3. Definitions

3.1. Board Policy

Board Policy is defined as policies adopted by the Durham College Board of Governors under four sections: Outcomes, Governance Process, Board-President Relationship and Executive Limitations.
3.2. College Policy

College Policy (also referred to as “Policy”) is defined as any academic, administrative or employment-related Policy that sets out the requirements for the College, its management, staff and faculty to administer operations in accordance with Board Policy, federal and provincial legislation and directives, and commonly accepted business practices and professional ethics.

3.3. College Procedure

College Procedure (also referred to as “Procedure”) is defined as the documentation of processes, methods and operational considerations required to implement College policies.

4. Policy statements

4.1. Durham College Policies will be developed and renewed in the context of the following principles:

4.1.1. Respect for the mission, vision, values and goals of the College (as outlined in Board Framework ‘Outcomes’), all of which are reviewed and renewed as part of each Strategic Planning cycle.

4.1.2. Support for consistent decision-making and high standards of clarity, transparency and accountability.

4.1.3. Commitment to consultation and collaboration in the development of effective and implementable policies and procedures.

4.2. All Durham College Policies and Procedures will follow the format and guidelines outlined in procedure ADMIN-201.1 Policy and Procedure Development and Renewal and in the College Policy and Procedure templates available on the Info Centre for Employees (ICE).

4.3. College Policies and Procedures will be organized into three sub-sections: Academic (ACAD), Administrative (ADMIN) and Employment-Related (EMPL).

4.4. Procedures relating to specific College Policies will be renewed at the same time as the Policy and be clearly referenced in the Policy.

5. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) considerations

Durham College’s commitment to accessibility and AODA standards has been considered in the development of this Policy and it adheres to the principles outlined in the AODA standards and Durham College Accessibility Policy (ADMIN-203).
6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. DCLT is responsible for reviewing and approving all proposed, revised and renewed College Policies and Procedures.

6.2. Each Policy and Procedure document will specify a DCLT member who has responsibility for the Policy or Procedure. The DCLT member is responsible for:

   6.2.1. Developing and renewing all sections of the Policy and its Procedures, including appropriate research and consultation with related stakeholders and committees across campus.

   6.2.2. Considering legislative and other requirements in determining the appropriate lifecycle for the Policy and its Procedures. Policies and Procedures are generally, one, two, three or four years in length. They are not to exceed four years as regular review of Policies and Procedures is key to ensuring relevancy and any applicable legislative compliance.

   6.2.3. Ensuring new or renewed Policies and Procedures are communicated to the relevant College stakeholders (students, faculty staff, administrative staff, support staff, contractors and suppliers, the external community).

   6.2.4. Monitoring the Policy and its Procedures for effective implementation and compliance, including revising as required for business and/or legislative need.

6.3. The Office of the President is responsible for:

   6.3.1. Monitoring all Policies and Procedures with respect to their review dates and notifying the appropriate DCLT lead regarding scheduled review timelines.

   6.3.2. Reviewing all Policies and Procedures in advance of DCLT consideration to confirm they are formatted correctly and contain all required information.

   6.3.3. Ensuring all new Policies are presented to College Council for review and feedback prior to communication to the College community.

   6.3.4. Ensuring that all DCLT-approved Policies and Procedures are numbered and posted to the employee intranet (ICE) and that any Policies and Procedures with implications for non-employee audiences are posted to the College’s external facing website.

   6.3.5. Ensuring pdf and Word document copies are current and available in the Policies and Procedures folder on the shared S drive.
7. **Non-compliance implications**

Failure to comply with this Policy could impact Durham College’s ability to effectively conduct its operations in all areas and leave the College in contravention of Board Policy, federal and provincial legislation and directives, and commonly accepted business practices and professional ethics. These implications could include financial or reputational harm to the College, human rights challenges, or potential legal or other sanctions against the College.

8. **Related policies, procedures and directives**

- Durham College Administrative Decision Making policy (ADMIN-253), procedure (ADMIN-253.1) and form
- Durham College Board of Governors Governance Policy Framework
- Durham College procedure on Policy and Procedure Development and Renewal and the associated templates.
- Minister’s Binding Policy Directive – Governance and Accountability Framework
College Procedure

PROCEDURE TYPE: Administrative
PROCEDURE TITLE: Policy Development and Renewal
PROCEDURE NO.: ADMIN-201.1
RESPONSIBILITY: Office of the President
APPROVED BY: Durham College Leadership Team (DCLT)
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 2016
REVIEW DATE: March 2020

1. Introduction

1.1. College Policies and Procedures are informed by legislation, Minister’s Binding Policy Directives, current business practices and best-practices common to the college sector.

1.2. The college is governed by the board of governors, using a policy governance model. Through the board-president relationship policy President’s Job Description, the board of governors authorizes the president to establish, monitor and amend college operational policies and practices.

1.3. Durham College Bylaw 3 provides for College Council input on new college policy.

2. Definitions

2.1. Author

The Author is the individual tasked with writing the Policy or Procedure. This may or may not be the DCLT member who is responsible for the Policy or Procedure.

2.2. Effective Date

The month and year during which the new or renewed Policy or Procedure becomes effective (typically the month during which College Council endorses a new Policy or DCLT approves the renewed Policy or Procedure).
2.3. Policies

Policies are high-level documents that outline the importance of the topic and implications the topic has for operations. They describe what is to be done and why it is to be done.

2.4. Procedures

Procedures describe how something is to be done, identifying the specific tasks and procedural steps necessary to carry out the work. Procedures are always associated with a Policy; there may be more than one Procedure associated with any given Policy.

2.5. Renewal

Renewal is the process of scheduled assessment of the currency of Policies and Procedures; consultation with College departments impacted by the Policies and Procedures; updating, and review and approval by DCLT. Renewal takes place at or around the Review Date shown on the Policy or Procedure.

2.6. Review Date

The month and year, determined by the Author at the creation or renewal of the Policy or Procedure, at which the Policy or Procedure is to undergo Renewal. This date is determined by the Author, based on their knowledge and assessment of likely legislative, business practice or college sector best-practice change.

2.7. Revised Date(s)

The month and year during which the Policy or Procedure underwent Revision without a full assessment and update.

2.8. Revision

Revision is an un-scheduled updating of Policies or Procedures, often resulting from unanticipated changes in legislation, business practices, or college sector best-practice change which takes place between the Effective Date and the Review Date of the Policy or Procedure. Contact the corporate and board secretary if a revision is required.

2.9. As exceptions to the DC Style guide, terms defined in the Definitions section of Policies and Procedures are capitalized when used throughout the documents. “College” in reference to Durham College is also capitalized, to clarify that the use of the word specifically pertains to Durham College.

3. Purpose and Use

3.1. This Procedure provides information to those tasked with writing and reviewing Policies and Procedures to ensure clarity and consistency of meaning and
completeness of the information included in the documents. It is to be referenced every time an existing Policy or Procedure is reviewed for renewal and new Policies or Procedures are created.

3.2. Authors are to reference policy ADMIN-203 Accessibility and use the College Policy and College Procedure templates, which have been designed to maximize accessibility for people with disabilities and/or exceptionalities. The structure and formatting of the templates is not to be changed.

4. Procedure for Creating or Renewing Policies and Procedures

4.1. Initiation Creation or Renewal of a Non-faculty Policies and Procedures

4.1.1. The need for a new Policy is typically identified by a member of DCLT as an outcome of new or significantly revised legislation, Minister’s Binding Policy Directives, college sector recommendations or College business. The need for a new Procedure(s) is typically identified as above or by members of the Durham College community attempting to implement Policies.

- A member of the Durham College community recognizing a need for a new Policy or Procedure notifies their supervisor who then confirms the need with the relevant member of DCLT. Care should be taken to not duplicate existing Policies and Procedures.

4.2. Initiation Creation or Renewal of Academic Policies and Procedures

4.2.1. Develop a Plan - The policy author will develop a plan with phases and timelines that typically include the following: analysis, research, drafting, consultation, review, revision, editing, finalization and implementation.

4.2.2. Research - The policy author will conduct research on issues, legislation and best practices related to the policy and procedure (where applicable). Subject matter experts and other who have information may be consulted at this stage. For example this may include: deans, associate deans, Communications and Marketing, IT, SES, HR, managers of Program Planning or Program Review and Renewal, facilities, CAFE, Continuing Education, ORSIE, or ASC.

4.2.3. Draft - All policies and procedure (where applicable) will be documented on the Policy and Procedure template. Policy statements should be clear, concise and specific. They should be written in simple language and include with the policy is and what is expected of the users.

4.2.4. Consultation - The initial draft policy and the policy author will present procedures to the appropriate stakeholders in the College for review and feedback. This includes:
• Academic Leadership Team
• Academic Council
• College Council (if policy and procedure(s) (where applicable) is new)
• DCLT

4.2.5. Revise – The policy author will review feedback and revise the policy and procedure(s) (where applicable) as required. If a legal review is required, the policy and procedure(s) (where applicable) will be sent to legal counsel for review.

4.3. Timetable

4.3.1. Developing new or renewing Policies or Procedures often requires a few months and should begin at least two- to three-months in advance of the Review Date.

• New Academic Policies are to be endorsed by Academic Council prior to approval by DCLT; Academic Council meets monthly with few exceptions.

4.3.2. New or renewed Policies and Procedures ready for DCLT approval are submitted to the corporate and board secretary in the Office of the President two weeks in advance of the DCLT meeting at which approval is anticipated.

4.3.3. Approved Policies and Procedures are posted to the employee intranet, and, where applicable, to the public College website in the month in which DCLT approval is granted.

4.4. Accessing Existing Policy and Procedure Documents

4.4.1. Microsoft Word versions of Policies and Procedures are stored on the shared S: Drive, in the ’Policies and Procedures’ folder. The executive assistants (EA) and administrative assistants (AA) to members of DCLT and DCLT members themselves have “Read-Only” access to this folder.

4.4.2. Current versions approaching their review date are downloaded from the Policies and Procedures folder and provided to the Author by the Office of the President.

4.5. Content

4.5.1. Documentation

The Author provides documentation/information for all sections of each template that is specific to the new or renewed Policy or Procedure. Policy and Procedure numbers for new Policies and Procedures are the only exception; these are provided by the President’s Office.
4.5.2. Identifying updated information

Minor updates are identified using the Track Changes feature in Word or by striking through the old text, adding new text and changing the colour of old and new text to red. Using Track Changes for major updates often results in documents that are difficult to navigate and read and error-prone when accepting all changes once the document is approved. It is recommended that significantly revised portions be highlighted and include only the new text.

4.5.3. Policy and Procedure Details

Each policy and procedure has a details section at the beginning of the document.

a) **Policy Type** or **Procedure Type** indicates the broad area of applicability: Academic (ACAD), Administrative (ADMIN) or Employment-related (EMPL).

b) **Policy Title** or **Procedure Title** is a succinct description of what the Policy or Procedure covers.

c) **Policy Number** begins with the Policy Type acronym followed by a three digit number; 100-series is used for ACAD Policies and Procedures, 200-series for ADMIN and 300-series for EMPL. **Procedure Number** begins with the same three digits as its parent Policy with an “.X” extension where “X” is an additional number signaling that the document is a Procedure rather than a Policy, e.g. “ACAD 100” for a Policy and “ACAD 100.1” for its associated Procedure. Once assigned by the President’s Office, Policy and Procedure numbers do not change unless the Policy or Procedure is rescinded.

d) **Responsibility** identifies the DCLT member responsible for the Policy or Procedure. Enter the position title,” for example, “vice-president, Academic”. Where two or more DCLT members are responsible, list the one with primary responsibility first; questions regarding the document and notice of impending Review Date will be sent to this DCLT member.

e) **Policy Approved By** or **Procedure Approved By** is the Durham College Leadership Team (DCLT).

f) Effective Date is given as month and year only (E.g. May 2016)

g) Revised Date(s) is given as month and year only (E.g. May 2016).

h) Review Date is given as month and year only (E.g. May 2016).

4.5.4. Body of Policies and Procedures

a) Instructions for each section of the body of the Policy and Procedures
templates are included in the templates. Add additional sections where necessary, using the Headings 1-3 and text style “Normal” in the Styles section of Microsoft Word ribbon. It is these headings and text styles that ensure the document is as accessible as possible under the Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). See Appendix 1 for instructions on maintaining maximum accessibility.

b) Language is to be declarative (i.e., “shall”, “will”, “must” rather than “may”, “can”, “should”), concise, simple and free of jargon.

c) College stakeholder groups to which the Policy applies and their definitions are listed in Appendix 2. These names are to be capitalized when used in Policies and Procedures to indicate that they have a specific definition.

- This will be phased in as Policies and Procedures are renewed.

d) Within sections, use bullets to list items/information when there is no priority or sequence to the items/information. Use lower case letters when there is a priority (list in declining priority) or a sequence. The format is “a), b), c),” etc.

e) Standardized definitions and language is to be used where possible to ensure clarity, consistency and inclusivity. This is important as many Policies and Procedures are relevant to a wide variety of stakeholder groups. Recommended inclusive language is provided in Appendix 3.

f) The DC Style Guide is to be used, unless specified otherwise in this Procedure.

5. Content Consultations and Confirmation

5.1. Policies and Procedures need to work well for those to whom they relate. This includes the stakeholder groups identified in the Purpose section of the Policy as well as those with disabilities and/or exceptionalities. Authors need to consider all College stakeholder groups to whom the Policy and Procedures relate and obtain input from students or the relevant departments or business units to ensure that Policies are relevant and understandable and that Procedures can be implemented.

5.2. Policies and Procedures ready for DCLT approval are sent by the EA or AA of the responsible DCLT member to the administrative assistant in the Office of the President who will follow the ADMIN-253.1 Administrative Decision Making procedure.

6. DCLT and College Council Approval

6.2. New policies approved by DCLT are presented to College Council for input and endorsement.

7. **Posting New/Renewed Policies and Procedures**

7.1. Approved Policies and Procedures containing significant “red-lining” or Tracked Changes are returned to the EA or AA of the DCLT member responsible for the Policy or Procedure for formatting and then returned to the corporate and board secretary.

7.2. New Policies and their associated Procedures are posted by the end of the month in which they are endorsed by College Council and approved by DCLT.

7.3. The corporate and board secretary sends all renewed Policies and Procedures approved by DCLT to the web specialist, Communications and Marketing, for posting on ICE, and to the public-facing DC Website for those relevant to non-employees. The secretary saves all Policies and Procedures in the limited-access S:\Policies and Procedures folder.

7.4. The corporate and board secretary notifies the relevant member of DCLT and their EA or AA when posting is complete.

7.5. The responsible DCLT member facilitates posting of Policies relevant to students to MyCampus and any additional relevant communication channels.

8. **Roles and responsibilities**

Roles and responsibilities in addition to those outlined in the Policy on Policy Development and Renewal ADMIN-201 are identified with the relevant action throughout this Procedure.

9. **Related policies, procedures and directives**

- Durham College Administrative Decision Making Policy ADMIN-253 and Procedure ADMIN-253.1
- Durham College Board of Governors Governance Policy Framework
- Durham College Policy and Procedure templates
- Durham College Policy Development Policy, ADMIN-201
- Minister’s Binding Policy Directive – Governance and Accountability Framework
- Appendix 1: Tips for Creating New Policies and Procedures in Accessible Templates
- Appendix 2: College Stakeholder Groups and their Definitions
- Appendix 3: Inclusive Language Tip Sheet
Introduction

In order for the college to fulfill its mission, it requires dynamic employees who are committed to their own professional and personal development and to the need for current skills and knowledge in the classroom, management and service areas of the institution.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the commitment of the organization and employees’ roles and responsibilities to and for professional and personal development.

Definitions

Professional development is a continuum that ranges from personal development to professional development to organizational development.

**Professional development**

Professional development is skill and knowledge development that relates specifically to an individual’s position at the college.

**Personal development**

Personal development is skill and knowledge development, but not necessarily related to a particular college position.

**Organizational development**

Organizational development is any planned, organization-wide, activity that helps the college function more effectively as an organization, e.g. team building, strategic planning, leadership development, coaching, and organization design.
Policy statements

4.1. People are the college’s most valuable asset.

4.2. Professional development is an investment in people whose work performance serves as a foundation for the college to succeed in its mission.

4.3. Professional development focused on college goals and employee needs serves as a foundation for the college living its mission and contributing to the growth of its people.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) considerations

Durham College’s commitment to accessibility and AODA standards has been considered in the development of this policy and it adheres to the principles outlined in the AODA standards and Durham College Accessibility Policy (ADMIN-203).

Roles and responsibilities

6.1. Co-ordination of college-sponsored professional development programs is the responsibility of the executive director, Human Resources.

6.2. Durham College recognizes that professional development is a shared responsibility between the organization and its staff members. The college has a responsibility to encourage and support the continuous development of faculty and staff. Each staff member has the responsibility to seek out his or her own personal and career development.

6.3. Co-ordination of professional development is a shared responsibility between a staff member and his or her immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will have responsibility for ensuring specific staff requests comply with the employee’s plan. Approval of the immediate supervisor will include verification of activity, scheduling and availability of funds if financial assistance is required.

Non-compliance implications
Failure to invest in the professional development of individual employees or groups of employees could result in the college not being able to best meet the needs of students, in and/or out of the classroom.

Communications Plan
The policy, as well as upcoming professional development activities, will be communicated to all employees through ICE.

Related policies, procedures and directives
- Academic College Agreement – Article 11.01 (H), 11.04 (B) and 20
- Administrative Staff Performance Planning and Development System
- Administrative Staff Terms and Conditions of Employment – Section 6.7
- Durham College Employee Access to Part-time Courses at a Reduced Fee Policy EMPL-305
- Durham College Professional Development Procedure EMPL-307.1
- Faculty Performance Review and Planning Process
- Support Staff Collective Agreement – Articles 9.3 and 9.5
- Support Staff Performance Review and Planning Process.
College Procedure

PROCEDURE TYPE: Employment-Related
PROCEDURE TITLE: Professional Development
PROCEDURE NO.: EMPL-307.1
RESPONSIBILITY: Chief Administrative Officer
APPROVED BY: Durham College Leadership Team (DCLT)
EFFECTIVE DATE: April 2015
REVIEW DATE: February 2017

1. Introduction

Durham College recognizes the importance of its most valued resource – its employees. As a learning organization, Durham College is committed to providing and encouraging personal and professional employee development. The purpose of this procedure is to complement the Durham College Employee Access to Part-time Courses at a Reduced Fee Policy, which provides campus and affiliate colleagues with the opportunity to take courses for professional and personal development at a reduced tuition fee.

2. Definitions

All full-time employees are eligible for tuition reimbursement or advancement. All employees are eligible to attend on-campus workshops.

3. Procedure

3.1. Undergraduate and graduate programs

3.1.1. Durham College will reimburse 50 per cent of tuition for employees successfully completing courses, to a maximum of $3,000 per academic year (September 1 to August 31). Employees can also request tuition advancement for the full tuition prior to the start of each course. The total amount owed by the employee, 50 per cent of total tuition, will be automatically deducted from the employee’s pay over the course duration.

3.1.2. For undergraduate programs taken at UOIT, the employee must be registered as a UOIT student through the normal admissions process. In this case, UOIT will reimburse a specific amount which is defined on an annual basis.

3.1.3. To access tuition reimbursement or advancement, an employee must have
completed a tuition reimbursement or advancement request form that has been approved by his or her immediate supervisor.

3.1.4. The request form is to be sent to Human Resources for processing.

3.1.5. Upon successful completion of the course, employees must provide a grade report for Human Resources’ records. Employees who do not successfully complete their program of study will be required to reimburse the college for any or all advances.

3.2. Diploma and certificate programs (at institutes other than Durham College)

3.2.1. Durham College will reimburse 50 per cent of tuition for successfully completing post-secondary courses, to a maximum of $3,000 per academic year (September 1 to August 31). Employees can also request tuition advancement for the full tuition prior to the start of each course. The total amount owed by the employee, 50 per cent of total tuition, will be automatically deducted from the employee’s pay over the course duration.

3.2.2. To access tuition reimbursement or advancement, the employee must have completed a tuition reimbursement or advancement request form that has been approved by his or her immediate supervisor.

3.2.3. The request form is to be sent to Human Resources for processing.

3.2.4. Upon successful completion of the course, employees must provide a grade report for Human Resources’ records. Employees who do not successfully complete their program of study will be required to reimburse the college for any or all advances.

3.3. Continuing Education programs

Employees are eligible to access part-time courses through Continuing Education at a reduced fee. Please refer to the Durham College Employee Access to Part-time Courses at a Reduced Fee Policy EMPL-305.

3.4. Other professional development activities

Participation in other professional development-related activities is to be planned in advance with approval of an employee’s manager. Associated costs are the responsibility of the employee’s department. These activities are considered paid work time and any related expenses require prior approval and must follow the Durham College Business and Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy ADMIN-215.
4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. Co-ordination of college-sponsored professional development programs is the responsibility of the executive director, Human Resources.

4.2. Durham College recognizes that professional development is a shared responsibility between the organization and its staff members. The college has the responsibility to encourage and support the continuous development of faculty and staff. Each staff member has the responsibility to seek out his or her own personal and career development.

4.3. Co-ordination of professional development is a shared responsibility between a staff member and his or her immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will have responsibility for ensuring specific staff requests comply with the employee’s plan. Approval of the immediate supervisor will include verification of activity, scheduling and availability of funds if financial assistance is required.

5. Related policies, procedures and directives

- Academic Collective Agreement – Article 11.01 (H), 11.04 (B) and 20
- Administrative Staff Performance Planning and Development System
- Administrative Staff Terms and Conditions of Employment – Section 6.7
- Durham College Business and Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy ADMIN 215
- Durham College Employee Access to Part-time Courses at a Reduced Fee Policy EMPL-305
- Durham College Professional Development Policy EMPL-307
- Faculty Performance Review and Planning Process
- Professional and Personal Development Tuition Advancement Form
- Professional and Personal Development Tuition Reimbursement Form
- Support Staff Collective Agreement – Articles 9.3 and 9.5
- Support Staff Performance Review and Planning Process
1. Introduction

The Administrative Decision Making policy assists the Durham College Leadership Team (DCLT) in being prudent stewards of all resources so that we are financially responsible, demonstrate good governance and are system leaders in making decisions. Additionally the college is committed to realizing greater efficiencies through the college operations, including greater use of technology, scheduling of classes, utilization of space, and financial decisions.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist in strengthening our institutional governance; inform our strategic planning and management practices in a manner that creates value for our stakeholders; and provide institutional guidance.

3. Policy statements

3.1. In order to prevent silos and ensure collaboration and transparency, a systematic approach will be undertaken when providing information or seeking approval, execution or submission from the President, Board or Chair.

3.2. The Administrative Decision Making policy will be utilized by DCLT for:

- Request to initiate an unbudgeted capital project;
- New or scope change in advance of budget approval;
- Workforce strength adjustments, plus or minus, or where significant workload impact would occur multi-department or cross-college;
• Request to amend/deviate from/overspend the approved departmental operating budget and/or plan;
• Recommendation to change established corporate policies or to establish new corporate policies;
• Reply to a Board directive or enquiry;
• Contract change orders that require approval of the President, Chair or Board;
• Complex memoranda for which an Administrative Decision Making Form would provide a more concise explanation.

3.3. This consultative practice will be conducted in a manner that:

• Promotes a culture of seeking and receiving feedback from colleagues that may offer a diverse viewpoint.
• Is inclusive and ensures all vice-president’s and other applicable stakeholders have an opportunity for input.
• Aligns with applicable legislation, mission, vision and values, and strategic plan.
• Considers the impact on financial and workforce resources college-wide.
• Creates opportunity and stimulates innovation.
• Assists leadership in understanding challenges and choices and supports proactive management.
• Supports continuous improvement and renewal.

4. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) considerations

This policy adheres to the principles outlined in the AODA standards and the college’s commitment to accessibility, as demonstrated by the Accessibility Policy (ADMIN-203).

5. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Office of the President to ensure this policy is fully implemented.

6. Non-compliance implications

Failure to comply with this policy could result in financial, reputational or other loss for Durham College.

7. Communications plan

The Office of the President will post this policy and all associated procedures on the Info Centre for Employees (ICE) and notify the employees of its establishment and/of any revisions and/or updates made to it.
8. Related policies, procedures and directives

- Durham College Administrative Decision Making Form and Procedure ADMIN-253.1
- Durham College Contract Authorization and Risk Assessment Form
- Durham College Employee Code of Conduct Policy EMPL-317
- Durham College Policy Development Policy ADMIN-201 and Procedure ADMIN-201.1
- Durham College Purchasing Policy ADMIN-214, Procedure ADMIN-214.1 and Schedule of Authority ADMIN-214.2
- Durham College Risk Management Policy ADMIN-223 and Procedure ADMIN-223.1
1. Introduction

The objective of the Administrative Decision Making (ADM) procedure is to provide a process for forwarding material to the Office of the President for information, approval, execution or submission to the Board or Chair.

2. Procedure

2.1. The ADM form is to be completed by the employee(s) preparing the material (the “originator(s)”)) for approval. The form can be accessed on ICE at INSERT LINK

2.2. The ADM form should be no more than two pages. If additional background is required, attachments may be added. The form fields are to be completed as follows:

2.2.1. ID# - The Office of the President will assign an ID# upon receipt of the form. The form is automatically sent to the Office of the President once the form is submitted using the submit button at the bottom of the form.

2.2.2. Prepared By - The name of the employee completing the form

2.2.3. Manager/Director – Name of the employee’s manager/director

2.2.4. Department – Employee’s Department

2.2.5. VP/AVP/CIO/CFO/CAO – Name of the employee’s VP/AVP/CIO/CFO/CAO

2.2.6. Phone Ext – Employee’s phone extension

2.2.7. Date Prepared – Date form is prepared and submitted
2.2.8. Decision/Purpose - a concise statement that conveys the reason for the preparation of the ADM form. (e.g. Execution of lease required.)

2.2.9. Funding/Budget Implications - a concise statement outlining how the proposed action will be funded (if applicable) and/or the impact on the capital or operating budget. (e.g. Funding is available under projects in the currently approved capital program budget)

2.2.10. Workforce Implications - a statement justifying impact on approved budgeted workforce. (e.g. Approval will result in an increase of two temporary unbudgeted positions)

2.2.11. Recommendations – a statement requesting specific, appropriate actions. (e.g. The property, 2000 Simcoe Street, is recommended as the most appropriate choice)

2.2.12. Review and Edit File – attach document to be reviewed and edited using track changes. (e.g. Policy or Procedures for review)

2.2.13. Attachments – attach additional background information if required.

2.2.14. Decision Routing – All ADM forms must be approved initially by the department’s Manager/Director and member of the Durham College Leadership Team (DCLT). The decision routing will be completed by the Office of the President upon receipt and review of the form.

2.2.15 Notes (Non-concur) – Comments and notes are to be added by members of DCLT that do not approve of the request outlining their concerns or reasons for not approving the request.

2.2.16 Amendments/Comments – Amendments and/or comments may be added by members of DCLT.

2.2.17 Highest Level Approval - indicate if approval is required by DCLT or Board of Governors – This field will be completed by the Office of the President as required.

2.2.18 Submit – Once the form is completed, click the submit button at the bottom of the page, this will forward the form to the Office of the President.

2.3. Once the form is completed and submitted, the Office of the President will add the ID#. The ADM form will then be routed as indicated by the decision routing.

2.4. Once approved, the Office of the President will notify the originator of the DCLT and their assistants via email to ensure the decision is communicated as required. The approved ADM form will go forward as a information item in the next Large
DCLT meeting agenda and if required the next Board of Governors meeting, and become part of the DCLT and/or Board of Governors meeting minutes.

2.5. If the request is not approved, the Office of the President will notify the originator of the request and all members of DCLT via email.

3. **Roles and responsibilities**

   3.1. It is the responsibility of each DCLT member to obtain the appropriate review prior to submitting an ADM form to the Office of the President for action.

   3.2. When DCLT members receive an ADM form, they are responsible for consulting with the appropriate staff in their areas to aid in assessing the ADM form for review and approval or non-concur.

   3.3. It is the responsibility of the Office of the President to ensure this procedure is fully implemented.

4. **Related policies, procedures and directives**

   - Durham College Administrative Decision Making Form
   - Durham College Contract Authorization and Risk Assessment Form
   - Durham College Employee Code of Conduct Policy EMPL-317
   - Durham College Policy Development Policy ADMIN-201 and Procedure ADMIN-201.1
   - Durham College Purchasing Policy ADMIN-214, Procedure ADMIN-214.1 and Schedule of Authority ADMIN-214.2
   - Durham College Risk Management Policy ADMIN-223 and Procedure ADMIN-223.1
The key terms used in this research study are:

**Basic Themes** - Basic themes are the principle characteristic of the data, and on their own they say very little about the text or group of texts as a whole (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Derived from the textual data they are typically statements anchored around the central topic of study and contribute toward the signification of an organizing theme.

**Constructivist** - This model suggests that people form their perceptions of the world and that how people see and interpret their environment is not a reflection of what there is, but a set of shared elements of what we make of it (Glesne, 2006).

**Organizational Policy** – A documented set of guiding principles and procedures that an organization will establish through the auspices of the Senior Management leadership team.

**Descriptive–interpretive qualitative research method** - Often referred to by many ‘brand names’ in which various common elements are mixed according to particular researchers’ predilections (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). The Interpretivist approach adopted for this study is based on a naturalistic approach of data collection such as interviews and observations and meanings emerge usually towards the end of the research process (Bhattacherjee, 2012) an approach that emphasizes common methodological practices that is my own mix of methods that lend themselves to the topic under investigation and my own preference for collecting and analyzing qualitative data.

**Employee Engagement** – The employment and expression of a person’s preferred self in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, a personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active full role performance (Kahn, 1990, p. 700). Shuck & Wollard, (2010) extend our understanding of employee engagement by defining employee engagement as an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes.

**Full-time Faculty Employees** – Full-time faculty employees are recognized as professors, teachers, instructors, counsellors and librarians whose skills and abilities contribute directly to student success, program quality and support the college in meeting its mission and mandate.

**Global Theme** - Global Themes are super-ordinate themes that encompass the principal metaphors in the data as a whole. They are macro themes that summarize and make sense of clusters of lower-order themes abstracted from and supported by the data and is the core of a thematic network (Attride-Stirling, 2001).
Human Resource Development (HRD) – Is an area of theory, research and practice that is dedicated to the study of individuals, however, determining a specific definition has been the topic of detailed conversations and debates by various scholars over the past number of decades.

Organizing Theme - This is a middle-order theme that organizes the basic themes into clusters of similar issues. They are clusters of signification that summarize the principal assumptions of a group of basic themes and their role is to enhance the meaning and significance of a broader theme (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Policy creation/implementation - Policy creation and implementation in organizations is defined as the documented set of guiding principles and procedures that an organization has established. They are typically created and approved by senior management or an oversight committee and have significant impact on the strategic success of the organization.

Positivism – Positivism assumes that there is knowledge only found from scientific information and obtaining and verifying data can only be received from empirical evidence.

Professional Development - is a continuum that ranges from personal development to professional development to organizational development within the Ontario College environment. Specifically, professional development is skill and knowledge development that relates directly to an individual’s position. It is an investment in people whose work performance serves as a foundation for the college to succeed in its mission.

Ontario Colleges - As used in this study refers to the 22 English Speaking Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT).

Thematic Network Analysis - Thematic analyzes search for themes salient in a text at different levels, and thematic networks aim to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). In this study, thematic network analysis is used as the final step in identifying and analyzing patterns in the qualitative data.