Abstract

Given the significance afforded to career guidance as public policy within compulsory education, increasing our understanding of the role of policy documents in the enactment of career guidance programing is fundamental. Through a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study, I explored how different levels of policy actors interpreted policy documents to make sense of career guidance as public policy and enacted their interpretations into career guidance programing. The 2014 revised policy for career guidance (first implemented in 2012/2013) in secondary schools in England, where I lived and worked for the first 43 years of my life, and the simultaneous introduction of a new policy and program for education and career/life planning in secondary schools in Ontario, where I now reside, provided logical locations for this study. By purposefully including a variety of levels of job roles, this study acknowledged Ball et al.’s (2011a) assertion that policy actors undertake complex and differentiated activity during policy implementation. Document analysis revealed the Ontario Creating Pathways to Success (2013) policy included the most far-reaching contributory content, outlining a comprehensive education and career/life planning program for K–12 students, that must be delivered through classroom instruction linked to the broader school curriculum. By contrast, the England Statutory Guidance and Non-Statutory Guidance (2013) policies consisted of guidance that schools must have regard to when providing advice and guidance to their students. The contextual policy landscape of each jurisdiction situated these interpretations, and clearly contributed to a number of challenges that needed navigation, as part of the interpretive process and decision-making regarding provision. The data collected from 25 policy actors underlined nuanced individual definitions of career guidance and interpretations of policy documents, that supported decision-making in all sample schools. The study examined the
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intersection of document analysis, sensemaking, and policy implementation; and provided rich
descriptions of situated policy contexts and nested working practices that were peppered with
learning, labour market, and social equity related terminology. Implications for future conceptual
and empirical work include, reaching consensus in defining career guidance and associated
terms, roles of external stakeholders as policy actors, and opportunities for learning
conversations to build policy legacy.
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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

Taken on its own a libretto rarely adds up to much. The text as narrative is often disjointed, repetitive and lacking in depth. I cannot think of a single one that might hold a person’s attention as a gripping tale. Yet a libretto is not intended to be analysed in isolation. It demands to be analysed in action. How it is integrated into the dramatic action on stage, how it relates to the melody and rhythm of the music, how it is called upon (recruited) and manipulated by the singers, how it is performed – all of these are of primary importance. Its substance as displayed on the inert page is of only secondary concern. (Prior, 2003, p. 173)

As a precursor to interviews for my Masters of Education research in 2011, a career guidance teacher gave me three Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents she frequently consulted to guide her practice. “Take them home” she suggested, “I no longer use them very much.” The varied intensities of yellow-highlighted words and sentences were apparent from my first viewing; the varied depth in colours suggesting different focal points of interest over time. I recall seeing annotations, with many words and phrases underlined or circled. Pages were worn and grubby, a tangible record of a level of physical interaction between the teacher and the documents. Perhaps, at some point during reading, a cup of coffee was placed carelessly upon the document and a page jogged, as a dark circle stained one of the pages. These physical markers on the documents resonated with me. During my fifteen years as an educator, the documents I have interacted with also show a similar testimony, a physical and tangible record of their consumption and use. As Prior (2003) maintained, “every reader in every age has cut and edited documents to suit a personal agenda” (p. 16).
Prior to 2011, I had never given this significant thought. During the research process of my Masters of Education, this generosity of sharing policy and curriculum documents for career guidance prompted me to pause and look at these documents in a new way. Why had this teacher annotated and highlighted this document? What had she been thinking when she first read this policy? How had her annotations and markings helped her make sense of policy, curriculum? What reading and sensemaking processes had she engaged whilst reading to subsequently inform career guidance programming in her school? Was the visual demonstration of her interaction with this document indicative of her interpretations, and representative of other career studies teachers’ interaction with, and interpretation of, policy documents? These were the questions that drove this dissertation.

The visible examples of interactions with documents exhibited by the career guidance teacher and myself are but a trace of what is mostly an invisible process undertaken by readers as they use and consume documents. However, such physical markers do not tell us how the use and consumption of documents are related to practice, how the documents are called upon and manipulated, how the documents are, to quote Prior, “performed” (p. 173).

Policy and curriculum documents are produced and disseminated by ministries and departments of education to provide guidance and frameworks for educators to implement programs effectively. Different levels of policy actors (e.g., teachers, principals/head teachers, district school board/administrators) work with and interpret documents to make sense of career guidance as public policy and ultimately enact their interpretations into career guidance programming. As these individuals adopt, adapt, circulate, and reject such documents, they do so through all kinds of interpretations within their professional practice, political, and managerial maneuverings (Prior, 2003). However, there is a dearth of research literature that examines
career guidance educators’ interpretations and understandings of policy and curriculum documents. Therefore, given the significance afforded to career guidance as public policy within the educational sphere, it is pivotal to increase our understanding of the role of policy and curriculum documents in the enactment of career guidance programming.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to understand how different types of policy actors, situated in the province of Ontario, Canada, and England interpreted career guidance policy documents to make sense of career guidance as public policy and to inform career guidance provision in their respective jurisdictional contexts.

There were six research questions guiding this study:

1. How was career guidance defined in policy documents and by the policy actors for both jurisdictions in this study?
2. How did policy actors access, interact with, and interpret career guidance policy documents?
3. How were public policy goals for career guidance and responding policy initiatives represented in the policy documents for the two jurisdictions examined in this study?
4. How did policy actors interpret the role of career guidance policy and programing as public policy mechanisms within their contextual environments and jurisdictions?
5. How did policy actors engage in interpreting and re-interpreting career guidance policy documents and their associated job roles and policy actor roles?
6. Where and how did congruence and incongruence emerge between the two jurisdictions of this study?
Rationale

There were five main arguments for the importance of this research. First, the continued context of high youth unemployment, austerity, and global economic downturn provides a grave situation for young people (Hooley, Marriott, Watts, & Coiffat, 2012). The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2013) called the current global cohort of young people “a generation at-risk” (p. 1) with many young people now giving up on the job search after global recovery weakened in 2012 and 2013. The global population of youth aged 15 to 24 reached 1.2 billion in 2010, and jobs are simply not being created fast enough to meet the needs of this growing population (UNESCO, 2012). Though the global youth unemployment rate has improved from 76.6m in 2009 to 73.3m in 2014, the global youth unemployment rate of 36.7 per-cent in 2014 remains well-above its pre-crisis rate of 11.7 per-cent in 2007 (ILO, 2015). It clearly remains a challenge for young people to smoothly transition into employment in today’s labour market.

The ILO estimated global youth unemployment levels to be approximately 73 million during 2014 with informal employment remaining pervasive, and transitions to work continuing to be “slow and difficult” (2015, p. 1). In addition, “society is losing valuable skills and forfeiting stronger productivity growth that would have been achieved had these young people been employed at their appropriate level of qualification” (ILO, 2014, p. 1) due to many employed young people being overqualified for their jobs. The global economic downturn of 2008 involved a substantial reduction in jobs concentrated in a small number of sectors forcing increased numbers of young people to take jobs in sectors or occupations they had not previously considered, worked in, or trained for. The ILO (2014) concluded that such a mismatch between young people’s skill supply and the labour market demand further hampered labour reallocation and increased unemployment rates.
The second argument for the importance of this research is related to the challenges faced by many young people during the process of school-to-work (STW) transition. STW transition, defined as occurring between the ages of 15–24 (World Bank, 2010), is a crucial and often very challenging stage for young people (Hooley, Marriott, & Sampson, 2011). STW transition involves students making personal and career choices within a context of shifting social and economic conditions (Bloxom, et al., 2008; Vondracek, Ferreira, & dos Santos, 2010), and global financial uncertainties, for example the global economic crisis of 2008 (OECD, 2010). A study of 14 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations (OECD, 2000) identified six features of effective STW transitions: (a) a healthy economy; (b) well-organized pathways that connect initial education with work and further study; (c) widespread opportunities to combine workplace experiences with education, and bridges between vocational education, apprenticeships, and tertiary education; (d) tight safety nets for at-risk youth; (e) good information and guidance; and, (f) effective institutions and processes.

Similarly, a study by the European Training Foundation (ETF), identified five features that impacted upon successful STW transitions: (a) the economic, social, and political context; (b) the education and training system; (c) the structure of the labour market; (d) the interfaces linking education with work; and, (e) the characteristics of the transition itself (ETF, 2008, p. 7). In both the OECD (2000) and the ETF (2008) lists of successful features, the role of educational and training systems, and the interfaces linking education and work (e.g., career guidance) are prominent in supporting STW transition.

Thirdly, career guidance remains a vital policy area that needs ongoing attention and understanding. Hooley et al. (2011) highlighted how career guidance can create meaningful links between the education system and the training system, acting as an interface that links education
with work. However, youth are faced with the challenge that they may need to undertake many jobs and changes to career paths involving re-training, frequent integration into new working contexts, and a commitment to lifelong learning (OECD, 2010). Youth ostensibly need development of relevant skills that can be continuously employed to both assist STW transition, and facilitate subsequent productive roles in society.

In developed countries such as the Canada and the United Kingdom, education is seen as a vital agent against youth unemployment with a strong linkage between educational attainment and successful employment outcomes (International Labour Office, 2012). A variety of influential international organizations have argued the value of career guidance within compulsory education (i.e., secondary school) as one of the most promising strategies to curtail high youth unemployment (Bell & Benes, 2012; International Labour Office, 2012; OECD, 2012; World Bank, 2011). Despite this recommendation, limited research has been conducted on the way these policy directives in the form of career guidance policy documents are interpreted into working policies and practices that drive educational programming.

The fourth argument for the importance of research examining career guidance educators’ interpretations and understandings of policy and curriculum documents related to how policy implementation is problematic and may not follow the original policy intent (Coburn, 2001; Hope, 2002; McLaughlin, 1987; O’Toole, 2004; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl (2009) warned that various policy actors involved in implementing policy, each carry “particular interests, ambitions, and traditions that affect the implementation process and shape its outcomes” (p. 160). Research has demonstrated that teachers, as policy actors, come to understand policy through their pre-existing knowledge and practice (Coburn, 2005), and often interpret, adapt, or transform policy messages as they implement policy
(Coburn, 2001; Spillane et al., 2002). In addition, the interpretive process of policy implementation is influenced by the social and structural conditions of career guidance policy actors’ workplaces (Coburn, 2005).

The fifth important argument, focused upon the need for work with documents to understand how documents were used, recruited, manipulated, adopted, interpreted, adapted, and “performed” (Prior, 2003, p. 173). Policy documents provide a discernible, tangible way of expressing policy goals, and the resources and obligations necessary to meet the intended policy outcomes (Cheung, Mirzaei, & Leeder, 2010). In making the policy implementation process visible, documents have a key role (Prior, 2003). However, examination of the visible, the document content, provides a limited viewpoint. Miller and Alvarado (2005) proposed that in addition to examining a document for its content, context analytic strategies can focus on sources in ways that embed documents into their contexts of production and use (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2001). Context analytic strategies help to widen the viewpoint, and acknowledge the role of career guidance documents within a larger field of social activity, with meanings that are socially situated (Miller & Alvarado). Consequently, deepening our understanding of the role of policy documents in career guidance policy implementation provides a timely and crucial contribution to understanding how schools can support young people’s successful transition to post-secondary destinations and the labour market.

Context

Feller, Russell, and Whichard (2005) noted that despite the differences in cultures, religions, economies, political systems, and education structures, “many countries face similar challenges when designing and implementing career development programs” (p. 54). Similarly, Gysbers (2008) suggested, while there are increasing similarities in career guidance provision,
the enduring differences present a valid opportunity for continued comparative investigation that will encourage professionals to come together to address unresolved issues in the career guidance implementation process.

The two jurisdictions selected for this study were the province of Ontario in Canada, and the country of England, part of the United Kingdom (UK). These jurisdictions presented an instructive comparison for this study for many reasons, including

- continued youth unemployment challenges in both jurisdictions (Statistics Canada, 2016; Taylor, 2016);
- empirical studies reporting that the skills mismatch between young peoples’ career aspirations, education and training, and local labour markets must be addressed for the mutual benefit of the economy and the youth (Bell & Benes, 2012; Brown, Bimrose, & Hughes, 2011; Conference Board of Canada, 2013; CIPD, 2012; CIPD, 2013; Mann, Massey, Glover, Kashefpadkel, & Dawkins, 2013; Hughes, 2015);
- both the Ontario Curriculum (Ministry of Education 2013) and the Statutory Guidance for England (Department for Education, 2014) include the recommendation for schools to engage with local employers, work-based education providers, and post-secondary education and training providers; and,
- both jurisdictions introduced new policies for career guidance provision in secondary schools during 2013.

High youth unemployment in both jurisdictions is of particular concern. In July 2016 the unemployment rate as a percentage of labour force in the UK was given as 4.9% (Trading Economics, 2016) against a rate of 13.7% for youth aged between 16 and 24 (Taylor, 2016). In Canada, statistics for July 2016 reported the unemployment rate as a percentage of the labour
force as 6.9% (Statistics Canada, 2016) against a rate of 13.3% for youth aged between 15 and 24 (Statistics Canada).

Despite many commonalities, there are key differences between these two jurisdictions’ career guidance policies that influence implementation into practice. In Ontario, the career guidance and education provision in public [state] schools must include clearly stated competencies for students in grades 1 to 12 (age 5 to 18) and should contain a range of career exploration activities in the community. All students must complete the compulsory half-credit Career Studies (GLC20) course as a secondary school graduation requirement (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). The guidance and career education program involves a variety of instructional settings and roles, the involvement of community partners, events such as work-experience and job shadowing, and the active involvement of teachers and guidance counsellors.

In England, schools were required to secure access to independent [defined as being external to the school] careers guidance for students in years 8 to 13 (aged 12 to 18) (Department for Education, 2013). Careers guidance must be presented to students in an impartial manner (defined as showing no bias or favouritism towards particular education or work option, Department for Education, 2013). Schools were responsible for assuring the quality of external providers of career guidance and for providing career activities for young people. Furthermore, schools were expected to work with the local authorities to assist the “most vulnerable young people and those at-risk of disengaging with education and work” (Department for Education, 2013, p. 7). In addition, schools were expected to work with education and training providers acting impartially to recognize “where it may be in the best interests of some pupils to pursue their education in a further education college or a university technical college (for example)” (Department for Education, 2013, p. 8).
These two jurisdictional examples provided different contexts for policy actors to interpret and enact policy documents to achieve public policy goals (Watts, 2004). In addition, the jurisdictions provided opportunity to understand how lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and work-based education (WBE) and vocational education and training (VET), are being utilized as responses to youth unemployment, and transitions, and how such initiatives are enacted into career guidance programming and provision.

**Description of Jurisdictional Education Systems**

Prior to situating this research within the literature and outlining the conceptual framework for this study, I describe the two educational jurisdictions in Ontario, Canada and England that were the focus of this comparative study.

**Governmental departments for education.** The Ministry of Education and Training is a department within the Ontario provincial government with numerous divisions and services through which it undertakes its official work in the education sector throughout Ontario (Kutsyuruba, Burgess, Walker, & Donlevy, 2013). The Ministry of Education and Training define their mission statement as follows (Ministry of Education, 2016):

> Ontario is committed to the success and well-being of every student and child. Learners in the province's education system will develop the knowledge, skills and characteristics that will lead them to become personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens. Ontario will cultivate and continuously develop a high-quality teaching profession and strong leadership at all levels of the system. Our education system will be characterized by high expectations and success for all. It will be responsive, high quality, accessible and integrated from early
learning and child care to adult education. Together, we will build on past achievements and move forward with ambitious goals. (Ministry of Education, 2016)

The Department for Education is a department within the United Kingdom government that works with nine agencies and public bodies to oversee educational provision and services for children. The Department for Education (2016) described its mandate as follows:

The Department for Education is responsible for education, children’s services, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England, and equalities. We work to achieve a highly educated society in which opportunity is equal for all, no matter what their background or family circumstances.

(www.education.gov.uk)

Local Authorities

Local government in England consists of two systems, either a one-tier system (unitary authorities), or a two-tier system (county and district councils). There are five types of local authority in England: county councils, district councils, unitary authorities, metropolitan districts, and London boroughs. Most relevant to this study is the system of county councils, which cover the whole of the county and provide the majority of public services in their particular area including education (http://www.politics.co.uk).

School Administration and Governance

England. Schools in England can be categorized in many different ways. At the highest level, schools can be either state (maintained) schools or academies, which are independent publicly funded schools, or independent schools, which are fee-paying. Secondary schools are generally for 11–18 year olds and the compulsory school age is from 5 to 17. This changed to 18 in 2015 when all young people of this age were required to be in education or training. Sixth
form colleges and further education (FE) colleges admit pupils from age 14. There are other classifications relevant to the governance and funding of schools.

Academies and maintained schools are designated together as publicly funded schools or state-funded schools. Academies were originally set up as all-ability, state-funded schools established and managed by sponsors from a wide range of backgrounds, including high-performing schools and colleges, universities, individual philanthropists, businesses, the voluntary sector, and the faith communities. Since the passing of the Academies Act 2010 there has been a fundamental change in the policy on academies, with the expectation from the Government that all schools might become academies. There are now several types of academies, including maintained schools that have decided to become academies (converter academies), and sponsor academies (schools that have been in special measures for some time and as a result have been required to become academies).

Free Schools are a kind of academy, and they are funded similarly to academies. University Technical Colleges (UTCs) are academies for 14–19 year-olds, offering technical courses and work-related learning, combined with academic studies that are sponsored by local universities and local employers. The variation in school structures in England is reflected in their governance provision. Several different categories of governors can be found on most governing bodies, some elected and some appointed (for example, parent, staff, community, foundation, partnership and local authority). Governance arrangements for academies are set in their funding agreements, and might include a trust, which may include sponsor representatives, or an overarching trust that covers all the academies in the chain.

**Ontario.** Publicly funded schools in Ontario fall into four main types, English public, English Separate (Catholic), French public, and French Separate (Catholic). All four are
organized in the same way, and are operated by district school boards, sharing the same standards for teacher and student performance (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013). School boards may also establish schools specializing in areas such as the performing arts, business studies, pure and applied sciences, and languages. However, a school must offer the full range of courses required for a student to graduate with a secondary school diploma.

An elected school board or board of education governs each school district, and any public or separate school district exists in a geographical area that encloses one or more schools (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013). A school board is a legal corporate body and it is required to have locally elected membership and the duties and powers of school boards are laid down in the Education Act. Young people generally attend secondary school between the ages of 14 and 18 (grades 9 to 12), and the compulsory school age in Ontario is 6 to 18 inclusive.

Teachers of Career Guidance

**England.** The National College for Teaching and Leadership, part of the Department for Education, is responsible for initial teacher training in England (www.education.gov.uk); however, since the introduction of the Academies Act in 2010 all academies can employ unqualified teachers. Schools in England may retain “in house” teachers of career guidance but should supplement them with external sources of career guidance, for example, an external careers guidance provider, employer visits, access to websites and telephone helplines (Department for Education, 2013).

**Ontario.** To be employed to teach in a public school in Ontario, individuals must meet certain requirements laid down in the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, and the Teaching Profession Act. Furthermore, all teachers must be certified to teach by the Ontario College of Teachers (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013). A teacher of career guidance in Ontario is defined
as either a guidance counsellor or teacher employed in a public secondary school. Guidance counsellors in Ontario must meet all the requirements of teachers, however they must also complete *Guidance and Career Education Part One* Additional Qualification (AQ), after which they may have guidance periods included in their teaching timetable. Taking the *Guidance and Career Education Part Two* might qualify an Ontario teacher to become a secondary school department head (www.osca.ca). In addition, some guidance counsellors in Ontario also are required to possess AQ’s in special education or cooperative education depending upon their roles and responsibilities.

**Defining Key Terminology**

It was useful to consider the variation in terminology used to label career guidance in different jurisdictions and identify the most relevant term for research within the compulsory education (secondary or high school) setting. I adopted a definition using the term *guidance* (emphasis added by author), offered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Watts, 2004):

In some countries terms such as “vocational guidance”, “vocational counselling”, “career counselling”, “information, advice and guidance” and “career development” are used to refer to the range of activities that is included here within the term career guidance. In this report career guidance encompasses all of these, and no attempt is made to distinguish between them. (p. 18)

Consequently, throughout my research the term *career guidance* (emphasis added by author) is used to represent all career services, information, education, and guidance that was provided for young people attending compulsory secondary (high school) education institutions.
Within this study, five additional definitions were relevant. First, educators fulfilled the role of policy actors when applying their knowledge and values to shape career guidance programs while implementing policy decisions (Howlett et al., 2009). Civil servants and other government officials were often responsible for implementing policy, however non-governmental policy actors could also be part of the policy subsystem involved in implementation activities (Howlett et al.). All policy actors involved in policy implementation conveyed individual interests, motivations, and customs that impacted upon the implementation process and determined its outcomes (Bache & Flinders, 2004). For the purposes of this study, educators as policy actors were defined as follows:

- **teachers** (emphasis added by author), including career guidance counsellors in Ontario and career guidance teachers in England;
- **administrators**, including principals in Ontario and head or assistant head teachers in England;
- **coordinators**, including guidance coordinators in district school boards in Ontario, and local education authority employed career guidance coordinators or managers in England; and,
- **policy experts**, who comprised of professionals in the career guidance field from Ontario and England who were academics, policy commentators, policy makers, or career guidance professionals holding senior level management positions.

Second, collecting and using information was an important part of policy actor activity (Honig, 2006). The deliberate decisions of whether to incorporate information into an organization’s collective wisdom, mind, or organizational rules, involved three sub-processes...
• *interpretation* (emphasis added by author), where policy actors, after identifying information and bringing it to their organization, made sense of the information and decided whether and how to include it within organizational policy (Weick, 1995);

• *storage*, where policy information was observed as it was stored by being part of policy. For example, how centrally formed policies took various documentary forms including curriculum documents, administrative bulletins, resource allocations etc. (Honig, 2006); and,

• *retrieval*, when organizational members retrieved and consulted the information, reformulated as organizational policy, which guided subsequent choice and actions (Levitt & March, 1988).

Third, I considered documents to be material entities (Fenwick & Edwards, 2011) that included, “objects, bodies, texts, and technologies, as well as the material connections through which they became assembled in nets of action and influence” (p. 711). Specifically, this study considered documents (print and electronic) identified by policy actors as being crucial to the implementation of career guidance policy in their jurisdictions.

Fourth, it was important to note, within this dissertation, *youth* (emphasis added by author) were defined as being between the ages of 15 and 24, in alignment with Scarpetta, Sonnet, and Manfredi’s (2010) report, *Rising Youth Unemployment During the Crisis: How to Prevent Negative Long-Term Consequences for a Generation*, part of the OECD social, employment, and migration paper series.

Finally, I have used the term *job roles* (emphasis added by author) in order to differentiate between the policy actors’ usual, every-day working practices, and the processes
they engaged in as policy actors interpreting policy documents that were revealed through this study.

**Identifying Relevant Assumptions**

It is imperative to recognize that there were a number of assumptions that underpinned this research:

- There existed evidence that career guidance supported individuals to make positive transitions, realize positive labour market outcomes, and engage in lifelong learning (Hooley et al., 2012).
- Career guidance provision consisted of a variety of activities, supports, and interventions. Many of these activities could exist within an overall framework such as a comprehensive guidance system or as discrete interventions. Dykeman et al. (2001) described typical activities as including work-based interventions (i.e., job shadowing and youth apprenticeships), advising interventions (i.e., career maps and job hunting preparation), introductory interventions (i.e., career field trips and career fairs), and curriculum-based interventions (i.e., career skills embedded into the curriculum).
- Career guidance was closely related to the area of vocational education and training (VET). However, career guidance was not limited to a particular educational route, as it could be embedded into different subjects and curricula within schools irrespective of whether students are following academic or vocational pathways (Hooley et al., 2011).
- Across Europe, career guidance was seen to have a progressively broad appeal as a mechanism to promote public policy goals in three specific areas; (a) lifelong learning, (b) improving labour market outcomes and efficiencies that support economic
development goals, and (c) social equity and inclusion (Sultana, 2004; Watts, 2004; Watts & Fretwell, 2004)

- There was often limited opportunity for career guidance teachers to develop adequate knowledge and skills to support their practice (Anctil, Klose Smith, Schenck, & Dahir, 2012; Godden, 2011; Schloss, 2011).
- There was a need to understand the attitudes and levels of understanding of school leaders, teachers, and other policy actors of career guidance in schools (Hooley et al., 2012).
- Documents matter, and can help us examine the attitudes, interpretations, and levels of understanding of policy actors (Miller & Alvarado, 2005; Prior, 2003).

Researcher Background

Within this research I have combined my academic interests of career guidance, STW transitions, and the role of documents in supporting the policy to practice implementation process. My knowledge gained as a mentor of high school students, curriculum manager, business owner, marketing manager, school governor, and educator who has navigated an ostensibly infinite flow of curriculum and policy documents in England, energized and informed my work. More recently, my graduate work has encompassed career guidance, mentorship, professional development of educators, educational policy, educational leadership, and workplace learning perspectives from Ontario and the broader pan-Canadian context. I believe my background and experience in both Ontario and England have enabled a robust analysis of both jurisdictional contexts of this study.
Dissertation Overview

This doctoral dissertation proposal is presented over six chapters. The first chapter has thus far introduced the dissertation including the study purpose, research questions, rationale, context, and definition of terms. The chapter also described how my experiences have shaped the dissertation. The second chapter reviews literature related to youth unemployment and associated public policy responses, the career guidance policy implementation process, and comparative approaches to deepen our understanding of career guidance as public policy. The conceptual framework underpinning this dissertation is also presented in chapter two. The third chapter provides the rationale for choosing to undertake a hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative study and describes the methodology I adopted in order to answer the research questions presented in chapter one. The fourth chapter presents the findings from the content analysis phase of data collection, and this is followed with findings from the context analytic phase of the dissertation in chapter five. I discuss the findings of the study in chapter six and situate them in the context of the conceptual framework and the literature reviewed in chapter two. The significance of this study and implications for future research are also presented in chapter six.
CHAPTER 2:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this literature review, I discuss high unemployment as a significant and long-term problem for youth and government, and various ways in which career guidance as public policy has sought to ameliorate this problem. Career guidance has become an important policy focus in schools around the world. Whilst career guidance remains a public policy and curriculum focus in schools, and youth experience high unemployment, policy actors make sense of the policy and the context within which it is situated. Recent policy implementation literature demonstrates that policy actors interpret and make sense of policy in ways that may not follow the original policy intent (Coburn, 2001; Spillane, Diamond, Burch, Hallet, Jita, & Zoltners, 2002; Weick, 1995). I proposed that it was important to understand (through methodologies such as hermeneutics) how policy actors interpreted and made sense of policy implementation of career guidance through interaction with documents and associated materials. I argued the importance of this understanding, as policy actors’ interpretations have influence upon the quality of implementation of career guidance programs. I contended that comparative approaches to research deepened our understanding of how public policies for career guidance addressed high youth unemployment in various jurisdictions. Hence, I have used the Canadian province of Ontario and the country of England as comparison locations.

The Problem of High Youth Unemployment

High youth unemployment is not a new story but certainly continues to be a newsworthy story. For several decades, youth have faced difficulties with achieving gainful employment when compared to their adult counterparts (Bell & Blanchflower, 2011c). For young people around the globe the financial crisis and its accompanying economic downturn of 2008–09 has
been devastating and prolonged (Scarpetta & Sonnet, 2012). Although youth joblessness pre-dated the global economic downturn that began in 2008 (OECD, 2009), youth unemployment continued to rise, and though it has now fallen slightly, it continues to be significantly higher than the general unemployment rate (Bell & Blanchflower, 2011d). But why is high youth unemployment a problem? This review outlines some of the associated issues and challenges faced by young people that are described and critiqued in the literature.

The Impact of High Unemployment upon Youth

The historical nature of high youth unemployment was reflected in this review’s chronological order that focused on selected reports and research drawing attention to both the significant challenges caused for youth through being unemployed, and the broader consequences of high youth unemployment for government and society. Verick described that the global economic downturn that began in 2008 (OECD, 2009) had diverse implications for various populations with youth “especially vulnerable to marginalization in the labour market, because they lack skills, work experience, job search abilities and the financial resources to find employment” (p. 3).

In their in-depth examination of youth unemployment levels, Bell and Blanchflower (2010b) described “an element of déjà vu” around the issue, as high youth unemployment had previously come to the fore in the 1980’s (p. 2). Using statistical data from a number of sources including the United Nations (UN), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Bureau of Labour Statistics, and the National Bureau of Economic Research, they conclusively showed that since the early 1980’s young people continuously suffered from significantly higher average rates of unemployment than their adult counterparts.
In addition to unemployment being a “stressful event that makes people unhappy” (p. 13), Bell and Blanchflower (2010a) noted that young people were particularly vulnerable to having their long-term opportunities “damaged by adverse events early in their labour market experience” (p. 33). In addition, Bell and Blanchflower reported that the social and health costs associated with youth unemployment were high. Long-term unemployment was seen as particularly harmful, with an individual’s morale sinking as the duration of unemployment extended. In addition, lost work experience reflected in considerably lower wages, and a rise in crime rates through a cyclical development “whereby involvement in crime reduces subsequent employment prospects which then raises the likelihood of participating in crime” (Bell & Blanchflower, p. 17).

Similarly, Scarpetta et al. (2010) noted that the global economic downturn had hit youth very hard and reiterated the adverse effects of high youth unemployment. The authors outlined how failure to find a first job could have long-term scarring effects, including a negative impact upon future wage levels, employability, happiness, job satisfaction, and health, often over a prolonged period. Scarpetta et al. highlighted how “the current crisis was exacerbating a number of structural problems that affect the transition from school to work and the initial labour market experiences of youth with different levels of education” (p. 9). They acknowledged how many governments were struggling to devise short-term measures to minimize the impact of high unemployment upon youth, whilst aligning such measures with a longer-term agenda of promoting more and better jobs for young people.

Sonnet, Quintini, and Manfredi (2010) echoed these widely reported risks, and highlighted the possibility of long-term “scarring” effects and negative long-term career prospects upon youth who failed to successfully capture their first job. However, they conceded
there was limited analysis to prove this point. While there was empirical evidence to support the many reported negative aspects for young people who suffered from unemployment early in their career, they noted there was insufficient verification to confirm whether these effects were permanent or more transitory in nature. Sonnet et al. also suggested that established labour market performance indicators, for example employment and unemployment rates, could be misleading when applied to the youth labour market. The authors argued, “they fail to capture the *dynamic* nature of transitions from school-to-work” (p. 54) which involved more than just passing from an educational institution to the workplace.

In seeking to investigate the increase in youth unemployment, Bell and Blanchflower (2011b) examined recent micro-data files across a number of countries. They found that influences on the probability of an individual being unemployed were similarly high across most nations over similar periods of time. The data also revealed new evidence of long-term scarring effects upon youth as a direct result of being unemployed. These were consistent with earlier evidence that unemployment for young people “lowers wages and happiness over thirty-five years later” (p. 12). The most harmful effects could be seen in the least skilled and educated youth. The authors suggested that if there had been earlier interventions to help such individuals, “they wouldn’t be in a similar situation in middle age” and therefore the “consequences of inaction may well be large” (p. 12).

The complexity of educational attainment’s impact upon unemployment was seen by Bell and Blanchflower (2011b) when they found unemployment rates in the European Union (EU) among those with tertiary-education qualifications had risen more sharply than those with primary or secondary education qualifications who already had a high unemployment rate. They advocated the possibility that there was a genuine oversupply of graduates with relatively high
reservation wages. An alternative explanation might be that within the 16–24 years’ age group, tertiary education graduates tended to have less work experience than their lesser-educated peers. When a recession causes greater restrictions on employers hiring young people, those lesser-educated peers who have already accumulated some level of work experience through the low quality jobs available might have some advantage.

Choudhry, Marelli, and Signorelli (2012) agreed that education does matter. However, in contrast to Bell and Blanchflower’s (2011c) suggestion that the impact of high unemployment was being felt most by those with tertiary-qualifications, Choudhry et al. asserted the consequences of the economic downturn were most dramatic for low-skilled young people who were increasingly pushed into either “poorly integrated new entrants” or “youth left behind” categories (p. 80).

Looking at these studies together, the findings strongly suggest that unemployment remains a global problem for many young people. The social impact of unemployment, demonstrated though increased crime, mental health problems, violence, drug taking, and social exclusion is significant, and has been shown to have lasting effects related to continued part-time work, temporary contracts, limited labour rights, and loss of career hope and of sense of occupational identity (Bell & Blanchflower, 2010a; Oreopoulos, Von Wachter, & Heiz, 2008; Sonnet et al., 2010; Standing, 2011; Verick, 2009). As Bell and Blanchflower (2011b) emphasize, “inaction is not a sensible option when the potential private and social costs of youth unemployment are so high” (p. 265).

In examining the role of learning in developing career adaptability in the UK and Denmark, Brown, Bimrose, and Hughes (2011) proposed that a crucial element in understanding skills supply and successful labour market transitions was the concept of career adaptability.
INTERPRETING DOCUMENTS AND MAKING SENSE OF PUBLIC POLICY GOALS

Brown et al. argued for the need to move beyond static models of employability, to where individuals become resilient and able to manage risk and uncertainty in dynamic education and labour markets. They also proposed that a goal of any continuing vocational training policy informed by individual career development should be to find accommodations that work well for all individuals. The authors concluded, “extending the breadth and quality of the opportunity structures should be a primary goal of policy in this area” (p. 21).

Public Policy Responses to High Youth Unemployment Through Career Guidance

This alarming situation facing youth entering the labour market has been the subject of many deliberations among international organizations, governments, politicians, policy makers, not the least of which are G20 Summits (ILO, 2013). Policy makers across the globe appear to recognize the serious impact on young people, with various attempts being seen internationally to address high youth unemployment, for example, Australia’s National Career Development Strategy (www.ja.com.au, 2012). However, Bell and Blanchflower (2010a) argued that many policy responses lacked a coherent approach to assisting younger people who had not yet entered the labour market (i.e., individuals still in compulsory education). Influential international organizations, including the OECD, have claimed that career guidance within compulsory secondary school education is one of the most favourable public policy mechanisms to curtail high youth unemployment (Bell & Benes, 2012; ILO, 2012b; OECD, 2012; World Bank, 2011). Subsequently, the next section of this review explored public policy responses to high youth unemployment, and included an examination of how career guidance was considered a public policy mechanism for ameliorating the issue of high youth unemployment.
Career Guidance as a Public Policy Mechanism

Career guidance as public policy gained international attention after the publication of three key reviews

- *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap by the OECD* (Watts, 2004);
- *Public Policies for Career Development: Case Studies and Emerging Issues for Designing Career Information and Guidance Systems in Developing and Transition Economies by the World Bank* (Watts & Fretwell, 2004); and
- *Guidance Policies in the Knowledge Society: Trends, Challenges and Responses Across Europe* by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (Sultana, 2004).

Together, these reviews constituted a large database on career guidance policies across 37 countries (Watts, 2005) and strongly suggested that policy makers regarded career guidance as being of value to both the individual and society as a whole. Watts (2005) stated that career guidance was seen as not only a private good but also as a public good. This was a crucial argument, because career guidance as public good has caused governments to reconsider their interest and financial support for career guidance efforts.

In the World Bank report (Watts & Fretwell, 2004), career guidance was considered within five main sectors; schools, tertiary education, public employment services, employer-based services, and private or voluntary sectors. This provision echoed a traditional policy rationale in which career guidance was perceived, in institutional and responsive terms, as a measure to support and promote the educational system and its relationship with the labour market, and to combat phenomena such as mismatch or unemployment. However, it was also
recognized that career guidance was increasingly seen as a human development strategy, designed to both harness economic and social change and to enable a nation to compete in a global market (Watts & Fretwell). Across Europe, career guidance was seen to have a progressively broad appeal as a mechanism to promote public policy goals in three specific areas: (a) promoting lifelong learning goals by developing links between education and workplaces both within a nation and, via the creation of common learning and working spaces, across Europe; (b) improving labour market outcomes and efficiency that support economic development goals; and (c) helping governments attain social equity and inclusion (Sultana, 2004).

A report by the ILO’s 185 member states at the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2012 identified five policy strategies for supporting youth employment (a) employment and economic policies to increase aggregate demand for workers and improve access to financial opportunities; (b) education and training to ease the school-to-work transition and prevent labour market mismatches; (c) labour market policies to target employment of disadvantaged youth; (d) entrepreneurship and self-employment to assist potential young entrepreneurs; and, (e) labour rights that are based on international labour standards to ensure that young people receive equal treatment. In addition, education and training, combined with work experience, and some level of vocational guidance were seen as a key determinant of youth employment outcomes (ILO, 2012a).

More recently, attention has focussed upon career guidance policy issues in Europe and the United Kingdom. For example, a report by Hooley (2014) undertaken on behalf of the European Lifelong Guidance Network, conveyed key issues for effective policy and practice from an evidence base of lifelong guidance. Hooley noted that a mix of factors had resulted in a
large number of Europeans undertaking major changes in their lives and careers. Acknowledging the caveat of variance across different nations, Hooley argued that factors typically included “low levels of growth, decline of the public sector as an employer, reorganisation of education systems, changes in technology, and high levels of youth unemployment” (p. 9). A number of European responses to these issues were specified as government actions including, ensuring employment, investment in research and development, addressing climate change, improving participation in education, and challenging poverty and social exclusion (European Commission, 2011). Hooley explained that such targets “provide a broad framework for action, within which particular strategies for lifelong guidance can be considered” (p. 9). Importantly, the Council of European Union Resolution (2011) on lifelong guidance has suggested that guidance services provide public-policy tools that can be utilized to address these varied challenges.

In the United Kingdom, focus has been directed at reviewing the evidence base (e.g., Access Economics, 2006; Hughes, 2004; Mayston, 2002) relating to the economic impact of career guidance (Hooley & Dodd, 2015). Benefits reported across this literature included contribution to a number of primary economic outcomes, such as increased labour market participation, enhanced skills base, and increased labour market flexibility. Also identified as benefits was secondary outcomes such as improved health, decreased crime, increased tax revenue, and decreased benefits (welfare) costs. Finally, a number of macro-level economic benefits were identified including deficit reduction, increased productivity, improved living standards, and increased growth. In their overview of effective policy frameworks for the organization of career guidance services, Hooley, Neary, Morris, and Mackay (2015) emphasized the increasing recognition of the lifelong context of a career, and the consequential
need to provide a lifelong provision of career support that extends beyond what is initially provided in schools.

**Career Guidance as a Response to High Youth Unemployment**

Beyond interest in career guidance as public policy, the literature also spoke specifically to career guidance as a policy response to the challenges faced by youth experiencing high unemployment. Traditionally, career guidance was viewed as a reactive measure, designed to help young people manage transitions from education to work, and support them to gain employment (Watts, 2004, 2005). However, nations have increasingly moved from these earlier models of career guidance to create a more personally individual approach that better fits available resources, and changing individual and governmental needs for career guidance (Herr, 2008; Norton Grubb, 2004; Sweet, 2004).

While government statistics focus on unemployment, academic research has tended to focus on *NEETs*—individuals who are Not in Education, Employment or Training. Career guidance can be a preventative strategy for NEETs when it helps young people to identify valuable workplace skills that can be learned through the education system (Britton, Gregg, Macmillan, & Mitchell, 2011). In addition, signposting to credible, alternative options to the academic routes is crucial for giving young people most at risk a clear pathway to achievable goals (Roberts & Atherton, 2011). Shorter-term NEETs have benefitted from the signposting supplied through career guidance; however, for core long-term NEETs career guidance alone is insufficient, showing nations require additional complementary strategies for these youth to become attached to the labour market (Britton et al.). Career guidance can play a vital role in supporting this group of youth through directing them to learning that is credible and solidly connected to the workplace (Britton et al.; Scarpetta et al., 2010; Skrzydlewska, 2013).
The influences of increasingly diverse and complex societies, globalization, and the breakdown in consensus around the Keynesian Welfare State in most westernized nations, has combined with the discourse of the global economic downturn to rationalize new assumptions about the role of government and rights of its citizens (Brodie, 1996). Governments are increasingly being evaluated on their efficiency and effectiveness, and citizens are expected to become increasingly self-reliant (Taylor, 2002). This new discourse significantly impacted the underpinning rationale and structure of career guidance. Consequently, three main areas of policy response to high youth unemployment linked with career guidance advanced, and included (a) lifelong learning; (b) skills development to address the skills mismatch that young people experience between their education and qualifications obtained in school and labour market needs; and, (c) support for work-based learning including vocational education and training (VET) (OECD, 2015).

**Lifelong Learning**

Over recent years, globalization and continuous technological progress have instigated an incessant shifting of employment opportunities towards higher skilled occupations. In response, the level of educational attainment in the labour force has increased in many nations (ILO, 2012). Thus labour markets have shifted and, to a certain extent, will continue to shift against individuals with a low level of education (McIntosh, 2008). Organizations are being constantly exposed to change, making them less willing to commit to individuals over the long-term and, when they do commit, they expect individuals to respond with job, task, and role flexibility (Watts, 2005). Young people need to know the transferability of their skills and must be able to see potential employment opportunities in different and creative ways. Articulating and aligning skills with different economic sectors is a career development and management skill; therefore,
early exposure to methods for connecting education and work through effective career guidance can help young people to achieve this (Bell & Benes, 2012).

School-based career guidance staff face the challenge of providing services within the time-bound period of compulsory education while also fostering a continuous approach of lifelong learning (Norton Grubb, 2004). Thus, career guidance should expand its professional borders to encompass this lifelong career guidance perspective (Amundson, 2006) with school-based provision consistent with the long-term needs of employment (Norton Grubb, 2004). However, most career guidance staff in compulsory education originate from an education background, and as a result may lack direct knowledge of work environments and associated skill requirements to support lifelong learning and career planning (OECD, 2011).

**Skills Development to Address Skills Mismatch**

The mismatch between young people’s qualifications and labour market requirements has been reported as one of the most significant reasons for high youth unemployment (Choudhry et al., 2012; OECD, 2015; Skrzydleewska, 2013). The skills mismatch is mutually reinforcing; “young people without a strong skills foundation are more likely to drop out of school and face difficulties finding jobs while those who drop out and are jobless can hardly maintain and enhance their skills” (OECD, 2015, p 22). The invisibility of pathways to the labour market in many countries and limited career education programs in high school (that could facilitate making connections between education and the labour market), are also cited as reasons for a skills mismatch (Bell & Benes, 2012, p. 15). This has led to accusations of failure by educational systems to provide young people with the right skills for employment, with many young people leaving school ill-prepared for today’s labour market (Scarpetta et al., 2010; World Bank, 2011).
Technological advances are changing job profiles and the skills needed to perform these jobs, requiring accelerated learning from young people (OECD, 2012; World Bank, 2011). Such changes in skills demand have to be recognized, articulated, and interpreted into relevant, current curricula and educational programing (OECD, 2012). For such strategies to work effectively, skills development is seen as being more successful if the world of learning and the world of work are strongly linked (ILO, 2013; OECD, 2011; 2012). Allowing young people to experience a variety of employment opportunities is seen as a strong way to develop better integration between school and the labour market (Crowley, Jones, Cominetti, & Gulliford, 2013). Such learning in the workplace offers students the opportunity to develop “hard skills” on modern equipment, in addition to valuable “soft skills” such as teamwork and communications skills (OECD, 2012, p. 18).

The OECD stated that taking a “forward-looking perspective in education is crucial” (2010, p. 84), and combining study and work is a more effective school-to-work transition than the traditional “study first work later” model (OECD, 2010, p. 84). The OECD stated, “on-the-job training for students allows them to fill the gaps in school-based education and be better prepared to gain the skills required by employers” (p. 84). The skills mismatch has renewed interest in vocational education initiatives in many nations, and employers are not only providing work experience but are also increasingly likely to become part of school governance, or form partnerships with a school (Taylor, 2002).

**Work-Based Learning and Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

The visibility and promotion of work-based learning (WBL) and vocational education and training (VET) as educational and career pathways can offer youth a better chance of finding skilled work (OECD, 2010; Taylor, 2007). WBL can be integrated into both VET and academic
programing, including post-secondary, and it helps students to become familiar with the world of work and a variety of skills that are valued in the workplace (OECD, 2015). Nations that have WBL and VET (including dual systems and apprenticeships), where youth study and work part-time have high early labour market attachment for young people, and amongst the lowest youth unemployment rates (Kahn, Abdo, Hewes, McNeil, & Norman, 2011; Versnel, DeLuca, Hutchinson, Hill, & Chin, 2011). Although there are differing reasons as to why WBL and VET systems enhance labour market attachment for youth, one of the most significant offered by VET is the resulting transparency of pathways to the labour market, allowing students awareness of the career options with each pathway (Bell & Benes, 2012). Brown et al. (2011) proposed that offering varied WBL opportunities that work well for most youth, including those who struggle to “fit,” and should be a goal of any continuing career guidance and vocational training policy.

**Policy Context**

In order to explore public policies on career guidance and their associated strategies, it is important to remember that neither career guidance nor individual behaviour can be fully understood in isolation from the social, economic, and political contexts within which they function (Herr, 1996). Individuals and the process of career guidance undertake continuous transactions with social norms, mass media, behavioural expectations, policies and regulations, and cultural traditions. These transactions define roles, beliefs, and values acceptable to the individual and their societal context (Herr, 2008).

These transactions have the potential to influence how career guidance policy becomes interpreted, articulated, and enacted. Governments and policy makers clearly have an important role to play in the strategic leadership and co-ordination of career guidance (Watts, 2004). However, looking more closely at how policies get translated into practice, the differences in
national and regional contexts become significant, and career guidance plays a role for both society and the individual (Savickas, Van Esbroeck, & Herr, 2005; Watts, 2005). Within each individual setting, policy becomes shaped by specific regulations and practices at the localized level, resulting in the potential for many different interpretations and movement from the original policy intent (Levin, 1998). There is a gap, often profound, between policy and practice (Savickas et al., 2005), thus it is important to examine how these public policies for career guidance translate into local level career guidance provision and become implemented and enacted in practice.

The Implementation and Enactment of Public Policies

Drawing attention to the gap between policies and practices in career education, Goodman and Hansen (2005) summarized the cross-nation discussions held at the International Perspectives on Career Development symposium conducted at a joint meeting by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) and the National Career Development Association (NCDA) in San Francisco, 2004. The authors suggested that policies, legislation, and macro-level structures impacted significantly upon the services career guidance practitioners were able to provide. Contributing nations (Australia, UK, Finland, Columbia, Slovenia, Japan, Torres Strait, and USA) each supported their citizens with career development, and could highlight good practice. However, each could also identify how the gap between vision and reality was significant. Developing a comprehensive view of career guidance policy and practice was seen as useful for understanding the nuances of career guidance across different nations, contexts, and individual settings.

Increased interest in international collaboration in career guidance and public policy was significantly enhanced through the structures and processes of the European Lifelong Guidance
Policy Network (ELGPN) supported by ongoing funding from the European Commission and member nations (Watts, 2011a). Watts described how, through the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) and the IAEVG, it would be desirable to strengthen links with other countries to enable ELGPN to be enriched by practices from countries outside of Europe. Watts emphasized the value was from sharing learning, not merely importing models. Therefore, sharing knowledge about local context matters.

The past century has seen economic and political structures become progressively differentiated throughout the world, with the reasons for and delivery of career guidance increasingly more diverse and indigenous to individuals (Herr, 2008). Herr suggested that at the national macro-level, many implications for career guidance surfaced as nations changed political systems, experienced high unemployment, and expected employees to take increased responsibility for their own welfare, skills development, employability, purposefulness, and productivity. It is clear that how career guidance is conceptualized and practiced reflects nations’ social, economic, and political contexts (Gysbers, 2008). How informed policy actors are of the range of contextual public policies and legislation that support and define their practice is uncertain, but regardless of level of knowledge, context impacts subsequent enactment of career guidance policy (Herr, 2003). To establish the ability of career guidance to respond to high youth unemployment, we need to examine how public policy for career guidance becomes implemented locally, whilst taking individual context into account (Herr, 2008).

**The Implementation of Policy**

Implementation refers to “the effort, knowledge and resources that are devoted to translating policy decisions into action” (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 160) and the stage of the policy process whereby a policy formally adopted by a government body is put into practice (Fowler,
2004). During the early 1970’s, first generation researchers began to recognize problems and challenges with policy implementation as “the uncertain relationship between policies and implemented programs” (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 171). McLaughlin further explained how the second generation of policy researchers, began to “unpack implementation processes” and focus further upon relations between policy and practice (p. 171). Consequently, researchers identified how a number of issues could affect the success of implementation; policy could not always mandate importance or outcomes at the localized level.

The focus on policy implementation is of particular relevance to the high-stakes, big-budget policy arena that is education (Honig, 2006). In many nations, education takes a share of state and local budgets to such levels that the feasibility and value added by education policies are continually questioned (Honig, 2006). In general, once a policy is enacted at the state, national, federal, or provincial level, it is moved to a department or ministry of education to be translated into implementation language. The policy is thus “codified and infused with specifics,” usually in the form of curriculum (Hope, 2002, p. 40). It then becomes the responsibility of educators (local implementers) to transform the policy into practice in alignment with the original policy intent.

However, implementation of educational policy is far from straightforward, and is largely determined by finding an “appropriate strategy or model of policy construction” (Brain, Reid, & Comerford Boyes, 2006, p. 421) that employs rather than ignores educators’ professional knowledge, skills, and values. Ball (2005) proposed that the complexity and scope of policy analysis was in agreement with Ozga’s (1990) suggestion that, in undertaking policy analysis, it was important to “bring together structural, macro-level analysis of educational systems and education policies and micro-level investigation, especially that which takes account of people’s
perception and experiences” (p. 360). Ozga criticized approaches that stressed the ad-hocery and messiness of policy analysis. Conversely, Ball suggested certain forms and conceptions of social action should not be ruled out of analysis simply because they seemed messy, awkward, and theoretically challenging. Rather, Ball emphasized, policy analysis should seek to look for the iterations embedded within the chaos as it “precludes the possibility of successful single theory explanations” (p. 43).

As Honig (2006, p. 2) asserted, the essential implementation question became “what is implementable and what works for whom, where, when, and why?” Without explicit information and understanding of the conditions under which policy works, decision makers remained ignorant of whether the failure of a career guidance curriculum, for example, stemmed from the choice of curriculum or poor execution of implementation. Merely providing examples of recommended successful education programs was not sufficient, Honig argued, as it failed to capture the nuances of practice and resources that enabled those programs to work.

To better understand policy implementation, Smit (2005) suggested, that the teacher voice as local knowledge could be used to offer “substance and deeper nuanced understandings of the complexities at the various levels of policy implementation” (p. 294). Such educators’ hidden contextual micro-decision-making practices and dynamics, impacted upon the success of policy implementation at school and classroom level (Smit). In addition, processes and practices may or may not reflect the intended policy, and may or may not translate into concrete actions.

To further clarify policy analysis, Ball (2005) proposed two theoretical conceptualizations of policy, “policy as text and policy as discourse,” and “policy is not one or the other, but both, they are implicit in each other” (p. 44). Policy discourse produced “frameworks of sense and obviousness with which policy is thought, talked and written about”
and policy texts are “set within these frameworks which constrain but never determine all of the possibilities for action” (p. 44). Smit (2005) agreed that the rhetoric of policy is shared through a policy statement (as policy discourse), which is then expressed in the wording of legislation, circulars, and policy documents. Bowe, Ball, and Gold (1992) suggested that education policy in the form of texts must be understood and responded to through many different interpretations, within a variety of contexts. Thus, policy could not be fixed or rigid in the form of a text, “instead it is a constantly changing series of texts whose expression and interpretation vary according to the context in which the texts are being put into practice” (Bowe et al., p. ix).

Policy should not be identified solely with texts, as some documents are read and misinterpreted, some are not read first hand, some are never read at all, and, in some situations, mediators relate policy or act as gatekeepers (Ball, 1998). Ball asserted the importance of never assuming or predicting any uniformity towards policy implementation across individual settings. Given all of the possible constraints—understanding, capability, resources, and practical limitations—policy implementation is constructed through creative social interaction and interpretation (Ball). Consequently, exploring how career guidance as text becomes translated and interpreted, can aid our understanding of the way career guidance policy becomes enacted into practice, but it will be an incomplete story.

Ball (1998, p. 48) suggested if we concentrate only on “what those who inhabit policy think about and the relations between thought and action,” we miss what is not talked about, the policy discourse. Discourses are about what can be said and by whom, when and with what authority. Therefore, policy as discourse and policy as text shape implementation and all decisions related to enactment of career guidance provision. Thus, exclusive focus on the teacher’s role in translating texts that outline career guidance policy could be too one-
dimensional. Ball recommended employing a cross-sectional rather than a single level analysis, where policy could be traced through the multiple layers of implementation, for example through district school board, principal, and teacher level. Ball’s arguments to examine different layers of policy implementation enabled deeper understanding of how distinctive actors (teacher, principal, and district school board) interpret and enact policy as text and discourse. However, our understanding was further extended through comparative research in jurisdictions that shared similarity in their rationale of policy intention for career guidance but had contextually different approaches to policy implementation (Taylor, 2007).

**Policy Subsystems and Policy Actors**

Understanding the influences upon the policy implementation process involved not just assumptions about individuals, but also included the contexts within which individuals found themselves; described as policy subsystems (Weible, Heikkila, deLeon, & Sabatier, 2012). Sabatier (1998, p. 99) defined policy subsystems as consisting of “actors from a variety of public and private organizations who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issue.” Policy subsystems are usually comprised of those actors with sufficient knowledge of a policy area (Howlett & Ramesh, 2002), and bring together policy actors to focus on a particular policy within a territorial or other bounded situation (Weible et al., 2012).

The policy subsystem of a school contains a great deal of multifaceted activity, with actors taking up differing positions within the subsystem in relation to policy, including positions of “indifference or avoidance or irrelevance” (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011a, p. 625). Ball et al. warned against treating all policy actors as being equal within the policy implementation process, as actors in schools take diverse “roles, actions, and engagements” (p. 625) in their interpretation and translation processes. Within a secondary school career guidance
policy subsystem for example, my previous research (Godden, 2011; 2015) revealed how one teacher used her interpretations of career guidance policy to support two colleagues in their teaching practice. Her experience as a cooperative education teacher positioned her career guidance teaching differently to that of her history and mathematics teacher colleagues.

Within the school environment, educators were involved as key actors in a complex process of interpretation and translation in order to enact policy (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011). Furthermore, educators found themselves in a position where they were simultaneously an agent for and a subject of policy enactment. Teachers found themselves as policy subjects (i.e., where their practice is subject to an evaluation policy in school), and policy agents, interpreting and enacting a revised career guidance curriculum for example (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011). The rich and distinctive micro politics of different schools caused a need for all policies to be uniquely interpreted and individually translated and enacted into practice (Braun et al., 2011).

Ball et al. (2011b) suggested that identifying how different roles, actions, and engagements are embedded in interpretation and translation undertaken by different policy actors was useful when unpacking policy work. Ball and colleagues proposed that eight different types of policy actor were involved in making meaning of and constructing responses to policy through the processes of interpretation and translation: narrators, entrepreneurs, outsiders, transactors, enthusiasts, translators, critics, and receivers. Ball et al. (2011a) described how these actors or positions were not necessarily stable or mutually exclusive, as people may move between these roles or hold more than one role at any one time. In addition, some roles may be more prominent in different types of schools. The nuances of actors’ roles and individual contexts were linked with their policy responses. Schools are complex, dynamic environments consisting of “multiple
interacting parts” (Ball et al., 2011a, p. 637), and what Law (2007, p. 2) calls “the messy practices of relationality and materiality of the world.”

**Seeking Understanding of the Enactment of Career Guidance and Education Policy Through Comparative Study**

The notion of countries considering *what can we learn from each other* (emphasis added by author) has been linked with the implementation of policy for some time (Hayhoe & Mundy, 2008; Kubow & Fossum, 2007; Levin, 1998). Policy makers have sought understanding of how others implement policy in order to borrow or imitate, with or without adaptation (Bray, 2007). Phillips and Schweisfurth (2008) described how the purpose of undertaking comparative study could vary, depending upon the analogical processes used, and might include; the exploration of potential policy options through examination of alternatives, seeking a benchmark by which to judge performance of educational systems, or the attempt to predict policy outcomes. In addition, comparative perspectives offer extensive descriptive and explanatory data on a variety of practices and procedures from differing contexts. One rationale for comparative education is to increase the boundaries of knowledge (Clarkson, 2009) with such new knowledge created through observation of other ways of doing things. Insights are then created through the realization that educational programming can be implemented in different ways (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2007). Crossley (2000) asserted context mattered, and comparative and international research in education was “especially well placed to demonstrate this in a future in which the social-cultural analysis of global trends and developments will require concerted attention” (p. 323).

Comparisons can challenge us to increase our understanding beyond our own localized standpoints (Kubow & Fossum, 2003). Despite the diversity we might see through the
comparative lens, many commonalities might also allow for “generic insights” to be seen (Bray, Adamson, & Mason, 2007, p. 377). However, in addition to the benefit of generic insights, visible differences provide an infinite variety of aims, purposes, philosophies, and structures from which we can learn about growing similarities in the issues faced by educational policymakers across the world (Watson, 1996).

A number of international organizations have undertaken comparative studies to explore issues related to high youth unemployment, including the OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank. Bray (2007) described the interest in education and related issues by these three international organizations, explaining their long-term connection with (a) human rights and the quality of education (UNESCO), (b) ways to evaluate and improve education, promote quality teaching, and build social cohesion (OECD), and (c) promoting international cooperative arrangements to address monetary and financial problems (World Bank). International organizations’ interest in comparative research in career guidance as policy commenced with the Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap by the OECD (Watts, 2004). Others soon joined, including a report on middle-and low-income nations by the World Bank (Watts & Fretwell, 2004), in the Middle East and North Africa (Sultana & Watts, 2007; Watts, 2008), and the West Balkans (Zelloth, 2009). These reviews subsequently prompted another series of reviews commissioned by a range of European organizations, including the European Training Fund (ETF), and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. Combined, these reviews constitute the most extensive, comparable, internationally generated database of career guidance policy and practice involving over 50 countries (Sultana, 2012).

Watts and Sultana (2003) highlighted that there were risks in undertaking comparative studies on such a scale, as the extent of an individual nation’s tradition and history of provision
for career guidance could be concealed. Sweet (2004) agreed questions were left unanswered in these large comparative studies, as there appeared little explanation of how the nature and timing of career guidance interventions related to a country’s stage of development, labour market, or nature of pathways through compulsory education. Clearly, comparative research has been used effectively to highlight how career guidance has attained policy visibility internationally (Sultana, 2011).

However, as highlighted by Sweet (2004), a gap remained in our understanding of how career guidance interventions become enacted into practice-based responses to high youth unemployment. Further investigation was desirable that explored the nuances of the knowledge and resources that were devoted to translating public policy decisions into jurisdictional career guidance practice. By undertaking comparative research in two distinctive jurisdictions, that shared similarity in policy prescriptions for tightening the links between school and work (Taylor, 2002), valuable insights were gained from understanding how career guidance policy becomes interpreted, negotiated, and enacted into practice in different contexts.

**Choosing Two Jurisdictions for Comparative Study**

**Selecting units of analysis.** Comparative education research has traditionally focused on geographic locations as units of comparison (Manzon, 2007). Comparisons can be made across many other units of analysis, for example, policy, culture, curricula, and systems. However, Manzon suggested even these units are inextricably bound to one or more places, therefore “examining geographic entities as foci of comparative enquiry is an essential step for comparative study of education” (p. 85). However, Bray and Murray Thomas (1995) advocated that the primary focus of comparative education literature on countries and world regions has led to “unbalanced and incomplete perspectives” (p. 472). Consequently, Bray and Murray Thomas
constructed a model for classifying comparative studies by level and type. The framework for comparative and multilevel analyses presented a three-dimensional way of classifying comparative studies. The first dimension is *geographical/locational* (emphasis added by author) with seven levels in this dimension: (1) world regions/continents, (2) countries, (3) states/provinces, (4) districts, (5) schools, (6) classrooms, and finally, (7) individuals. The second dimension represented *non-locational geographic groupings*, and included ethnicity, religion, age, and gender, in addition to entire population. The third dimension included *aspects of education and society*, such as curriculum, teaching methods, finance, management structures, political change, and labour markets. Bray and Murray Thomas visualized how a study could be located in the framework, as shown in Figure 2.1, where the shaded cell represented a research project that compared curriculum plans for all varieties of educational programs (entire population) for two provinces.

Bray and Murray Thomas (1995) concluded that research focused on the highest levels or macro-level could identify broad economic conditions, political structures, cultural traditions, and forms of educational organization and administration at the policy level. However, broad generalizations at macro-level might mask features distinguishing one region, school, or individual from another. Conversely, research at micro-levels (e.g., individual, classroom, and school) may ignore the impact of broader contextual features that shaped classrooms, educators, and students. McNess (2004) agreed, that whilst international comparisons of broadly defined indicators could help to identify trends, “they did little to tell us about how a policy is experienced in diverse cultural and historical contexts, where differing ideologies inform individual teacher values” (p. 316).
Therefore, to understand how career guidance policy becomes interpreted and enacted into practice, I employed a comparative perspective that included the different levels of the actors involved and paid attention to the micro- and macro-level policy environments (McNess, 2004). Undertaking this approach to understand career guidance policy implementation was multilayered and connected, as I considered the relevant implementing systems’ site-specific response. The complexities of policy implementation were widely reported, and only by exploring the multi-layered dimensions of the implementation process could I begin to reveal the nuances, messiness, and subsequent sense making, of all levels of policy actors as they responded to career guidance policy documents. The contextual influences, and their impact upon career guidance policy implementation and enactment into programing, were explored in
two distinctive jurisdictions with three levels of policy actors (teachers, principals, district school boards) that shared similarity in policy prescriptions (Taylor, 2007).

The Two Jurisdictions

Two jurisdictions selected for this study were the province of Ontario in Canada, and the country of England, part of the United Kingdom (UK). These were selected because educational policy and education ministries were situated at the provincial level in Canada and the national level in the UK. The jurisdictions of Ontario and England presented an instructive comparison for this study for the following reasons. First, high youth unemployment in comparison to general unemployment remained an issue in both jurisdictions. The youth unemployment rate at the time of data collection for this study was 13.6% against a general adult unemployment rate of 7.1% (Statistics Canada, 2013). The youth unemployment rate in United Kingdom during March 2013 was 20.7% (Eurostat, 2013) against a general adult unemployment rate of 7.8% (Trading Economics, 2013).

More recent data confirms that youth unemployment still remains an issue in both jurisdictions. In July 2016 the unemployment rate for youth in Canada stood at 13.3% compared to the general unemployment rate of 6.9% (Statistics Canada, 2016). The data for England over the same time period, revealed the youth unemployment at 13.7% compared to the general unemployment rate of 4.9% (Trading Economics, 2016).

Second, in both jurisdictions, empirical studies report that the skills mismatch of young peoples’ career aspirations, education and training to local labour markets must be addressed for the mutual benefit of the economy and the youth (Bell & Benes, 2012; Brown et al., 2011; Conference Board of Canada, 2013; CIPD, 2012; CIPD, 2013; Mann, Massey, Glover, Kashefpadkel, & Dawkins, 2013). Third, both the Ontario Curriculum (Ministry of Education
2006a, 2006b) and the Statutory Guidance for England (Department for Education, 2013) include the recommendation for schools to engage with local employers, work-based education providers, and post-secondary education and training providers, suggesting a similar underlying rationale and process for career guidance in the two jurisdictions.

However, despite these commonalities, there were key differences in each jurisdiction’s career guidance policy that influence implementation into practice. In Ontario, the career guidance was embedded into the curriculum, and included a compulsory half-credit careers studies course, and the career guidance curriculum was last revised in 2006. In England, career guidance has been removed from the national curriculum, is now centered on schools following a statutory duty to provide access for students to independent and impartial (emphasis added by author) careers guidance, which was a new policy introduced in 2012.

These similarities and differences provide two jurisdictional examples where much can be learned from these different contexts about how policy actors interpret and enact career guidance public policy of learning, labour market, and social equity goals, along with lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and VET (as responses to high youth unemployment), into their career guidance programming and practice. In particular, Ontario (curriculum last revised in 2006) and England (statutory duty for career guidance enforced from 2012) provide the opportunity for exploring whether the recency of introduction affects how policy actors utilize policy documents to inform and guide career guidance provision.

**Ontario**

Constitutionally, the education system in Canada comes under the jurisdiction of the ten provinces and three territories. There is no federal ministry of education; instead all 13 provinces and territories have ministries of education that work collectively through the Council of
Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC, n.d.). The federal government plays a role in labour market issues; however, here too there has been some devolution of funding and responsibilities to the provinces and territories (OECD, 2002).

Of the three areas of career guidance related public policy, *learning, labour market, and social equity* (emphasis added by author) (Sultana, 2004; Watts & Sultana, 2003, 2004), in Ontario, learning and labour market goals are currently topical. The Ontario government has committed to supporting youth through its Youth Action Plan, acknowledging the particular difficulty faced by young people seeking employment (Hoskins & Meilleur, 2012). More recently, the launch of the Ontario Premier’s Council on Youth Opportunities (2013), outlined the need to both report on the specific challenges faced by youth, and to share ideas of how to provide the most appropriate support.

The mismatch between skills learned and labour market needs is estimated by the Conference Board of Canada (2013) to cost the Ontario economy $24.3 billion in foregone GDP as well as $4.4 billion in federal tax revenues and $3.7 billion in provincial tax revenues annually. This, the Conference Board of Canada stated, was a result of too many Ontarians not obtaining adequate levels of education or the right skills to find employment in today’s economy. The Conference Board of Canada concluded that more could be done to build work-related skills to begin to address the skills mismatch, and educators in secondary schools should support students to make informed choices about their educational paths and employment prospects.

**The role of career guidance in secondary schools in Ontario.** The current career guidance and education program offered in Ontario was initially shaped by the introduction of *Choices Into Action, Guidance and Career Education Policy, Grades 1 to 12 (1998): Detailed Discussion Document*. This was followed with the publication of a curriculum document in
1999, which was revised in 2004 for Grades 10 and 12. The curriculum documents for guidance and career education in Ontario were further updated to *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10, Guidance and Career Education (Revised 2006)* and *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 11 and 12, Guidance and Career Education (revised 2006)*. The most current policy document for career guidance programing in Ontario is *Creating Pathways to Success: An Education and Career/Life Planning Program for Ontario Schools*, introduced in 2013.

Career guidance courses are part of the Ontario secondary school curriculum and are intended to encourage students to explore possible career choices, and develop and match their skills through experiential learning activities such as job shadowing, work experience, community involvement, and cooperative education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). In particular, the goals for career guidance are to

- ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed education and career/life choices through the effective application of a four-step inquiry process;
- provide opportunities for this learning both in and outside the classroom; and,
- engage parents and the broader community in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program to support students in their learning.

(Ministry of Education, 2013).

**England**

The United Kingdom (UK) has many of the features of a country with a federal system of government with three of its constituent countries (Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) having their own parliaments (OECD, 2003). England however, is governed by the national parliament for the UK, and the educational system in England is separate from that of Scotland,
Wales, and Northern Ireland. Compared to many other OECD nations, the UK labour market is flexible, levels of employment protection are relatively low, it is easy for employers to hire and fire, and private employment agencies face few limitations.

In England, learning and labour market skills are also topical. The National Careers Council (2013) identified that evidence was clearly showing that England’s national supplies of skills were not well matched to economic demand. The Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD), agreed there was a “real mismatch between employers’ expectations of young people during the recruitment process and young people’s understanding of what was expected of them” (CIPD, 2013, p. 4). Comparing the aspirations of 11,000 young people against the predicted distribution of jobs over the next decade showed a complete mismatch where “the two had nothing in common” (Mann, Massey, Glover, Kashefpadkel, & Dawkins, 2013, p. 8). A study by Gardiner and Wilson (2012) compared the training acquired by further education learners to actual labour market vacancies and also showed high levels of mismatch between supply and demand. The CIPD (2013) concluded that there is clearly a need for greater support for young people during the transition between education and the labour market, as “most young people do not know where to turn when they try to enter the labour market” (p. 5).

The role of career guidance in secondary schools in England. The Education Act 2011 introduced changes to the career guidance provision within England’s state secondary schools taking effect from September 2012. The Coalition Government outlined how it remained committed to ensuring that schools

…have a role to play in supporting their pupils to make well-informed and realistic decisions by providing access to impartial and independent information and guidance
about the range of education and training options that are most likely to help young people achieve their ambitions. (Department for Education, 2013, p. 3)

The new legislation repealed the previous statutory provision for all schools to provide a program of careers education (section 43 of part VII of the *Education Act 1997*), and replaced it with a new duty on schools to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance (Department for Education, 2013) for every student in years 9 to 11 (age 13 to 16). From September 2013, the duty has extended to include all registered students in year 8 (12–13 year olds) and years 12 and 13 (16–18 year olds). The governing body of a school has complete freedom in choosing how best to fulfill the new duty, however all guidance provided must be impartial. The legislation was underpinned by the Coalition Government’s stated belief that schools should be trusted to do what is right for their students. Schools would be able to make their own arrangements for careers guidance that best reflected the needs of their cohort of students, engaging (where appropriate) in partnership with independent providers (for example, providers not directly employed by the school). Careers guidance was no longer part of the national curriculum and though there was recommendation in the *Education Act* for face-to-face delivery of careers guidance (especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those that have special educational needs, learning difficulties and or disabilities), there was no requirement for schools to secure face-to-face delivery (Cegnet, 2012). Schools could choose to offer their students’ access to automated sources of advice, for example a telephone helpline or specialist web resources (Department for Education, 2011).

**Summary of the Literature Review**

In the literature reviewed, I have examined how career guidance as public policy is framed as a response to ameliorate the identified harmful effects of youth unemployment. What
appears consistent is that career guidance as public policy in western nations is mainly concerned with three public policy goals, *learning*, *labour market*, and *social equity* (emphasis added by author) (Sultana, 2004; Watts, 2004; 2005; Watts & Sultana, 2004). In examination of how career guidance as policy becomes implemented and enacted into practice, it appears that lifelong learning, responding to skills mismatch between educational qualifications and labour market needs, and WBE and VET are three significant policy responses used to support young people with successful transition to employment.

However, the literature (Goodman & Hansen, 2005; Savickas et al., 2005; Sweet, 2004) shows unmistakably that there is a gap between policy and practice; therefore, it is important we look at how policy becomes interpreted and enacted in career guidance practice. What is not clear is where, when, and how different levels of policy actors interpret and enact macro-level career guidance public policy of *learning*, *labour market*, and *social equity* goals (emphasis added by author), along with lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and WBE and VET (as responses to high youth unemployment), into their micro-level career guidance programming and practice. In particular, little is known of how different levels of policy actors interpret and utilize policy and curriculum texts and associated materials to make sense of career guidance policy to inform and guide career guidance program implementation.

**Conceptual Framework: Policy Actor Roles and Sensemaking**

To bring clarity to the diverse range of literature that both underpins and directs the methodological focus of this study, a conceptual framework is useful. Miles and Huberman (1984) suggested that in creating a conceptual framework a researcher is “forced to be selective” and make decisions about “which dimensions are important, which relationships are likely to be most meaningful, and, as a consequence, what information should be collected and analyzed” (p.
28). Ball (1998) proposed that during all stages in the policy implementation process we are confronted with interpretations of policy and with further interpretations of these interpretations. In order to begin to examine any interpretations, however, I must first establish whose interpretations, whose meanings, and, which policy actors?

**Policy Actor Roles**

In conceptualizing ‘policy actors’ I drew deliberately on Ball et al.’s description of policy actors. Ball, et al. (2011a) warned against taking all policy actors in a policy process to be equal in power and authority, arguing that the complex and differentiated activity undertaken by different policy actors within schools could easily be obscured by such an approach. Instead, they suggested it was useful to begin by attempting to identify the different types of roles, actions, and engagements that were embedded into the processes of interpretation and translation. Ball et al. subsequently suggested eight types of policy actors involved in making meaning and constructing responses to policy through interpretation and translation; narrators, entrepreneurs, outsiders, transactors, enthusiasts, translators, critics, and receivers (emphasis in original) Ball et al. explained these positions were not necessarily fixed and that policy actors may hold simultaneous positions. In addition, some roles may be more or less prominent in individual schools and school districts.

**Narrators** Ball et al. (2011a) noted, undertook interpretation, selection, and enforcement of meanings, and were likely to be administrators, or senior management teams within schools. **Entrepreneurs** would undertake policy advocacy within schools, and would consist of actors that “champion and represent particular policies” (p. 628). Entrepreneurs were often charismatic people who could be forceful agents for change. Ball et al. outlined the importance of remembering that policy actors in schools sometimes undertook policy work with others.
Outsiders (e.g., consultants, local authority advisers, outside agencies) could also play an important role in policy implementation, interpreting policies and initiating or assisting with translation. The Creating Pathways to Success (2013) (hereby referred to as CPS) education and career/life planning policy document for Ontario, directed policy implementers to work with outsiders; for example, further and higher education providers. In England, the requirement for schools to provide access for students to independent and impartial (emphasis added by author) careers guidance translates to outsiders having a role within schools’ policy work for career guidance provision.

Transactors have the responsibility of overseeing the accountability aspect of the policy work. Ball et al. (2011a) highlighted how in England the culture of accountability is strong, with expectations that policy needs to be seen to be done. Ontario also had accountability measures embedded historically into policy work undertaken in schools, with accountability measures of career guidance specified in Choices into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999 (Kutsyuruba et al., 2013). Ball et al. described enthusiasts as being policy models, policy actors that “embody policy in their practice and are examples to others” (p. 630). Enthusiasts could also act as translators, producing events, processes, institutional texts, and speaking to practice in ways that assist policy implementation for others. Enthusiasts are often translators, people who plan and produce the events, processes, and institutional texts of the policy in relation to others. For example, they may produce a policy summary document for distribution in their school.

Ball et al. (2011a) warned that it was important not to over-estimate the role of policy critics, but at the same time be mindful of how they do contribute to policy work and policy interpretation. Critics can have second-order implications in policy implementation, for example,
consideration of the work-life balance of teachers and other educators (Ball et al.). Receivers were described as exhibiting a high level of policy dependence, and were most likely to be newly qualified or recently hired educators. Newly qualified teachers, for example, may find managing in the classroom context was often a primary focus (Ball et al.), therefore policy issues from the broader educational context could be distant, and new and beginning teachers may rely temporarily on interpretations of interpretations from more senior colleagues in policy work.

**Sensemaking**

The eight types of policy actor identified by Ball et al. (2011a) represented educators who were positioned in a variety of ways regarding policy implementation. They could be at different stages of their careers, with diverse proficiencies, holding distinctive responsibilities as part of their everyday practice. In addition, each can have individual world-views, levels of accumulated experience, aspirations, and cultural and social aspects (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Pre-existing beliefs, experiences, and practices provide a lens through which policy actors interpret and make sense of policy (Coburn, 2006). Therefore, as a significant process of organizing, sensemaking unfolds as, “turning circumstances into a situation that is comprehended explicitly into words and that serves as a springboard into action” (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409).

Weick et al. (2005) described three important aspects within the quest for finding meaning in organizational life: (a) *sensemaking* (emphasis added by author), which occurs when a flow of organizational conditions is turned into words and noticeable categories; (b) *organizing*, which is embodied into written and spoken texts; and, (c) *reading, writing, conversing, and editing* as crucial actions with which the institutions’ shape conduct.

Sensemaking was described by Mills (2003) as being a central activity due to it being a primary
site where “meanings materialize that inform and constrain identity” (p. 35). However, organizations consist of human beings who make sense of policy both collectively and as individuals. Coburn (2006) highlighted how during sensemaking, individuals and groups actively construct understandings by placing new information into cognitive frameworks, or “world views” (Weick, 1995).

Spillane et al. (2002) argued the importance of understanding that during implementation policy actors choose not only to respond (or not respond) to policy, but they also respond to what they understand a policy to be. Therefore, the content of a policy can be influenced by what policy actors understand it to mean. Spillane et al. explained that individuals must use their “prior knowledge and experience to notice, make sense of, interpret, and react to incoming stimuli—all the while actively constructing meaning from their interactions with the environment, of which policy is a part” (p. 394). This may result in individual sensemaking, equally it may result in individuals’ seeking collective understanding through collaborative sensemaking processes.

Spillane et al. (2002), developed a cognitive framework to characterize sensemaking in the policy implementation processes relevant to education policy initiatives. Their cognitive framework was employed in a “broad sense that takes into account basic information processing as well as the complexities and influences involved in the processing of information about abstract ideas” (p. 388). They developed their framework in three stages: (a) individual cognition, where they explored the local policy actor as the sensemaker; (b) situated cognition, where they complicated the human sensemaking process by arguing that situation or context is critical to understand an individual’s sensemaking; and, (c) role of representations, where they considered the role of policy stimuli in implementing policy actors’ sensemaking.
Spillane et al. (2002) admitted that their cognitive model of implementation did not conclude with detailing infinity of meanings that policy actors come to understand. Instead, their model attempted to demystify the ways in which human sensemaking contributes to the evolution of policy in the implementation process. Spillane et al. highlighted the continued importance of policy makers’ intentions, even if the original intent of the policy was not always clear. They reminded that policy texts often represented ideas that instigated a reforming of practice, and thus analysis of whether policy implementation was as intended was crucial. Nevertheless, even when policy is interpreted and translated as originally intended, policy actors may not have the “necessary human and material resources to do what they understand the policy to be asking of them” (p. 420).

Coburn (2001) highlighted how individuals, in addition to making their own understandings, also sought to make sense of policy messages in consultation with colleagues in ways deeply situated in broader collective, professional, and organizational contexts (Lin, 2000). Coburn examined how teachers in both formal and informal groups interacted with messages from the environment as they made sense of implementing a policy. Coburn identified three clear sub-processes that characterized and facilitated collective sensemaking (a) constructing understanding through interpersonal interaction, (b) gatekeeping, and (c) negotiating technical and practical details. Coburn asserted that each of these sub-processes was influenced by teachers’ worldviews, preexisting practices, and shared understandings. Coburn and Stein (2006) highlighted how within a community of practice, all policy actors learn from each other as they implement policy, with individuals constructing their own understandings through interpretations of shared experiences. However, the internal administrative environment, and norms of action,
roles, and levels of agency of policy actors in a school, promoted a dynamic and fluid environment where variation in policy response was inevitable (McLaughlin, 2006).

The eight types of policy actor identified by Ball et al. (2011a) represented educators who were also dynamic in their policy actor roles. Ball et al. highlighted how the seven types of policy actors were not necessarily specific individuals, how individuals may be policy actors of more than one type, they may change types, roles need not be specialized, and some roles may be more or less prominent in different schools. Regardless of individual roles of career guidance policy actors, they all made sense of the multilayered phenomenon of policy implementation, and each type of policy actor acted on the policy through individual interpretations (McLaughlin, 2006).

The sensemaking process was cyclical, with policy actors continually making sense as influences led them back to reconsider through the three sub-processes. Coburn’s sensemaking processes aligned with the premise of hermeneutics that people are self-interpreting and therefore engaged in a process of repeated interpretation to understand what is important for them in order to create their own construction of reality (Koch, 1996). Underpinning this concept was that when career guidance policy actors came into contact with messages from the environment (for example, new labour market information, or a new curriculum), each policy actor produced individual interpretations of what this information meant to career guidance provision.

Though Coburn applied her conceptual sensemaking framework to groups of teachers, I suggested it could be applied to individuals undertaking interpretive relationships with documents within multi-faceted environments. Coburn drew upon sensemaking theory to guide her exploration of how “teachers have adapted, adopted, combined, or ignored messages… in their professional communities, and how these deliberations have shaped practice” (p. 147). How
teachers noticed information from their environments, made meaning from that information, and subsequently acted upon their interpretations, was then re-acted upon to develop social structures, routines, and culture over time (Coburn, 2001; Weick, 1995).

Through this study, I expanded on the sensemaking literature through my examination of how policy actors interpreted and enacted policy messages from policy documents during career guidance policy implementation. I examined and reported on the sensemaking of different levels of policy actors implementing policies for career guidance in the two different regional jurisdictions of England and Ontario, Canada. It was my intention that this study would shed light on how policy actors’ implementation efforts for career guidance were driven by their interpretations of policy documents. This concludes the review of the literature that supports my study. In the next chapter I present the methodological approach and accompanying method I selected to frame this study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

My rationale for undertaking this qualitative study stemmed from the identified gap between policy and practice that was shown in the literature (Goodman & Hansen, 2005; Savickas et al., 2005; Sweet, 2004), and the desire to look at how policy became interpreted and enacted into career guidance practice. What was not clear was where, when, and how different levels of policy actors interpreted and enacted career guidance public policy of learning, labour market, and social equity (emphasis added by author) goals, along with lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and work-based learning (WBL) and vocational education and training (VET)—as responses to high youth unemployment—in their career guidance programing and practice. In order to explore the lived experiences of how policy actors interpreted and enacted career guidance policy and curriculum into practice, I adopted a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology for this study. In this chapter, I describe how hermeneutic phenomenology guided, informed, and shaped my data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Koch (1999) suggested before we could begin to ask our research sample to tell us their stories and interpretations, we needed to explore our own philosophical stance about inquiry, and we should begin this process with reflection upon our individual sense of reality. Koch argued that knowing our own position on reality helped us to understand what happens through research, how we were making sense of what we found, and, where appropriate, how we selected interpretive frameworks to guide the analysis of our findings.

I came to this study from a hermeneutic phenomenological viewpoint, with an understanding that what something meant depended upon the cultural context within which it is
constructed and subsequently interpreted (Patton, 2002). Hermeneutic phenomenology considers the life world and human experience as it is lived (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). I sought to understand reflections, examples, and meanings held in the lives and minds of policy actors as they engaged with and made sense of policy and curriculum documents. Therefore, the goal of my study was to develop a rich description of the phenomenon being investigated (interpreting and making sense of documents) within the particular context (career guidance as a public policy mechanism response to high youth unemployment) (van Manen, 1997).

Hermeneutic phenomenology attempts to be attentive to both the descriptive (emphasis added by author) nature of phenomenology and the interpretive nature of hermeneutics (van Manen, 1997). It was my aim to be observant to both terms within my study. First, I described the public policy environment of career guidance within both jurisdictions, and identified public policy goals of career education through analysis of career guidance policy and curriculum documents. Second, I explored the policy actors’ experiences of interpreting and enacting documents, and filtered these through my past and present insights from analysis of policy documents, and my personal and professional experiences (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Gadamer, 1976). Gadamer (1998) considered that “hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the traditionary test and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which it speaks” (p. 295). Within the hermeneutic phenomenological paradigm, I was able to add an interpretive element to explicate meanings, interpretations, and assumptions revealed in the policy actors’ texts that policy actors might have had difficulty in articulating, for example, tacit knowledge of public policy goals of career guidance (Crotty, 1998).

---

1 Transcriptions of interview data.
My data collection for this study began with strategies intended to reveal individual interpretations. First, I undertook document analysis to reveal my interpretations of three purposefully selected policy documents, which are identified in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Three policy documents examined in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Publication Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating Pathways to Success</td>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools: Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies, School Leaders and School Staff</td>
<td>SG</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools: Non-statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies, School Leaders and School Staff</td>
<td>NSG</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The document analysis of selected curriculum and policy documents was envisioned to promote my conscious awareness of public policy goals and expectations for career guidance in both jurisdictions. I also undertook an interview with 25 purposefully selected policy actors to explore their individual interpretations of career guidance policy documents appropriate to their contexts and jurisdictions. I subsequently undertook, a second interview with 9 policy actors employing a hermeneutic data collection strategy that explored the policy actors’ collective interpretations of the three selected career guidance documents shown in Table 3.1. Through the second interviews, I was able to bring my reflections and interpretations regarding the content of the three career guidance policy documents shown in Table 3.1 together with the policy actors. In addition, I maintained a process of reflexivity throughout this dissertation through a process of continuous reflective field notes. As the policy actors and I delved into the multiple layers of each other’s interpretations, I sought new understandings from all connected with this study.
Hermeneutic phenomenology is “a research methodology aimed at producing rich textural descriptions of the experiencing of selected phenomena in the life world of individuals that are able to connect with the experience of all of us collectively” (Smith, 1997, p. 80). From this perspective, life is not concrete and static, but dynamic and fluid, where “everyday interpretation merges with re-interpretation” (Conroy, 2003, p. 3) and our knowledge of the world is co-constructed with the lives of others. I sought to illuminate detailed and perhaps seemingly trivial aspects of career guidance policy documents. My goal was to achieve some sense of understanding of how policy documents and policy actors defined public policy goals for career guidance in both jurisdictions of this study (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). It was my intention to use my understandings in tandem with those of the policy actors’ sensemaking of documents, in a process of continued hermeneutic interpretation to achieve an increasingly multilayered understanding.

**Document Analysis and Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

I drew upon the work of Prior (2003) and Miller and Alvarado (2005) to frame my hermeneutic phenomenological approach to the analysis of documents. Prior discussed how documents could be taken as a field of research in their own right, and that “processes of production and consumption of written materials” (p. 166) provided two robust areas for crucial research. Prior described how

Dismantling documents is not an easy task, but it is a worthwhile one, not least because every document is packed tight with assumptions and concepts and ideas that reflect on the agents who produced the document, and its intended recipients, as much as upon the people and events reported upon. For what is counted, and how it
is counted are expressive and distinctive ways of thinking, acting, and organizing. In that sense, all documents are a two-way mirror on aspects of human culture. (p. 48)

Prior (2003) highlighted that it was not always easy to distinguish activity issues regarding the production of documents and activity issues regarding the consumption of documents as the two processes can become entwined. In addition, Prior cautioned that documents, in addition to being produced and consumed, could be used “to produce new facts and new things,” becoming “enmeshed in a circuit of production” (p. 167). Prior warned that the researcher should not think of the content of documents as being mere representations of the world as it really is, but should instead perhaps, consider the possibility of the world as it is being interpreted in and through documents. Prior summarized how the production and consumption of documents in their social settings was important, and research should seek to explore “how the document fits into the entire network of activities and agents of which it forms a part” (p. 168).

Miller and Alvarado (2005) argued for greater attention to documents in qualitative research, as primary or supplementary sources of data. In their study, they explored the nature of documents, the distinctive features of research with documents, how documents might be analyzed, and produced a framework to consider the spectrum of available approaches to document analysis. Though their study was based in the context of nursing, I proposed that their framework, as a method for analyzing documents, could be applied to the hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of education policy documents. Miller and Alvarado suggested that there were three distinct approaches to the analysis of documents: (a) content (content analytic); (b) commentary (context analytic); and, (c) documents as actors (context analytic). The features of each approach are described in Table 3.2.
Table 3.2. Features of document analysis framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Analytic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content of documents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document is container of static and unchanging information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify core consistencies and meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key patterns, themes, categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key form of inductive analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can draw on different philosophical approaches, including grounded theory and phenomenology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative or purposive sampling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External source criticism minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might consider effect of biases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context Analytic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documents as commentary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight into individual and collective actions, intentions, meanings, organizational dynamics, and institutional structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret the social reality constructed in the documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooted in case study, history, and policy analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meanings that are socially situated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of analytic strategies (depending on discipline and research questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple sources and types of documents for triangulation (Yin, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful sampling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Miller and Alvarado (2005) agreed with Prior (2003) in that what mattered most in effective document analysis was the study of who recruits and allies themselves with the document, how it is adopted, adapted, interpreted, and circulated, and how documents “can form a series of key entry points into the investigation of social life” (p. 172). Prior concluded that more work was needed in understanding the relationships between documents and their contexts with a focus on relationships rather than on documents in isolation.
The Role of the Researcher in Data Collection

Creswell (2007) highlighted how researchers bring their own worldviews, paradigms, and sets of beliefs to qualitative studies. Qualitative investigation endorses an active role for researchers attempting to explore an empirical social world that exists for research study participants rather than a world as imagined by the researcher (Patton, 2002). Stake (2010) proposed that a qualitative researcher has no choice but to be empathetic, and Patton agreed that empathy provides the researcher an empirical basis for describing the experiences of others. However, Gadamer (1976) emphasized a shift from the pure description of the conscious experience, to an interpretation that involves meaning. Within an interpretive paradigm, meanings were constructed in unique individual and collective ways, and were shaped by context and personal frames of reference as humans engage with the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998).

It was my intention that my experience as an educator and mentor would help to provide sensitivity and empathy to the policy actors’ contexts. The importance of being attentive to context—for example, holding interviews in policy actors’ places of work so documents were at hand, looking at how documents are stored, establishing whether documents were physically brought into our conversations, and being attentive to whether policy actors consulted electronic or hard copies—supported and deepened my understanding of policy actors’ interactions with, and interpretations of their documents. My own understanding of using and interpreting documents, often within a chaotic work place environment, helped me to attune to the environments of my participants. van Manen (1997) described being consciously aware of one’s own experience in relation to the phenomenon being studied as having the lived experience of one’s participants “on one’s mind” (p. 57).
The Research Design

This doctoral research featured three segments of data collection. The first segment included the search, identification, and mapping of policy documents that related directly to the compulsory career guidance programs in both jurisdictions of this study. I initially used electronic sources to locate publically available documents. This was followed with a snowballing technique search with the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Department for Education in England to locate and obtain any relevant documents not listed in mainstream databases. No further documents were added to the data collection phase through this method. Subsequently, three policy documents were selected for this study, which are detailed in Table 3.1. The three documents were chosen because they constituted the overarching policy documents that outline career guidance provision for secondary schools in both jurisdictions of this study.

The second segment of data collection consisted of 34 semi-structured interviews undertaken with four levels of policy actors (a) policy experts, (b) district school board coordinators (Ontario) and local authority intermediaries (England), (c) principals (Ontario) and school senior management team (England), and (d) career guidance counsellors (Ontario and career guidance teachers (England). The interviews were designed to focus on understanding the policy actors’ interpretations of the documents identified in Table 3.1. Professional informants (e.g., International Centre for Career Guidance at the University of Derby, UK, National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, Canadian Career Development Foundation, and Canadian Educational Research Institute for Counselling) assisted with the purposeful selection of participants using an extreme case sampling strategy. Professional informants, though themselves career guidance policy actor experts, were not considered part of the policy actors of
this study. The third segment of data came from reflective field notes that were kept for the duration of the study.

**Data Collection Segment One: Document Analysis**

Document collection, selection, and analysis were conducted to include all current (at the time of data collection) policy documents for career guidance provision in secondary schools in Ontario and England produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the UK Government’s Department for Education. In addition, the 25 policy actors in this study were asked to identify additional policy and curriculum documents (not previously identified by the researcher) that they considered were important to read, interpret, and utilize alongside the three policy documents identified in Table 3.1. Though I did not undertake a detailed analysis of the additional documents identified by the policy actors, they were acknowledged as being worthy of mention as they provide a contextual insight of how the three documents featured in Table 3.1 are interpreted alongside other relevant policy documents in each jurisdiction of this study.

**Search and Selection Strategies for Documents**

Documents were located through an Internet search of relevant Ontario and UK (England) government websites, and through identification of further relevant documents by the career guidance policy actors. Boolean searches for online sourcing and collection of documents were undertaken in both jurisdictions, and documents that reflected current career guidance policy in Ontario and England were selected for analysis. The search process was straightforward and the three policy documents identified in Table 3.1 were easily located from the relevant government websites.

All 25 policy actors were asked to identify if they consulted any other policy documents to inform their interpretations of the three policy documents presented in Table 3.3. In total, all
25 policy actors identified additional relevant policy documents that they regularly consulted, and 11 (three from Ontario and eight from England) shared copies with me during the data collection phase of this study, these are highlighted in Table 3.3.

Definition of Document Types

The following definitions were applied during this study.

**Policy document.** Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombes, and Thurston (1999) described policy as “any authoritative communication about how individuals in certain positions should behave under specified conditions” (p. 230). In addition, documents are often produced for *public consumption* (emphasis added by author) and used for *external communication*, representing an official perspective on a topic, issue or process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, *policy document* was taken to be the written authoritative communication that outlined how policy actors should behave in order to meet the required conditions of the policy.

**Curriculum document.** The Ontario Ministry of Education (2010) referred to policy or curriculum documents as those that define:

What students are taught in Ontario public schools. They detail the knowledge and skills that students are expected to develop in each subject at each grade level. By developing and publishing curriculum documents for use by all Ontario teachers, the Ministry of Education sets standards for the entire province. (Frequently Asked Questions, 2nd Ques.)

**Strategy document.** A document that outlined strategic goals and outcomes presented by Ontario Government or Ministry of Education, or the UK Government or Department of Education. The document may be in print or electronic format.
# Table 3.3. Policy actor participants provision of additional documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real name or pseudonym</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Geographic location and School</th>
<th>Documents identified</th>
<th>Documents shared with researcher</th>
<th>Real name or pseudonym</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Geographic location and school</th>
<th>Documents identified</th>
<th>Documents shared with researcher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Bezanson</td>
<td>Executive Director Emeritus of the Canadian Career Development Foundation.</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Tony Watts</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>England/UK</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anthony Barnes</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>David Andrews</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Guidance Instructional Leader</td>
<td>Ontario A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Smith</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>England/UK</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>Instructional Program Leader</td>
<td>Ontario B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Annie</td>
<td>Connexions Careers Advisor</td>
<td>England B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Ontario B Birch View High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Off-Site Provision Manager</td>
<td>England B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Ontario A Oak Ridge High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>TFL and Post-16 Manager</td>
<td>England B</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Ontario A Willow Fall High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Research and Development Manager</td>
<td>England A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Ontario A Oak Ridge High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>Assistant Head Teacher</td>
<td>England A Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilly</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Ontario A Willow Fall High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Judith</td>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>England A Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethel</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Ontario B Maple Heights High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Careers and Higher Education Advisor</td>
<td>England A The Grove School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Ontario B Birch View High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Futures Advisor</td>
<td>England B Tanglewood School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>England B Mulberry High School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information document. Designed to provide the reader with information about defined topics or subjects, an information document was neither a legal document nor was it a policy document. It was to be used by policy actors for informative purposes only; however, information documents could usually be expected to align with relevant policy.

Data Collection Segment Two: Participant Interviews

Selection of Policy Actors

Purposeful sampling was employed to recruit policy actors from four school sites in Ontario, Canada and four school sites in England. In Ontario, Canada the policy actors included (a) one teacher responsible for delivering career guidance and related topics from each of the four selected schools, (b) one principal from three of the four selected schools, (c) and one guidance coordinator from each of the participating district school boards, and (d) one Ontario and two Canadian career guidance policy experts. In England, the policy actors included (a) four teachers responsible for career guidance provision and related topics from the four selected schools, (b) one member of the senior management team from one of the four selected schools, (c) one career guidance intermediary or Local Authority who worked with each of the four selected schools, and (d) four policy experts. In total, 25 individuals participated in this study, and their profiles are presented in Tables 3.4 and 3.5.

Miles and Huberman (1984) recommended that the conceptual framework and research questions should drive sampling decisions of the proposed study, and a sampling framework was useful in defining appropriate selection criteria. Sampling involves more than just selection of which people to interview, argued Miles and Huberman, it also must consider sites, events, and social processes. Patton (2002) suggested that within purposeful sampling, instead of studying a representative sample, the researcher focuses on studying selected cases of special interest.
Table 3.4. Policy actors from Ontario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real name or Pseudonym</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Geographic Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Bezanson</td>
<td>Executive Director Emeritus of the Canadian Career Development Foundation.</td>
<td>Lynne was instrumental in the development of the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners and is a founding member of the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP) and the Canadian Research Working Group in Evidence Based Practice in Career Development (CRWG). Lynne is the recipient of the Stu Conger Gold Medal for Leadership in Career Development.</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Jeff has addressed a wide range of career related issues, from helping at-risk teens manage their career paths to working with executives to make their companies more career-friendly. Jeff has worked extensively with provincial and federal government departments, energy companies, financial institutions, policing organizations, and utility companies</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Was a teacher and guidance counsellor for over 30 years. Edgar is the Chair of a non-profit organization that delivers tailored careers-related training for students, parents and educators.</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Guidance Instructional Leader</td>
<td>Responsible for supporting all school guidance counselors in his area, including portfolio planning and participating in the implementation of Creating Pathways to Success.</td>
<td>Ontario A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>Instructional Program Leader</td>
<td>Norman is an instructional program leader for the guidance program, cooperative education, and student success in his District School Board. Norman is responsible for facilitating processes and best practices for teachers in those three subject areas, and participating in the implementation of Creating Pathways to Success.</td>
<td>Ontario B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Day to day management of school.</td>
<td>Ontario B Birch View High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Day to day management of school.</td>
<td>Ontario A Oak Ridge High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Day to day management of school.</td>
<td>Ontario A Willow Fall High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Overseas all academic and career life planning in school.</td>
<td>Ontario A Oak Ridge High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilly</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Head of student services in school, overseeing guidance team.</td>
<td>Ontario A Willow Fall High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethel</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>The program leader of guidance careers and co-op.</td>
<td>Ontario B Maple Heights High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Guidance Counselor</td>
<td>Head of guidance services in school.</td>
<td>Ontario B Birch View High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.5. Policy actors from England.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real name or Pseudonym</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Geographic Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tony Watts, OBE</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Tony retired in November 2014 after more than 50 years in the career development field. His international work spans career theory, practice, policy, and efficacy of the evidence base for career development. Tony was a consultant to the European Commission, the OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank.</td>
<td>England/UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Barnes</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>An independent careers education specialist. Anthony is a National Institute for Career Education and Counselling Fellow, and an honorary life member of the Career Development Institute.</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Andrews, OBE</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Works as an independent education consultant and trainer, specializing in careers education and Information Advice and Guidance (IAG). David is a Senior Fellow of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC).</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Smith</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Specializes in careers, employment and skills, policy, research, and practice. Dr. Smith has held a number of leadership positions with a variety of careers and employment focused organizations.</td>
<td>England/UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie</td>
<td>Connexions Careers Advisor</td>
<td>Works as a Connexions Careers Advisor for a Local Education Authority in the Midlands area. Annie holds a level 6 (masters level) qualification in careers practice, and works predominantly with young people aged between 13 and 19 who have a learning difficulty or disability. Annie also supports students who are NEET (not in education, employment, or training).</td>
<td>England B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Off-Site Provision Manager</td>
<td>Arranges vocational provision for groups of students in schools, going out to smaller training providers and colleges, to develop and implement curriculum.</td>
<td>England B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>TFL and Post-16 Manager</td>
<td>Works with post-16 providers in a collaborative grouping and that involves a range of activities. The group coordinates the local city post-16 providers in the way that they support careers education, information, advice, and guidance in the local city schools.</td>
<td>England B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Research and Development Manager</td>
<td>Works in a skills and employability service as part of a county council in the south of England. James has been working in his current role since 2009, looking after the careers guidance policy for the Local Authority.</td>
<td>England A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>Assistant Head Teacher</td>
<td>Works within the senior management team with particular responsibility for the school’s sixth form (students aged 16–18).</td>
<td>England A Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judith</td>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>Judith’s has worked at the school for a number of years, and her job role includes liaising with her local authority to secure bought in provision, in addition to providing students with varied information and (prior to the implementing of the Statutory Guidance) guidance regarding career and post-secondary planning</td>
<td>England A Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Careers and Higher Education Advisor</td>
<td>Employed as a careers and higher education advisor. Sally has worked at the boys only grammar school for many years, where she is responsible for organizing all careers-related events, in addition to providing information to support career and post-secondary planning</td>
<td>England A The Grove School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Futures Advisor</td>
<td>Works at the Tanglewood School located in the Midlands. John’s job title is school futures advisor, and he is responsible for providing advice and guidance to students regarding post-secondary choices and career planning.</td>
<td>England B Tanglewood School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>Looks after both the careers education and the information advice and guidance side of things for all of our students. Also looks after work-related learning initiatives.</td>
<td>England B Mulberry High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purposeful sampling enabled me to select policy actors who provided rich information that responded to the purpose of this research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). There were many different ways I could have adopted purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990), and in qualitative research such as this study, the sample selection could have had a profound effect upon the quality of the research (Coyne, 1997). Subsequently, sampling was a practical consideration that was shaped by the time and resources I had available, by the conceptual framework of this study, and by the availability and willingness of the selected sample population (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973).

Representing as extensive a range as possible of different policy actors’ roles was the primary benchmark of selecting policy actors for this study. Though this sampling strategy could not be fully representative of the extensive variations in policy actors’ roles throughout the publically funded schools in Ontario and England that were described by Ball et al. (2011a), it did provide a broader picture than if I had situated this study in a single school in each jurisdiction. In addition, the selection of district school boards (Ontario) and local authorities (England) were important. Using a purposeful selection process (Patton, 2002), I sought two district school boards that demonstrated a centralized approach to career guidance within its schools. To differentiate the two areas in Ontario and England, they are described as Ontario A and B, and England A and B.

I short-listed four district school boards that met the criteria and applied for ethics clearance at each of the district school boards. Three district school boards granted me permission to collect data from their schools. Subsequently, from the three boards I selected two for the final sampling. These were chosen based upon the extensive range of Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP), cooperative education, and Specialist High Skills Majors
(SHSM), all vocational programs, that were available for their schools. Once I had selected the
district school boards, I asked each board to recommend two schools that would be suitable for
my study, and for contact details of their district school board career guidance coordinator.

In England, I sought two local authority areas that had retained a commitment to
supporting career guidance in secondary schools in their area (e.g., though continuing to provide
centralized services to support schools with careers guidance provision). In total, four different
area jurisdictions were sourced, two district school boards in Ontario, and two local authorities in
England. Ultimately, the sampling framework for this study shown in Table 3.6 intended to span
the eight policy actor roles identified by Ball et al. (2011a) and was applied across all four school
sites within the sample population of this study. From the eight policy actor roles identified by
Ball et al. policy actors were purposively sought that were prospective narrators, entrepreneurs,
outsiders, transactors, enthusiasts, and translators, in either individual or multiple roles. I did
not purposefully seek policy actors that I felt would fall into the critics and receivers’ (emphasis
in original) categories.

Recruitment of Participants

Over two months (approximately middle of February to end of March 2014) I recruited policy
actors in England and Ontario. Electronic recruitment notices were utilized for this process in
both jurisdictions (Appendix B), and once sites were finalized, ethics clearance was obtained
from individual schools and district school boards as appropriate. Each district school board in
Ontario was asked to identify a career guidance coordinator within their board who might be
willing to participate in this study. Both boards contacted their coordinators and facilitated my
initial contact.
Table 3.6. Sampling framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Actor Roles in Ontario</th>
<th>Possible choices Ontario</th>
<th>Policy Actor Roles in England</th>
<th>Possible choices England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrators</td>
<td>Administrators, senior management team members, principals</td>
<td>Narrators</td>
<td>Head teachers, senior management team, governing body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Guidance counselors, career guidance teachers, cooperative education teachers</td>
<td>Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Career guidance teachers, designated careers educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outsiders</td>
<td>District school boards, Ontario School Counsellors’ Association</td>
<td>Outsiders</td>
<td>Local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, links with other providers (e.g., apprenticeships and vocational training), links with post-16 education and training institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactors</td>
<td>School senior management team, principals, district school board, guidance counselors</td>
<td>Transactors</td>
<td>Governing bodies, school senior management team, school directors, head teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>Individual teacher or guidance counsellor who has overall responsibility for career guidance provision in school</td>
<td>Enthusiasts</td>
<td>Individual teacher or manager who has overall responsibility for career guidance provision in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translators</td>
<td>Any policy actor who plans and produces events and processes and institutional versions of policy in relation for others who are thus inducted into a discursive pattern of policy</td>
<td>Translators</td>
<td>Any policy actor who plans and produces events and processes and institutional versions of policy in relation for others who are thus inducted into a discursive pattern of policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critics</td>
<td>Career guidance teachers with other teaching duties that take precedence over career guidance, anyone who gives career guidance a low priority</td>
<td>Critics</td>
<td>Any policy actor who does not support current career guidance policy, anyone who gives career guidance a low priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receivers</td>
<td>New and beginning teachers that have responsibility for teaching career guidance</td>
<td>Receivers</td>
<td>Newly Qualified Teacher’s or new hires</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During my initial contact with the career guidance coordinators, I asked each of them to provide suggestions of sample schools in their area who were proactive in their approach to
career guidance provision in their schools, and to pass on to me the relevant school name and contact details. Each coordinator suggested five potential schools, and I contacted them on a first-come-first-serve basis. From the five schools in each board I selected the first two from each that agreed to participate. Four policy experts were also sought in Ontario, however, only three policy experts were recruited for this study; one policy expert from Ontario, one policy expert who works in the pan-Canadian context, and one policy expert who works in a pan-Canadian and international context. All data collection in Ontario took place over a six-month period between February and August 2014.

Approximately one month before travelling to England to collect my data (April 2014), I searched the relevant websites for the two local authority areas selected for this study and obtained email addresses for individuals who matched my proposed sample criteria. In England A, two coordinators were contacted and one agreed to participate in this study. In England B, two coordinators were contacted, and both agreed to participate. In addition, one coordinator arranged for a colleague to attend and participate in a joint interview. In a similar strategy to Ontario, coordinators were asked to recommend suitable schools in their local area that might wish to participate in this study. Ultimately, two schools from each area (four in total) contributed data.

To recruit the four policy experts in England, I first used a snowballing technique that commenced with asking Professor Tony Watts, OBE to participate in this study as a policy expert. Tony agreed and subsequently suggested I interview David Andrews, OBE and Anthony Barnes. Dr. Smith, the final policy expert participant was recruited during the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) annual conference during 2014 in Quebec City where we were both in attendance.
Interviews

**Development of interview protocols.** The development of interview protocols for this study was informed primarily by the research questions arising from literature I reviewed in chapter 2 of this dissertation. However, I was also guided by the content analytic document analysis phase of this study. All policy actors were asked to respond to the same protocol regardless of jurisdiction during the first interviews. For the second interviews, a protocol was developed for each jurisdiction based upon the findings of the content analytic phase of this study that considered each of the policy documents relevant to each jurisdiction. To distinguish between the questions being asked of the policy actors and the higher-order questions related to responding to the purpose of this study (Yin, 2009), the questions taken from the three protocols were mapped against the research questions. Subsequently, the relationship between the research questions and interview questions from the three protocols are presented in Table 3.7. I had originally planned to undertake two in-depth interviews of up to 40 minutes in length with each of the policy actors of this study. However, the first set of interviews ranged between 50 minutes and 120 minutes in length, and from the 25 policy actors who completed the first interviews, only nine agreed or were available within given time frames to undertake second interviews. The three protocols used for this study can be found in Appendices G, H and I. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Member checks were undertaken with all policy actors to ensure accuracy in transcription. To do justice to the policy actors in expressing what they intended, I shared my initial interpretations of their responses throughout the data collection phase of this study (Kafle, 2011). Patton (2002) described how qualitative interviewing “begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 341). Subsequently, I
undertook interviews to investigate the interactions with and interpretations of CPS, SG, and NSG from the 25 policy actors.

Table 3.7. Relationship between research questions and interview protocol questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Corresponding interview question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) How are public policy goals for career guidance represented in the policy documents for the two jurisdictions examine in this study?</td>
<td>Q3; Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ONT1; ONT8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG1; ENG4; ENG5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) How are any responding policy initiatives defined in the policy documents for the two jurisdictions examined in this study?</td>
<td>Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ONT4; ONT6; ONT8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG1; ENG4; ENG5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) How do policy actors’ select policy and curriculum documents for their programs?</td>
<td>Q6; Q7; Q8; Q9; Q10; Q11; Q12; Q13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ONT1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG1; ENG2; ENG3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) How do policy actors interpret the role of career guidance programs as a public policy mechanism to address high youth unemployment within their contextual environments and jurisdictions?</td>
<td>Q1; Q3; Q4; Q5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG1; ENG4; ENG5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) How do policy actors engage in interpreting and re-interpreting their role in relation to policy and curriculum career guidance documents?</td>
<td>Q1; Q2; Q15; Q16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ONT1; ONT3; ONT4; ONT5; ONT6; ONT7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ENG1; ENG 4; ENG5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Where and how do congruence and incongruence emerge in policy actors’ interpretations of career guidance documents and programs?</td>
<td>All questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Q = questions asked during the first interviews; ONT = questions asked of Ontario policy actors during the second interviews; and ENG = questions asked of the England policy actors during the second round interviews.

Data Collection Segment Three: Field Notes

A hermeneutic phenomenological approach asks the researcher to engage in a process of self-reflection. Specifically, the biases and assumptions of the researcher are not bracketed or set aside, but rather are embedded and essential to the interpretive process. The researcher is called (in a continuous manner) to give significant thought to their own experience and to openly claim the ways in which their position or experience relates to the issues being researched.
INTERPRETING DOCUMENTS AND MAKING SENSE OF PUBLIC POLICY GOALS

Consequently, this dissertation includes my personal assumptions and the philosophical bases from which my interpretations have occurred (Allen, 1996). The keeping of a reflective journal and series of field notes helped this process of reflection and interpretation.

Two types of field notes were kept during the research process: (a) my initial interpretations of the policy actors and their settings, and reflective notes on the research process and methodological issues as they arose; and, (b) reflective interpretations of emerging ideas in relation to the research questions that were brought back to the policy actors during the second stage of the interviews. Through both types of field notes I attempted to maintain what van Manen (1997) called *hermeneutic alertness*, where I used field notes to step back and reflect upon the meanings of situations rather than just accepting interpretations at face value (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Such reflexivity was important within this study, as it provided opportunities for the research relationship between the policy actors and myself to be used for insightful sharing of interpretations that were invaluable in helping me to understand the policy actors sensemaking of policy documents. Samples of field notes and research process reflections can be found in Appendix H.

**Three Segments of Data Collection: The Hermeneutic Spiral**

Within a hermeneutical spiral of interpretation during all three segments of data collection, I built my understanding of how policy actors interpret career guidance policy documents in order to make sense of and enact career guidance as public policy. This dynamic, interpretive method commenced with the content analytic phase of document analysis, where I utilized a deductive approach to establish public policy goals of *learning*, *labour market*, and *social equity* (emphasis added by author) goals, along with lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and work-based learning (WBL) and vocational education and training (VET)—as responses to
high youth unemployment—that were contained within the CPS, SG, and NSG documents for both jurisdictions of this study. I subsequently prepared a summary of my interpretations, which were used to help construct the protocols for the first stage semi-structured interviews with policy actors.

I transcribed all of the first stage interview data verbatim and distributed each transcript to the appropriate individual policy actors prior to the second stage interviews. All policy actors were invited to reflect upon their individual transcripts, and on brief accompanying notes where I felt further clarification was needed. This process helped to create an active dialogue within the research process prior to the second stage interviews. During the first stage interviews, policy actors were asked to identify any additional documents they felt were relevant for commentary within this study.

In the second stage interviews, both the policy actors and I built upon the initial interpretations shared from the document analysis and the first stage interviews as each reflected and interpreted what was happening across the research narrative (Conroy, 2003). I continued to expand the interpretive process through repeated visits to the documents, the policy actors’ transcripts from both interviews, and the notations I made in the field logs.

**Data Analysis**

McMillan and Schumacher (2009) suggested, “an essential early step in analysis is to organize the large amount of data so that coding is facilitated (p. 369), and Patton (2002) proposed that preparing for data analysis begins with an inventory of what data you have. Therefore, data analysis commenced with administrative steps with a two-fold purpose (a) to arrange the data in an organized manner to facilitate analysis, and (b) to allow for data to be organized for secure storage.
Data were organized into folders, one for each of the interviews conducted. Each folder was encrypted and contained the interview instrument, the audio recording of the interview, the typed transcription of the audio recording, and the field notes that pertained to that interview. Field notes were frequently revisited and added to throughout the data analysis process (Patton, 2002). Master copies of each transcription and set of field notes were stored as read only files. Patton recommended that a master copy of the data be preserved given the nature of extensive cutting and pasting of data that was a natural part of the analysis of qualitative research. Patton warned that “under no circumstances should one yield to the temptation to begin cutting and pasting the master copy” (p. 442).

Multiple back-ups of the electronic data were made, on electronic computer files and an external computer hard-drive. Electronic files were password protected, and the audio recording device and external hard drive were stored in a locked filing cabinet. Hard copies of data were also stored in the locked filing cabinet. Before commencing analysis, I read and re-read the data. This was important to allow me to gain a sense of the wholeness of the data and to check for gaps.

**Coding and Interpreting the Data**

To analyze the data collected, I utilized the conceptual framework outlined in the literature in chapter two of this dissertation. Initially I acquainted myself with the data by reading, re-reading, and producing verbatim transcripts from each interview, with all identifying features of each of the policy actors removed and pseudonyms allocated where appropriate. As suggested by van Manen (1997), I was attentive to my policy actors’ voices and the subtleties of their individual words and language. My sampling framework purposefully directed me to achieving *purposeful* variation within my participant population. Patton (2002) suggested where
variations in the experiences of individuals were the primary focus of the study it was useful to
begin by describing the data for each of the policy actors. Once this was complete, comparative
analyses could be undertaken.

Data analysis followed Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) document analysis framework (as
described in Table 1). Miller and Alvarado’s content analytic approach and context analytic
approach was employed to analyze documents, interview data, and field notes. The three
segments of data (document analysis, interview transcripts, and field notes) were intended to
facilitate a hermeneutical spiral of interpretation, where both I and the policy actors built upon
our interpretations as each of us reflected and interpreted what was happening throughout the
research process (Conroy, 2003). The ongoing interaction through the data collection and
analysis phase was intended to engender reflection and a continual re-interpretation of the
construction of meaning and understanding. This phase relied upon the inclusion of sharing
personal values, beliefs, assumptions, and reflections between policy actors and myself (Conroy,
2003). Subsequently, the interpretations conveyed in this dissertation will further spiral to
include readers of this study, as they add their own interpretations and understandings situating
what is reported here against their own experiences and practices.

Coding of Content Analytic Data: Documents

I began my examination of the CPS, SG, and NSG documents with a deductive content
document analysis (Miller & Alvarado, 2005). I purposefully sought to examine how public
policy goals for career guidance (Watts, 2005) were conceptualized in all three documents,
together with three established responding initiatives of lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and
work-based learning (WBL) and vocational education and training (VET). Given that eleven
years has passed since Watts (2005) conceptualized the public policy goals for career guidance, I
also followed an inductive exploration of all three policy documents to establish how any new policy goals were currently theorized.

Goodlad, Klein, and Tye (1979) suggested that “One gets closer to what is intended for the schools by examining what is to be studied by students than by examining statements of aims or objectives” (p. 61). In alignment with this viewpoint, focus was also given to how the documents explicitly outlined the importance of career guidance and the underlying rationale (if provided) for each of the CPS, SG, and NSG documents. Documents were manually coded using a combination of highlighter pens and annotations. Codes were etic in nature, arose directly from the research questions, and were descriptive, to identify topics featured in the documents (e.g., “work experience” and “role of employers”). An example page of the CPS with the highlighted codes is provided in Appendix J.

**Coding of Context Analytic Data: Policy Actors**

A verbatim transcript was produced from each interview. All identifying features of the respondent were removed. Transcripts were then sent to each policy actor for reading and confirmation of accuracy. The policy actors were invited to comment upon the transcriptions and verify their accuracy. Following the suggestion that “developing some manageable classification or coding scheme is the first step of analysis” (Patton, 2002, p. 463), data were considered against the research questions as the first stage of analysis, facilitating the search for areas of significance in the raw data. The first cut of this stage of the data analysis was to highlight areas of each transcript, following a deductive approach by referring constantly to the research questions. Data were examined and re-examined until I was confident that all of the data pertaining to each question was located. Where there were areas of crossover in these overarching themes, data were highlighted accordingly. As data were highlighted, they were
placed in a table for each policy actor ready for the second stage coding.

The second coding cycle was an iterative process of data analysis with the goal of building categories that would respond to each of the research questions. In this context, categories were defined as “abstractions derived from the data” (Merriam, 2001, p. 181). Working inductively, I began by looking for patterns in the data (Saldana, 2009) and I created an initial list of categories into which the codes could be grouped. I carefully considered these categories and compared them to the research literature and conceptual framework featured in chapter 2, and the research questions guiding this dissertation. Examples of coded pages are provided in Appendices K and L.

**Enhancing Reliability**

Issues of reliability and validity or the quality of this type of hermeneutic phenomenological research were addressed through the examination of rigor, trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). McMillan and Schumacher (2009) use the terms *validity, reflexivity, and extension of findings* (emphasis added by author) as the most common criteria for evidence-based enquiry in qualitative research. A number of strategies can be used to enhance validity; I chose the combination of using multi-method data collection strategies including interviews, document analysis, and field notes to permit triangulation of data across inquiry techniques (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009). Checking interviews against written evidence (documents and field notes) allowed me to corroborate what the policy actors reported, though it did not necessarily lead to a single, consistent picture. However, data were interrogated to establish the reasons for the differences, and either consistency or divergence highlighted important nuances that contributed significantly to the overall credibility of the findings (Patton,
2002). I ensured that interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed as a verbatim account, and the transcriptions were sent to the policy actors for them to verify accuracy.

The primary strategy chosen to increase reflexivity was the keeping of field notes and a research journal (for an example of field notes see Appendix M). It was essential that I acknowledge in my writing of this research that I had a stance that shaped my writing (Creswell, 2007). By recording my thoughts, and reactions throughout the study, to the triangulation of sources of data, I was able to add to the rigor of this research. The extension of findings was facilitated with a clear description of the following; my research role, the criteria I used to select the policy actors and documents for analysis, a description of the contexts of my research, the data collection and analysis strategies, ensuring that my narrative was rich and full of the policy actors’ own words, recording the typicality of this study, explaining my choice of analytical premises, and offering alternative explanations where negative and discrepant data challenged the emerging patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009). The hermeneutic procedures employed in this study contributed to ensuring trustworthiness within the data collection process. The two stage interviews provided an opportunity for policy actors to re-visit and comment further upon their interpretations and experiences related to how they made sense of documents for career guidance programing, and verify the accuracy of what was said (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Ethics

In advance of recruitment of policy actors, ethics clearance was granted on November 22nd 2013 by the General Research Ethics Board of Queen’s University (see Appendix A). Ethics clearance was also granted by the relevant schools and district school boards selected for this study prior to recruitment of policy actors and subsequent data collection. Appropriate letters of information (Appendix E) and consent forms (Appendix F) were distributed, and signed copies
were collected from all policy actors prior to conducting interviews. Due to the policy experts’ professional reputations and standing, advice was sought from the General Research Ethics Board at Queen’s University regarding anonymity protection. Due to the fact that some participants, who had a long-standing established academic or professional role in careers work, could potentially be identifiable to other professionals in the careers field, I was anxious that the process of keeping their contributions anonymous would require significant chunks of their data to be removed. Subsequently, agreement was made to offer each of the policy experts the opportunity to be named as participants in this study or to remain anonymous (see Appendices C and D). Where policy experts chose to remain anonymous, I endeavored to protect that right through limiting the amount of information shared about their specific job and professional roles in descriptions and verbatim quotations.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have reiterated how the overarching goal of this research was to explore policy actors’ interpretations of career guidance policies in relation to their job roles and practice. Throughout this study, the hermeneutic phenomenological data collection process was intended to facilitate the policy actors and myself to return to our interpretations to explore further our understanding of the role of documents in implementing career guidance provision. The interpretive hermeneutical phenomenology paradigm was viewed as being the most suitable for this work because of its ability to generate new understandings of the complex multi-layered human phenomena I sought to investigate through the study research questions. Specifically, practical knowledge was sought of practices that were embedded in a milieu of human interactions and interpretations.

In this chapter I have described the sampling procedure, development of interview
protocols for the two-stage interviews, the recruitment of policy actors, and collection and analysis of data from interviews, documents, and my field notes. I also identified several strategies I used to enhance the trustworthiness of data collection and analysis procedures, including verbatim transcription, member checking, and triangulation.
CHAPTER 4:

INTERPRETING CAREER GUIDANCE POLICY DOCUMENTS

The purpose of this study was to understand how different types of policy actors, situated in the province of Ontario, Canada, and England, interpreted and made sense of career guidance policy documents, to inform and enact provision in secondary schools. The findings of this investigation are reported over two chapters, commencing in this chapter with the findings from a content analytic exploration of three selected policy documents as shown in the list below, which are detailed in Table 3.1 in the previous chapter.

- *Creating Pathways to Success* (Ontario)
- *Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools: Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies, School Leaders and School Staff* (England)
- *Careers Guidance and Inspiration in Schools: Non-statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies, School Leaders and School Staff* (England)

In chapter 5 that follows, I present the findings from the context analytic exploration of my conversations with 25 policy actors who agreed to participate in the in-depth interviews.

This chapter reports the examination of three purposefully selected policy documents informed by Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) content analytic approach to document analysis. The chapter begins with an introduction followed by an overview of the policy context of Ontario and England at the time of this study. The findings of this examination have been drawn from government documents, policy, empirical studies, and from the voices of the policy experts who participated in the in-depth interviews, but not from the three policy documents themselves as listed in Table 3.1 as these are explored in the content analysis that follows. Describing the policy context in which each of the three policy documents featured in Table 3.1 are situated is
particularly important for this study given the two different jurisdictions examined. To begin the content analytic approach, the underpinning rationales and definitions of career guidance as expressed in the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents are presented. This chapter concludes with an in-depth content analysis of the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents.

**Content Analytic Document Analysis**

I initiated data analysis for this study by examining the content of the three selected policy documents featured in Table 3.1 to identify key themes. In this approach, documents were seen to be “conduits of communication” (Prior, 2008), that contained meaningful messages, usually in the form of text. I began my examination of the CPS, SG, and NSG documents with a deductive content document analysis (Miller & Alvarado, 2005). I purposefully sought to examine how public policy goals for career guidance (Watts, 2005) were conceptualized in all three documents, together with three established responding initiatives of lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and work-based education (WBE) and vocational education and training (VET). Given that eleven years have passed since Watts (2005) conceptualized the public policy goals for career guidance, I followed a deductive exploration of all three policy documents to investigate whether and how these policy goals were currently conceptualized.

Prior (2014) reminded us that policy analysis remains a challenging process. It can be difficult to ascertain where a policy is situated, for example, is it in documents, speech, or in the actions of those responsible for implementing policy? Consequently, it was usually easiest to focus upon what was determined in text or documentary form. However, “good policy analysis is always grounded in solid description and historical understanding” (Pal, 1987). In particular, Lasswell (1971, cited in Howlett, et al., 2009) encouraged connecting the analysis of policies to their social and political contexts to gain insights into the complex organizational, and situational
factors that influence policy interpretation, understanding, and implementation. Consequently, the policy context that surrounded the introduction of CPS, SG, and NSG policies must be considered prior to the content of the policies themselves.

Subsequently, prior to presenting the findings from the content analytic phase of the document analysis, the following section of this chapter provides an overview of the policy contexts of each of the jurisdictions of this study, Ontario and England, including contributions from the policy experts. Both jurisdictional educational policy contexts have been previously written about in some depth and breadth, and therefore the overview presented here within the bounds of this dissertation somewhat constrains the extensive exploration of the two policy contexts. In addition, the policy context overviews do not contain extensive reviews of all related and connected policy and curriculum documents and initiatives that were current at the time data were collected for this study. Nevertheless, in brief, the following sections are intended to provide the reader with a glimpse of the overarching career guidance policy contexts that framed all the policy actors’ interpretations of the policy documents that pertained to their practice and jurisdictions.

Policy Contexts

Ontario

Education policy within Ontario is generated at the provincially managed Ministry of Education (MOE) level, and school boards receive these policies and implement them at either board or school level, dependent upon the individual requirement of the particular policy. The MOE states its commitment to “developing and implementing policies, programs, and practices that are evidence-based, research-informed, and connected to provincial education goals” (“Research in Education,” n.d.). School boards are responsible for developing necessary
procedures and allocating resources to support schools to implement such policies and meet provincial mandate requirements. Teachers, though employed by individual school boards, are regulated as a profession by the Ontario College of Teachers (Kutsyuruba, Burgess, Walker, & Donlevy, 2013). The Liberal Government has held political power in Ontario since 2003. Since 2014, the MOE under the Liberal Government has held four overarching priorities

- achieving excellence;
- ensuring equity;
- promoting well-being; and,
- enhancing public confidence.

In addition to these four overarching priorities, the MOE has introduced a number of policies and strategies including *Achieving Excellence: a Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*, which are intended to “inspire our children and youth to become capable adults and fully engaged citizens.” This will help to ensure all students will develop “the skills and the knowledge that will lead them to become personally successful, economically productive and actively engaged citizens” and to “become the motivated innovators, community builders, creative talent, skilled workers, entrepreneurs and leaders of tomorrow” (MOE, 2014, p. 1). A number of strategies to support transitions, career, and life planning have been introduced as revised, expanded, or new polices and curricula.

**Success in high school and beyond.** In 2013, the MOE outlined the following four priorities: *success for students; strong people, strong economy; better health;* and, *safer communities* (emphasis added by author). The priority of *strong people, strong economy* encompassed a number of significant programs and initiatives including: specialist high skills majors; expanded cooperative education; dual credits; student success teachers and teams;
student voice; grade 8–9 transition teams; homework help; student success school support initiative; supervised alternative learning; and, the 21st century teaching and learning initiative. Though many of these activities were existing and established areas of policy and curriculum prior to 2013 in Ontario, the results-based plan briefing book detailed how they would be renewed or expanded over the fiscal year of 2013–14 (MOE, 2013).

In addition to the focus on programs and initiatives *Through Strong People, Strong Economy*, the Ontario Government launched *Stepping Up*, a strategic framework to help Ontario’s youth to succeed (Government of Ontario, 2014). The framework was structured around seven themes

- health and wellness;
- strong, supportive friends and families;
- education, training, and apprenticeships;
- employment and entrepreneurship;
- diversity, social inclusion, and safety;
- civic engagement and youth leadership; and,
- coordinated and youth friendly communities.

To support the implementation of this framework, the Ontario Government created (in consultation with researchers, youth, and community leaders and service providers), *Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development*, a resource intended to support those who work with youth aged 12 to 25. Included in this resource was an overview of youth development, a series of developmental maps, and tips for implementation.

A brief examination of the documents identified in the previous two paragraphs reveals some common issues relevant to this study. In the programs linked with *Strong People, Strong
Economy, significant attention was given to describing the benefit for Ontario students to
graduate with their high school diploma. The provision of specialist high skills majors,
cooperative education, and dual credit programs were described as ways for students to focus
their interests and learning towards employment and specific economic sectors, whilst
simultaneously earning necessary credits for successful graduation. Some diverse ways for
student to achieve credits and subsequently successfully graduate are explored, with prominence
placed upon the need to accommodate diverse student needs. All of the documents provided
descriptions of available support for student transitions and student engagement. For example,
the assistance available to students via dedicated student success teams and the CPS career/life
planning process. The documents, like the CPS, have an all-encompassing, holistic approach,
and the language is consistent in its description of programing, learning goals, outcomes, and
evaluations across different documents. All documents examined were aimed at K–12 student
populations, and were targeted across school and district school board job roles.

The Stepping Up framework emphasized the period of 12 to 25 years of age as a critical
period of human development, in particular with regard to developing relationships and cognitive
thinking abilities, and establishing successful roles, relationships, and responsibilities. These
features of human development were linked to producing “educated, healthy, creative and
resilient young people [who] are critical to support the economic and social future of our
province” (Ontario Government, 2014, p. 5). This document presented a holistic view of many
themes, that required contribution from multiple public sectors and services in order to
implement. Examples of case studies and initiatives that support implementation were specified
for each section of the 119-page document, and included initiatives provided, for example,
through OYAP, Jobs for Youth, Supporting Our Youth, and Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres.

**K–12 school initiatives and policies.** To explore what policy documents might relate to CPS, the policy actors of this study were asked to identify relevant policy documents that they accessed to support implementation of their relevant career guidance policy. All policy actors highlighted the relevance of policies for cooperative education, dual credits, and specialist high skills majors. Many of the policy actors also identified a number of polices that were holistically focused across K–12 grades, and entire school teachable subjects. For example, all of the policy actors at teacher, administrator, and coordinator levels reported accessing *Growing Success* (MOE, 2010), *Achieving Excellence* (MOE, 2014), *Ontario Schools K–12 Policy and Program Requirements* (MOE, 2011), *Learning for All* (MOE, 2013), and the *School Effectiveness Framework* (MOE, 2013, on a regular basis to both support their day-to-day working roles, and more specifically, the implementation of CPS.

One of the participant guidance counselors, Ethel, explained that the diversity of her role required her to have familiarity with all MOE documents that related to grades 9–12 in her school. Ethel highlighted what she considered important documents (see Figure 4.1), and described the impact of them upon her work:

I'm here as a conduit to make sure things happen. And so, you know… if there was a major [policy] change, okay, let's talk about maybe why? In terms of my policy driving it, it's the kids, it's the programs, the technology, and then it's how we, as a bunch of heads and leaders, work that policy in with what we're offering, right. And then where's it leading to? So we can't do it in isolation. We need that raft of policies.
We have to all work together, to see the connection… [to] implement policy together.

Although I identified and examined a limited range of MOE documents, they were all relevant to the implementation of CPS, and representative of the Ontario Government and Ministry of Education’s ‘across the grade’ approach to policy in public schools. In particular, they reinforced how CPS as a K–12 career/life planning policy was strongly linked with and aligned to many other MOE policies and initiatives. The linkages between documents reported by the policy actors in Ontario are explored more fully in chapter 5. The next section of this chapter describes the policy context for the other jurisdiction examined in this dissertation, England.

England

Similar to my description of the policy context for Ontario, the following section is not intended to portray in detail the complex policy environment in England at the time of data.
collection and through the duration of subsequent data analysis of this study. It is an attempt however, to provide some level of understanding of the changes that occurred in government policy between 2012 and the present time that resulted in major transformations to the delivery of career support for young people in England. It is important to note here, that there was a policy revision to the SG in 2015, and that this commentary is largely aimed at describing the policy context of the previous 2014 SG as it was applied at the time of data collection. The NSG policy has not changed in this time. The changes contained in the SG policy document, and implications of this revised 2015 version of the SG are discussed in chapter 6. What is important to acknowledge is that the overarching policy context during the period of 2013 until now has not fundamentally changed, as revealed by the policy actors of this study, and the latest relevant empirical studies. There remains a challenging policy context for careers guidance provision in secondary schools in England (Andrews, 2016).

In England, education policy is generated at UK Government level, with the Department for Education (DfE) responsible for education, children’s services, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills in England, and equalities (Gov.UK, 2016). Up until 2012, when the Coalition Government came to power, career support was managed through local education authorities (LEA’s), who worked in partnership with localized careers guidance to provide careers education, information, advice, and guidance to young people, including provision available through schools. The Education Act of 2011, transferred responsibility for careers guidance from the LEA’s to schools themselves. Simultaneously, the government removed the statutory duties on schools to provide careers education in the curriculum, and work-related learning at key stage 4 (ages 14–16). Instead, the government introduced a new statutory duty for schools to secure access for the students to “independent and impartial careers
guidance” (DfE, 2013), with no dedicated funding with which to achieve such provision (Hughes, 2014).

May 2014 saw another change in government, with the election of a Conservative Government. One of the targets the new government promptly outlined aimed to achieve full employment in the UK, with the highest employment rate in the G7 group of nations (Hughes, 2015). The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) reported that to meet this challenge, action would be needed on skills, as predictions were that increasingly, new jobs would require higher levels of skills (Wilson, Beaven, May-Gillings, & Stevens, 2014). The government has responded to this with a series of initiatives aimed at reshaping the framework for developing skills and “equipping young people to take up these opportunities” (Hughes, 2015). In particular, and as an example of two such initiatives, the number of apprenticeships and associated funding have been expanded, and the government has created five National Colleges. These highly specialized colleges are intended to train an estimated 21,000 students by 2020, in “sectors deemed crucial to future prosperity such as digital skills, high speed rail, onshore oil and gas, and creative and cultural industries” (Hughes, 2015).

Within this milieu, it is widely agreed that young people need both support and measures to develop appropriate skills, foster employability, and to prepare them for challenges and growing opportunities (e.g., Andrews, 2014; Borbély-Pecze & Hutchinson, 2013; Hughes, 2015; NFER, 2014). Seemingly, the DfE intends to ensure that young people are indeed, equipped to meet such challenges. The DfE has stated that it works “to achieve a highly educated society in which opportunity is equal for all, no matter what their background or family services” (“What we do,” 2016), and has set one of its overarching goals to ensure that young people are:
Prepared for adult life: all 19-year-olds complete school or college with the skills and character to contribute to the UK’s society and economy and are able to access high-quality work or study options. (What we do, 2016)

Nevertheless, the government’s policy on career support for young people in secondary schools has been increasingly seen as a failing policy (Langley, Hooley, & Bertuchi, 2014), a position supported by Tony Watts, one of the policy experts in this study.

In his interviews for this dissertation, Tony described that he had tracked the development of the implementation of the SG through a series of policy commentaries produced for Careers England. Careers England is a trade association for employers and traders involved in the provision of products and services promoting careers education and guidance in England.

Tony believed that the SG reflected how the government, by removing funding and emphasizing the role of employers in supporting youth to develop career aspirations, had effectively stated “we don’t need those career professionals and advisors at all… employers can do it all.” Tony felt very strongly that the policy shift had undermined the careers profession, with the historical development of careers provision in schools was effectively being “stripped out.” This, Tony conceded, was not necessarily problematic in schools where there remained a commitment to providing students with support with career preparation, “because they have got good people who believe in it, and know about it, and are able to use the resources that they had before.” Tony noted feeling that “effectively there is no policy, except to leave it to employers.”

Anthony Barnes, another policy expert participant, also discussed the shift in the policy from valuing the expertise of the careers profession to embracing the role of employers in supporting youth in their career aspirations. Anthony believed it was important to contextualize the policy change within the increased autonomy that was being provided to schools, a
contextual piece also considered important by Dr. Smith, another policy expert participant in this study. The policy experts all described that the autonomy agenda had provided a context where schools must take responsibility for their own interpretations of the SG, and decide how best to respond with appropriate career development provision for their students. Dr. Smith revealed that this context had initiated a process of policymakers, business leaders in the community, and education leaders contributing to attempting to keep the spotlight on careers provision. The emphasis of this work was “making a lot of noise and keeping the spotlight on careers.” Dr. Smith concluded “we are at a point now where we will see stronger links and better work I think coming into schools, and a more dynamic approach to careers education and guidance from a range of different players.”

The policy context in England that surrounds the implementation of the SG is a story of interconnectedness between historical provision for careers in schools and the shift to an aspirations agenda, which is underpinned by a policy of increased autonomy for leadership in schools. Within this climate, educators who remain passionate about the value of supporting young people with their career progression and development are trying to find ways to provide appropriate provision in their schools. They are clearly supported in this endeavor by a number of professionals like the policy experts of this study whose knowledge and expertise substantiates and validates careers provision in schools. With these two contrasting policy contexts outlined, I will now report the findings of the in-depth examination of three careers guidance policy documents as they apply to relevant jurisdictions.

Findings from Analyzing Creating Pathways to Success & Statutory Guidance

The following section of this chapter contains the results of the content analytic reviews of the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents. In keeping with the order that I have presented the
two jurisdictions in this study, his section commences with an introduction to the Ontario document and then is followed by the two documents from England. Following the document introduction, the findings are presented in order of the three main overarching themes of policy scope, policy outcomes, and policy content. These three themes emerged from the deductive analysis that explored Watts’ (2005) public policy goals in each of the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents. Each of these documents is reported on as applicable to the three overarching themes.

**Introduction to the Three Policy Documents**

*CPS* was introduced by the Ontario Ministry of Education during 2013, with full implementation planned for September 2014. Described by the Ministry as “the new career development policy for Ontario schools” (p. 3), the policy outlined an education and career/life planning program for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K–12) students. *CPS* is intended as a “whole-school program delivered through classroom instruction linked to the curriculum and through broader school programs and activities” (p. 3). The *CPS* document is 43 pages long, available in hard copy (paper-based) and electronic format, and is publically available in electronic format on the MOE’s website.

The *SG*, was introduced by the UK DfE for schools in England during 2012 with immediate full implementation. The policy outlined “why schools (and local authorities that maintain pupil referral units) must secure independent careers guidance for young people…”, and what they “…must do to comply with legal responsibilities in this area and the role of the governing body and head teacher in shaping the guidance and support offered by the school” (p. 4). The *SG* was not distributed in paper-based format, being available in electronic format on the DfE’s website, and the document is 18 pages in length. It is important to note that this document
content analysis refers to the updated 2014 version of the SG policy as this was pertinent at the time of collecting data for this study. The policy document was subsequently revised and further updated in 2015, and the implications of this for this study are discussed in chapter 6.

Within the SG are a number of must and should statements. These are important to define, as when a must statement is outlined, this means it is a statutory requirement for schools to implement. When a statement is preceded by a should, this means that a school is advised to consider this in its provision of careers guidance to students; however, there is not a statutory obligation on it to do so.

The NSG, was introduced by the DfE during 2012 with immediate full implementation. The purpose of this document was to act as a non-statutory resource to “help recipients understand their obligations and duties in relation to advice and guidance” (p. 4). The document features a selection of case-studies of best practice, and recipients are encouraged to “read this document alongside the statutory guidance on careers guidance and inspiration and the government’s Inspiration Vision Statement to support decisions on the most appropriate forms of independent advice and guidance for pupils” (p. 4). The document and its subsequent revisions were issued in electronic format only, and the 2014 archive and 2015 revised version remain available on the DfE website.

**Defining Career Guidance**

The methods employed by governments to recognize issues and concerns and prioritize them for government response are complex and sometimes opaque (Howlett et al., 2009). Often the best clue we have towards government intention is to examine the content of a policy as manifested in documentary form (Yanow, 1996). Therefore, a first step of my content analysis
was an exploration of the CPS, SG and NSG documents in terms of their underlying rationale and definition of career guidance (Delany, 2002), which are detailed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Defining and rationalizing career guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Document</th>
<th>CPS</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>NSG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition of career guidance</strong></td>
<td>“Education and career/life planning refers to a process that assists in the development and application of the knowledge and skills needed to make informed education and career/life choices” (p. 6).</td>
<td>“For the purposes of this statutory guidance, ‘advice and guidance’ refers to a coherent programme of activities that inform, inspire, and motivate young people, preparing them for work and helping them to understand where different education and training choices could take them in the future” (about this guidance, para. 1).</td>
<td>Not defined in this document.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Rationale** | Cites the following; Krumboltz and Worthington’s (1999) assertion that leading career development theories have suggested a link between an individual’s “access to accurate information and guidance,” and independent acquisition of skills “needed for effective career planning” (p. 6). | During 2013, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) undertook a survey of 60 schools in England to evaluate careers advice and guidance provision in England’s schools (Ofsted, 2013). The evaluation found some examples of good practice, however, the report concluded that the majority of schools needed to do more to provide high quality advice and guidance that motivated students to succeed. In response to the Ofsted report, the Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise, Mathew Hancock published an Inspiration Vision Statement (Hancock, 2013), and this is cited in the policy guidance as being a key driver for the implementation of the Statutory Guidance. The best motivation and advice tend to come from people in jobs themselves. I am calling on employers to offer more to schools and colleges, so that we are building the workforce they need for the future. I am also calling on educational institutions to seek more opportunities to help learners enter the world of work. I know many social enterprises and charities are already doing important work in this area, bringing benefits to young people and adults across the country. We need to build on and help expand this work (Hancock, 2013, p. 1). Advice and guidance is more likely to be effective where there is a clear focus on the outcomes the school is trying to achieve for pupils. The best schools have high aspirations for all of their pupils and demonstrate this by placing inspiration, mentoring and real-life insights into the workplace at the core of what they do. In considering how this best fits with their overall plans, schools can refer to the Inspiration Vision Statement, published by the Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise, Mathew Hancock, which describes how schools should meet their careers duty by working with employers and others to inspire young people about the world of work (p. 5). | }
Only the CPS and SG policy documents provided a definition of *careers guidance* (emphasis added by author). In the CPS, the term *careers guidance* is not used, instead the document refers to *career/life planning* (emphasis added by author). This is important, as it reflects the overarching approach to this policy as a K–12 initiative intended to support students to see the links and connections between their learning in school, and their plans for life beyond school. In addition, the CPS definition describes how students must not only develop knowledge to make informed career/life choices, but that they must be able to apply that knowledge and skills. This is reflective of the CPS policy outcomes that include a requirement for students to experience applying knowledge and skills in real-life workplace settings.

Contrastingly, the SG document outlined that students required access to information, as this, in turn, would motivate and inspire them with regard to post-secondary choices and planning. The SG definition did not consider opportunities for students to apply their learning in work related settings. This was interesting given the established body of empirical evidence that reports how access to work-related learning whilst in school has a range of benefits for youth. For example, benefits include; promoting resilience in at-risk youth (e.g., Zanibbi, Munby, Hutchinson, Versnel, & Chin, 2006), being an effective strategy to re-engage learners (e.g., Hooley, 2013), forging social connections and finding new enthusiasm for school (e.g., Raffo, 2003), and successful employment outcomes for youth with disabilities (e.g., Quintini, Martin, & Martin, 2007).

All three policy documents contained an underpinning rationale for the policy mandate they contained. Unsurprisingly, the SG and NSG were aligned to each other through an identical rationale. The rationale in both the SG and NSG emphasized the value for students to have access to a number of employers that could share inspirational stories about their working environments.
and job roles. Intriguingly, the rationale included in the *SG* that was based upon Mathew Hancock’s *Vision Statement* also identified value in educational institutions providing “opportunities to help learners enter the world of work” (Hancock, 2013, p. 1). However, it was unclear to me whether this was intended to translate into actual work-related experiences, or whether it intended that learners should be merely exposed to information about the world of work that supported transition to the world of work. A closer examination of the *Vision Statement* (Hancock, 2013) reiterated the desirability of providing learners with high aspirations, and included work experience as a “possible” way of achieving this.

In contrast, the *CPS* cited a number of empirical research studies in support of its underpinning rationale. The *CPS* reiterated the desirability of providing a comprehensive career/life planning program as a valuable way of supporting students of all ages with career/life planning processes. The *CPS* acknowledged that a finite and uncontested definition of career guidance remained elusive. Nevertheless, the *CPS* outlined that “fundamental principles and concepts, specific learning goals, and the need for strong programing that responds to the interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations of all students” was robustly established and evidenced, and subsequently presented a conclusive rationale for the policy mandate.

**Content of CPS, SG, and NSG**

My goal in exploring the *CPS, SG, and NSG* documents was to establish any key themes and sub-themes, that would enable me to describe the content of career guidance as a public policy phenomenon as expressed in the policies themselves (Patton, 2002). The key themes were categorized into the final cluster of overarching themes of policy scope, expected policy outcomes, and policy content, together with the sub-themes as they applied to each of the three
overarching themes. They are discussed in the following section of this chapter in the order they are presented, and commence with policy scope in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Occurrences of policy scope themes across the three policy documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Scope</th>
<th>Ontario CPS</th>
<th>England SG</th>
<th>England NSG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Learning</em></td>
<td>Instructional strategies (9)</td>
<td>Range of learning (1)</td>
<td>Real world relevance (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location of learning (5)</td>
<td>Environment (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Program type (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment of learning (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of learning (16)</td>
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<td>Role of educator/teacher (3)</td>
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<td>Opportunities and planning (14)</td>
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<td><em>Labour Market</em></td>
<td>Skills/knowledge (2)</td>
<td>Opportunities (5)</td>
<td>Role of employers (9)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exploration/exposure (8)</td>
<td>Role of employer (3)</td>
<td>Work experience (2)</td>
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<td>Habits of mind (4)</td>
<td>Role of brokerage (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Social Equity</em></td>
<td>Success (3)</td>
<td>Disadvantaged youth (4)</td>
<td>Choice (2)</td>
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<td>Aspirations (2)</td>
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<td>Realizing potential (1)</td>
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<td>Diversity &amp; equity (3)</td>
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*Figure in parentheses denote number of occurrences within each sub-theme*

**Policy Scope**

Policy Scope was conceptualized as the extent and range of the policy content, including any changes or evolutions since the inception of any previous version of the policy, all of the possible circumstances and options available to respond to such evolutions and changes, and might include the setting of particular goals and outcomes (Ball, 1994). The process of coding revealed a number of sub-themes within the policy scope overarching theme that were associated with the three public policy goals of learning, labour market, and social equity. The full range of sub-themes included within policy scope together with the frequency of their occurrences are detailed in Table 4.2.
Learning. Section 3 (pp. 11–20) of the CPS outlined the components and processes of the career/life planning policy, and these were structured as “the what, where, and how of learning” (p. 11). A great deal of emphasis was placed upon students learning within the education and career/life planning program, with a detailed framework (see Figure 4.2) utilized to “provide a starting point and a process for ongoing program development and student learning” (p. 13).

![Education and Career/Life Planning Framework: A Four-Step Inquiry Process](image)

*Figure 4.2. The CPS education and career/life planning framework.*

Educators were also encouraged to apply the framework to structure and develop appropriate learning activities for all students. Learning was a significant theme throughout the CPS, and to begin to reveal the many components and nuances of learning, data were sorted further into the resulting sub-themes: instructional strategies, location of learning, program type (e.g., cooperative education), assessment of learning, methods of learning, and the role of the educator...
and/or teacher. Instructional strategies had nine significant occurrences: and comprised of sub-themes of classroom instruction, program related activities, teaching and learning activities, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and diverse and engaging learning opportunities. Within all of these themes, educators are provided with clear examples of how these themes might transpire into practice within schools and classrooms, and expected learning outcomes were explicit and aligned to the learning experiences and opportunities. For example, as noted in CPS:

The experiences students have as they actively develop answers to the four key inquiry questions allow them to gather information about themselves and their opportunities; consider feedback from their teachers, parents, and peers; make decisions and set goals; and develop plans for achieving their goals. (p. 16)

A particular emphasis was placed upon strategies to encourage students to achieve deeper levels of understanding through the program content, for example, by providing students with opportunities to “review evidence of their learning” (p. 18) and “see the connections between what they are learning in school and its relevance and application beyond the classroom” (p. 28).

The theme of learning was embedded throughout CPS, and this was not altogether surprising given that the policy was also an outline of an education and career/life planning program.

Location of learning was defined within the CPS as the where of learning, with five significant occurrences. Emphasis was placed upon students having the opportunity to reflect upon their community involvement, either through the 40-hours diploma requirement, volunteering, school-wide and extra-curricular activities, or part-time employment. Learning that was to take place outside of classroom settings was clearly valued and encouraged in the CPS, and the roles of a number of people were acknowledged as being of value in supporting this strategy, including teachers, guidance counselors, peers, mentors, parents, and community
partners. Interestingly, employers were not explicitly linked to providing direct support with students learning external to the classroom setting, however, workplace supervisors were acknowledged as playing a vital role in supporting learning and development through cooperative education placements.

The relevance of other secondary school-based vocational or work-based learning programs were detailed, with nine occurrences. These included cooperative education, experiential learning, education and career/life exploration activities (e.g., work experience), programs with a pathways focus; for example, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship (OYAP), Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM), and school-to-work transition programs. All of these were presented as a source of learning opportunities for all grade 9–12 students, and they were promoted as being opportunities for students to develop metacognitive skills, make connections across various subjects and disciplines, and relate their learning to their lives beyond school. The sub-theme of making connections through learning was seen throughout CPS.

The section assessment of learning, with four occurrences as a sub-theme, was largely focused at students being able to assess their progress and evidence their achievement. In addition to students’ expected summative assessments necessary for successful acquisition of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (p. 22), the CPS determined that a “process must be in place for all students to capture evidence of learning in a portfolio called “All About Me” for Kindergarten to Grade 6, and in the Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) for Grades 7 to 12” (p. 20). A procedure must also be in place for students to “summarize and transfer their key learning” between these portfolios as they moved from Grade 6 to Grade 7.

Methods of learning had the highest number of occurrences as a sub-theme, with 16 significant mentions. Educators were advised on how to support students to utilize their
individual planning portfolio (IPP), a web-based portfolio to track and record all of their learning. By association, educators were expected to utilize a variety of methods of learning to provide students with numerous and varied opportunities to successfully engage in, undertake, reflect upon, and document their learning in the education and career life planning program. The role of educators, as facilitators and contributors in this student learning process, occurred as a sub-theme on three occasions. This was largely explored through the requirement for schools to establish an education and career/life planning program advisory committee, responsible for coordinating the “development, implementation, and evaluation” (p. 37) of a school’s program. The committee must include representatives of all members of the school community including administrators, teachers, students, parents, and members of the broader community. In secondary schools, the committee extended to include guidance staff who, it was suggested, “may play a key role in coordinating the development and implementation process” (p. 35).

The requirements for providing opportunities for learning for students in a deliberately planned manner was also embedded throughout the CPS. Given the far-reaching K–12 scope of the CPS policy, this was not unexpected. The CPS seems to be structured in such a way as to allow a wide variety of educator policy actors room for individual interpretation and subsequent implementation of the CPS appropriate to their educational institution needs. For example, the policy includes sections on education and career/life planning through “school-wide activities” (p. 32), and “activities in the community” (p. 33). School-wide activities are varied and include experiential learning opportunities linked with community outside of school. Community activities include undertaking civic responsibilities, volunteering, and part-time employment. All schools are required to establish an “Education and Career/Life planning Program Advisory Committee” (p. 36), that must, amongst other duties, develop a “communication plan that fosters
support among all stakeholders for the implementation of the program in the school, at home, and in the community” (p. 36).

In contrast to the extensive inclusion of the theme of learning in the CPS, a close examination of the SG revealed very few mentions of learning. Where learning was included, it was described as being part of Mathew Hancock’s response to the Ofsted report that had reported on an inspection of the SG implementation in schools. In his Vision Statement (Hancock, 2014), Hancock described how “employers, schools and others will work together to inspire young people about the world of work, opening their eyes to the range of learning and career opportunities that are open to them” (DfE, p. 5). This was noteworthy from two perspectives. First, the decision to place employers before schools in the list of people who would support students with career opportunities provides a clue as to the priority placed upon the role of schools in supporting careers provision by the DfE. Second, learning was presented as something that the students might “have their eyes open to,” rather than as a deliberate strategy for engaged, reflective, deep learning that is purposefully structured to support students’ ongoing career development.

In the NSG, the theme of learning was connected to ensuring students were exposed to real world relevance. This sub-theme emerged in a case study where a school had sought to develop “sustainable school-business partnerships” (DfE, p. 13), and was underpinned by the need for the school to raise awareness of different careers, particularly in STEM subjects. The other explicit link with learning was demonstrated in a case study where a school had implemented a mentoring program involving local employers. Describing the nuances of the mentoring program, the case study example revealed how student mentees would attend a weekly tutorial in the school “to help them make best use of their mentor and learn from each
other” (DfE, p. 10). In the 12 individual case studies included in the NSG, none of them made explicit reference to the role of a school or educator in supporting students learning in careers related experiences.

**Labour market.** Though not extensively detailed within CPS, sub-themes linked to the labour market theme surfaced twice as a sub-theme of a requirement to provide opportunities for students to develop skills and knowledge of the labour market, eight times as a sub-theme of gaining exposure to and/or exploring the labour market, and four times as the sub-theme of forming habits of mind to help them prepare for future career/life including entering the labour market. Where skills were mentioned, they included job search, employment retention, and essential skills, and knowledge included gathering information about different occupations and technical skills related to specific work sectors. In addition, students were expected to have opportunities to develop their knowledge about what kind of work and occupations they would like to do.

The sub-theme of being exposed to and having opportunities to explore the labour market manifested as participating in work experience, cooperative education, specialized vocational programs, and other “school-wide activities” (e.g., workshops, seminars, field trips) that “can help broaden students’ awareness of opportunities for ongoing learning, involvement in the community and future work” (MOE, p. 32). Habits of mind, though not mentioned explicitly in the CPS policy document, was a sub-theme embedded in the descriptions of what the students should be learning and experiencing as part of their career/life planning, for example in developing “essential skills and work habits (as described in the Ontario Skills Passport)” (MOE, p. 32).
Similar to the *CPS*, the *SG* policy document frequently pointed to the need for students to take advantages to broaden their horizons, and learn more about the opportunities available and how to access them (p. 9). However, in contrast to *CPS* where educators were significantly expected to support this process for students, the *SG* policy determined that employers were well positioned to “pass on the benefits of their experience to both pupils and teachers” (section 28, para. 1). The *SG* conceded that schools had a “critical role to play in preparing young people for the next stage of their education or training or beyond” (section 11, para. 1), and emphasized the necessity for schools to set high expectations for all students.

Interestingly, the outcome linked to this statement about high expectations was expanded to include “every pupil is stretched and acquires the attributes that employers value” (section 11, para. 1), however, what these attributes actually consisted of was not clearly identified. The *SG* described the necessity for schools to provide a clear focus on “the enterprise skills, experience and qualifications that employers want” (DfE, p. 10). In addition, schools were expected to help students gain the confidence to compete in the labour market. However, explicit links to sources of independent, impartial, accurate, and up to date labour market information as a resource for schools were not signposted in *SG*. Instead, as suggested in *SG*, “schools can work within local partnerships with other schools, the local authority and other partners to understand pathways locally, and embed intelligence on the local economy” (DfE, p. 12).

**Social equity.** A number of positive social equity outcomes are associated with successful education and the labour market transitions, including, promoting social inclusion, addressing the needs of minority groups and the disadvantaged, and integrating the poorly qualified in education and employment (Sweet & Watts, 2004). *CPS* defined the importance of positive “beliefs about student success” (p. 9) early in the document, highlighting that all
students could be successful, that success came in many forms, and there were many pathways to success. Though these three main perspectives contributed to the overarching theme of success, differentiated programing to provide all students with access to effective career/life planning was also repeated as a sub-theme throughout CPS. Similarly, students being provided with the opportunity to “grow and reach their potential” (p. 9), and programing that responds to the “interests, strengths, needs, and aspirations of all students” (p. 7) was emphasized.

The inclusive approach of CPS has significant implications for implementing the CPS policy across K–12 schools. Educators must carefully construe what this means for their individual student cohorts, and balance this with the resources available to support differentiated learning appropriate and relevant to meet individual student needs. CPS accepts that every student is unique, but also highlights broad developmental stages that are common to the majority of students. Educators are pointed to the MOE’s Stepping Stones: Ontario Youth Policy Framework (2012) as a resource, and are advised to recognize that students interest, strengths, needs, and aspirations evolve as they proceed through school from Kindergarten to Grade 12, effective education and career/life planning programs provide learning opportunities that are relevant, challenging, and engaging to students at every stage of development. (MOE, p. 14)

The social equity theme identified in the SG manifested as an emphasis to ensure disadvantaged youth were also included in the high expectations that schools should be setting for all students. Disadvantaged youth occurred four times as sub-theme to the social equity theme, with the main focus being on reducing the gaps in successful transitions to post-secondary destinations between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged youth. The SG outlined an expectation on schools to facilitate access to “a range of inspirational role models” as this could
“instill resilience, goal setting, hard work and social confidence in pupils, encouraging them to overcome barriers to success” (DfE, p. 9). The SG concluded that the approach “can particularly benefit pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who may get less support from family and social networks” (p. 9).

In the Key Points section of the SG, access to education and training, together with the setting of high expectations by schools, was linked to the possibility for “every young person to realize their potential and so increase economic competitiveness and support social mobility” (section 11, para. 1). Neither economic competitiveness nor social mobility were defined or contextualized further in the SG document. The success of careers and inspiration activity in schools was to be judged by in its effectiveness by schools through consideration of attainment and destinations of pupils, and the DfE reminded schools that these data were available from the Destinations Measures Data published by the DfE. Success in the form of higher numbers of pupils progressing to universities and apprenticeships was described as being important in closing “the gap in destinations between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and others” (section 13, para. 1). The SG did not include specific guidance for assessment strategies within career guidance programing.

In the NSG, the beginning section (p. 5) considered the advantages for all students when they were provided with extensive choices regarding post-secondary destinations and employment planning. In providing students with choices, the need for impartial information and advice was emphasized. The additional occurrence that contributed to the social equity theme was found in one of the case studies that outlined how one school has supplemented its in-house careers provision with impartial careers guidance. The case study described how the school had used its pupil premium allocation to design a tailor made program for its students. The program
had included a range of activities which intended to facilitate students to “discuss and challenge stereotyping and gender issues” (DfE, p. 11).

**Expected Policy Outcomes**

Expected policy outcomes were conceptualized as comprising the learning outcomes, specific skills and/or knowledge students would acquire from CPS, the SG, and the NSG policies, in addition to any observable and measurable evaluation of the policies (Ball, 1994). Once again, my content analysis sought to establish how the CPS, SG and NSG were associated with the three public policy goals of learning, labour market, and social equity. These were coded according to a series of sub-themes within the overarching policy outcome theme. A full list of occurrences of the sub-themes within the policy outcome theme is provided in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3. Occurrences of policy outcomes themes across the three policy documents.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Outcomes</th>
<th>Ontario CPS</th>
<th>England SG</th>
<th>England NSG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation of program (3) Gathering evidence (11)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labour Market</strong></td>
<td>Expertise, skills, knowledge (3)</td>
<td>Role of employer (3)</td>
<td>Role of employers (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Equity</strong></td>
<td>Outcomes of learning (3)</td>
<td>Economic competitiveness (1)</td>
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</tbody>
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*Figure in parentheses denote number of occurrences

**Learning.** In the CPS, there were two sub-themes that contributed to the overarching learning theme. First, provision for students learning within their education and career/life planning should be evaluated within the overall program evaluation, with this theme notably occurring on three occasions. Second, students were expected to gather evidence of their learning within their portfolios and IPPs. Students were expected to gather evidence from actively developing answers to four key questions that help them to both gather information about themselves, and to develop plans for achieving their goals. Gathering evidence was a sub-theme
revealed through 11 significant occurrences. Schools and district school boards were expected to
develop and implement evaluation strategies that aligned with indicators for pathways planning
(e.g., School Effectiveness Framework) and put processes into place to gather varied types of
data to measure program effectiveness. Included was the requirement to collect student feedback,
and inclusion of student voice featured prominently throughout CPS.

An overarching goal of program evaluation was to assess “how well the program is
succeeding in helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need for effective
education and career/life planning” (MOE, p. 39). Throughout section 6 (pp. 35–41) of the CPS,
the role and responsibility of a number of policy actors in contributing to evaluation of the CPS
was determined. Policy actors included teachers, guidance counselors, principals, district school
boards, parents, students, and community partners. Limited information was provided towards
how such a wide-ranging contribution from so many parties could be effectively and
meaningfully coordinated and collated, and I suspect schools will rely heavily on existing
structures for such evaluation.

To prompt students to gather evidence of their learning, they were expected to respond to
the “Framework: Areas of Learning and Enquiry Questions” (p. 12) of; who am I? what are my
opportunities? who do I want to become? and, what is my plan for achieving my goals?
(emphasis added by author). Students subsequently worked through a diagnostic assessment
process to “document and reflect on their experiences and learning, discuss what they are
learning, and weigh their options for next steps, their competence in education, and career/life
planning grows” (p. 16). In addition to students gathering evidence of meeting learning goals and
outcomes, the Education and Career/Life Planning Program Advisory Committee was
responsible for developing and implementing “strategies and procedures for measuring program
effectiveness” (p. 37). The committee must also ensure quantitative and qualitative data are gathered that demonstrate alignment with indicators for pathways programing as indicated in board and school improvement planning.

Labour market. There were three occurrences of the sub-theme of assessing students’ knowledge, skills, and expertise as they directly related to the labour market, or of matters connected to the labour market. For example, students were required to develop knowledge of “a variety of fields of work, occupations, and careers, and develop an awareness of local and global trends (e.g., demographic, technological, economic, social) on the opportunities connected to them” (p. 15). This sub-theme was also seen in the SG and the NSG, however, in contrast to the CPS, the discourse was far more grounded in the role of employers in providing opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge of the labour market. When the term labour market was mentioned it was in very broad terms, and did not feature specific examples such as demographic, technological etc., in the same way as CPS. Within the SG and the NSG, policy outcomes were conceptualized as being the specific skills and/or knowledge students would acquire from being exposed to the careers guidance and inspiration policy. Limited linkages were made within the SG and NSG of any associated benefits to students of being able to engage in deeper levels of learning that could support their transitions to post-secondary destinations and career planning.

Social equity. Within this theme in CPS, social equity was linked with ensuring all students were supported with transitions, and with equal opportunities to successfully transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9, and from Grade 12 to their post-secondary destination. Successful transitions were very much expressed as an outcome of successful learning within the education and career/life planning program. To facilitate this, schools were required to provide orientation
programs to support transitions, and “multiple and varied opportunities and resources to inform the planning process” (p. 23). Section 4 of the CPS (pp. 21–25), details transition planning efforts that must be made by all schools and district school boards. A small section referred specifically to the needs of students with special educational needs, and transitions included all transitions such a student might face. For example, entry to school, transitions between grades, transitions between various settings and classrooms, moving from school to school or school to outside agency, transitioning from elementary to secondary, and from secondary to post-secondary destinations. The responsibility for coordinating and developing this support fell to the school principal.

Within the SG, two sections detailed the range of support schools must provide for disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs. First, schools were expected to share information about students with their local education authority, however the information that they must (emphasis added by author) share included “basic information such as the pupil’s name, address, and date of birth” (DfE, p. 14). Schools were also advised that they should (emphasis added by author) share information with the local authority that might be needed to support the individual student to participate in education and training. For example, a school should choose to share information to help identify those students at-risk of becoming NEET. Schools were reminded that they could not share this information for a student aged under 16 without parental consent being in place. Schools were further advised that they should work with their local authority to “ensure they know what services are available, and how many young people can be referred for support” (p. 14). Interestingly, there seemed no statutory requirement that schools must know how to access the specific ranges of support for successful transitions
and career planning that might be needed by at-risk youth or youth with disabilities, rather it was left to the individual school to determine what was needed on a case-by-case basis.

Within the SG, schools were strongly encouraged to create a learning environment that inspired pupils to “tackle real-life challenges which require them to manage risk and to develop their decision making, team building and problem solving skills” (Inspiring young people, section 25, para. 1). Once again the SG promoted the setting of high expectations for all students, and introduced the benefits of students being able to “access a range of inspirational role models” with associated benefits detailed as the instilling of “resilience, goal setting, hard work and social confidence” (section 25, para. 1). This approach was explained as being particularly advantageous for “pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who may get less support from family and social networks” (section 25, para. 1).

Policy Content

Policy content was conceptualized as selected pedagogy and domains of teaching and learning influencing a process of study, skills, and knowledge, that when combined, create a program of learning. The CPS, SG, and NSG policies were closely examined to reveal any occurrences of lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and WBE and VET and where they were presented as deliberate initiatives for supporting secondary school-based career guidance and planning. A full description of the sub-themes and amount of significant occurrence within each policy document is reported in Table 4.4.

Lifelong learning. In CPS, reference to lifelong learning occurred right at the commencement of the policy, where it was included within the vision statement. CPS clearly intended that students would commence a lifelong learning process right from kindergarten, that would subsequently continue to be developed through each grade until they reach grade 12.
Table 4.4. Occurrences of policy content themes across the three policy documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Content</th>
<th>Ontario CPS</th>
<th>England SG</th>
<th>England NSG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
<td>Planning (4)</td>
<td>Choices (1)</td>
<td>Ambition (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge/mastery (3)</td>
<td>Inspiration for long-term planning (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuity/habits of mind (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Mismatch</td>
<td>Intentional programing (5)</td>
<td>What employer wants (2)</td>
<td>Skills valued by employers (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Apprenticeships (2)</td>
<td>Vocational options (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Options (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>University Technical Colleges (1)</td>
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</table>

*Figure in parentheses denote number of occurrences*

What is noteworthy is the CPS acknowledged that education and career/life planning should continue well beyond compulsory education, and an overarching goal for CPS was to ensure that students also accepted and embraced this lifelong learning process. This was important, as the CPS policy hinged on all policy actors undertaking a holistic approach to both interpretation of the policy and its subsequent implementation. It also required policy actors to be committed to supporting students in envisaging their lives beyond compulsory schooling, and any subsequent post-secondary learning or training. As an example, lifelong learning was contextualized as the necessity for students to undertake long-term planning to support “education, career, and life” (p. 4).

Much of the data linked the need for students to develop knowledge and skills to assist with their planning for successful long-term outcomes. Planning was also conceptualized as being a “lifelong process that requires all learners to be flexible and able to adapt to changes in themselves and in the world around them” (p. 4), while a major goal of CPS was to enable students “to become confident, independent, and effective education and career/life planners throughout their lives” (p. 13).
Within the SG, students having the opportunity to be inspired by “real-life contacts” from “the world of work” was explicitly linked to “students being able to understand where different choices can take them in the future” (p. 5). In addition, continuous and wide-ranging “contact with employer networks, further education (FE) colleges, higher education (HE) institutions, mentors, coaches, alumni, and other high achieving individuals” was described as motivational and informative for students. In particular, the SG defined that it could encourage students to “consider a broader and more ambitious range of future education and career options” (p. 9). Remarkably, the SG did not define “a high achieving individual” (p. 9), nor did it provide guidance regarding best practice for building effective mentorship or coaching relationships.

Very limited consideration towards facilitating and promoting lifelong learning perspectives was found in the NSG policy. Where it was included was in section 6, setting clear goals (emphasis added by author), and advised schools to set clear goals for students, inspiring and encouraging them to “think about their future possibilities; to aim high, motivating them in school as well as beyond” (p. 5). Though this statement acknowledged students’ lives beyond school, the perspective was one of facilitating their aspirations, rather than providing effective advice and guidance to scaffold student’s efforts to become lifelong learners.

Skills mismatch. The theme of skills mismatch was not overtly seen in the CPS policy. In contrast, a major goal of the SG was to vigorously encourage schools to build strong connections with employers. Citing the “mismatch between the careers that young people want to pursue and the opportunities available” (section 27, para. 1), the policy guidance outlined how evidence from the Education and Employers Taskforce demonstrated “that access to a network of employers is associated with better outcomes for young people” (section 28, para. 1). The Education and Employers Taskforce was launched in 2009 as an independent charity supported
by initial funding from the Government Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to ensure every school and college in England had effective relationships with employers (Cruickshank, 2009).

The theme of schools needing to engage with employers was threaded throughout the SG, but only represents one sub-theme, for students to avoid skills mismatch by giving employers what employers want. This manifested in the SG as an emphasis for schools to “ensure [that] real-world connections with employers lie at the heart of the strategy” (section 29, para. 1). Examples of what employer roles might look like within this strategy were defined as; mentoring and coaching, speaking in schools, workplace visits and work experience placements, work ‘taster’ events such as games and competitions, careers fairs and careers networking events, open days at universities and colleges, access to creative online resources, and help with career management skills such as CV writing, CV building, job searches, and job interviews (section 29, para. 1). The SG further emphasized that “choices made at school should be based on a clear view of the current labour market and how opportunities might change in the future” (p. 9).

The NSG also underlined the importance of schools working with employers to ensure that students acquired the skills valued by employers. Though only mentioned once in this explicit terminology, the 12 case studies featured within the NSG all contain elements that reflect an underlining perspective towards students needing to hone their skills to match employer needs. Little attention is given to how students might identify or keep current with any changes that might occur to employer needs, and the possibility of employers contributing to employee skill development through training and professional development is also not considered.

**Work-based education (WBE) and vocational education and training (VET).** CPS clearly placed value upon students participating in vocational and work-related programs,
highlighting a variety of intentional VET programing available in Ontario public schools. Particular mention was made of experiential learning, cooperative education, dual credit, specialist high skills majors, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship. All of these programs were highlighted as being able to provide students with “learning opportunities that allow them to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life work-related situations” (p. 28). All of these VET programs and options for students were included in section 5 (pp. 26–34) and were described as “the where of learning” (p. 26). The CPS also highlights the compulsory Grade 10 Careers Studies course that is available for all students through the guidance and career education curriculum. This curriculum also includes a number of optional career education courses that students can take during Grade 11 and 12.

The VET options and programs are described as providing students with “a wide range of opportunities in and outside of the classroom to practice education and career/life planning” (p. 27). Such opportunities are also deliberately linked to all of the other subject area curriculum policy documents. For Grades 1–8 all curriculum policy documents in the current review cycle of the MOE contain a chapter called “Some Considerations for Program Planning” (p. 28). This chapter includes a sub-section called “building career awareness” which is “focused on students’ exploration of their strengths and skills and on career exploration opportunities” (p. 28). For grades 9–12 documents, there is a section that is focused on career education. Any curriculum documents released during 2013 onwards align fully with the CPS.

A range of education and career/life exploration activities and experiential learning are delivered in connection with the Ontario secondary school curriculum, and they may also be provided on a school-wide basis as part of a career education program. Within this structure, the curriculum included the opportunity for students to take cooperative education programs that
provided them with the opportunity to earn credits towards their secondary school diploma whilst completing a work placement that is directly related to the learning expectations of a secondary school course. Students received mentorship from a workplace supervisor and cooperative education teacher whilst they were completing their cooperative education credit. The CPS highlighted the *Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 2000* as a further resource.

In addition to cooperative education, the CPS emphasized that many secondary schools and district school boards provide programs that “focus on students’ preparation for postsecondary endeavors and to address particular interests” (p.31). Such programs included dual credit, OYAP, SHSM, and school-to-work transition programs. Throughout the brief descriptions of these options, terminology and language was targeted towards providing students with flexible and varied opportunities to achieve success in their learning, and facilitating students to subsequently transfer that learning success to life after their compulsory schooling.

In the SG, the role of VET is not considered as a programing option for students to engage in real-life experience of the world of work. Instead, schools were strongly encouraged to help students “to access information on the full range of education and training options and engage with other local learning providers” (p. 11). The focus was very much on students being provided with information of a “full range of education and training options, including apprenticeships and vocational pathways” (p. 11). The SG detailed options including GCSEs offered by local university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools. UTCs were described as new academy schools that are backed by employers and universities, for 14–19 year olds specializing in one or two curriculum areas, for example, engineering and construction. There were, at the time of this study, 39 UTCs opened with plans to open a total of more than 50 by
2018 (“University Tech,” 2016). Studio Schools were described as new academies (state schools) for 300 students aimed at “those in the 14–19 age range, who learn in more practical ways” (p. 11). Studio Schools were defined as offering GCSEs in English, mathematic, and science, alongside work placements and projects directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area.

Limited information was provided in the SG about Studio Schools, but an internet search for the term “studio schools” identified a designated website where the following information was gleaned. To date, 39 schools have opened, with 5 more in the pipeline (“Current School Locations” 2016). In addition to their GCSEs and work placement, students are also expected to develop a number of employability skills that are defined in a framework called CREATE (outlined in Figure 4.3).

The Studio Schools website promoted the CREATE framework as “grounded in a wide range of skills typologies and has been developed specifically for Studio Schools in order to equip young people with the key employability skills they need to flourish in life” (“CREATE Framework” 2016). Studio Schools were not promoted as vocational schools, rather they were seen as a state school that offered both academic and vocational qualifications, and they delivered their qualifications “out of the traditional classroom setting through Enterprise Projects. What was particularly noteworthy was that students would need to make a planned decision to attend a Studio School. The SG outlined that “in good time before the decision points schools should ensure that pupils are informed about the options available, including… Post 14 GSCEs; options offered by local university technical colleges and studio schools” (p. 11).
CREATE Framework
The CREATE framework is grounded in a wide range of skills typologies and has been developed specifically for Studio Schools in order to equip young people with the key employability skills that they need to flourish in life.

![CREATE Framework Diagram](http://studioschoolstrust.org/sites/default/files/CREATE%20Handout%20Oct%202012.pdf)

Figure 4.3. The CREATE framework of employability skills for Studio School students.

Consequently, information about the availability of this choice would need to be provided to students in a timely manner for them to commence study at a Studio School at age 14. Given that the SG outlined the requirement for all registered students to have access to independent careers guidance from year 8 (ages 12–13) this seemingly leaves limited time for students to pursue their education at a Studio School, if they are reliant on receiving their careers guidance as specified in the SG policy to find out their option of being able to attend a Studio School.
Very limited consideration of VET was found in the NSG policy document, with one mention in the section *Meeting the careers guidance duty: preparing young people for work*, where under the *needs and interventions* section, schools were asked to consider whether students “had access to impartial information and advice on a broad range of options to include…vocational routes” (p. 5).

**Chapter Summary**

This examination of three purposefully selected policy documents was informed by Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) content analytic approach to document analysis. This method guided my practical decisions about how to code the documents, and enhanced my understanding of how three public policy goals of learning, labour market, and social equity were represented in career guidance policy in secondary schools in Ontario and England. In addition, my approach revealed that to some extent, lifelong learning, skills mismatch, and VET were represented in all policies as intentional responses for contributing to the public policy goals.

In considering the content of each policy, I compared the nuances and extent of each policy’s contribution towards achieving these public policy goals. The CPS policy included the most far-reaching contributory content, and the structure of the policy as a combined policy and program, together with the contextual policy landscape in Ontario, goes some way to explaining why this should be the case. As a career development policy, it contained a comprehensive education and career/life planning program for all students from K–12, that must be delivered through classroom instruction linked to the broader school curriculum. By contrast, the SG policy consisted of guidance from the DfE that recipients must have regard to when carrying out duties related to providing advice and guidance in their secondary schools. It was not intended to determine actual career guidance programing. The NSG was a non-statutory policy document
that, when read alongside the SG, provided a number of case studies that were intended to help the recipients understand their obligations and duties.

Regardless of these policy content differences, all three policy documents required interpretation in order for policy actors to formulate appropriate responses. The contextual policy landscape of each jurisdiction situated these interpretations, and clearly contributed to a number of challenges that needed navigation, and perhaps mitigation, as part of the interpretive process and subsequent decision-making regarding career guidance provision. The next chapter reports the findings of 34 interviews with 25 policy actors who shared their insights and understandings of what this complex interpretive process meant to them.
CHAPTER 5:

POLICY ACTOR SENSEMAKING

This chapter reports the findings of the context analytical exploration of the three selected career guidance policy documents, which were detailed in Table 3.1 in chapter 3. The advantage of employing a context analytical approach to analyzing CPS, SG, and NSG, was that it allowed for exploration of the social realities and situated meanings (Miller & Alvarado, 2005) of the 25 policy actors that were generated through their interactions with and interpretations of these three policy documents (Prior, 2003). A summary of the 25 policy actors highlighting their jurisdiction and school pseudonym is detailed in Table 5.1.

I constructed a series of the thematic findings of this chapter to reflect (a) how the appropriate policy documents were accessed by the policy actors in each jurisdiction, (b) what their preferred format for documents was, (c) how the policy actors interacted with their policy documents, (d) what the initial purpose of reading their policy document was for each policy actor, (e) what particular lens each policy actor engaged as they read their policy documents, (f) how the policy actors made sense of their policy documents, (g) how the policy actors defined career guidance, and, (h) how the policy actors interpreted career guidance as public policy. This series of themes allowed me to analyze the CPS, SG, and NSG documents in action, revealing how they were enrolled into activity and functions by policy actors, and establishing a deep understanding of how these career guidance policy documents were performed (Prior, 2003, p. 173). In the following section the first three themes were merged to become Access, Preferred Format, and Interaction with Policy Documents (emphasis added by author). The remaining themes were discussed in the following sections, Reading Purpose and Reading Lens, The Policy
Interpreting Documents and Making Sense of Public Policy Goals

Actors as Sensemakers of Career Guidance Policy, Defining Career Guidance, and Career Guidance as Public Policy.

Access, Preferred Format, and Interaction with Policy Documents

Miller and Alvarado (2005) asserted that the accessibility of documents was embedded in social practices based upon judgements of individuals or institutions to permit or withhold access to any given person or organization. Miller and Alvarado also claimed that biases could result in the limited availability of disenfranchised people or institutions in gaining access to documents. Sometimes these manifested as less obvious biases through the selection, detainment, and storage of documents, for example private archives or electronic storage that is password protected. In this situation, documents might become unavailable to individuals who might otherwise have access to them. As a result, the implications of documents access, preferred format, and interaction with documents by the policy actors of this study were considered an important part of revealing the social processes of document selection, exchange, and use.

Access. When initially asked to explain how they accessed policy documents, many policy actors from both jurisdictions valued networking with colleagues as a means to access and distribute documents. For example, Dr. Smith a policy expert from England, explained that although technology assisted distribution, networking skills also played an important role “I’m a good networker and I am an avid researcher so I have strategies that guide me every day as to what’s coming in.” David Andrews, another England policy expert, agreed by indicating, “if you start to then establish the networks, somebody will alert you to something that is in the pipeline, or is just come out.”
Table 5.1. Summary of the 25 policy actor participants of this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real name or Pseudonym</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Geographic Location</th>
<th>Real name or Pseudonym</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Geographic Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Bezanson</td>
<td>Executive Director Emeritus of the Canadian Career Development Foundation.</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Tony Watts, OBE</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>England/UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Anthony Barnes</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>David Andrews, OBE</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>Guidance Instructional Leader</td>
<td>Ontario A</td>
<td>Dr. Smith, OBE</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>England/UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>Instructional Program Leader</td>
<td>Ontario B</td>
<td>Annie</td>
<td>Connexions Careers Advisor</td>
<td>England B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Ontario B Birch View High</td>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>Off-Site Provision Manager</td>
<td>England B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Ontario A Oak Ridge High</td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>TFL and Post-16 Manager</td>
<td>England B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Ontario A Willow Fall High</td>
<td>James</td>
<td>Research and Development Manager</td>
<td>England A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Guidance Counsellor</td>
<td>Ontario A Oak Ridge High</td>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>Assistant Head Teacher</td>
<td>England A Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilly</td>
<td>Guidance Counsellor</td>
<td>Ontario A Willow Fall High</td>
<td>Judith</td>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>England A Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethel</td>
<td>Guidance Counsellor</td>
<td>Ontario B Maple Heights High</td>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Careers and Higher Education Advisor</td>
<td>England A The Grove School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Guidance Counsellor</td>
<td>Ontario B Birch View High</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Futures Advisor</td>
<td>England B Tanglewood School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Careers Advisor</td>
<td>England B Mulberry High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tony Watts (England policy expert) highlighted the value of forging mutually beneficial relationships to support policy implementation “what I do, I think, is to try and both analyze and
inform policy. I always maintain links with civil servants…I think networking and having good relationships is vital.” Lynne Bezanson, an Ontario policy expert, explained that the fluidity and international reach of her work resulted in the need to access all types of documents from many different origins. Lynne referred to both the influence of her organization and the practices employed to source documents as she explained “there are very few areas around where I would say people here at the Foundation don’t know someone, or know someone who knows someone, where we can't make those connections…” This applied regardless of Lynne’s area of work project, whether policy, practice, or training based, or working with government. Similarly, when discussing how he accessed CPS, Edgar another Ontario policy expert, highlighted that his connections with the schools’ system provided “insider knowledge” of when the CPS document was initially available online.

In the England data, Martin’s description of how he accessed policy documents in his school, the Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive in England A, helped me to further understand the SG policy access and implementation through networks. Martin revealed that he did not always know which policy documents were sent to the head teacher. He explained that his usual source of accessing policy was “through the news, through union guidance, through courses that are available, or through colleagues from other schools.” Martin clarified that his school was part of a partnership in excellence consortium, consisting of “seven or eight schools across the county “who seemed to be at the cutting edge of education, and are proactive.” Martin explained the value of this source of “creating references, resources, and sources of support and guidance, the best practice to other schools,” citing how this kept him up to date.

The account of accessing policy documents provided by Martin via his networks were important, as they provided potential for policy implementation to become adapted to diverse
contexts (Yanow, 1996). In particular, when a school in Martin’s consortium implemented the SG and subsequently shared that implementation account to other schools in their network, the receivers of that account were no longer reacting to the original policy, but rather to the interpretation of implementation that had been shared with them. Subsequently, even though the policy implementation by other schools in the consortium may only vary by quite small amounts, each new subsequent interpretation and implementation would be based upon new views of the original SG policy (Yanow, 1996).

Underpinning the recognition of the role of networking, was a mutual acknowledgment that each of the four England policy experts’ job roles provided a rich historical and contextual resource that situated any new career guidance policy document. Tony Watts emphasized that by producing policy commentaries he was making an “attempt to pay attention to the detail of the policy documents and spell out their implications and contextualize them.” In order to do this effectively, he would undertake a process to “relate them to other things to show how they have changed, what’s been said before, and what some of the implications are.” Anthony Barnes described building his resource bank by not throwing anything away, “you know I’ve got an archive that goes back and covers policy initiatives from even before I got involved in careers work in 1973.” Drawing upon his 25 years plus of working in the career development field, David Andrews identified that “one of the key parts of my work is to read everything a teacher should read, that they have not got time to read.” Interestingly, when asked to identify policy documents that supported her work, Dr. Smith highlighted colleagues in the field, and considered David Andrews to “really be a leading expert in careers education in England…David has got a really good handle on the issues that teachers are grappling with, so he would be the kind of go-to person.”
All policy actors valued electronically available documents for being easy to access and distribute to colleagues. One of the England B intermediaries, Annie, highlighted a process within her organization where senior management alerted staff to relevant documents in addition to providing hard copies of pertinent documents in the staff room. Annie understood that any documents that were distributed by the senior management in this way were important, as these documents defined how she was expected to undertake her work with young people, and provide evidence of that work. Which, Annie explained, was crucial, because of the situation with things like [youths’] different needs. “We need to know how long they've been NEETs, where they come from before they were NEETs…this is all government requirements, so this details what services we can offer and the cycle of activities, which really underpins this document.” As Annie shared this insight of her working practice, she picked up her organization’s service level agreement document, and briefly held it close, before sharing it with me.

For all four of the England intermediaries, there were a number of sources to access electronic policy documents including, being steered towards them by colleagues, being sent them directly from colleagues, or accessing them first-hand from relevant websites. These sources were varied, and were often accessed without preference. James from England A, for example, highlighted that his job role required liaison with colleagues to access and distribute policy documents, and create additional documents as needed to support overall organizational goals. James explained that a prerequisite of his role was to create frameworks to support schools regarding their careers guidance provision. With the SG as a starting point, James explained that his team consulted and synthesized a number of policy documents including organizational internal quality assurance policies. James summarized:
We see ourselves very much as brokers that overlay a framework. We can't dictate...we can't tell schools what to do, but what we can do is give some guidance, help provide some sort of prompts. What someone once described to me as our role is to translate and interpret policy for schools. And I think that's a really good tool to hang on to, and I think that's what we are doing is trying to interpret and direct, in the context of [local jurisdiction] the bigger picture of what we should be doing.

In spite of the advantages described by the policy actors of having documents in electronic format, the desirability of having documents in hard copy format was also evident. For example, Mary, a guidance counsellor from Oak Ridge High school in Ontario A district school board, as she held her copy of CPS, regaled how she liked “being able to flip through it, is useful and it's another way to kind of digest the material.” Although Ethel a guidance counsellor from Maple Heights High in Ontario B district school board, could not easily pinpoint benefits of hard copy documents, she also verbalized that she liked hard copy, “I just want to have it, the computer doesn't work, I don't need to worry, and I do like to tab things and I probably always will want to have hard copies, I just like having them.”

There was a tangible response from many policy actors when talking about the benefits of hard copy format documents. Without exception, all policy actors engaged physically with the document as they spoke to me about this facet of their work with documents. Clarence, the principal in Oak Ridge High school in Ontario A district school board stated that with a hard copy document he could “I can touch it, feel it, open it. As I said, highlight it, put little sticky tabs on it. I can take it with me. A lot of the documents I might take with me at home after I leave here, and leaf through a bit at home.” As Clarence provided this insight, the expression on his face softened and it seemed like he was talking about something quite beloved. In a similar
way, Katherine, a principal in Birch View High in Ontario B district school board, became visibly animated when talking about the pleasure of receiving documents in hard copy, revealing her disappointment if she was ever presented with a black and white photocopy from an internal department. Katherine confessed her desire to “have my own beautiful, glossy copy, and if it's purple it’s even better,” she stated smilingly. Katherine went on to explain how even her vice principal often came in to her office and “and commented that I had a little bag full of all my documents.” Katherine confirmed their importance “yes, I always carry them with me.”

Perhaps the most powerful revelation of engaging with a hard copy of the SG policy was provided by Judith, a careers advisor in Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive school in England A district. Describing the challenge of an ever decreasing budget for career guidance provision in her school, Judith picked up her copy of the SG and held it aloft. With a sense of resolve, Judith revealed how she was continually fighting to keep the 24 days of external [impartial] face-to-face careers advice for students in her school. As she shook the document before me, Judith expounded, “these are the documents that I use to fight my case because I think that having one-to-one interviews in year 11 before they go off to further education, are so important.” Judith firmly believed that even students who appeared confident regarding post-secondary planning, benefitted from being asked “okay you know what your next step is, do you know where that's going to lead? Do you know what the next step after that is?” Judith acknowledged the frustration of feeling she was more than qualified to ask such questions to her students, but from the perspective of the government she was “not deemed to be impartial, because I am employed by the school.” Carefully placing the SG back on the table Judith softly concluded “it is this policy [that] are going to be my ammunition if you like…”
Reading Purpose and Reading Lens

We know from an established body of literature that sensemaking is rooted in social interaction and negotiation (e.g., Coburn, 2001; Vaughan, 1996), and is profoundly situated in educators’ particular contexts, like organizational and professional cultures (e.g., Lin, 2000, Spillane, 1998, Vaughan, 1996). However, sensemaking activity regarding interpretation of policy must have a commencement. In other words, why do policy actors choose to engage with a particular policy at a particular moment in time? The answer may seem obvious, for example, the introduction of policy by a ministry or department of education. However, I know from my own experience that there have been some policy documents I have read immediately when they have become available, and some I have placed upon the back burner to read at a later date.

To explore when and why the commencement of reading might occur for all policy actors of this study, I first reflected upon my own experience of engaging with CPS, SG and NSG during the content analytic phase of this study. I subsequently examined the responses from the policy actors from the context analytic phase of this study. The findings suggest that the commencement of engagement with policy occurs within an intrinsic, mostly unexplored decision-making process that prequels the subsequent period of making sense of the content of the policy document.

My purpose in undertaking a content analytic approach to document analysis was to help identify whether and how Watt’s (2004) three overarching public policy goals were represented in the three policy documents central to this study. Given the nature and conceptual framing of this dissertation, this purpose was intended to orient the documents within the frameworks employed in this study, Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) document analysis and Coburn’s sensemaking (2001). I justified my purpose of reading CPS, SG and NSG through situating my
argument for this approach in empirical literature, and this instigated my reading of all three
documents. I purposefully looked for public policy goals, these were both my rationale and a
further lens, and my search for them was initiated by my trust in the academic milieu of careers
guidance. I trusted in the academic integrity of Watt’s public policy goals, and the breadth, depth
and empirical grounding of this work. In addition, I analyzed the content of the documents based
on the empirical conceptual framework of Miller and Alvarado that guided me to look at the
content. Ultimately, in a series of intentional and selective moments, I read CPS, the SG, and the
NSG for this dissertation.

The context analytic phase of data revealed that individually selected purposes and lenses
were also utilized by the study policy actors in discerning moments to begin to engage with
various policy documents. While these purposes and lenses were diverse and, to some extent
remain unexplored in great depth, there was sufficient evidence to illustrate that they occurred
for all policy actors at specific moments in time for different reasons.

Two of the policy actors, both coordinators for careers guidance for their district school
boards in Ontario, described how attending specific training had first introduced them to policy
documents related to careers guidance. George from Ontario A, and Norman from Ontario B,
both described that undertaking their additional qualifications as part of moving into guidance
and career planning work required them to read Choices into Action (MOE, 1999), the policy
document that preceded CPS. Reflecting, they both reported feeling that the purpose of reading
the policies at that stage of their career was to provide insights and guidance to the scope of their
work. This was followed with a shift in purpose for reading and, consequentially, a deeper level
of interaction with Choices into Action when they commenced their working roles as guidance
counsellors in schools, roles both had previously held in their district school boards before becoming coordinators.

Currently, there existed a multitude of ways that George could obtain access to policy documents, and these were largely determined by what others who worked in his board identified as falling within the remit of George’s job role. George explained how documents “sometimes just land on his desk because someone has thought, “this says guidance, this must relate to you, you should read this.” George reflected how documents could also come to him through more formal channels, for example, “the Ontario School Counsellors Association sends out and says they've consulted with the ministry and be aware that something's coming.” George smiled as he disclosed “or it may be a ministry directive that's come from the Deputy Minister… then it floats like in the wind from the director down until they can figure out where it should land and it comes to us.” Both Norman and George acknowledged the potential for policy documents to “land on their desk,” and that this was often an ambiguous process. As George clarified:

Sometimes it's a policy document that arrives in a box that's in a hall that somebody casually opens and says, well, who knows about this, and then they begin to read it, so it's serendipitous, or they don't open it, it's been there for a long time. Sometimes it's arrived in somebody else's area. So the co-op and other things of experiential learning document may come along, they may have it, and then they will come to me, and say hey, we were reading this and there are elements in guidance. Here, we think there's an actual connection, so they give it to us from another department.

As both Norman and George had moved through guidance training, roles as guidance counsellors and as guidance coordinators, their reading of policy had become increasingly autonomous, and embedded into practice. It was, as a result, a challenge for them both to discern
any particular moments that had initiated their reading and engagement with policy. However, both coordinators described that when the CPS came along, they had made very quick decisions regarding its relevance to their work. What had shifted for both coordinators was the likelihood that connecting policies would be read. The implementation of the CPS was instrumental in this, as Norman confirmed “it requires me to read all of the connected policies.”

For all three principals in Ontario, the potential for accessing documents was quite straightforward as both district school boards had procedures in place for the distribution of policy and curriculum documents. For example, Ontario B district school board sent out regular emails with links and pointers to new policies and initiatives, and Katherine one of their principals in Birch View High, explained that colleagues within her board took responsibility for passing on policies of relevance. Katherine was keen to also emphasize her belief that taking some level of personal responsibility regarding accessing policy documents was crucial in her professional role. Katherine spoke of the benefit of “having that layer of real interest in learning which of course so many of our educators and leaders have, that initiative and motivation to really delve into these documents and make them real.” Katherine explained this was very important regarding the process of policy documents becoming practice in her school, as, “they can't be on the shelf…you can't find them gathering dust…you have to make them real in your building in order to be able to talk and act about them in a professional way.” The principals in Ontario A district school board also received a weekly distribution of important documents and policy initiatives via email. One principal confirmed that when CPS was first distributed, the email advisory was quickly followed with a hard copy of the policy document.

All three Ontario principals in district school boards A and B, seemed somewhat surprised to be asked why they read particular policies at a given moment in time. Using the
example of the introduction of CPS, Clarence from Oak Ridge High in Ontario A, began by explaining how his head of guidance brought him a copy of CPS, and said, “do you know about the new document? I said, I do, but not too much…I'm aware of it, we're doing a million things, but I know that we have to start implementing it and therefore I have to read it.” Clarence explained how this conversation triggered “some initial discussions, what are we going to do, how are we going to start implementing it.” However, Clarence did not read CPS immediately, “I was super busy as we always are, so I made a mental note…this is a priority, this is a policy document for guidance curriculum. And so…I put it away in my file…with the mental note that I'm going to have to get back to it soon.” Clarence concluded that at that point, he “sent an e-mail to my head of guidance, saying I have a copy of this document, let's talk when you have a chance, because I knew she was busy as well.” The relationship between Clarence and Mary the senior guidance counsellor at Oak Ridge High was crucial to the implementation of CPS in Oak Ridge High school. Clarence explained that he trusted Mary’s expertise in career guidance matters and he clearly depended upon their frequent consultations regarding CPS.

Clarence acknowledged that time constraints and the demands of his role as principal impacted heavily on his decision to delay reading CPS, albeit temporarily. Clarence reported not being able to “micro manage the curriculum for every, for English, for business, for math, for arts, for guidance.” Clarence explained the importance of his relationship with his head of guidance, Mary, “she's my expert,” and consequently, how he asked Mary to investigate how other schools in their board were approaching the implementation of CPS, and report back to him. Then, Clarence confirmed, “we start deciding on how it will work best in our school.”

For Clarence, there was frustration in finding time to read and act upon policy, “the worst thing about it is that it's another pile of paper or documents, and I'm inundated with them, and
sometimes it gets stuck on the bottom of a pile.” Clarence described how he continually was deciding which policies to read and respond to, “you have to pull things and prioritize…and also set up a timeline and it’s time to do this now, or I'll put that one away.” For any policy that was a new curriculum like CPS, Clarence described that, “it goes to the top of the pile. I might not deal with it right now, but like I said, I’ve flagged it, I’ve put it in the file, mentally flagged it. I've got to get back to this, talk to my head of guidance.” Clarence responded by sending an email to Mary saying, “let's get together, we don’t have to do this now, but we have to do it soon because it's the new policy and we have to implement it.”

Both district school boards in Ontario held regular monthly meetings which were attended by all of the guidance counsellors, and this was the primary source of accessing and keeping up to date with relevant policy documents for this group of policy actors. In addition, they received email updates from the Ministry of Education. Each of the guidance counsellors described an “assumption” by their principals and guidance counsellor coordinator that they would keep current and knowledgeable regarding relevant policy documents. They all attributed the completion of the additional qualifications for guidance as being a starting point in getting to know relevant career guidance policy documents. For example, Ethel, a guidance counsellor in Maple Heights High in Ontario B, explained that “you have to have a certain level of education to get the job. So you wouldn't have gotten there without knowing all this. So… guidance career education curriculum and policy, you'd know, like, it would all be part of the part one qualification.”

The multi-faceted approach to sourcing documents was important, as Chelsea a guidance counsellor from Birch View High in Ontario B stated, “if you miss one, you get another one.” For Chelsea, the regular meetings were especially important, as “that is one of the places where
any new policy is shared and explained and announced that it's out.” Chelsea appreciated being
given “time to look within the policy, make connections, hear success stories of what are the
work some other people are already doing with the document.” The meetings also provided an
opportunity for clarity around policy expectations, goals, and timelines, as these were often
repeatedly discussed. Mary, the guidance counsellor from Oak Ridge High described how her
school built upon the regular meetings with prolonged in-service in school that ran alongside
new policy implementation. Mary rationalized “…it's one thing to get a two-hour in-service, we
both know that that's not going to be enough [to read in depth], but to just kind of skim the table
of contents.” Mary added that after her team is in-serviced regarding new policy, they
subsequently decide whether to read more deeply only if they saw relevance to their school
context.

For all four of the intermediaries in England, their interactions with the *SG and NSG*
began when they each received electronic notifications that the new policy had launched. James,
an intermediary from England A, described picking up his copy via email immediately after
colleagues informed him that the policy was available “they sent me the emails and before I went
on to the website to check for myself, three or four other people had sent me emails saying it was
out.” Annie, a Connexions Careers Advisor from England B, explained that many colleagues
including herself “printed it off because we knew it was a bit behind time, it was a bit late
coming out, and it was interesting reading, that we had been waiting for.” James also printed the
document, “…in hardcopy. I went through it all…as I'm going through it I have a highlighter
pen. Tha was all, and I was highlighting things…to the students, or for me that I thought were
pertinent.” James explained the necessity of being attentive in this initial reading “because we
were going to have a meeting the following day, and the CIAG [Careers, Information, Advice
and Guidance] briefing as well, so it was trying to pick out…is this message, is that what we want to communicate to people?”

For one of the intermediaries, it was important that he validated his reading and understanding of the implications of the SG and NSG with colleagues and a policy expert’s interpretation. James, an intermediary from England A, described initially sharing the policy with colleagues saying, “this is now out…so I looked at it for ourselves, and you triangulate what we'd all thought about it from the first reading, thinking about the key things that came out of it.” In particular, James looked for the “reactions of the team …of what the key things were.” James then consulted the policy commentary prepared by Tony Watts that was published by Careers England (April, 2014), “I picked up off the Careers England website Tony Watts’ article and his critique of it, to obviously further triangulate…had I picked up most of the things that he had thought of?” James explained feeling relieved, “…if I am thinking along the same lines as Tony Watts, then I feel confident in my interpretations.”

Ben and Martha, intermediaries from England B, outlined that in addition to the SG and NSG, they read their own organization’s internal documents, as well as other government issued documents to keep current and fulfil their job exceptions. However, they could not recall particular instances and timings of when they were prompted to read individual documents as, “it all becomes a bit of a blur and is just work” (Martha). Ben explained that he kept up to date “with the ones that are pertinent to careers, and the Ofsted stuff,” in addition to further reading for “other bits of work access things like the educational funding bodies in terms of things like the educational maintenance allowance and those types of things.” Ben emphasized that “it's only things where you need to read it because it's going to be relevant to a bit of work that you are doing. All the groups that you are working with, like recently, the new accountability
measures for post-16, and you know we have to try and familiarize ourselves with those.” After Ben finished speaking, Martha quietly took out a package of documents (see Figure 5.1.) which she handed to me, “these are for you” she said, “so you can see what we are talking about.” The package of documents (see Figure 5.1) Martha shared with me were, “just a few of what we have to read…you can see how difficult it is to keep on top of it all.

![Figure 5.1. Documents shared by Martha and Ben.](image)

**The Policy Actors as Sensemakers of Career Guidance Policy**

To understand the nuances of how the policy actors made sense of the **CPS**, **SG**, and **NSG** policy documents, it was necessary to explore how their sensemaking was situated in their individual contexts (Spillane, Diamond, Burch, Hallett, Jita, & Zoltners, 2002). The policy actors in this study, like all individuals, adjusted to the introduction of **CPS**, **SG**, and **NSG** through their existing cognitive structures, for example, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Data from the policy actor interviews were therefore examined for emerging themes that could shed light on the what existing cognitive structures might represent for each of
the policy actors. After a sequence of reading and re-reading the interview data, I finally settled upon the four overarching themes of prior experience, job role, organizational culture, and worldview of career guidance. As I considered these themes against the contributions of individual policy actors, I began to see that the themes could not be assigned in equal weighting to each individual. As an example, some policy actors (e.g., Edgar) seemed to be more significantly influenced by their worldview of career guidance and prior experience than their job role and organizational context. To explore this phenomenon more deeply, I created a conceptualization figure (see Figure 5.2) where each of the 25 policy actors were carefully placed in regard to how I perceived the four existing knowledge structure themes applied to them. I formed my judgement based upon the frequency each participant recalled each of the themes as being relevant or influential in their interpretations of the policy documents.

When viewing Figure 5.2, a few points are noteworthy. First, of the seven policy expert policy actors of this study, none of them were placed in the organizational culture theme. Three policy experts from England, Tony, David, and Anthony, and Edgar a policy expert from Ontario revealed that individual worldviews of career guidance in school and prior experience were their most significant existing knowledge structures underpinning their sensemaking of policy documents.

Dr. Smith a policy expert from England, and Lynne and Jeff, the other Ontario policy experts, were all placed similarly, however their current job role was also influential, hence being placed nearer to the job role existing knowledge structure. Interestingly, I did not place any of the policy experts within the organizational culture theme. This might be explained by their consultancy type job roles where they frequently work with a number of different organizations, or by their breadth and depth of experience in career guidance work.
For the career guidance intermediaries and coordinators, the relevant existing knowledge structures were their worldview of career guidance, prior experience, and job role. From the six coordinators across both jurisdictions, James, from England A, was also placed at the lower end of the organizational culture theme. The placement at the lower end reflects that this was not reported as an existing knowledge structure of limited influence regarding policy interpretation. All three principals in Ontario, and the one assistant head teacher in England were identified as having their job role and organizational culture as their most influential existing knowledge
structures. Of the four, Clarence in Ontario A at Oak Ridge High, was also placed toward the worldview of career guidance, as he identified through his interview data that his prior job role as a guidance counsellor had provided him with knowledge that he exploited to contextualize his reading of career guidance policy documents.

For the teachers, the placements were more sporadic, with Tilly from Willow Fall High in Ontario A, Ethel from Maple Heights High in Ontario B, and Chelsea from Birch View High in Ontario B placed in the worldview of career guidance, prior experience, and job role themes. However, one teacher, Judith from Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive in England A, was also placed within these three themes together with being placed more closely to organizational culture. The remaining three teachers Sally from The Grove School in England A, Mary from Oak Ridge High in Ontario A, and Michael from Mulberry High School in England B, were placed in the job role, organizational culture, and worldview of career guidance. For these teachers, there were existing knowledge structures of their school’s organizational culture that were of significant influence. For example, for Sally, employed as a careers teacher in a high-achieving grammar school in the south of England, described the influence of her school’s cohorts upon her understanding of policy and subsequent implementing of career guidance provision. Sally explained “we have very, very high ability students…and they also have very aspirational parents…I will look at the guidelines, and the documents that they could use by adapting all to what suits us.” Sally summarized “you know some things are useful and some things aren't.”

The construction of the conceptual chart and subsequent placement of policy actors are the result of my analysis and interpretations of data contributed via their interviews. During the interviews, policy actors were questioned specifically regarding these themes of existing
knowledge structures that influenced their interpretations of policy. Subsequently, further investigations could identify additional themes of existing knowledge structures that are not represented in Figure 5.2. Nevertheless, to provide additional insights about all of the policy actors existing knowledge structures that influenced their understanding of CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents, further explorations of the interview data as it was assigned to the four existing knowledge structure themes are now considered.

Prior experience. The change in language contained in CPS was described by Norman a coordinator from Ontario B, as causing a shift in perspectives of guidance counsellors regarding their responsibility for implementing the policy in his district. Norman explained that CPS has purposely been called “an education and career life planning document” rather than a “guidance curriculum.” Norman outlined that the CPS rationale, together with “other explicit indicators of what the program is all about,” had prompted significant discussion between principals, guidance counsellors, and himself as they situated CPS in relation to their previous work with Choices into Action. Norman summarized that he found himself needing to reiterate to all staff in school that “it's comprehensive, and by that definition we [guidance and careers] also have a part in it… it's not our chance to dust our hands off and say good, now everybody else in the building can do what I've been carrying for so long.”

George, a coordinator from Ontario A, also drew comparisons between the previous career guidance policy document Choices into Action and CPS to highlight what a new policy meant for him in his working practice. George referred to a “cycle” that begins when he first reads a document, focused on three things that his teachers will want from him, “why are you bringing this to us? What does it mean? and how are we supposed to deal with it?” George explained how the cycle quickly moves through to teachers wanting him to “give us the
highlights, what does that mean for me? my work? my kids? my school? what's the impact? And then what am I supposed to do with it?” George concluded that “it is always the why?” that frames his teachers understanding, and that concludingly he must prepare to be able to provide the answers to complete the “circle of understanding.” George explained that this meant he always had to use his prior experience to anticipate what his teachers were going to say, and make judgements about what resources, professional learning opportunities, and supports he would put in place, so that as he attempted to implement the new policy, and the teachers learned it, he became instrumental in “making this happen” in his school district.

Though the introduction of the SG had clearly impacted upon all four England policy intermediaries’ career guidance practice, the broader, historical policy context continued to be of significant impact. All four policy actors appeared to have found ways to retain what they considered “best practices,” even though many aspects of this career guidance had disappeared from the SG policy. For example, James from England A, explained that his Local Authority were:

…very aware that if we were going to get young people in the right pathway choices to do the current curriculum they need they need to have good careers guidance, it was essential. It's been a bit of a challenge, because at that time more and more of the staff and duty to provide that support, that guidance, has been disappearing from central government policy.

Job role. Facilitating others to have access to, or engage with policy was a significant part of the working role for two of the policy experts in Ontario. This often materialized through training and workshops, where policy might be the basis of an activity or discussion. For Edgar
and Jeff, both Ontario policy experts, providing training for other practitioners through consultancy was sometimes limited by funding.

An important focus of work acknowledged by Norman and George, the two coordinators in Ontario, was directed at providing opportunities for young people to develop deeper understandings of themselves and the world around them. Both coordinators talked about preparing young people for transitions, and enabling students “to dream for, pursue, and be prepared for something that either disappears, is too highly competitive or is no longer important” (George). Their experiences suggested an intention to encourage and facilitate students to become lifelong learners, which linked to “teaching lifelong employability skills and talking about employability skills that are not even necessarily related to a specific sector” (Norman). However, this was not unproblematic, as first, many classroom teachers and guidance counsellors in Georges’ district school board have a lack of understanding of what labour market was, and how it could help illustrate trends and predicability. In addition, George revealed, “that they don't have, generally speaking, ready access to current information…so what if a young person has dreams about something that we don’t know? Support will be very limited.”

Given the close relationships between guidance counsellors and their principals in Ontario, it came as no surprise to find that a significant level of responsibility for the implementation of CPS had been delegated to all of the guidance counsellors. As a result, all four guidance counsellor participants spoke at length regarding how they were interpreting their roles in relation to the implementation of CPS. Mary from Oak Ridge High in Ontario A, explained that her role began with her students, especially encouraging their engagement with the required planning process “that kind of reflect, plan and move, and then re-assess your plan and continue to re-assess the plan.” Whilst this was happening on one level, Mary also identified that at the
school level she was having to make sure that “a few people have become experts in understanding the document,” which could facilitate the teaching of the policy to the entire school, “so they're aware that it's there.” Mary acknowledged the necessity for school administrators to be “on board,” and highlighted how they “would have already gotten their own copy of CPS as well.”

This tended to manifest as a role for guidance counsellors to ensure that their teams were “understanding the documents the same way,” and learning together how to best implement CPS in their schools. All acknowledged that though they shared best practice examples through the frequent exchanges with other guidance counsellors and coordinators in their regional meetings, “how you meet that expectation will differ from school to school and what that looks like based on the resources in your school are different when you look at any school” (Mary). All unanimously agreed that as guidance counsellor in their individual school, they were best equipped to creatively and agreeably implement CPS, as opposed to an enforced implementation strategy coming from ministry or board level.

Nevertheless, as Chelsea of Birch View High in Ontario B acknowledged, “one of the most interesting things…career guidance and support is now everyone's responsibility in the school… not just guidance counsellors…though we are instrumental in facilitating the process and providing the foundation and the structure needed for it to happen.” Thus, guidance counsellors found themselves increasingly working across all functions of their schools to support this policy implementation effort.

Organizational culture. Organizational culture drew upon Deal’s (1982) definition, and comprised the shared beliefs, expectations, values, and norms of day to day conduct of the participants of this study. Organizational culture encompassed cultural pieces strongly linked to
career guidance provision in school, and more traditional aspects of organizational culture such as trust and leadership style. For example, the demands of administrative positions in schools in Ontario had resulted in particularly close trustful relationships between all the principals and the senior guidance counsellors in each of their schools. All three of the principals in Ontario revealed how they trusted in the level of expertise of the guidance teams in their school when it came to implementing CPS. Clarence from Oak Ridge High in Ontario A, admitted being unable to find the time to “micro manage the curriculum for every, for English, for business, for math, for arts, for guidance.” Therefore, being able to rely on his guidance counsellor to delegate the implementation of CPS to was invaluable:

she's my expert…After she's had that discussion about what other schools are doing, centrally what the board is directing us and asking us to do, sharing some best practices with her colleagues from the other schools in the school board, then we start deciding on how it will work best in our school.

Clarence described how he relied heavily on heads of departments in all subject areas when it came to implementing any new policy and curriculum. Clarence explained how he had worked with this strategy for some while, as it required developing a culture of trust between principal and subject leader. Clarence recalled how his prior experience as a guidance counsellor had helped facilitate trust with Mary, the head of guidance in Oak Ridge High School, to the stage where he could rely upon her to completely direct the implementation of CPS in their school.

As an example of the importance of developing a positive culture regarding career guidance provision, Violet the principal of Willow Fall High in Ontario A, showcased an initiative where her school’s status as a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
(STEM) designated school had instigated “resources that are being offered to us include the ability to bring an on-line feed of an expert into the classroom.” Violet was thrilled that through utilizing this technology “the walls are being softened in the classroom and the school, and we're having greater access to diverse people for our kids to talk to.” The result, Violet explained, was a career guidance environment where students could independently gain access to specialized fields of employment that they were interested in, which were previously unavailable through high school settings.

**Worldview of career guidance.** How people notice information from the environment, make meaning of that information, and then act on those interpretations was defined by Coburn (2001) as being an individual’s worldview. In the making meaning piece of this process, individuals “actively construct their understandings and interpretations…through the lens of their pre-existing understandings and worldviews” (Coburn, 2001, p. 147). For Edgar a policy expert in Ontario, the rise of globalization had presented social and moral complexities that created a need for youth to be prepared to navigate those challenges. Edgar passionately believed that work gave dignity to people, but acknowledged, “much of this dignity in our sort of social capitalist society is how much money you make.” Edgar proposed that underlying this was “a big question of growth and sustainability.” Many organizations, Edgar suggested, were caught between the fiscal challenge of “sitting on huge amounts of money for future security,” and an attempt to commit to social responsibility and establish and manage organizations in a more equitable way. Edgar concluded young people should have the opportunity to engage with such “big picture issues” through mainstream education, which could provide “all the tools possible as they enter that kind of environment.” For Edgar, the CPS policy was a clear model of an attempt to move in this direction, and mobilized schools to prompt youth to “go a little deeper in terms of
a vision of identifying...new understandings of [themselves] in the world, and that question of who do I want to become, how do I make that happen?”

The very name of CPS was described by Clarence the principal in Oak Ridge High in Ontario A, as a significant indication that the policy was concerned with responding to youth unemployment, “just by its very name Pathways…what are the pathways. It's college, university, apprenticeship, world of work.” Clarence continued, “…so it's honouring all the different pathways…and in that sense it's honoring every student…it is supporting their employment chances, and we're looking at best ways to help kids choose the correct pathway that works for them. And…if you do that, it makes it easier to get employment.”

However, treating career guidance or development in isolation from the labour market and broader society was problematic for Lynne a policy expert in Ontario, and she spoke at some length regarding the tensions faced by schools who are tasked with preparing young people to achieve successful lives (often linked to employment outcomes), yet have an overarching responsibility “to build citizens…not to build employment offices.” As she debated this, Lynne clearly understood the many facets of this policy issue, but her strongest assertion was with regard to educators’ responsibilities towards young people. Lynne outlined the necessity to prepare young people to be competitive, flexible, open to opportunity, “to help them learn the skills so that they will be attractive to people who want to work with them,” and concluded that if educators were not committed to this “then I think we're not doing our job.” There was a naivety in assuming that educators could solve the problem of young people who were not getting jobs, Lynne warned. However, she also conceded the irresponsibility of educators thinking that the period spent by young people in school was isolated from their lives after school. Lynne cautioned, “…the fact that we have so many areas where young people…are
spending fortunes on post-secondary education in fields where we know in advance that the opportunities are going to be very, very limited…is I think a travesty.”

**Defining Career Guidance**

Coburn (2001) asserted that in order to make meaning of policy (one form amongst many forms of communications in schools), individuals actively constructed understandings and interpretations and they did so by placing new information into pre-existing cognitive frameworks or worldviews. Therefore, an appreciation of the policy actors’ preexisting definitions of career guidance was an appropriate place to commence with understanding their interpretation and enactment of career guidance policy. Subsequently, each policy actor in this study was asked to describe what the term career guidance meant to them.

The 25 policy actors talked at some length in order to define career guidance, with many of them relating their definition to their working practice and context. The resulting definitions produced over 6,500 words of data. To make sense of these initially overwhelming data, I undertook a process of inductive coding of each policy actor’s definition, looking for emerging key words and themes. The findings of this coding process are presented in Table 5.2. Although each policy actor was asked to define career guidance, policy actors also described other career-related terms, including career information, career advice, career counselling, career education, career learning, and career management skills. In addition, career guidance was explained as an interchangeable term with career development. As the policy actors explored the various definitions, they assigned key phrases and words to their explanations, and these have been placed under each of the key career-related terms in Table 5.2 as they were defined by the policy actors. In order to highlight where there were jurisdictional variations, Table 5.2 is colour coded
to denote contributions from Ontario, England, and to show where data applied to both jurisdictions.

As can be seen in Table 5.2, the policy actors shared many commonalities, and some jurisdiction differences in their definitions of career guidance. In addition, analysis of the data revealed some important nuances that are not apparent in this table, but are discussed in the following section of this chapter. Given the multi-faceted nature and complexity of the definitions, I first introduce the commonalities and, second, the various findings unique to each jurisdiction. It should be noted, that Table 5.2 presents the definitions in a somewhat linear manner; however, they were revealed by many policy actors as part of a lengthy, often meandering narrative, where policy actors’ thoughtfully reflected upon their past experiences as they wrestled to define career guidance and associated terms.

I have deliberately structured the table to capture the many associations that policy actors assigned to the various career guidance terms. As an example, work experience was applied by policy actors to career guidance, career education, and career learning.

For all of the policy experts across both jurisdictions, defining career guidance seemed more straightforward, and all seven policy experts in this study confidently and comprehensively outlined many facets of career guidance, related career terms, and their associated nuances. The varied range of terms associated with careers work presented in Table 5.2. mostly originated from the extensive definitions provided by policy experts. This finding was not altogether surprising, given the diversity of their roles and the range of careers-related work they all engage in. However, the multi-faceted complexities of defining careers guidance and associated terms were seen in some instances as problematic. According to Dr. Smith, a policy expert from England, “one of the challenges that the profession, the careers profession has, is that it doesn't
### Table 5.2. Analysis of career guidance definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Information</th>
<th>Career Advice</th>
<th>Career Counselling</th>
<th>Career Guidance&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Career Education</th>
<th>Career Learning</th>
<th>Career Management Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work-related Information</td>
<td>Student as decision maker</td>
<td>Helping students to help themselves</td>
<td>Work-related Information</td>
<td>Student as decision maker</td>
<td>Helping students to help themselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMI Opportunities</td>
<td>LMI Opportunities</td>
<td>LMI Opportunities</td>
<td>LMI Opportunities</td>
<td>LMI Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impartiality External to school staff</td>
<td>Impartiality</td>
<td>Impartiality External to school staff</td>
<td>Impartiality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting the dots</td>
<td>Planning and goal setting</td>
<td>Connecting the dots</td>
<td>Competence for employment</td>
<td>Planning and goal setting</td>
<td>Planning and goal setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferable skills</td>
<td>Finding pathways</td>
<td>Finding pathways</td>
<td>Transferable skills</td>
<td>Transferable skills</td>
<td>Transferable skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See the bigger picture</td>
<td>See the bigger picture</td>
<td>See the bigger picture</td>
<td>See the bigger picture Recording achievement</td>
<td>See the bigger picture Recording achievement</td>
<td>See the bigger picture Recording achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Green text denotes Ontario data, Red text denotes England data, Blue text denotes both jurisdictions

<sup>1</sup> Lynne Bezanson preferred the term career development
half get itself tangled in the terminology.” Dr. Smith added this, in turn, was a problem for practitioners, as “there are so many different ways of describing careers education, careers guidance here in the UK…we have been tangled up for years in the debate about what is careers education…what is careers information…what is advice and guidance?” Dr. Smith revealed that she had been “very strident in my views which say that the general public is not interested in the nuances of how we describe the difference between advice and guidance.” Dr. Smith concluded with the irony of “many people in everyday conversation talk about advice, careers advice rather than guidance,” and what she found “really useful in all of my work is to really try and keep things simple and to really view this as a career is a sequence of life and work experience over time.”

Similarly, Lynne Bezanson, a policy expert from Ontario, also stated that career guidance was a term she did not like. Lynne described a preference for career guidance “to be understood as that piece of career development in which the practitioner actually does have a solid knowledge base around labour market information, around supply and demand.” Lynne asserted how she believed that “this was not in counselling, but it's a body of knowledge out of which you could actually give some concrete advice.” Lynne suggested that if career guidance “had that connotation, I would be very happy with the term guidance.” Lynne explained that she felt the problem was that is exactly the function that has been among the weakest across North America, “because guidance counsellors traditionally in the school system have no background in labour market information, no background in supply and demand, they don’t perceive that as a role.” For Lynne, the term career guidance was “a term that's fraught with problems.”

The common findings of transferable skills, competence for employment, and recording achievement were reported by all policy actors regardless of their job role, organizational
context, or jurisdiction. Interestingly, the occurrences of transferable skills seen through the content analytic phase of this study reported in chapter 4, were described in terms of meeting employer needs, and avoiding skills mismatch in the $SG$. Where transferable skills were referred to in the $CPS$, they described the desirability for students to develop essential skills and work habits that were seen as important contributors to career and life planning. The perspective outlined in the $CPS$, aligned with that of all of the Ontario policy actors of this study, who described the benefits of transferable skills for students, rather than for employers. For example, Norman, a coordinator from Ontario B, career guidance is “helping students to understand prospects, and trends in the workforce, helping them to understand how skills are transferrable.” This was a perspective shared by Katherine, who explained career guidance in her school “in terms of the pathways and making sure that all students have the skills to navigate whichever pathway that they choose.” In contrast to an exclusive focus on what employers need, Katherine, the principal for Birch View High in Ontario B, described how it was important that students felt that all possible pathways they might choose were “all equally important in our society.”

For James, an intermediary from England A, the notion of transferable skills was a starting point, “the skills you need, qualifications you need, prerequisites…we use little tags to get people thinking about what they need to do…it's a starting point for people to frame their thoughts and ideas.” However, for Michael, a teacher from Mulberry High school in England B, transferable skills were at the heart of career guidance, enabling students to learn about “the tools which those people who have worked for a while take for granted, such as the soft skills and employability skills.” Michael stressed how he truly believed that career guidance gave students …the tools to unlock and work their way through this confusing path so they can mold it for themselves. They are not at the whim of what job is just there, what can I
just do to pay the bills. They are not just at the whim of all of the structures that are put in place around the benefits and state system, and that interaction which is happening across the country at the moment. You are giving them the tools to really be able to write their own future, and go the path they want to go down, as far as they want to go.

Of course, it could be argued that the issue of transferable skills can be flipped to see benefits for students and employers, that the two were not mutually exclusive. However, the policy actors of this study were unanimous in that obtaining transferable skills could assist students to have more choice and freedom to navigate possible pathways. This student-centered perspective aligned with recognition that lifelong career pathways presented dynamic and unpredictable challenges, and that transferable skills were a necessary tool to help individuals navigate such challenges. The needs of employers were not verbalized in this context.

When describing how career guidance facilitates students to develop competence for employment, policy actors frequently linked developing competencies with opportunities. For example, Norman, a coordinator from Ontario B, described career guidance as helping “students become self-experts, understand what is available to them in the workplace beyond high school, how what they've learned about themselves connects to their opportunities that exist beyond secondary school.” Norman explained that to achieve this, it was essential that career guidance included opportunities for students to undertake such self-exploration activities. James, an intermediary from England A, agreed that career guidance should be asking students to reflect upon a series of personal questions including, “…what do you want to be, what's possible, what's out there?” James explained how all of these slotted into “careers education, information, advice and guidance.” James claimed that further consideration of students’ aptitudes was necessary,
“it's basically what competencies do you need in order to be employable, then asking them about
this future that they seem to be driving towards, and what their place might be, and the things
that they consider they might want to do.” George, an intermediary from Ontario A, succinctly
described his perspective of career guidance as “anytime I help young people put pieces together
about where they are and where they could be, and where work and other aspects of their lives fit
so they can live life, that's career guidance.”

The third area of common agreement across the jurisdictions was manifested in the
necessity for students to record their achievement. However, it is important to acknowledge how
policy actors in the two jurisdictions assigned different meanings. For example, in England,
Tony Watts talked about how career guidance in schools had traditionally resulted in students
planning and recording achievement. This was in contrast to the current policy he explained,
where this was not an explicit requirement. This finding supported the content analytic
investigation of the SG presented in chapter 4 of this study. In Ontario however, the CPS
contained many references to the need for students to record their development and achievement
through individual web-based individual pathways plans (IPPs). This finding aligned with
Ontario policy actors’ perspectives of a student directed recording of achievement. For example,
Edgar thoughtfully explained career guidance as “an ongoing process of evaluating and
recording one situation, the opportunities, and one's own character, and putting that into action in
some positive way.”

The emphasis on helping students to find pathways and alleviate anxiety for students
were linked to an overarching role played by career guidance for the Ontario guidance counsellor
policy actors. Finding pathways was described as one amongst many strategies that might be
utilized through career guidance. For example, Tilly, a guidance counsellor from Willow Fall
High in Ontario A, described how for her, career guidance provided “opportunities for students at every grade level to self-reflect on their goals, interests, attitudes and make connections to pathways.” Additionally, Tilly felt that career guidance allowed for students to “get more of an understanding about themselves, and make more concrete decisions about their post-secondary pathways.” Tilly concluded that this required “looking at how to support students at every grade recognizing that they need different things at different grade levels.”

Finding pathways was linked to the necessity of helping students to keep their options open, as Ethel, a guidance counsellor from Maple Heights High in Ontario B, outlined, “the transition would be through career guidance to figure out who am I, how do I learn, and then where do I want to go, you know, what skills do I need, what attributes do I need to get where I need to go.” Ethel linked the need to support students with this self-discovery process, “one of my goals is to not stress them out.” Ethel identified that experience had shown her “when we go in as guidance counsellors and we look at careers in general in the bigger picture, not just that small segment of their educational plan they think, whoa, you know, where am I going to be and what, how do I have to get there, and it's too big of a journey.” The role of the guidance counsellor to effectively utilize career guidance to scaffold the process for students was crucial to alleviate students’ anxiety Ethel concluded.

Only one component of career guidance, impartiality was identified by one of the England policy actors. One of the intermediaries, Annie from England B, when describing the contributions of her careers guidance team in supporting at-risk youth referred to the team’s impartiality. Annie stressed how important this was for a counsellor to be “challenging and dealing with opportunities, not stereotyping about careers and opportunities, and it's also very much a case of the advisor feeding back to the young person about how they feel they are
progressing with their plans.” Annie explained that in order to meet the specific needs of at-risk youth she felt very strongly “that an advisor should be independent of the school. They should not be employed by the school.” Annie qualified this by adding that she did not assume somebody employed by the school could not be impartial; however, she emphasized her belief that “somebody coming from outside the school is presenting as somebody external to the school, and the young person I think may open up differently if that advisor is not a member of the school staff. I know from past experience this is a very big advantage, [when a] young person sees us as being somebody from outside of that school.” Annie provided me with a copy of the SG (see Figure 5.3) that she had prepared prior to our interview. Annie described how she had highlighted this copy as an exact replica of her own highlighted copy, and explained that this helped her to identify the aspects of SG that were relevant to her working role.

The definitions of career guidance provided by the administrators (assistant head teacher in England and principals in Ontario) and teachers (including Ontario guidance counsellors), as highlighted in Table 2., include many nuances that are also aspects of career guidance programing. Clearly they were rooted in a level of theoretical understanding of career guidance, as many of the policy actors drew upon understandings of career guidance they formed during training, or from engaging with policy experts, or from self-directed reading. Nevertheless, facets such as the inclusion of work-related learning, and LMI, are typically included in the content of career guidance provision rather than in definitions of career guidance.

The definitions shared by the coordinator policy actors reflected a mixture of theoretical underpinning of career guidance together with facets that would typically be identified as career guidance programing or provision. This might have been due to their specific job roles, as all of them had prior practice-based experience as career guidance counsellors or advisors. In
addition, all coordinators revealed a strong interest in the career guidance field and spoke of a continued interest in reading career guidance policy and related documents, including empirical literature.

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However, having a strong interest in career guidance did not always equate to smooth implementation of career guidance provision. For example, George, a coordinator in Ontario A described how guidance counsellors in his district school board believed “because either they
really believe it or they've been told, that the CPS document is theirs, so there's a sense of ownership to it.” George explained that this became problematic when the CPS was not well distributed and widely shared, the across the grade and curriculum nature of the policy gets overlooked. As a result, other subject teachers then see the requirements of the CPS as an add-on. George described how subsequently, there was “a movement in the board to be more persuasive, to have people be familiar with their curriculum expectations, and know that career development ones are there, that there is an alignment.”, George summarized his expectation that this would be ongoing, as “some of them will fight.” George was passionate about CPS, and saw the policy as a distinct improvement from Choices into Action. Nevertheless, he perceived there would be subject area teachers in his board who would not welcome the “across the grade and subject area” approach of the CPS and, subsequently, George was expecting some teachers to resist incorporating the CPS into their teaching.

For the policy experts across both jurisdictions, defining career guidance was the most straightforward and the most problematic. They all had strong opinions about career guidance, and could clearly distinguish career guidance from other types of careers support. Indeed, it was their extensive contributions to clarifying all of the nuances of careers support that are outlined in Table 5.2. Equally, they acknowledged how the many variations of careers support had resulted in confusion regarding definitions, especially for the public. As Anthony Barnes summarized, “there are some real horrors around the definition.”

Comparing Definitions

The CPS and SG included a definition of career guidance, and I reviewed these as part of the content analytic phase of this study reported in chapter 4. However, I returned to these definitions to investigate their alignment with the definitions of career guidance provided by the
study policy actors. For reader convenience, they are shown once again in Table 5.3 below. In
the main, the definitions provided by the study policy actors for each jurisdiction aligned to
definitions included in appropriate jurisdictional policy. There were however, a few notable
differences between the SG and the England policy actor definitions. Beginning with the CPS,
definitions provided by the policy actors included subtleties that arguably could, somewhat
subjectively, be aligned with the CPS definition. For example, the need for students to undertake
self-evaluation and for career guidance provision to alleviate students’ anxiety around career and
life planning decisions could be aligned with “career/life planning… assists in the development
and application of… skills needed to make informed education and career/life choices.”

Table 5.3. Defining career guidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Document</th>
<th>CPS</th>
<th>SG</th>
<th>NSG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definition of career guidance</strong></td>
<td>“Education and career/life planning refers to a process that assists in the development and application of the knowledge and skills needed to make informed education and career/life choices” (p. 6).</td>
<td>“For the purposes of this statutory guidance, ‘advice and guidance’ refers to a coherent programme of activities that inform, inspire, and motivate young people, preparing them for work and helping them to understand where different education and training choices could take them in the future” (about this guidance, para. 1).</td>
<td>Not defined in this document.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The requirement for career guidance to be impartial and external to schools was not
included in the definition of career guidance provided in the SG. Rather, these requirements were
stated in the main body of the SG policy document, suggesting that England policy actors have
both noted this policy requirement and subsequently embedded it into their definitions of career
guidance. In particular, one of the intermediaries Annie, was very cognizant that her definition
was not aligned at all with how career guidance was defined in the SG. Annie, an intermediary
from England B, explained that she was fully “aware from this document that what the
government are talking about in the way of careers guidance is very different to how I describe
careers guidance.” In spite of this, Annie was one of the few policy actors who stated that effective career guidance provision was best provided in an “impartial manner.” This Annie believed, translated into career guidance provision that was “external to a school.”

Listening to and analyzing the experiences of all of the four levels of policy actor roles, I began to see how the way policy actors defined career guidance framed their working practices. Such working practices were widely varied, and ranged from the policy experts’ job role to research, summarize, and provide information to support others’ understandings; through to career guidance teachers’ need to simply adhere to career guidance policy requirements. What was particularly noteworthy was that all of the policy actors relied upon their own definitions of career guidance to frame their interpretation of career guidance policy, and were prepared to employ their own understandings of effective career guidance to mitigate what they perceived as any weakness in government policy. As James, an intermediary from England A highlighted:

I am very aware that if we were going to get young people in the right pathway choices to do the current curriculum they need they need to have good careers guidance, it was essential. It's been a bit of a challenge, because at that time more and more of the staff and duty to provide that support, that guidance, has been disappearing from central government policy.

Career Guidance as Public Policy

The three policy experts in Ontario all described the value of providing students with transferable skills, and linked this to improved post-secondary transitions and the effective development of employability skills. In addition, they all recognized that these were areas open to debate and interpretation, acknowledging that these issues had been widely discussed in academic literature. Interestingly, two of the policy experts advocated that there were much
deeper issues at stake alongside employability when considering career guidance as a public policy mechanism. As an example of how policy experts remained concerned at the employment status of youth in Canada, Lynne Bezanson spoke with some pride about the Canadian Career Development Foundation’s (CCDF) recent first-time experience of participating in the Canadian Federal Election on “a vote youth jobs campaign.” As Lynne described, “what we really wanted to do was try and get the whole issue of youth underemployment much higher on the agenda of politicians.” Lynne felt that being able to influence at a national political level was, historically, an area where the CCDF had been weakest, and that they had learned much from the experience. Lynne summarized this work “may be a new direction that we, not in terms of lobbying, but in terms of really trying to shape political agendas, get some of the important issues really talked about and discussed.”

Of the four guidance counsellors in Ontario, Ethel, from Maple Heights High in Ontario B made the strongest connections between CPS and youth un/employment. Ethel commenced by outlining the value for youth in undertaking volunteering activities, acknowledging the role of guidance “in terms of contributing, you know, organizing the volunteer things for these kids is huge.” Ethel admitted, “I sometimes think that's actually more powerful than some of the curriculum.” The opportunity for students to engage with cooperative education, specialist high skills majors, and complete community credits also gave them the opportunity to evaluate their “learning in terms of your skills working with people, communication skills, general skills like that” Ethel argued. She added, “that's what's going to lead you to not be unemployed, right?” This was the “promise of CPS,” Ethel believed, “these are small things that will grow, right, and that's the whole new pathway this policy has promoted.” Ethel enthused at her board’s decision
to adopt myBlueprint¹, and highlighted what she believed were many benefits for all of her students:

if a grade 12 logs in, it'll show them everything they've taken, it will show all their marks. It'll show them what occupations are available, and the salaries. It'll show the projection for the next ten years of where how many jobs will be in that sector, I mean it's pretty amazing. So all of that is going to help kids be employed, I mean maybe they'll be underemployed, but they'll be employed. So I think it will lead to greater employment.

The links between career guidance provision in schools and the broader policy of career guidance as a public policy mechanism against unemployment were acknowledged, albeit inversely, by all four policy experts in England. However, when I probed specifically about careers guidance as a mechanism against youth unemployment, the policy experts held differing viewpoints. Anthony Barnes voiced “not being very keen on the idea” of careers guidance in schools as a mechanism against youth unemployment. He carefully explained how he felt it was more beneficial to “have a more holistic view of careers education then to reduce it to some sort of palliative i.e., to prevent or make less likely…” Anthony described that:

in a holistic view, careers education…it’s about having…finding good work, which may not be paid well, you can do voluntary work, gift work, help out in the home…it's about being in touch with your values, and if it's for example doing the green thing is important to you (which I think it should be to everyone) that…you try to live your life by values that are important to you.

¹ myBlueprint (https://myblueprint.ca) is an online career and education planner adopted by many schools across Canada.
Anthony further explained feeling that “these politicians who see careers education to be a quick fix for employment problems…this is a very narrow view of what careers service is about…” Anthony drew upon an example of a young person being employed in a job they disliked and how effective careers guidance could help the young person to rationalize their employment, albeit in the short term. Effective careers guidance would, Anthony argued, “prepare that young person for saying…okay it's a tough job you've got right now but it's not the end, it's a stepping-stone to something else…”

David Andrews, another policy expert from England agreed that “the most obvious way in which it [career guidance] addresses youth unemployment is to make young people aware of the realities of that.” David also spoke of the need for young people to be equipped with contingency skills, and highlighted the value of asking young people “So what's your networking skills? What is your network? How do you build your network to find opportunities?” David summarized by saying “for me those [are] the ways, or are really useful ways in which career education can respond to high youth unemployment.” Clearly, Anthony and David shared similarities between their interpretations regarding the role of careers guidance in preparing young people to cope with transitions and periods of unemployment.

Youth unemployment and cost-of-living were described as important issues for the entire United Kingdom, and Dr. Smith spoke at some length regarding the complexity of these issues when linked to the role of careers guidance in schools. Dr. Smith explained that often statistics regarding youth unemployment were misinterpreted and contested, not least by government. A healthier perspective would be to reframe the conversation to talk about what careers education and careers guidance does contribute. Dr. Smith was anxious to highlight the trend across Europe
of framing youth unemployment through the lens of public employment services and not through the lens of career services. Dr. Smith argued that this was:

the challenge actually for the career development professionals, because if they lose that expertise and the impact of their work in terms of helping to reduce NEET and helping to tackle some of these issues, then it weakens the idea of a national or indeed a local careers service and evolves to a kind of centralized system.

The counter-argument, which, Dr. Smith explained, was quite easy to do but not necessarily to articulate, “of course what career development professionals are offering is a more holistic perspective, and that an HR professional can only talk about the context in which they work.” Dr. Smith concluded that careers services as a profession needs to be “really clear about what is our unique role in terms of work with unemployed young people.” Too often, she warned, the profession “gets caught up in this policy tension, which is everywhere, which is around—if you only have a finite level of resources where do you place those resources?”

In discussing the role of career guidance policy for schools, Tony Watts felt that the ambiguous nature of the SG provided a complex policy arena for teasing out policy initiatives regarding youth unemployment. For Tony, the SG had left schools “simply at the mercy of these external people coming in to sell them the services and stuff and they probably haven’t got the resource to engage with these kind of processes.” Tony felt strongly that although there were isolated cases of schools retaining committed careers coordinators who were able to understand the public policy arena, that was now very much the exception. Tony explained that:

in general, the government has created a policy vacuum and in a way it is feeding their purposes… So if you have that view, as with this government, the policy is not to have a policy, and if you want the free market to operate, from their perspective
that’s fine. But where you actually care for the quality and have strong concepts for quality careers education, that perspective is actually disastrous. So you have strong policy and you have weak policy. Where you have weak policy all these things don’t matter except to expose that it is so weak, because of what they are trying to do. Where you have strong policy, all these intermediary structures become extremely important because for that policy to work, they are absolutely key roles and without them you are not going to get change in schools.

For all of the intermediaries and teachers of careers guidance in England, interpretations of career guidance as public policy mechanisms against youth unemployment were at localized levels appropriate to their individual careers guidance in-school context. In some respects, this was an advantage as provision and programing could be tailored to meet localized needs. For example, Annie, one of the intermediaries in England B, carefully outlined her interpretation of how career guidance, when used from a holistic perspective, could support youth in her area with their employment efforts. Annie aligned this interpretation with her working practice, with a particular focus on the work she was doing with NEETs. However, Annie admitted that this was becoming an increasingly reduced part of their provision, revealing how she and her line manager had recently agreed:

we are singing or dancing and addressing everybody's barrier, whether it be a drugs issue, or whether it be a homeless issue, and in the midst of that we ask young people, by the way, do you know what you can be doing by the end of year 11?

James identified that in order to respond to youth unemployment, careers guidance provision should be far reaching, “it's got to be built within the curriculum, with progression pathways, at a school, at a district, at a local authority [level].” Using labour market information
as an example, James highlighted that his organization’s response was to produce data packs for schools:

what we are trying to say to schools, particularly around labour market, is look…this is what is in your locality, if you're going to try to help young people to get that first job it's got to be within 1 to 10 miles of where they live they are not going to travel miles especially our entry level level one learners. So what's in your locality…and it's interesting, especially in a high school, where they're saying…you know what? This is the best labour market information ever produced…one school said…we have reshaped our Post 16 curriculum to reflect what's there, because we need to prepare young people.

When asked about youth unemployment and the role of career guidance, Martin also spoke at a very localized level in his response. Martin described how, in his geographic area, the Government were concerned with NEETs. Martin was proud that his school had a relatively low level of NEETs, and he credited this to the school employing a designated careers guidance advisor, called Judith. Martin stressed the school was lucky to have her, as “she knows exactly what's out there for students, and is able to give them the best advice, and get the best outside agency in to support those students.” Martin explained that Judith looked out for opportunities that really suited their students. He admitted, “other staff support that process, and other people might give more university guidance.” However, Martin expanded:

for those students that aren't necessarily going to cut a traditional path through,

[Judith’s] involvement is vital…what [Judith’s] able to do, is look at the individual, and she's got time to look at the individual. And very much follow a program that
isn't one-size-fits-all, it's more fluid and it's a more personalized approach to what's out there.

However, the focus on localized provision was not necessarily a satisfactory approach. The one intermediary who revealed a more holistic perspective of careers guidance as a public policy mechanism was Ben an intermediary from England B. He described a tension between believing that careers guidance was an effective response, and his prior experience that suggested otherwise. Ben outlined believing careers guidance continued to be “a crucial part of the equation in addressing youth unemployment, because students need to understand what the opportunities are and they need help to navigate their way through the system.” However, he also acknowledged that “if I hark back to what may be the good days around careers information advice and guidance, when there was a lot of resources available, we still had high levels of youth unemployment.” Ben concluded “…you start to question actually, was all that effort, was a lot of what was being done…how much of an impact was it making?

**Chapter Summary**

Through seeking to examine the *CPS*, *SG*, and *NSG* documents in action, the contributions from 25 policy actors revealed that their wide-ranging and nuanced individual definitions of career guidance not only influenced their interpretation of policy documents, but also supported decision-making regarding career guidance provision in their relative job roles and schools. As each of the policy actors interpreted and enacted the *CPS*, or *SG*, and *NSG*, access, format, and engagement with policy documents was an implicit, but nevertheless deliberately instigated and managed, interaction. Purpose of reading the *CPS*, *SG*, and *NSG* mattered, and influenced the lens adopted which in turn aligned with an individual’s expectations of job role and working practice. Once again, individual definitions and worldviews of career
guidance framed individual understandings, and subsequently shaped and mitigated working practice. This was particularly evident for the England policy actors, many of whom reported how their ideal of career guidance was defined by their interpretation, rather than the definition of careers guidance contained in the SG, which was seen as a somewhat weak policy.

It was relatively straightforward to determine public policy goals through the content analytic approach undertaken in chapter 4, however, they were revealed in more nuanced and subtle terms by the policy actors of this study. Nevertheless, all of the policy actors provided rich descriptions of their policy context and nested working practices that were peppered with learning, labour market, and social equity related terminology. Overwhelmingly, all policy actors rooted their career guidance definitions and working practices in a commitment to providing career guidance as a “public policy good.” They subsequently expected policy documents to be a framework to aspire to that goal.
CHAPTER 6:

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

As you have questioned me, what has dawned on me was that if the teachers who work with the students, who drive that success, don't know about this vision, because they haven't heard it, they haven't articulated it, but policy makers say that's great language and the public is engaged, and they've got something great in this policy…I'm thinking if your measure of success is adoption, then this is a failure. Because there's a disconnect between who's writing it, and talking about it, and excited by it, and those who actually have the greatest influence in making it happen.

(George, career guidance coordinator from Ontario)

I commence this chapter by returning to the dissertation problem, purpose, methodology, and findings. The major themes that emerged from the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5 are discussed, and are followed by the implications for policy, practice, methodology, and future research. I conclude this dissertation by reflecting upon my dissertation journey and a brief nod towards my future anticipated areas of research activity.

Summary of the Dissertation

Policy and curriculum documents are produced and disseminated by ministries and departments of education to provide guidance and frameworks for educators to effectively implement programs. Different levels of policy actors work with and interpret documents to make sense of career guidance as public policy and enact their interpretations into career guidance programing. As these individuals adopt, adapt, circulate, and reject such documents, they do so through all kinds of interpretations within their professional practice, political, and managerial maneuverings (Prior, 2003). However, there was a dearth of research literature that
examined policy actors’ interpretations and understandings of policy documents. Therefore, given the significance afforded to career guidance as public policy within the educational sphere, it was pivotal to increase our understanding of the role of policy documents in the enactment of career guidance programing.

The purpose of this study was to understand how different types of policy actors, situated in England and in the province of Ontario, Canada, interpreted career guidance policy documents to make sense of career guidance as public policy and to inform career guidance provision in their respective jurisdictional contexts. The research questions that gave focus to this study were:

1. How was career guidance defined in policy documents and by the policy actors for both jurisdictions in this study?
2. How did policy actors access, interact with, and interpret career guidance policy documents?
3. How were public policy goals for career guidance and responding policy initiatives represented in the policy documents for the two jurisdictions examined in this study?
4. How did policy actors interpret the role of career guidance policy, curriculum, and programing as public policy mechanisms within their contextual environments and jurisdictions?
5. How did policy actors engage in interpreting and re-interpreting career guidance policy documents and their associated job roles and policy actor roles?
6. Where and how did congruence and incongruence emerge between the two jurisdictions of this study?

Through a qualitative interpretive study, which engaged the principles of hermeneutic phenomenology, I explored how different levels of policy actors interpreted policy documents to
make sense of career guidance as public policy and enacted their interpretations into career
guidance programing. The introduction during 2014 of a revised policy for career guidance
originally implemented in 2012/2013 in secondary schools in England, where I lived and worked
for the first 43 years of my life, and the simultaneous introduction of a new policy and program
for education and career/life planning in secondary schools in Ontario, where I now reside,
provided logical locations for this study. However, it was the three policy documents in addition
to the two geographic locations that were the primary focus of this study. Subsequently, I turned
to Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) framework for analyzing documents, and Coburn’s (2005)
sensemaking model in order to explore the content, and context of the three policy documents,
Creating Pathways to Success, Career Guidance and Inspiration in Schools: Statutory Guidance
for Governing Bodies, School Leaders and School Staff, and Non-Statutory Guidance for
Governing Bodies, School Leaders and School Staff.

Bray and Murray Thomas (1995) provided the framework for comparative education
analysis that helped me to differentiate the multilevel analyses required to explore insightful
nuances that might be gained from this comparative work. In addition, by purposefully including
a variety of levels of job roles, this study acknowledged Ball et al.’s (2011a) assertion that all
policy actors undertake complex and differentiated activity, manifested through different roles,
actions, and engagements embedded in the processes of interpretation. Finally, rooting this study
conceptually in sensemaking (Coburn 2001) allowed me to gain deeper insight into each of the
policy actors’ individual interpretations of what engaging with the appropriate career guidance
policy document meant to them.
Review of Conceptual Framing

I commenced this dissertation with the notion that reading and annotating a policy document was a physical marker of a mostly invisible process of using and consuming documents undertaken by policy actors as they interpreted policy documents and enacted them into career guidance practice. I connected this process to one prong of a three-pronged approach to document analysis, where documents are deliberated for their content, and context, both as commentary and as actors (Miller & Alvarado, 2005). In addition, I saw this as an interpretive process whereby readers of policy documents negotiated a number of sensemaking processes and influences (Coburn, 2001) as they interpreted the content and implementation of the policy documents. I considered that policy actor roles were important in differentiating how various individuals, in different working roles, engaged and made sense of the policy documents they were responsible for implementing (Ball et al., 2011a). Finally, I argued that a hermeneutic phenomenological approach (e.g., Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Frieson, Henriksson & Saevi, 2012; van Manen, 1997), employing a comparative education analysis (Bray & Murray Thomas, 1995) was an appropriate way to explore the phenomenon of career guidance policy being “performed” (Prior, 2003, p. 173).

Data collection techniques of document analysis, interviews, and field notes were employed to investigate these assumptions. Twenty-five policy actors participated in a series of 34 interviews that were transcribed verbatim and member checked by the policy actors. Transcribing was a lengthy process that resulted in my spending a considerable amount of time listening, and re-listening to the policy actors as they shared their experiences and interpretations of reading and engaging with CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents. I subsequently coded the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents, field notes, and the transcriptions by hand. The application
of these methods produced a substantive body of data, which in turn was analysed to ensure the study included a thick, descriptive body of information.

The following section provides a brief review of the conceptual framing employed to examine my findings. The section is organized into the following sub-sections; document analysis, sensemaking, and policy actor roles. The implications of employing this conceptual framework are also commented upon.

**Document Analysis**

Miller and Alvarado (2005) presented their framework as an invitation for researchers to engage in a number of strategies to incorporate the analysis of documents into their research studies. This invitation was appealing due to the potential for examining the interpretations undertaken by a number of policy actors responsible for enacting career guidance policy documents. In their framework, Miller and Alvarado suggested three overarching approaches to analyzing documents. First, content analytic approach assumes that a document is a “container of static and unchanging information,” and the researcher’s role is to examine “core consistencies and meanings” (p. 351) within that static and unchanging information. Second, in the first of two context analytic approaches, documents are examined as commentary, for their “concern with organizational and institutional structure and process, and their naturalistic stance” (p. 351). Third, in the second of the context analytic approaches, documents are examined as actors. This strategy, Miller and Alvarado assert, is the most distinctive, where documents are seen as “social actors or actants” (Latour & Woolgar, 1986), and as “fields of study in their own right” (Miller & Alvarado, 2005, p. 352).

Although Miller and Alvarado saw these approaches as distinctive from each other, in this study I amalgamated two of the three approaches. First, I undertook a content analytic
approach to complete a purposeful exploration of all of the policy documents that were relevant to the policy actors in this study. Through this exploration, I was able to participate in reading the same CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents that had been read by the policy actors. This was important to both contextualize the interviews I had planned with the policy actors, and to enable me to experience my own interpretations of the policy documents in response to the research questions of this study.

Second, I undertook the context analytic approach of examining the selected policy documents as actors. Miller and Alvarado (2005) urged the researcher adopting a document as actor approach, to “follow the document in use” (p. 352). In particular, the policy actors shared how they had first sourced and accessed the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents, and their initial interpretations and understandings of how the documents would impact career guidance programing enactment in their contexts. Taking the approach of document as actor had some advantages, as it steered my investigation to examine how the CPS, SG, and NSG had been enrolled into activity to produce career guidance programing (Prior, 2003). However, this approach did not facilitate investigation as to how the various policy actors, the readers of CPS, SG, and NSG, made sense of the policy documents as and after they read them. I found the term “context analytical” to be somewhat misleading when applied to this study, as concentrating on the documents’ socially exchanged and produced nature (Miller & Alvarado, 2005, p. 352) risked overlooking the importance of many different contexts of the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents.

In particular, as established in chapter 2, the policy context was vitally important to any investigation about policy (e.g., Herr, 2008; McLaughlin, 2006; Savickas, Van Esbroeck, & Herr, 2005; Sweet, 2004; Watts, 2005). Furthermore, it was important to explore several macro
level contexts that framed the context of interpreting and using CPS, SG and NSG. For example, the two wider jurisdictional contexts were important (e.g., political power in each nation, school structures, etc.). In addition, the historical context of the introduction of CPS, SG, and NSG policies was also important. Furthermore, the agentic factors of the policy actors were important, if this study was to make sense of the policy actors’ interpretations of the CPS, SG and NSG documents. Subsequently, applying Coburn’s (2001) sensemaking framework alongside Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) document analysis framework provided an opportunity for exploring the many contextual pieces and for multiple interpretive perspectives to unfold. To build on Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) document analysis framework, I propose that to capture the agentic properties of a policy document through this type of analysis, the existing “context analytical” approach should be called agentic analytical (emphasis added by author), and a new context analytical approach be added. I suggest the following revised framework for analysis of policy documents as detailed in table 6.1.

**Sensemaking**

Understanding the multi-faceted environments within which policy actors made sense of policy documents was the overarching focus of this study. In her conceptual model of the sensemaking process, Coburn (2001), recognized that teachers in different communities could simultaneously make different interpretations of the same policy. Moreover, the sensemaking process is cyclical, with policy actors continually revisiting past experiences to construct new understandings of policy (McLaughlin, 2006). Subsequently, 25 policy actors were recruited to explore this phenomenon, through a hermeneutic phenomenological study, with the expectation that many nuanced sensemaking processes might be revealed. Furthermore, Coburn asserted that individual teachers’ worldviews, preexisting practices, and collective understandings, shaped
Table 6.1. Revised features of document analysis framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Analytic</th>
<th>Context Analytic</th>
<th>Agentic Analytic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content of Policy Document</strong></td>
<td><strong>Policy Document Environment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Policy Documents as Commentary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document is container of static and unchanging information</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Who are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify core consistencies and meanings</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Where are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key patterns, themes, categories</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>What is their job role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key form of inductive analysis</td>
<td>Values and ideology</td>
<td>Key form of inductive analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can draw on different philosophical approaches, including grounded theory and phenomenology</td>
<td>Legal frameworks</td>
<td>Can draw on different philosophical approaches, including grounded theory and phenomenology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative or purposive sampling</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>What is their policy actor role?</td>
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<tr>
<td>External source criticism minimal</td>
<td>Economic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Might consider effect of biases</td>
<td>Demographics</td>
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how teachers constructed understanding, selected certain messages, and negotiated the technical and practical details necessary for them to interpret and translate what were often abstract messages into concrete action. The findings of this study go some way to corroborating this; however, they also reinforced how nuanced and organic the sensemaking process was for all of the policy actors.

Sensemaking provided the opportunity to explore individual interactions with policy documents with a particular focus in situating these interactions against the messages selected,
emphasized, and reacted to by policy actors as they read and decoded the documents. However, the far-reaching scope of Coburn’s framework meant that teasing this information from the policy actors was complex, and required in some instances, repeated snippets of conversation between researcher and policy actor in order to pinpoint understandings.

The sensemaking framework was helpful to examine the portion of a document’s performance that occurred for policy actors whilst they were reading and making sense of documents. For example, utilizing the framework shone a light on the policy actors’ processes of reconstructing and re-interpreting what they understood about career guidance policy before, during, and after the momentary reading of a policy document. Moreover, policy actors formed and held their individual definitions of career guidance long before they physically picked up a copy of CPS, SG, or NSG and began to read it. Applying sensemaking within this study could be likened to providing an audience of the libretto with a visit whilst it is in production, eyeglasses and an ear trumpet to magnify the performance, and a full post-performance review. Ultimately, when engaged for document analysis, sensemaking provided a lens and space to explore moments crystalized by policy actors during the process of turning abstracted policy ideas in policy documents into contextualized, individualized working practices (Braun et al., 2011).

**Bringing Document Analysis and Sensemaking Frameworks Together**

By employing both the document analysis and sensemaking frameworks, I had attempted to combine an investigation of the content of the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents, and the ways in which these documents were made sense of by various policy actors. To some extent, this was an examination of two sides of the same coin. However, by bringing the two frameworks together this study was able to explore the human quality of policy analysis (Rorty,
acknowledging Yanow’s (1996) warning that there is no single correct solution to a policy problem any more than there is mutually agreed perception of what that policy problem is.

This was particularly evident when analyzing policy actors’ worldviews of career guidance public policy context with their definitions of career guidance, where there were both considerable overlap and variance. Although many policy actors contributed succinct definitions, some were extensive, convoluted and underscored the complexity of defining the many types and distinctions of careers work and support. How policy actors defined career guidance was most commonly cited as the significant influence upon policy actors’ decision-making processes about career guidance practice and provision.

In some instances, however, there was some overlap in the facets of the frameworks, and this needed to be addressed in the findings in order to keep the results from appearing too repetitive. In addition, though the document analysis framework acknowledged that policy documents had an historical development and existence prior to them being accessed and read by policy actors, it did not consider this analysis within the content and context analytic phases prescribed in the framework. Albeit far-reaching in its potential to consider the existing worldviews, knowledge, and pre-conceived understandings that frame policy actors’ interactions and interpretations of documents, Coburn’s (2001) sensemaking, was not aimed at considering historical development of policy documents.

To further explain, I return to the metaphor used by Prior (2003) comparing the use of and interaction with a document to the performance of a libretto. For an individual who attends the libretto, the experience begins with a decision to attend, consideration of whether one is able to attend (e.g., can I afford this, can I travel to the venue, do I need overnight accommodation?) selection of convenient performance dates, and the purchase of an appropriate ticket.
Correspondingly, this study revealed how policy actors made decisions regarding the access, consumption, and exchange of policy documents that influenced their interpretations, understandings, and decisions regarding subsequent enactment into programing. Yet, in the same way, in attending the libretto, we do not know or understand the processes of bringing that libretto to performance, for example, the script writing, auditions, rehearsals, set construction, and other related processes involved. Similarly, this study does not tell us how the CPS, SG, and NSG came to be performed in their entirety. I recommend future research that pairs sensemaking and document analysis for continued inquiry into the multiplicity of interpretations of careers related policy that is aimed at supporting youths’ transitions from compulsory (secondary) schooling.

**Policy Actor Roles**

Ball, Maguire, Braun, and Hoskins (2011) highlighted the importance of understanding how policy actor roles and positions combine to make policies happen. Within this combination process, many facets (e.g., existing values, institutional culture, wider political context) form both the backdrop and foreground for policy actors to take up their policy actor roles as they move towards implementing policy. Throughout this coming-together process, multiple interpretations and translations were made, and each was influenced by the focus of the policy actor role at that moment in time. Early on in this dissertation, I predicted what the policy actor roles might translate to for the policy actors of this study, and a summary of this can be seen in chapter 3, Table 3.2. The findings of this study have revealed that for the policy actor participants in this study, policy actor roles varied from Ball et al.’s (2011) framework, and differed across the two jurisdictions, though there were a few commonalities among the policy experts.
In Ontario, the document analysis showed that the policy scope and content of CPS were at least partially responsible for the career guidance coordinators and career guidance counselors having such crucial roles with regard to interpretation and implementation of CPS. All of the policy actors in both of these job roles disclosed that their interpretations of CPS had been driven by their worldview of career guidance, their school context, and their prior experience and training for their current job roles. Ball et al. (2011) highlighted how entrepreneur policy actors reworked and recombined aspects of different policies. I would add to this, because the career guidance coordinators and counselors also reworked prior experience and training, and their definition and worldview of career guidance as they read and interpreted the CPS. They appeared to undertake a complex situating of the CPS, informed by what Ball et al. identified as “examples of ‘good practice’ and other resources” (p. 628), to align the CPS with Choices into Action, the previous policy for career and life planning in Ontario schools.

For the principals, Ball et al.’s (2011) assertion of principals being narrators and having key roles in the discursive articulation of CPS did not fit the policy actor roles of the three principals in this study. Interpreting and implementing the CPS was not an active policy role for them, instead, the role was largely delegated to the career guidance counselors in each school. That is not to say they were not favourable to the CPS, but the constraints of their job roles prompted them to resort to this strategy. The definition of narrators (Ball et al. 2011) could however, be applied to the policy experts given their narrative role through their consultancy work. However, the fit between their particular job roles and Ball et al.’s definition was the overarching reason I placed them in this policy actor role. None of the three policy experts in Ontario had direct involvement with reading and implementing the CPS in schools; they shared their expertise from theoretical and conceptual perspectives.
In England, the coordinators, assistant head teacher, and career guidance teachers, all revealed feeling disappointed in the scope and content of the SG, and relied heavily on their job roles, previous experience with careers guidance provision, and their definitions and worldview of career guidance to mitigate what they saw as weak policy. However, they also confessed feeling that the SG constricted provision in their schools. Tony Watts, a policy expert participant in this study, clearly summarized this phenomenon:

So you have strong policy and you have weak policy. Where you have weak policy all these things don’t matter except to expose that it is so weak, because of what they are trying to do. Where you have strong policy, all these intermediary structures become extremely important because for that policy to work, they are absolutely key roles and without them you are not going to get change in schools.

Responding to the Research Questions

Defining career guidance. To commence each of the interviews with the policy actors I posed the question, “can you please define what career guidance means to you in your working context?”

Through my readings completed for chapter 2, I was aware that a number of definitions were employed in the career guidance field, and I had settled on one definition provided by Watts (2004), and adopted by the OECD (2004) as the guiding definition for this study. Although I had suspected that the definitions of career guidance employed by policy actors might be important contributions to understanding the worldviews that framed how they understood policy, I had underestimated the significance of this phenomenon. In particular, I had overlooked that the policy actors would reveal such a wide range of terms associated with career guidance.
In addition, I underestimated that the policy actors’ definitions of career guidance would be so influential to their interpretation of career guidance policy.

The complexity of defining policy was highlighted by Ball (2006), who admitted holding two conceptualizations of policy, first as text, and second as discourse. Ball explained that policy was neither one nor the other, “but both, they are implicit in each other” (p. 44). Ball emphasized that, because of this, it was vital to be explicit about the meanings attached to policy, as this affected how we initially interpreted policy and subsequently attached additional meanings to our interpretations. The data provided by the study policy actors seemed to support Ball’s two conceptualizations. In particular, the policy experts’ extensive experience in career guidance policy work translated into nuanced definitions of career guidance they were able to contrast to other types of careers support (e.g., career information, career development, career education). All policy experts linked their definitions to a discourse of historical development of career guidance policy in their jurisdictions, and they acknowledged the cumulative effect upon career guidance in varied contexts. Interestingly, none of the policy experts made explicit links to the textual documents of CPS, SG, or NSG within their definition of career guidance. Instead, their definitions, though initially shared as succinct summaries, were revealed through further probing as lengthy individual discourses rooted in career guidance as work, study, professional practice, and individual passion, suggesting a policy legacy of career guidance for all of the policy actors (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2009).

For the other levels of policy actors (the coordinators, administrators, and teachers), their definitions seemed more reactionary and situated in their current career guidance provision and programming. In addition, the definitions they provided were more explicitly linked to the policy documents of CPS, SG, and NSG. It was common among these policy actors to draw upon their
interpretations of the content of the CPS, SG, and NSG, embodying Ball’s (2006) conceptualization of policy as text. However, for some of the policy actors this was problematic, and they acknowledged a tension between their interpretation of policy document requirements, and their intrinsic worldview of career guidance. This manifested particularly in England and, subsequently, policy actors defined career guidance provision in terms of what they believed was best for their students in their particular contexts.

**Accessing and interacting with policy.** In discussing their experiences with accessing documents, the policy actors revealed some important facets, both in sourcing and locating, and their preferred format of documents. The policy experts in both Ontario and England reported relying on their professional networks to source and locate policy documents. The emergence of this theme was unsurprising given many of the policy experts’ job roles as consultants and, accordingly, their work with varying and diverse client bases. In particular, the policy experts sourced policy documents through other knowledgeable individuals and cultivated communities of practice to facilitate distribution of documents (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). This type of social interaction has been recognized as an important space for organizational and individual learning about policy (Coburn & Stein, 2006); however, for the policy experts, it was important to help them locate and obtain policy documents from trusted and reliable sources.

For the remaining policy actors, both formal and non-formal policy systems were important in sourcing and accessing policy documents (Coburn 2001). Coburn described that the non-formal system (e.g., connections with colleagues inside and outside of school), provided an opportunity for policy messages to be either aligned or misaligned to original policy intent. For sourcing and accessing policy documents this was not seen as an issue by most of the policy actors, although one of the guidance coordinators from Ontario, George, revealed that when he
accessed documents via the non-formal policy system this often resulted in a delay in receiving documents. The varying strategies employed by school boards in Ontario, and by the intermediaries in England were illustrative of the multi-faceted and multilayered environment in which policy documents are sourced, accessed, and read. Although policy actors reported confidence in the continuity of interpretations of policy in their work environments, it must be acknowledged there existed potential for a number of different messages about and interpretations of policy to be exchanged.

When interacting with policy, the physical act of annotating and highlighting a hard copy was an important part of de-coding and contextualizing a policy for all of the Policy actors, regardless of their jurisdiction or job role. Yanow (1996) drew attention to the difficulty in knowing for certain that any pattern was a direct result of a policy action, and was intended in the before-the-fact policy creation. To provide an illustration of this, Yanow called on the “apocryphal story of the baseball umpire who, when asked whether it’s a ball or strike, proclaims, ‘They ain’t nothin’ till I call ‘em.’” Similarly, calling out selected parts of policy, through annotation and highlighting, was reported by policy actors as being a way of evidencing to others that they had “made their call,” (George) that they had read the policy, and begun a process of decision-making regarding items of importance and relevance to their contexts.

**Interpretative processes.** Through the hermeneutic analysis of the results of this study, I identified three overarching existing cognitive structures, and two situational structures (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002) as important drivers and influencers, in differing combinations, to the interpretation process for all of the policy actors regardless of the different jurisdictions. The three overarching existing cognitive structures were *prior experience, job role,* and *worldview of*
career guidance, and the situational structure was organizational culture (emphasis added by author).

**Prior experience.** For policy experts in both jurisdictions, prior experience meant that they could situate CPS, SG, and NSG within the historical development of career guidance within their own jurisdictions and in many cases, internationally. When examined within the conceptual framework outlined in chapter 2, this transference of knowledge of historical policy to the current policy was explained by Coburn (2001) as a sub-process of generating new understanding that was influenced by worldviews, pre-existing practices, and shared understandings. Coburn examined this phenomenon in a group of teachers who, in spite of their different worldviews and prior experiences, managed to negotiate and achieve shared understandings. However, the policy experts were not work colleagues per se, and their shared understandings were generated across the field through academic contributions in addition to their individual work roles.

For the remaining policy actors, prior experience also impacted their interpretation of the three documents under study. The range of their individual prior experiences with career guidance work was complex. As the policy actors utilized their prior experience to interpret CPS, SG, and NSG, they undertook a series of maneuvers in order to achieve preferred programmatic components which they believed to be in the best interests of their students. For the policy actors in Ontario, who all felt favourably towards the CPS, this resulted in the career guidance programing in their schools extending and building upon what they had been doing with Choices into Action. However, for policy actors in England, who were more critical of the SG and NSG, this manifested as aligning the requirements of the new policy with programing heavily influenced by what they considered best practice. The England policy actors talked about the
importance of knowing their students, and being on their side. In addition, they reported that their prior experience from completing career guidance qualifications, combined with their historical practice in their schools, meant they were ideally placed to meet the needs of their particular cohorts of students. There was a sense of frustration in England at what policy actors felt was a narrowing of their previous roles due to the government’s requirement for provision to be impartial and independent of the school.

**Job role.** The category of job role was most significantly influential upon the way administrators (principals) accessed and interacted with policy compared to all of the other policy actor groups. All of the administrators to some extent delegated the implementation of career guidance policy in their schools. In England, the interpretation of policy had been largely delegated to the consortium of which the sample school was a member. This multi–perspective approach to understanding the requirements of the SG resulted in a level of shared mediation regarding policy messages (Coburn, 2005), with negotiated consensus on the most important aspects of the policy being reached outside of the sample school. Echoing Coburn’s conceptualization of how school principals influence teacher sensemaking, the consortium set parameters within which a further level of sensemaking was undertaken by the assistant head teacher to create implementation strategy for his school.

The cross–role interaction (Coburn, 2005) of the Ontario principals with their guidance counselors was significant and manifested through a two–way process that framed the sensemaking of both levels of policy actors. The principals framed the guidance counsellors’ understanding of the CPS in relation to the other K–12 policy documents, and to the school effectiveness framework (SEF). The guidance counsellors framed the sensemaking of the CPS for the principals through their specialist knowledge and experience with career guidance
programing in their schools. Coburn suggested that the nature, quality, and content in the interactions between principals and teachers facilitated substantive implementation. The cross-role interactions explored in this study corroborated Coburn’s claim and also hinged on the trust principals placed upon guidance counselors’ interpretation of the CPS policy into contextualized programing (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011).

**Worldview of career guidance.** In chapter 2, I discussed that how career guidance was conceptualized and practiced reflected nations’ social, economic, and political contexts (Gysbers, 2008). The findings of my research supported that assertion for the policy experts, and to some extent, the career guidance coordinators and administrators. Conversely, the career guidance teacher policy actors were more limited in their awareness of how a range of contextual public policies and legislation affected and defined their practice (Herr, 2003). Nevertheless, this group of policy actors mitigated what they perceived as weaknesses of policy or constraints imposed by policy through an unwavering belief and trust in their worldview of career guidance. For all of the teacher policy actors in this study, their worldview of career guidance was the strongest influence upon their interpretive behavior and understandings of policy documents.

In England, the weak structure of the SG had created a “policy vacuum” (Tony Watts) which had necessitated all four of the policy experts and four career guidance coordinators to draw upon their worldviews to compensate for what they perceived was missing from the policy. Tony Watts explained, that the government’s intention for the free market to operate had opened up a space where schools were now at the mercy of many external providers attempting to sell them various packages of careers provision. In this situation, the sensemaking activity of careers guidance teachers had become an activity were many possible meanings and outcomes needed to be synthesized. The emphasis on the role of worldview in determining the decision making
processes revealed by career guidance teachers aligned with Weick’s proposal that the problem faced by the sensemaker was “equivocality not uncertainty,” and “during this, people need values, priorities, and clarity about preferences” (1995, p. 27).

In Ontario, the shift to the “across the grade” policy in CPS had prompted the career guidance coordinators, principals, and guidance counsellors to identify new implementation strategies in their schools. The role of career guidance counsellors was instrumental in this, and they drew heavily on their “pre-existing understandings and worldviews” (Coburn, 2001, p. 147) to construct understandings of how to navigate the complexities of working with all school staff who now shared responsibility for implementing CPS.

**Organizational culture.** Scott’s (1987) work on understanding organizations as rational, natural, and open systems provides a useful source for discussing the impact of the wider policy context and structure of schools and their effect on sensemaking within organizational culture. Scott described the concept of an organization in three ways. First, as “collectivities orientated to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting relatively highly formalized social structures” (p. 22). Second, Scott suggested that organizations were “collectivities whose policy actors share a common interest in the survival of the system, and who engage in collective activities, informally structured, to secure this end” (p. 23).

The policy context in England was particularly demonstrative of Scott’s third area, the “coalition of shifting interest groups.” For example, the requirement in SG for schools to access independent and impartial career guidance provision was interpreted by policy actors to carry some level of risk for schools. In particular, policy actors felt it quite possible for schools to simply buy in career guidance provision from an outside provider. The challenge with this strategy was to avoid biased, abstracted provision, and retain the ability to make valuable
connections for and with the individual student, a construct seen by the policy actors as more difficult to achieve by someone external to the school. Policy actors argued that, to provide the most informed career guidance, it was important to fit the context of macro environment, community, and school with the students’ needs and aspirations. In addition, schools faced inspection of their career guidance provision from Ofsted, the government inspectorate. Spillane et al. (2002) described that, while such institutional sectors could allow for human sensemaking, they obliterated human agency. This would help to explain why in some instances, career guidance programming was tailored to “satisfying the Ofsted inspection framework.”

In Ontario, there was a greater sense of Scott’s (1987) “collectivities whose policy actors share a common interest in the survival of the system, and who engage in collective activities, informally structured, to secure this end.” Certainly, the organizational structure of district school board, guidance coordinator, principal, and guidance counselor lent themselves to this “collective of policy actors” approach. Although some of the activities of sensemaking and subsequent implementation of the CPS were formally structured, there were examples of schools undertaking a more “in-house” informal approach, utilizing the experience and knowledge of the guidance counselor. This enabled the school principals to navigate the multiple interacting contexts of guidance counselors, teachers, and student demographics as that influenced their interpretations of the CPS as a K–12 “across the grade” policy.

**Political frame.** As already discussed, the shift to the “across the grade” CPS in Ontario, and the perceived weakness of the SG in England, provided a political frame where organizations are viewed as “roiling arenas hosting ongoing contests of individual and group interests” (Bolman & Deal, 2010, p. 194). Five propositions encapsulate this viewpoint

- organizations are coalitions of various individuals and formed interest groups;
coalition members have enduring differences in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality;

most important decisions involve the allocation of resources;

scarce resources and enduring differences can put conflict at the center of the dynamics and make power an important asset; and,

goals and decisions emerge from negotiation and bargaining among the competing stakeholders.

Fowler’s (2013) explanation of networking and coalition building provides a useful insight to describe the political frames of CPS in Ontario and SG in England. Fowler drew upon the work of Crosby and Bryson (2005), to present the concept of forums and arenas as important venues for networking and coalition. Forums were venues where opinions and beliefs could be exchanged and discussed, arenas were venues in which decisions about policy were made. In Ontario, forums were apparent in two situations. First, career guidance coordinators discussed their participation in regional events within their district school board, where coordinators would meet with each other and with board superintendents and principals, and with the Ontario School Counsellors Association (OSCA) who held a series of regional meetings to discuss CPS. Second, forums existed between principals and career guidance counsellors, which were purposefully formed in order to mitigate the challenges of implementing the “across the grade and subject area” CPS policy. The forum between principals and career guidance coordinators provided opportunity for allocation of resources, which were reported by all policy actors as challenging given that CPS was being implemented alongside a number of other policies and initiatives from the MOE. Ultimately, the arena for decision making regarding the implementation of CPS in Ontario was at district school board level, with much of the final selection and choice about
provision undertaken through the partnership between principals and career guidance coordinators.

In England, the extensive publications and commentary on career guidance policy defined the forum of policy experts. All of the England policy expert policy actors in this study were familiar with each other’s contributions, were fellow members of various career guidance professional bodies and organizations, and had, in many instances worked collaboratively. A further forum existed at career guidance coordinator level, and all of the England coordinator policy actors reported the value of networking in helping them make sense of the requirements of SG and how they might be best positioned to support schools in their areas. For one of the career guidance teachers Judith, located in England A, the support from coordinator level was vital, and she made explicit links to how being part of the forum helped her make sense of the requirements of SG for her school. Consequently, knowing of the scarcity of resources to support careers guidance in her school, Judith emphasized using the SG document to argue for provision. The strategy employed by Judith aligned with Scott’s concept of an organization as “coalitions of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation,” (1987, p. 23) describing the process Judith frequently undertook with senior management in her school. In Hillrise Catholic Comprehensive, the structure of negotiation, and the outcomes were strongly influenced by environmental factors prompted by the SG, including the requirement to provide impartial and independent careers guidance and the evaluation of provision determined by the Ofsted inspection framework.

**Career Guidance as Public Policy**

The content analytic approach to exploring CPS, SG, and NSG undertaken in chapter 4 showed that public policy goals for career guidance were relatively consistent throughout the
CPS policy but more difficult to extract from the SG and NSG documents. In addition, they were disclosed in nuanced and subtle terms by the England policy actors of this study in chapter 5, where they were revealed as nested work practices that were peppered with learning, labour market, and social equity related terminology. However, they were related in more explicit terms by the Ontario policy actors who all saw strong linkages between cooperative education, SHSM, OYAP programing, and career guidance policy initiatives in schools.

Yanow (1996) warned that human knowledge often included “a tacit dimension” (1996, p. 215), which had implications for interpretation and making meaning of policy that was called ambiguous by the England policy actors. This presented the England policy actors with the SG policy and underpinning policy context that required extensive layers of interpretation in order to reveal any understandings of career guidance as public policy for this study. In the end, the findings in chapter 5 established that for these policy actors, it came down to their worldview of career guidance that supported the notion of career guidance being for the public good. For the policy experts, their working roles and significant experience had historically provided them with numerous opportunities to engage with and develop their understanding of career guidance as public policy. Subsequently, the linkages to any public policy for careers guidance contained in the SG policy were more easily identified and commented upon, even if they manifested as shortcomings where policy experts commented upon what was missing from the SG policy in particular, in the form of VET provision.

The Revised SG Policy

Since data were collected for this study, the UK Government updated the SG in 2015. The NSG has not been updated. The version introduced in 2015 remains the most current version. In the same way as the 2014 version, the SG begins with an explanation of the terms
must and should. The term must (emphasis added by author) is defined as “when the person is required to do something” and the term should (emphasis added by author) is qualified as “setting out a requirement in the statutory guidance to which they should have regard” (2015, p. 3). The revised SG contains a number of should additional sections, that consist of a series of best practice guidelines that schools might consider adopting in their careers guidance provision. Given that these guidelines are optional and subsequently difficult to predict their incorporation into provision by the policy actors of this study; I have concentrated on the areas of the revised guidance that are must statements, which schools and their governing bodies are legally required to implement. The overall content of the revised SG has not significantly changed, some sections have been moved to new locations in the document, and there are a few important additional statements. A section has been added under the section “statutory duty,” which reaffirms the need that governing bodies must ensure independent1 careers guidance is provided

- that is presented in an impartial2 manner;
- includes information on the range of education or training options including apprenticeships and other vocational pathways; and,
- is guidance that the person giving it considers will promote the best interests of the pupils to whom it was given.

A further new section has been added that outlines the contributions of the Careers and Enterprise Company. This was created by the Secretary of State for Education to broker relationships between employers, schools, and colleges. A further role of the Careers and Enterprise Company is to develop a system “that motivates young people to take part in activities

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1 Independent is defined as external to the school. External sources of careers guidance and inspiration could include employer visits, mentoring, website, telephone and helpline access. Taken together, these external sources could include information on the range of education and training options, including apprenticeships.

2 Impartial is defined as showing no bias or favouritism towards a particular education or work option.
to build their employability” (2015, p. 6). In addition, the company provide feedback to Government “on how well young people are being prepared for work,” administer a “£5m investment fund to support innovation and stimulate good practice,” and “support a network of advisors to broker strong local links,” which will help schools to “choose the best careers and enterprise organisations to partner with” (p. 10).

The raising of participation age was also outlined, from September 2014 young people are now required to stay in full-time education or training until the age of 18. Options for education and training were defined as

- full-time study in school, college, or training provider;
- an apprenticeship, traineeship, or supported internship; and,
- full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more) combined with part-time accredited study.

Furthermore, schools “must also notify local authorities whenever a 16 or 17 year old leaves an education or training program before completion” (p. 14). In addition, a section has been added advising schools to ensure adequate support for students with special educational needs or disabilities. This section of an entire page in length, emphasizes that young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and or disabilities “are capable of sustainable paid employment,” that “all professionals working with them should share that assumption,” and “families need to know that the great majority of children and young people with SEN or disabilities, with the right support, can find paid work, be supported to live independently, and participate in the community” (p. 15). Additional sections on this page were devoted to explaining the need to cooperate with local authorities, and the value of partnerships with employment services, businesses, housing agencies, disability associations, arts and sports
groups which are valuable in helping young people to see what they can achieve. Interestingly, this section is a *should* section, and therefore there is not a statutory requirement for schools to specifically implement any of these strategies, though of course they *must* have due regard in some way to the needs of students with SEN and or disabilities, and they *must* liaise with local authorities to achieve this. In addition, the complexities faced by youth during transitions are not included in this section.

The revised 2015 *SG* does not, I believe, impact upon the findings of this study, which were drawn from policy actors’ interpretations of the 2013 *SG*. However, the additions highlighted here do demonstrate the increased expectations upon schools to work with a variety of professionals and partnerships outside of the school. There would be value in further research that seeks to understand the role and interpretation of policy documents within these new relationships and partnerships with external intermediaries, including those directed at supporting at-risk youth and youth with SEN and disabilities.

### Congruence and Incongruence Between Ontario and England

The findings of this study described in chapters 4 and 5 highlight a number of important areas of congruence and incongruence between the data from Ontario and England. These are briefly discussed under the following themes: definitions and worldviews, content and scope of policy, policy actor roles, and policy arenas and forums.

**Definitions and worldviews.** Defining career guidance was a nuanced process for all of the policy actors in this study. Of the many terms identified in Table 5.2, chapter 5, most congruence was seen across the definition of “career guidance.” There were some terms particular to each jurisdiction, for example, the Ontario participants only highlighted “student self-evaluation,” “accepting change,” “finding pathways,” and “alleviating anxiety.” In addition,
the England policy actors identified “impartiality,” and “independent to the school.” Looking more broadly at the data shared by all policy actors from both jurisdictions, there was shared agreement that the variety of terminology associated with careers provision was problematic, both for defining provision, and for interpreting and implementing policy requirements.

The data presented in chapter 5 demonstrated the importance of worldviews in shaping both individual definitions of career guidance and choices regarding programing. Of the 25 policy actors across the two jurisdictions, all seven policy experts, all six coordinators, three of the principals from Ontario, and all eight careers guidance teachers, personalism (emphasis in original), one of six worldviews listed by Ellis (1998), most closely matched the shared perspectives of career guidance. In particular, the policy actors favoured career guidance policies that targeted “self-actualization of students and the enlightenment of society” (Alexander, 2013), aligning their perspectives of career guidance with Tony Watts (2004), who contended career guidance policy was a public good.

**Content and scope of policy.** This theme provided noteworthy incongruence between the CPS on the one hand and the SG and NSG on the other. The CPS contained a number of expectations that were absent from the SG and NSG, and these are largely attributed to the CPS being a policy that also outlines a program plan for education and career/life planning in Ontario schools. In addition, the CPS is intended to be embedded into the entire school curriculum, across all subject areas and grades from kindergarten (age 4) to grade 12 (age 18). Furthermore, the CPS is aligned to a number of other MOE policies that policy actors are expected to consult, interpret, and implement alongside the CPS. In contrast, the SG and NSG, although aligned with each other, are largely stand-alone policies aimed at secondary schools, that are not directly related to a national curriculum, nor to primary-aged students. A further marked incongruence
was seen regarding program and policy evaluation. In section 6 of the *CPS*, “Program Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (pp. 35–42) expectations are stated that:

Every elementary and secondary school, under the direction of the principal and with the assistance of key staff and students, will develop, document, implement, and evaluate an education and career/life planning program based on the policies outlined in this document. Every effort should be made to engage parents and community partners in this collaborative process. The design and development, implementation, and evaluation of the program should involve all school staff, students, parents, and the community. (p. 35)

In contrast, the *SG* stated that “schools should satisfy themselves of the quality of any external organisations they plan to work with, and can use quality standards where these are available. They should monitor and evaluate the activity taking place whether that involves school staff, volunteers or external providers” (p. 16). In addition, schools were guided to take into account pupils’ feedback. This can be done informally or formally, for example via school councils or other mechanisms.” Schools were also directed to consider the usefulness of “feedback from parents and from employers engaged in the activities.” In particular, schools were encouraged to “use this feedback to evaluate different activities and delivery options to inform future provision” (p. 16). In contrast to the *CPS*, schools in England are under no statutory obligation to implement these suggested evaluation strategies, they are suggested as initiatives schools *should* consider adopting. Where there is a statutory requirement is related to the role of Ofsted, the government inspectorate who undertake inspection of secondary schools in England, and “will take account of the quality of independent advice and guidance in making their judgement on leadership and management” (p. 16). Though quite clearly different in
content and scope, the contrasting approaches to career guidance policy each bring about challenges for policy actors in terms of interpreting policy and subsequent enactment into career guidance provision. These jurisdictionally different challenges are discussed further in the implications for practice later in this chapter.

**Policy actor roles.** The CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents, have undoubtedly impacted upon the roles of the teacher level policy actors in both jurisdictions, with similar outcomes. For career guidance counsellor policy actors in Ontario, the move to an “across the grade/every subject area” policy, resulted in the four Ontario policy actors reporting that they now were required to work with many different subject teachers across their schools in order to implement CPS. This is predicted to extend further to include a greater range of community stakeholders and employers as schools in Ontario begin to implement a new policy framework for *Community-Connected Experiential Learning: Kindergarten to Grade 12* (MOE, 2016) in fall 2016, as shown in Figure 6.1. This new policy will expand community-connected experiential learning programing and cooperative education in Ontario schools, and is likely to significantly implicate guidance counsellors given that schools will need to

- create alignment and coherence among the experiential learning policy framework; the policy governing the education and career/ life planning program in Ontario schools, articulated in *Creating Pathways to Success*; policies outlined in the Kindergarten program document and the Ontario curriculum documents; and,

- develop strategies and structures to encourage individuals, businesses, and community organizations to become partners in providing experiential learning opportunities. (MOE, 2016, p. 15)
In England, the requirement for secondary schools to ensure that students are provided with independent (defined as external to the school), and impartial (defined as not favouring particular education or work options), resulted in the careers guidance teacher policy actors perceiving a job role shift from being responsible for delivering career guidance provision in their schools, to one of brokering provision from external providers. In particular, career guidance teachers must now work with a number of professionals both inside and outside of their schools as they implement the SG (Hooley, Watts, & Andrews, 2015). For career guidance counsellors and teachers, and school administrators in both jurisdictions, implementing their respective CPS, SG, and NSG career guidance policies has presented them with new ways of working, that have in turn, required them to interpret what their policy document expects, and how they can best respond.

Nevertheless, the expectations for schools to work increasingly across different curriculum areas, with varied and diverse stakeholders is seen as a challenge. As one principal from Ontario A explained

Certainly student services is where it all comes together. And they are sort of that bulk room if that makes sense between departments, but consciously trying to connect that kind of collaboration. It continues to be challenging, for the kind of structure we work in. You know our timetable, our space, the fact our teachers are trained to work in subject disciplines. Those are kind of barriers to that. It often happens with extra-curricular, where people come together and often that is inter space for the students, an electronics club or a social justice club and then you will have, but it's not so much based on an academic framework for cross-panel collaboration. (Violet, Willow Fall High)
In her work examining the influence of external organizations on the implementation of district initiatives, Honig (2009) emphasized important questions for school leaders to consider as they sought to participate productively through partnerships with external organizations. In particular, Honig stressed the need to consider how such relationships could be fuelled in order
to deepen the “collective capacity for implementation” (p. 411). Given the increasing expectation on schools to work with external stakeholders (e.g., employers) in both jurisdictions of this study, I would urge investigation of all stakeholders’ worldviews and definitions of key career guidance policy terms and discourse to begin to build knowledge and capacity inside and outside of formal school systems.

**Policy arenas and forums.** The final area of incongruence between the data from Ontario and England concerns the impact of arenas and forums upon career guidance policy document interpretation, with a marked difference in the two policy arenas where policy decisions were being made and formed into the *CPS*, *SG*, and *NSG* policy documents. In Ontario, the Ministry of Education is increasingly aligning policies for schools, subsequently creating a larger pool of policy documents that must be interpreted and understood in relation to each other by policy actors. In contrast, the Department for Education has, to all intents and purposes, removed career guidance from the overarching National curriculum in England schools, resulting in the *SG* and *NSG* being created within a more focused arena.

**Implications**

Based on the findings of this study, the following section presents implications for policy, practice, methodology, and future research.

**Implications for policy.** The findings of this study suggest several implications for policy, regardless of geographic jurisdiction, subsequently, the following recommendations are suggested.

*Special educational needs (SEN) students and students with disabilities.* Appropriate support for transitions for some groups (e.g., students with disabilities, low socio-economic status, Aboriginal students) should be embedded into career guidance policy, and work-based
learning (WBL) and vocational education and training (VET) facilitated and encouraged. In particular, further research should explore how career guidance policy is defined and becomes translated into support to meet the specific and varied needs of these populations of students.

**Policy actor roles.** As the range of stakeholders diversifies due to increased expectations of employer involvement, new community partnerships, and “across grade and subject area” polices to support career guidance provision in secondary schools, so increased attention must be given to establishing how the new stakeholders define career guidance and make sense of policy documents. This could facilitate more effective partnerships between external stakeholders and schools. Literature examining transformational change in higher education institutions could provide a valuable lens to examine policy actor roles in secondary schools, for example Kezar’s (2012) work that examined how sensemaking occurs from the bottom up, unfolds over time, and is sustainable. Kezar identified three key elements of sensemaking and sensegiving that propelled institutions toward transformation—depth of process; breadth of engagement across departments and campus-wide; and connection to strategies and barriers. Applying this lens would help us to understand the role of policy actors as they move through the more superficial efforts of early sensemaking activity to the deeper levels of understanding and forms of persuasion required for sustainable policy implementation and ongoing policy legacy.

**Collaborative arenas.** Collaborative arenas should be developed across schools, districts and jurisdictions that nurture trusting professional relationships, networking, communities of practice, and conversational learning (Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 2002) of career guidance, and associated definitions of terms. This could provide a valuable support structure for teachers and principals who are new to their roles, and have not benefited from any policy legacy regarding career guidance implementation. The power of social networks as a way of embedding
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) into higher education institutions is informative for further research exploring collaborative arenas. Williams et al. (2013) introduced a model to highlight the interactions at micro, meso, and macro levels typically seen in high educational institutions. These three levels are transferrable to public secondary school organizational structures and roles of policy actors within these levels that were explored in this study, e.g., teacher, principal or head teacher, and coordinator levels. Williams et al.’s model is based upon the premise that communities of practice provide access to expertise, support for problem solving and knowledge sharing, and promotes synergy across departments, subject areas, or other groups (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

**Defining career guidance.** Given that worldview of career guidance was one of the strongest influences upon subsequent sensemaking of career guidance policy, further work should be undertaken to reach broadly agreed definitions of career guidance, that are explicitly understood by all stakeholders and policy actors, that could be applied by policy makers at the agenda setting stage.

In particular, the findings of this study recommend the following considerations for policy in England:

**Shifting job roles.** All policy actors felt the introduction of the SG had directly or indirectly impacted their careers guidance work and in the case of intermediaries, administrators, and careers guidance teachers, shifted the requirements of their job roles. The impact of this shift in job roles needs to be understood within the autonomy agenda, and the academization policy initiative.

**Role of WBE and VET.** The findings of this study supported The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network’s (Hooley, 2014) assertion that career guidance policy increases in
effectiveness when explicitly linked to WBE and or VET. This includes opportunities for students to engage in work experience connected to and aligned with their compulsory education that are explicitly signposted. In particular, career guidance has an important role in ensuring that individuals and training routes are well-connected to the labour market. However, career guidance also needs to support individuals to make best use of skills and knowledge received through WBE and VET.

**Implications for practice.** Based upon the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to address the needs of careers guidance teachers responsible for interpreting policy documents and enacting programing into their schools. These recommendations are seen to be relevant in Ontario to support all subject teachers who are now included in the ‘across the grade and school CPS policy’ and in England to support careers guidance teachers and administrators who must select provision for their schools from an increasingly complex range of provision.

**Guidance counsellor roles.** The role of guidance counselor teachers and guidance coordinators in district school boards for successful implementation of CPS in Ontario is crucial. The shift to an ‘entire school, across the grade’ policy has caused a shift in the job roles of these policy actors. Adequate training and support should be provided to ensure they are adequately prepared and supported to undertake this vital implementation role.

**Initial teacher education.** Programs should include a component that helps teacher candidates to make sense of career guidance policies, and acquire skills and perspectives to effectively support students with career explorations and planning, including familiarity with VET programing, WBE, cooperative education, work-experience, and supporting transitions for
specific populations (e.g., students with disabilities, minority groups, low socio-economic status, and at-risk students) (e.g., Hooley, Watts, & Andrews, 2015; Slomp, Gunn, & Bernes, 2014).

New and beginning teacher induction and mentorship programs. These should align with and build upon the content of teacher education programs to facilitate career guidance policy actors to begin building their policy legacy through continuing to re-visit their evolving worldviews of career guidance, further develop their knowledge and experience of career guidance programming, and extend their sensemaking processes for new and familiar policy documents.

Implications for future methodology. In this study, I selected a hermeneutic phenomenology in order to be attentive to both the descriptive nature of phenomenology and the interpretive nature of hermeneutics (van Manen, 1997). Subsequently, I turned to Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) framework for collecting and analyzing documents, and Coburn’s (2005) sensemaking model in order to explore the content, and context of the three policy documents as they were interpreted by a range of career guidance policy actors. Bringing together a document analysis framework with a sensemaking framework resulted in a number of interesting phenomena that have interesting implications for future work exploring the role of policy and or curriculum documents in careers guidance (and other subject and curriculum areas) policy implementation.

Henriksson emphasized the unquestionably close link “between language, our worldviews, and our attitude towards fellow human beings; they shape and modify each other” (2012, p. 120). This assertion has important connotations for career guidance policy documents, and was supported by the findings reported in chapter 5. If policy actors are presented with policy documents that do not disclose a world they recognize, and the policy document talks
about initiatives and expectations that are alien to the policy actors’ pedagogical practices; Henrikkson queried whether we could really blame the policy actors for not moving past the first few sections of a career guidance policy document. If we are to understand the role of documents in this human interpretive process, there are two viewpoints to consider, the language, text, discourse, and or content of the documents, and the human being reading and interpreting the document.

Miller and Alvarado’s (2005) document analysis framework provided an insightful lens to first examine the text and discourse contained within the CPS, SG, and NSG documents, and second, as a means to explore the three documents’ social realities and situated meanings. However, to fully explore these, it is the human interaction and interpretation that needs to be examined. It is at this stage of document analysis that I suggest Miller and Alvarado’s framework is somewhat limited, and where I found a useful contribution from Coburn’s (2001) sensemaking model. Nevertheless, the multiplicity of public policy goals that played out within the careers guidance policy and or programming in both jurisdictions of this study, provided a complex context in which to tease out the interpretive practices of policy actors.

With hindsight, undertaking of the document analysis together with my participants (e.g., reading sections of the document together) would have provided a richer opportunity for examining multiple sensemaking processes, shared understandings and divergences in the reading and interpretation of documents. Consequently, I suggest there is value in utilizing hermeneutic methodology to instigate an ongoing inquiry with policy actors in further interpretive work aimed at moving towards a document analysis framework that provides a way of examining the interrelatedness of policy document and policy actor within a given context. In
particular, I would encourage methods such as think aloud, journaling, focus groups, and professional learning communities to be explored as suitable methods for engaging in this work.

**Implications for future research.** The findings of this study suggest several implications for future research, subsequently, the following recommendations are made.

**Defining career guidance.** The variety of definitions of career guidance and careers related work was seen to rather misguide careers work undertaken by guidance counsellors in Ontario secondary schools (Lynne Bezanson). Further empirical and conceptual work is needed to bring clarity to the breadth and depth of careers work, and reach consensus regarding related terminology. This is particularly important in Ontario as the Ministry of Education prepares to launch the new Community-Connected Experiential Learning policy framework, and expanded cooperative education programs with an expanding range of stakeholder involvement. In addition, the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) Future in Focus-Atlantic career development Framework for Public Education launched in 2015 (CAMET, 2015), provides a further opportunity for examining how career guidance related terminology is being applied and understood. More broadly, pan-Canadian policies on career development and associated service provision that in turn support provincial and territorial K–12 education systems are absent nationally in Canada (Borgen, McDonald, Pickerell, Roy, & Wischoff Yerama, 2015). Given the recent press release outlining the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada’s (CMEC) pledge to the “development of a pan-Canadian student transitions reference framework which would take into account the approaches adopted by the provinces and territories,” with a commitment to providing a draft document by July 2017 (CMEC, 2016). The findings of this study suggest that policy experts (i.e., researchers in career education and career development) have a vital role in contributing to such a framework.
In England, the variety of definitions of career guidance and careers related work was seen to somewhat weaken the careers guidance field (Dr. Smith), and provide a context where career guidance practitioners were increasingly defending their work and maintaining its value. Recent empirical work (e.g., Hooley, 2014; Hooley & Dodd, 2015; Mayston, 2002) has attempted to address this, presenting an evidence base for a number of benefits of career guidance. However, as highlighted in a policy commentary published in August 2016 by Careers England, this is a time of unprecedented change in the UK, with moves to “leave Europe,” and “a new Prime Minister and a new Secretary of State for Education” (Neary, 2016, p. 6). In addition, the “Careers Strategy” and a further revision to the Statutory Guidance are “both soon to be published” (p. 6). It would seem timely for further work to be completed that brings increased clarity to the careers guidance field, and contributes to a greater coherence in understanding the value and benefits of providing a range of careers related support to young people in England.

Building on increased clarity and coherence of careers related terminology, I would also suggest that further investigation of how policy actors respond to content and discourse in policy documents that do not align with their definitions and worldviews should be undertaken. Ball (2006) asserted that in policy matters it was important to establish “who can speak?” (p. 49). The definitions of career guidance held by policy actors and shared in this study prompted a policy document discourse that had influenced programing, and determined how policy actors responded to questions I asked in this study. In addition, many of the policy actors reported that their conversations with me as researcher through this study had deepened their understanding of how they were interpreting policy documents. Future empirical work could investigate the value of planned conversational learning as an intentional policy implementation strategy.
In Ontario, the findings of this study suggest that there may be an important role for trust in order to create and sustain successful relationships between administrators, career guidance counselors, and other subject teachers. These complex networks of relationships were being employed as a primary solution to the complexity of implementing an “across the grade and subject area” CPS policy for education and career and life planning. The relationship between administrator and guidance counsellor was viewed as particularly important due to the amount of delegation necessary for successful career guidance policy implementation. Further empirical work is needed across a broader range of schools to establish how other schools are managing organizational relationships to achieve CPS policy implementation.

Policy actors in England described a complex and confusing array of services and third party provision regarding careers guidance that had been initiated through the requirement for independent and impartial advice. Subsequently, the role of private sector intermediaries in defining careers guidance and interpreting the requirements of policy documents should be empirically investigated.

Concluding Thoughts

This dissertation was instigated by my desire to understand how policy actors interpreted and made sense of policy documents. I had a sense that developing this understanding was important, and my initial readings of the literature seemed to support this notion. Through this subsequent investigative journey, my initial curiosity has been somewhat answered, though as the implications of this study have outlined, I have many questions that remain unanswered. In this work I have deliberately sought to examine the policy implementation process through an examination of the role of policy documents from a deliberately all-encompassing perspective.
For this I drew from the work of Prior (2003), and this was invaluable in helping me to see the potential value in investigating policy documents as they were performed.

This has been a long journey, and there have been times when I have paused and wondered does this work really matter? I believe these moments of inward reflection and questioning have been important for different reasons. Overwhelmingly they have been important for me to keep focused and driven to complete this work. In addition, they have been important for me to notice what my policy actors feel is important within this work.

I began this chapter with a reflection from one of the policy actors, George, a guidance coordinator from Ontario, who described how important it was that “those at the chalk face, who facilitated education and career/life planning for young people, understood policy and drove forward its implementation.” This was reiterated and supported by all 25 policy actors in this study. In spite of the challenges their policy contexts have presented, they remain passionate about career guidance and committed to supporting students through career guidance programing in compulsory education settings. I conclude this dissertation with a return to the analogy of the libretto:

Taken on its own a libretto rarely adds up to much. The text as narrative is often disjointed, repetitive and lacking in depth. I cannot think of a single one that might hold a person’s attention as a gripping tale. Yet a libretto is not intended to be analysed in isolation. It demands to be analysed in action. How it is integrated into the dramatic action on stage, how it relates to the melody and rhythm of the music, how it is called upon (recruited) and manipulated by the singers, how it is performed – all of these are of primary importance. Its substance as displayed on the inert page is of only secondary concern. (Prior, 2003, p. 173)
Three policy documents, 25 policy actors, and one researcher came together to produce this dissertation libretto. Through multiple readings, reflections, and insights from policy actors and my own interpretations I have revealed how career guidance is defined and policy documents are connected to and drive career guidance practice. It is my sincerest hope that I have conveyed this libretto in a way that substantiates the policy actors’ contributions, and has emphasized how much their roles in the performance of the CPS, SG, and NSG policy documents mattered.
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Washington, DC. Retrieved from


APPENDIX A:

LETTER OF ETHICS CLEARANCE FROM QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

November 22, 2013

Ms. Lorraine Godden
Ph.D. Candidate
Faculty of Education
Duncan McArthur Hall
Queen's University
511 Union Street West
Kingston, ON, K7M 5R7

GREB Ref #: GEDUC-711-13; Romeo # 6011190

Dear Ms. Godden:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GEDUC-711-13 Interpreting Documents and Making Sense of Public Policy Goals for Career Guidance in Secondary Schools: A Multi-Perspective Empirical Comparative Study" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://eservices.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Chair, General Research Ethics Board

C: Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Faculty Supervisor
   Dr. Don Klinger, Chair, Unit REB
   Ms. Erin Wicklam, c/o Graduate Studies and Bureau of Research
APPENDIX B:

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

For Interviews (policy actors)

I am undertaking a research project for my PhD at Queen’s University Faculty of Education. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study about interpreting documents and making sense of public policy goals for career guidance in secondary schools. The overarching purpose of this study is to understand how different levels of policy actors (i.e., teacher, principal/head teacher, district school board/administrators), situated in two different jurisdictions, investigate and interpret career guidance policy and curriculum documents to inform program implementation. As such, understanding your perspective as an educator policy actor (teacher, career guidance provision provider, head teacher, principal, member of a district school board, school governing body, local education authority *select and delete as appropriate) in this implementation process is important to this research. You will be invited to undertake two interviews lasting a total of no more than 1 hour and 20 minutes. Interview questions will focus on your interpretation of any documents you interact with as part of your daily working routine, your experiences with issues related to using documents as part of career guidance curriculum or provision, and your views on how career guidance in secondary schools is a mechanism to address high youth unemployment. I will provide you with a Letter of Information to outline more details about this study, and Consent Forms, which need to be signed as soon as possible. Please contact me if you need more information about this study.
APPENDIX C:

LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR POLICY EXPERTS


I would like to invite you to participate in a research study about interpreting documents and making sense of public policy goals for career guidance in secondary schools. The overarching purpose of this study is to understand how different levels of career guidance policy actors (i.e., teacher, principal/head teacher, district school board/administrators), situated in two different jurisdictions, investigate and interpret career guidance policy and curriculum documents to inform program implementation. As such, understanding your perspective as an expert educator policy actor (someone who has expertise in the policy, planning and delivery of career education) in this implementation process is important to this research. This research project is led by Lorraine Godden, a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, under the supervision of Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Assistant Professor at Queen’s University. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen’s policies.

Your participation in this research will involve two interviews spaced approximately 10 days apart of no more than 40 minutes each in duration. You will not be asked to allocate more than 1 hour and 20 minutes of your time to this study. Interview questions will focus on your interpretation of any documents you interact with as part of your daily working routine, your experiences with issues related to using documents as part of career guidance curriculum or provision, and your views on how career guidance in secondary schools is a mechanism to address high youth unemployment. The interviews will be conducted at a time and location convenient to you. With your consent, the interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials. Direct quotes from your interviews may be used in presentation or publication of results; however, your name will not be associated with these quotes unless you specifically agree to be named as a participant in this study. Your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected to the best of the researcher’s ability. Data gathered from you will only be used by the researcher and will be kept securely in a locked office and on a password protected computer. In accordance with Queen’s University faculty of Education policy, data will be kept for a minimum of five years. If data are used for secondary analysis it will contain no identifying information.

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from this study without reason at any time and without consequence. You may choose to not answer any question you feel uncomfortable with. To withdraw from this study, you may contact the lead researcher of this study Lorraine Godden at lorraine.godden@queensu.ca or +1 613 272 3056. If you withdraw from the study, you can choose to have all or part of your data removed from the study and destroyed immediately.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the lead researcher of this study, Lorraine Godden at (lorraine.godden@queensu.ca or +1 613 272 3056), or Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba (ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca or +1 613-533-3049). Questions, concerns, or complaints about research ethics can also be addressed to Dr. Joan Stevenson, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board (greb.chair@queensu.ca; 613-533-6081).

Sincerely,

Lorraine Godden, PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education
Queen’s University, 511 Union Street
Kingston, ON, Canada, K7M 5R7
APPENDIX D:

CONSENT FORM FOR PROFESSIONAL INFORMANTS


I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information concerning the above named study and all questions have been sufficiently answered. I am aware that the purpose of this study is to understand how different levels of career guidance policy actors (i.e., teacher, principal/head teacher, district school board/administrators), situated in two different jurisdictions, investigate and interpret career guidance policy and curriculum documents to inform program implementation.

I am aware of the nature of my participation in this study and I have been informed that the two interviews (of approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes total duration) will be audio recorded. I understand that direct quotes from my interview may be used in presentation or publication of results but that my identity will remain confidential unless I specifically agree to be named as a participant in this study. I have been notified that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point during the study and I may request the removal of all or part of my data without any consequences to myself. I have also been told the steps that will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all information.

I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact the lead research of this study, Lorraine Godden at lorraine.godden@queensu.ca or +1 613 272 3056, or the researcher supervisor Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba (ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca; +1 613-533-3049). I am also aware that for questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I can contact Dr. Joan Stevenson, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board (greb.chair@queensu.ca; 613-533-6081).

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to Lorraine Godden. Retain the second copy for your records.

Should you require a copy of the research study findings please provide an email or mailing address in the space below.

Participant’s Name: _____________________________________________
Signature: ______________________________________________________
Date: __________________________________________________________
I agree to be named as a participant in this study (only sign if you agree)
Signature: ______________________________________________________
Email or Postal Address: _________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study about interpreting documents and making sense of public policy goals for career guidance in secondary schools. The overarching purpose of this study is to understand how different levels of career guidance policy actors (i.e., teacher, principal/head teacher, district school board/administrators), situated in two different jurisdictions, investigate and interpret career guidance policy and curriculum documents to inform program implementation. As such, understanding your perspective as an educator policy actor (teacher, career guidance provision provider, head teacher, principal, member of a district school board, school governing body, local education authority, *select and delete as appropriate*) in this implementation process is important to this research. This research project is led by Lorraine Godden, a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, under the supervision of Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Assistant Professor at Queen’s University. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines and Queen’s policies.

Your participation in this research will involve two interviews spaced approximately 10 days apart of no more than 40 minutes each in duration. You will not be asked to allocate more than 1 hour and 20 minutes of your time to this study. Interview questions will focus on your interpretation of any documents you interact with as part of your daily working routine, your experiences with issues related to using documents as part of career guidance curriculum or provision, and your views on how career guidance in secondary schools is a mechanism to address high youth unemployment. The interviews will be conducted at a time and location convenient to you. With your consent, the interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

This research may result in publications of various types, including journal articles, professional publications, newsletters, books, and instructional materials. Direct quotes from your interviews may be used in presentation or publication of results; however, your name will not be associated with these quotes. Your identity will not be disclosed in any presentation of results. Your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected to the best of the researcher’s ability, however, given the small universe of professionals such as yourselves, there is a small risk that it might be possible for some readers of the final published work to recognize your identity. Data gathered from you will only be used by the researcher and will be kept securely in a locked office and on a password protected computer. In accordance with Queen’s University faculty of Education policy, data will be kept for a minimum of five years. If data are used for secondary analysis it will contain no identifying information.

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from this study without reason at any time and without consequence. You may choose to not answer any question you feel uncomfortable with. To withdraw from this study, you may contact the lead researcher of this study Lorraine Godden at lorraine.godden@queensu.ca or +1 613 272 3056. If you withdraw from the study, you can choose to have all or part of your data removed from the study and destroyed immediately. There is no remuneration for participation in this study.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact the lead research of this study, Lorraine Godden at (lorraine.godden@queensu.ca or +1 613 272 3056), or Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba (ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca or +1 613-533-3049). Questions, concerns, or complaints about research ethics can also be addressed to Dr. Joan Stevenson, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board.
Lorraine Godden, PhD Candidate
Faculty of Education
Queen’s University
511 Union Street
Kingston, ON
Canada
K7M 5R7
APPENDIX F:

CONSENT FORM FOR POLICY ACTORS

FOR INTERVIEWS

(Teacher, career guidance provision provider, head teacher, principal, member of a district school board, school governing body, local education authority, *select and delete as appropriate)


I have read and retained a copy of the Letter of Information concerning the above named study and all questions have been sufficiently answered. I am aware that the purpose of this study is to understand how different levels of career guidance policy actors (i.e., teacher, principal/head teacher, district school board/administrators), situated in two different jurisdictions, investigate and interpret career guidance policy and curriculum documents to inform program implementation.

I am aware of the nature of my participation in this study and I have been informed that the two interviews (of approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes total duration) will be audio recorded. I understand that direct quotes from my interview may be used in presentation or publication of results but that my identity will remain confidential. I have been notified that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point during the study and I may request the removal of all or part of my data without any consequences to myself. I have also been told the steps that will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all information.

I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact the lead research of this study, Lorraine Godden at lorraine.godden@queensu.ca or +1 613 272 3056, or the researcher supervisor Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba (ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca; +1 613-533-3049). I am also aware that for questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, I can contact Dr. Joan Stevenson, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board (greb.chair@queensu.ca; 613-533-6081).

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to Lorraine Godden. Retain the second copy for your records.

Should you require a copy of the research study findings please provide an email or mailing address in the space below.

Participant’s Name: ____________________________________________

Signature: __________________________________________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________________________________________

Email or Postal Address: ________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX G:

QUESTIONS FOR FIRST PHASE INTERVIEWS

Q1: What does the term “career guidance” mean to you?
Q2: Tell me about any roles you have had that are connected to career guidance.
Q3: Tell me broadly how you think career guidance can help to address high youth unemployment?
Q4: How does career guidance in secondary schools provide a mechanism against unemployment?
Q5: Should career guidance be considered as a mechanism for unemployment in secondary schools? Why/why not?
Q6: Tell me about the documents you have accessed and used to help you to understand what is required by policy/curriculum for *the teaching of career guidance*?
Q7: How did you come to select these documents?
Q8: Tell me about how you used your selected documents?
Q9: What was it about these documents that were most useful to you? Least useful?
Q10: What format would you choose to receive documents related to career guidance in and why?
Q11: What do you like about having a policy outlined in document form? What do you dislike?
Q12: If a new career guidance policy document arrived on your desk tomorrow, what would you do? Why?
Q13: Can you give me any examples of when a career guidance policy or curriculum document has been updated or revised? How did you react to this?
Q14: Are you aware of any other documents that you do not use? Tell me about why you do not use them?
Q15: What personal and professional perspectives have shaped why you choose to use/do not use career guidance policy and curriculum documents?
   If you do not use any documents directly related to career guidance, do use any other documents instead? And why do you use these particular ones?
Q16: If you do not use any documents at all, why not? What are the barriers? What else informs your practice? Why do you choose/use these particular sources?
APPENDIX H:

QUESTIONS FOR SECOND PHASE INTERVIEWS (ONTARIO)

ONT1: P. 4: the planning framework included in this document focuses on students’ self-discovery and self-knowledge and on their creative use of this knowledge in the exploration of opportunities and the planning of pathways for education, career, and life. ONT2: How would you define self-discovery and self-knowledge in your school’s context?

ONT3: P. 8: In section 2.2 program goals, it mentions that parents and the broader community should be involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the P2S program. How would you describe the broader community for your school?

ONT4: P.9: How would you define a comprehensive education and career/life planning program?

ONT5: P.13: How are you disseminating the Pathways to Success framework to students, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, parents, and the wider community of your school?

ONT6: P. 18: Students must be given the opportunity to review evidence of their learning in education and career/life planning. How would this typically happen in your school?

ONT7: P. 36: Section on development, implementation, and evaluation

- Provide professional learning - what does the term professional learning mean to you?
- Create or reinforce structures and processes that support cross-panel collaboration related to education and career/life planning – How has/will your school respond to this task?
- Develop strategies for strengthening and expanding community partnerships – How will your school develop these strategies?

ONT8: P. 40: How would you define authentic learning experiences and experiential learning in your school?
APPENDIX I:

QUESTIONS FOR SECOND PHASE INTERVIEWS (ENGLAND)

The following questions are taken from the document Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: Statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff, April 2014

Beginning on page 5 of the document there are a number of “key points.” Could you please tell me what is your interpretation of the following terms? I have tried to include an excerpt from the particular point so that you have a context of where the term was expressed, but it is the emboldened words I am particularly interested in your interpretation of, although it is fine if you also want to speak to the broader statement;

ENG 1: (point # 9) “…how employers, schools and others will work together to inspire young people about the world of work”

ENG2: (point # 11) “…every pupil is stretched and acquires the attributes that employers value”

ENG3: (point # 24) “…modern careers guidance is as much about inspiration and aspiration as it is about advice”

ENG4: (point # 25) “…facilitating access to a range of inspirational role models can instill resilience, goal setting, hard work, and social confidence in pupils, encouraging them to overcome barriers to success”

ENG5: (point # 27) “…there is currently a mismatch between the careers young people want to pursue and the opportunities available”

ENG6: (point # 34) “…In good time before decision points schools should ensure that pupils are informed about the options available…”
APPENDIX J:
SAMPLE OF FIRST AND SECOND PHASE CODING OF A POLICY DOCUMENT

Figure # First stage coding of Creating Pathways to Success

Figure # Second stage coding of Creating Pathways to Success
APPENDIX K:

SAMPLE OF FIRST PHASE CODING OF INTERVIEWS

Figure # Coding of participant interviews
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selecting and Engaging with Policy and Curriculum Documents to Support Working Roles</th>
<th>Deductive Coding Process (David Andrews)</th>
<th>Interpreting the Role of Career Guidance Programs as a Public Policy Mechanism</th>
<th>Engaging in Interpretation and Re-Interpretation of Their Role in Relation to Career Guidance Policy and Curriculum Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I've probably had 25 years plus of this sort work, and I was thinking one of the key parts of my work is to read everything a teacher should read, that they have not got time to read. So I will look at revised guidance when it comes out, and the advice and the frameworks and I will try and not only present teachers with an overview of what that's about, and the summary of what that's about, but also set out what the implications are for their practice. See my job is doing that, they've got young people to deal with most of the time, they have not got time to go through these documents, so this is a mediating role, it's an advisory consultant role, which is to digest that for them.</td>
<td>The most obvious way in which it addresses youth unemployment is to make young people aware of the realities of that? So is it a myth when we see unemployment levels? I want to be talking about that... I think it's also important to distinguish between or explore where there is unemployment and underemployment, which we have got a lot of after this current recession. So what's about the knowledge and understanding part? What is it? What's the reality? And then the most obvious ways in which career education helps to tackle that is going to be through an increasingly competitive environment. What skills have you got? How are you going to be successful? So all that traditional careers education, so the first careers lesson I have a tool, that was the tool that was how to fill in an application and all this stuff about writing targeted CVs. Another indication which nor everybody picks up on... it's the understanding that 65 to 70% of jobs are advertised, do what's your networking skills? What is your network? How do you build your network to find opportunities? So for me those the ways, or are really useful ways ways in which career education can respond to youth unemployment. And having contingencies and thinking differently about careers, it's not just a linear way up, progression, you might occasionally have to make sideways moves in order to then work for opportunities to come around. (There is a more challenging part to it)</td>
<td>Training, I provide largely non-accredited though I used to do some accredited professional development for careers teachers. I am increasingly using the term careers leader rather than careers teacher because we have schools now where the person who leads this work isn't a teacher, so to say careers teachers is now a misnomer... I occasionally do in-school in-service training; my work is on leading and managing careers work in schools. But most of my work is in Career's teachers coming out of courses where people have asked me to come and speak at a conference, or run a workshop, or lead seminars. I also provide consultancy support to schools who want to review their programs, and colleges... I also do consultancy to local authorities, to careers companies. The particular projects... I do some evaluation work, some project management, and then some writing contribution. Two research teams in the past... I have worked with research teams with NICEC, the most recent thing I've done is just coming to an end, I've been doing some work with the Institute of Employment Research at Warwick, which is looking at the role of employers in support in schools. So it's a mixture of training and consultancy, evaluation, and research, and then I also do some writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You've got this new duty to provide careers education, whether a school offers is up to them, on what they offer is certainly up to them, that...
APPENDIX M:

SAMPLE OF FIELD NOTES KEPT DURING STUDY

Reflective notes from post-interview

Notes from data analysis phase

Notes from writing up findings phase