An Exploration of Professional Development Practices of Academic Advisors in the Ontario College System

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Education by Melissa A. Gallo

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Land Acknowledgement

I would like to open my thesis by acknowledging the land on which it has been written to accept my role toward the Truth and Reconciliation efforts in Canada. My ancestors began arriving in Canada from Italy as early as the late 19th century, eventually settling in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. It was through their dream of a better life that I now have the privilege and honor of living and working in wadopikang, which means *where the alders grow,* now known as Etobicoke. Etobicoke was part of the Toronto Purchase signed in 1805 and sits on the traditional territory of several indigenous nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples (City of Toronto, 2019). I would also like to note that although my thesis does not directly address the lived experience of indigenous and black youth in Canada, my hope is that the wisdom garnered through this process can help strengthen the professional development efforts of the advisors responsible for their care.

Academic Acknowledgement

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Dedication

For my father (*1949 – 2005*)

But everything happens for a reason, and the reason is something better is waiting for you.
Don't ever give up, don't ever let them drag you down.
Whatever you want out of life starts with a dream.
I'm still dreaming.
You come from a family of dreamers and most of our dreams come true.

Love you.

Leo

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List of Acronyms

CACUSS	Canadian Association of College and University Student Services
CAS	Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education
CoP	Community of Practice
ESMMR	Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Research
MCU	Ministry of Colleges and Universities
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
NACADA	NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising
OAAP	Ontario Academic Advising Professionals
OCMS	Ontario College Multi-Site Research Ethics Committee
PD	Professional Development
Qual	Qualitative
Quan	Quantitative
REB	Research Ethics Board (also known as an IRB)
VPREC	University of Liverpool Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee

Abstract

An Exploration of Professional Development Practices by Academic Advisors in the Ontario College System

Melissa A. Gallo

The purpose of this research study was to explore the nature and scope of professional development (PD) activities that are available to, and practiced by, academic advisors in the Ontario college system. The goal of the exploration was to provide a comprehensive review that could facilitate future planning of PD activities that could influence the development of institutional academic advising models, and further define the role and responsibilities of the academic advisors. Therefore, my main research question asks: *How do academic advisors' approach, engage with, and make meaning of professional development practices across the Ontario College system?*

An exploratory mixed methods research design (ESMMR) was chosen because it provided the flexibility to collect and to analyze qualitative data with a small sample of academic advisors, and then legitimize the findings against a larger sample of academic advisors from across the college system in Ontario. The qualitative phase of the research study involved collecting documentary evidence from a voluntary sample of 4 colleges in Ontario and conducting semi-structured interviews at the same 4 colleges. From a purposeful voluntary sample, 8 academic advisors and 3 managers responsible for training academic advisors participated. The quantitative phase of the study included the dissemination of a questionnaire that was designed from the qualitative findings. The questionnaire was administered, using a purposeful voluntary sample, across 14 of the 22 English-speaking colleges in Ontario. Participants comprised 82 staff academic advisors and 38 faculty advisors, for a total of 120 participants.

Using content analysis to analyze the qualitative findings, 5 major categories were recorded: (a) types of advising, (b) institutional advising model, (c) role and responsibilities of academic advisors, (d) PD practices and (e) assessment of advising practice. The 5 major categories were used to inform the development of the questionnaire. Using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics, findings from the questionnaire were triangulated with the findings from the qualitative analysis.

Findings from both the qualitative and quantitative phase of the study suggest that: (a) staff and faculty advisors spend more time on transactional advising than developmental advising; (b) institutional advising models tend to be shared, but not applied consistently across campuses; (c) the role of staff and faculty academic advisors lacks clarity; (d) a variety of PD activities are offered or sought out by academic advisors, but the expectations are not consistent; and, finally, (e) assessment of academic advisor practice is not well established.

As a result of the findings, the following 4 recommendations are made for future planning. First, institutions should continue to provide multiple PD opportunities and practices for their staff and faculty advisors. Second, institutions should clearly define the roles of the staff and faculty advisors. Third, institutions should consistently apply the institutional advising model across academic and student services divisions. Finally, institutions should design and implement assessment practices that measure the effectiveness of the institutional advising model, the impact of PD on advisor practice, and the impact of advisor practice on student outcomes.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The nature and scope of academic advising has been of interest to me from the time I accepted my first full-time job as an academic advisor for international students in 2004. At that time, my title was Academic and Student Success Advisor, and I was not provided with any formal training, nor was I offered a guidebook to inform my practice. The manager who had hired me also was unfamiliar with the responsibilities of an academic advisor. I was the first and only person to hold this position in international student services at the college. Although a job description existed for this role, the tasks and responsibilities outlined were vague and general. I was provided with a mentor of whom I could ask questions, but this mentor was a college counsellor. Although they did provide academic and career support for students, the role of the counsellors was focused on student mental health. It was left to me to begin shaping the role. Therefore, without proper guidance or a concrete definition of my role, and with only a vague job title, one of my first tasks was to begin reading and learning about academic advising. The only available title I could access at the time was *Academic Advising: A Comprehensive Guidebook*, first published by NACADA in 2000 (now known as NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising).

In 2016, after more than a decade at the same college in several different roles, all within student services, I was hired as the Associate Director for the Academic and Career Success Centre. In this role, I was tasked with evolving how the centre would function and defining the role of several new academic advising positions, as well as those of the already established career advisors. In addition to this, I would have to coordinate an initial training program and establish professional development (PD) activities for the academic advisors. With little information or direction, I revisited the literature on academic advising. I quickly noted a lack of knowledge and literature specific to Canada, let alone specific to the college system in Ontario. Most of the resources I accessed were written about academic advising in the higher education system in the United States. Also, I began to learn about the reluctance

in the college system in Ontario to use the position title *academic advisor*, simply because it had the word *academic* in it. This was partly because of the labour structures governing the college system. The two main unions to which almost all college employees belonged are designated as "academic" and "support staff". Academic in this context refers to faculty, counselors, and librarians. Advisors are classified as support staff. However, the confusion caused by the title was seen as something to be avoided. When I reached out to my peers in the college system for guidance, they were also in the process of developing professional development activities for their staff and faculty advisors. As a result, I began to see an opportunity to expand on the research and to develop an advising service and academic advising practice that would work within the structures of my institution and ultimately meet the needs of students.

I began by searching for a common definition and job description. My search began with resources available from NACADA, of which our institution was a member. NACADA is an organization that was chartered in 1979 in the United States, and, to date, there is no equivalent in Canada. In fact, Canadian advisors were members of NACADA from its inception in 1977 (NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2018). Provinces in Canada are included in the various regional divisions that make up NACADA (2021b), for example, Ontario is in The Great Lakes Region, which is Region 5. The original acronym NACADA, stood for the National Academic Advising Association. In 2009, the NACADA board of directors, recognizing NACADA's global reach to over 26 nations, voted to update the name of the organization to NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2009).

As is demonstrated by its global reach, NACADA is the preeminent organization governing the practice of academic advising, shaping both how it is defined and how it is seen in institutional settings. This study recognizes its contribution to the field. However, this study also recognizes the limitations of the organization's approach to defining academic advising, especially as it relates to establishing the

status of academic advising as a profession. From the resources available through NACADA, I learned that a definition of academic advising remains elusive and, as a result, NACADA (2006b) has only committed to a *concept* of academic advising. The concept of academic advising includes three competencies: relational (defined as establishing relationships with students), informational (defined as understanding how information is processed by the institution), and conceptual (defined as understanding the theory supporting academic advising). According to NACADA (2006b), this concept is meant to inform individual institutional definitions of advising.

In addition to the lack of a common definition, I came across several articles that challenged the very idea of academic advising as a profession. Prior to this, I had assumed that academic advising was a profession simply because I had never asked what made up the definition of a profession, or the process by which a profession came to be. Kuhn and Padak (2008) suggested that, although academic advising is distinguishing itself as an independent service area, it must meet several additional criteria before claiming to be a profession. Habley (2009) concurred, noting that advising has yet to meet the following criteria that are essential to becoming a profession: "specialized knowledge, extended training and systematic scholarship and research" (p. 76). In 2015, Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, and Barkemeyer reiterated that academic advising has not met the "scholarly definition of a profession" (p. 60). As late as 2018, these position papers were cited in the literature on academic advising and used as a foundation for making the claim that academic advising is an emerging profession (McGill, 2018). Whilst arguing whether academic advising is a profession—or where it lies on a continuum of becoming a profession—is beyond the scope of this thesis, its focus on exploring and researching PD for academic advisors both fills a practical need in Ontario's college system and may contribute to the systematic scholarship and research required to establish it as a profession.

1.1 Research Study Context

In Canada, it is important to note that public higher education is made up of colleges and universities, each considered separate and distinct entities. Colleges focus on technical and service industries, granting certificates, diplomas, post-graduate certificates, and, in some cases, degrees (Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 2018). The colleges in Ontario are synonymous with what is commonly known as community colleges or technical and trade schools in the United States and parts of Europe. Polytechnic institutions, or degree-granting colleges, are also a part of the college ecosystem. The distinction between the colleges and universities is important to the context of this study because my study is focused on the college system, whose institutional structures—including academic units and employee/labour groups—are not interchangeable with universities in Canada. What is unique about the colleges in Ontario is that they function as part of a system. This means that the colleges are governed collectively by the provincial government's Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU; formerly the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities; and, briefly, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development from 2015 to 2017). The mandate of the ministry is to develop policies and strategic mandates that guide the practice and outcomes of the colleges. Colleges Ontario is an association representing the colleges in the system. It is an arm's length body from the Provincial government and represents the interests of the Presidents and Boards of Governors of the colleges in responding to ministry policies and mandates. The colleges therefore do not operate as independently from one another, or as independently from the Provincial government, as universities do.

The purpose of the college system is also distinct from that of universities in Canada. Clark, Moran, Skolnik, and Trick (2009) stated that the colleges in Ontario were established in the mid 1960s to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving knowledge and technological landscape. They described the founding of the colleges as having "a major responsibility for workforce preparation… helping individuals to change and enrich their lives and helping communities to improve their quality of life" (p. 21). Hogan

and Trotter (2013) added that, considering a growing domestic and immigrant population, Canada was seeing a shift from elite to mass education to ensure a trained and educated workforce to compete with global demands. This focus on the labour market would continue to shape the colleges' mandate and, as we will see, the makeup of their student body.

A discussion paper written in 2012 by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (now known as the Ministry of Colleges and Universities), called *Strengthening Ontario's Centres of Creativity, Innovation and Knowledge* called for educational reforms that would "meet the needs of the emerging economy" by increasing enrolment (p. 3). Colleges Ontario (2012) wrote a response that agreed with the position of the provincial government on transforming higher education and the importance of access and articulated the need for the government to invest "more in student success" (p. 3). In 2013, the ministry established what is known in the college system in Ontario as the *access mandate*, which required institutions to focus on admissions policies that prioritized a student's "ability to learn, not ability to pay" (Ministry of Training Colleges & Universities, 2013, p. 8). This meant that institutions had to find ways to increase at-risk and underserved student populations, without modifying academic standards (Colleges Ontario, 2015). The term *at-risk* is itself contextual, and for the purpose of consistency, I use the Colleges Ontario definition that reads "Aboriginal Peoples, first-generation students, people with disabilities, people with mental health challenges, and others who need specific supports" (Colleges Ontario, 2015, p. 34). Understanding the access mandate helps to illuminate the pressure on colleges in Ontario to widen access, increasing the student population by reaching out to groups that would need increased academic and career readiness supports.

At the time the access mandate was defined, provincial funding models encouraged enrolment growth (Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, 2013), meaning that institutions were rewarded for increasing their student population but not necessarily their graduation rates. By 2016, there was a recognition that the higher education funding model needed to change to accommodate the growing

student population and to balance financial sustainability with student success, leading to higher graduation rates. The results of consultations between the government and leaders in higher education indicated that with an increase in at-risk students, there was a higher need to ensure they were supported. Many higher education leaders, therefore, called on the government to understand the following:

> Special recognition of the costs of successfully servicing at-risk students; in particular, if the ministry seeks to increase its focus on outcomes… [the] new college funding model should allocate funding towards creative recruitment and retention strategies that demonstrate measurable results. (Ministry of Training, College, and Universities, 2016 p. 14)

In 2016, the funding formula changed from an enrolment-based calculation to a corridor model, to complement the access mandate of 2013 by requiring that institutions manage their enrolment within a consistent range and focus on retention. Academic advising would become one of the college's retention strategies. There is some evidence that the colleges were investing in student advising prior to the access mandate, as shown by my personal experiences in the early 2000s, and Centennial College's 2006-2007 annual report (2007) which recognizes its one-stop Advising Centre for improving student success. However, interest in academic advising grew after the access mandate took effect, and colleges and universities in Canada began to examine the effectiveness of their advising programs. At Humber College (2013), academic advising was even included in its strategic plan: the goal was to "ensure an exceptional student experience for a diverse student body" (p. 17), and the success outcome included the development of an integrated advising model that was reflective of best practices to support student success.

The 2016 funding changes that prioritized student success were followed by even more rigorous attention paid to academic advising. In 2017, Niagara College participated in an institutional quality

audit process. The quality audit process outlined several standards that the institution must meet. One of the standards outlined that the college must set adequate resources toward student services. In addition, the standard indicated that resources must "ensure that academic support and advising services meet the needs of the students [and] ensure that staff members providing student support services such as …academic advising…are appropriately qualified, trained and supported" (Niagara College, 2017 p. 7). Also in 2017, Mohawk College published a research study examining the effectiveness of various modalities of academic advising on student retention (Finnie, Fricker, Bozkurt, Poirier, Pavlic & Pratt, 2017). Authors of this study specifically examined whether certain academic advising interventions increased students' participation in advising and whether the academic advising interventions influenced students' decision to leave the institution.

This increased interest in advising in the Ontario college system built on a body of research coming out of the United States. As early as 2000, Gordon, Habley, and Associates asserted that research was beginning to demonstrate the effectiveness of academic advising on student retention. This conclusion was supported by several subsequent studies (Percy, James, Stirling & Walker 2004; Stephenson, 2012; Walsh, Larsen, & Parry, 2009). In fact, Cate and Miller (2015) cite a landmark study in the United States (2012), wherein academic advising emerged as one of three top predictors of student academic success, along with the completion of advanced placement courses and prior mathematics achievement. Although improving academic advising services in Ontario was not included in the provincial access mandate, the move to transform higher education created a growing need for it in the student population. In addition, the subsequent changes to the funding models that prioritized student success provided institutional need for retention strategies. With recent research demonstrating the value of academic advising as an effective retention tool for students (Mayhew, Rockenbach, Bowman, Seifert, & Wolniak, 2016), and for college students (Hatch & Garcia, 2017), it is not surprising there has been a recent focus on academic advising in the Ontario college system.

1.2 The Research Problem

Prior to engaging in research, Petrina (2009) suggested, a researcher must start by establishing a problem statement that reflects the need and purpose for the investigation. The status of academic advising as an emerging profession is pertinent here, as the research problem begins with the understanding that academic advising, including the educational and training needs of the academic advisor, have yet to be defined (McGill, 2019). As a result, scant literature on professional development for academic advisors exists, including a lack of empirical evidence that demonstrates how academic advisors can assess their practices. For example, literature on PD specific to academic advising is minimal. Although there is a growing number of theses on academic advising, literature on academic advising tends to be concentrated in the *NACADA Journal*, which is associated with Kansas State University, and *The Mentor*, which is published out of Penn State University. This supports the assertion made by Fricker (2015) that academic advising in Canada is in its early development and that there is still a reliance on literature from the United States and on universities. This is significant because the following research study is focused on the college system in Canada.

This lack of academic literature on PD for academic advisors is particularly problematic because of the importance of PD in advisor training in Canada. McGill (2019) noted that the field of academic advising has yet to meet several criteria, including developing a body of knowledge taught through a formalized educational pathway, to continue evolving as an occupation toward a profession. A quick Internet search confirms that there are only a few educational credentials available in Canada that are specific to academic advising. For example, the University of Calgary offers a post-graduate certificate in Career Development and Academic Advising, and George Brown College offers a post-graduate certificate in Student Advising and Support Program through its continuing education stream. Therefore, in the absence of formal education and preparation for the role, PD might be the only tool available to ensure academic advisors understand their roles and responsibilities.

1.3 Research Methodology

Because of the dearth of literature on academic advising, to understand the nature and scope of PD in academic advising in the Ontario system, a qualitative approach was required. Relevant conclusions would be drawn from interviews with participants and a review of documentary evidence. However, because of the context of the research study, which is a complex system of institutions of varying sizes, any recommendations made would have to be applicable to each institution. Therefore, a quantitative study was required to provide validity for the findings. Hence, to address the research problem, I chose an MMR study. As discussed in the context of the research study, any recommendations for future practice that are made would have to be able to be implemented system wide. The differences among colleges of different sizes, versus those within urban settings, mean that any recommendation drawn from qualitative research would need to be tested for validity quantitatively. The central things I wanted to know were qualitative, but the nature of the colleges in Ontario meant that I needed quantitative data to confirm my findings because of the perceived differences between big colleges and small colleges.

Creswell (2009) states that the advantage to using mixed methods research is that it allows for using the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research to analyze complex research problems. Creswell (2009) argues that more insight is gained through the combining of research methods as it allows the researcher to both explore and explain phenomena. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) state that MMR also supports multiple ways of seeing and addressing research problems. For my research study, an MMR study would allow me to gain an understanding of the research problem from multiple stakeholders and data sets.

The research methodology for my MMR study will be outlined using Collins, Onwuegbuzie and Sutton's (2006) 13-step mixed methods research process, which comprises: (a) determining the mixed research goal of the study, (b) formulating the mixed research objective(s), (c) determining the rationale

of the study and the research/mixing rationale(s), (d) determining the purpose of the study and research/mixing purpose(s), (e) determining the mixed research question(s), (f) selecting the mixed sampling design, (g) selecting the mixed methods research design, (h) collecting the quantitative and/or qualitative data, (i) analyzing the quantitative and/or qualitative data using quantitative and/or qualitative analysis techniques, (j) validating/legitimating the data and data interpretations, (k) interpreting the mixed research findings, (l) writing the mixed research report, and (m) reformulating the mixed research question(s).

Step 1. The first step in designing the research process is to determine the goal for mixing qualitative and quantitative data. Newman, Ridenour, Newman, and DeMarco (2003) illustrate nine types of goals that include to: (a) predict; (b) add to the knowledge base; (c) have a personal, social, institutional, and/or organizational impact; (d) measure change; (e) understand complex phenomena; (f) test new theories; (g) generate new ideas; (f) inform constituencies; and (i) examine the past. The first goal of my research study was to understand the nature and scope of PD practices and activities that are available to, and practiced by, academic advisors in the Ontario college system. The second goal of my research was to add to the growing knowledge base of academic advising in Canada. The final goal of my research was to have an organizational impact on the development of advising practices within the Ontario college system.

Step 2. The second step in the research process is to establish the research objective. Johnson & Christensen (2012) identify five research objectives which include (a) exploration, (b) description, (c) explanation, (d) prediction, and/or (e) influence. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006) describe exploration as a mostly inductive approach, whereby a phenomenon or situation is explored with the intention of developing tentative generalizations, while description includes depicting a phenomenon in relation to the context of a phenomenon. Explanation includes developing a working theory about a phenomenon, while prediction involves using existing theory and knowledge to predict specific outcomes. Finally,

influence is described as manipulating or introducing variables to produce a certain outcome. For my study, the objective for the qualitative phase was exploration and will focus primarily on deductive data collection methods. The objective of the quantitative phase was on explanation and will involve deductive data collection methods.

The research paradigms that informed my research study included social constructionism and pragmatism. Whereas social constructivism focuses on understanding the structure or "operational definitions" of the elements that create reality, social constructionism is focused on the process of meaning making between the individual and the social constructs in their environment (Sandu & Unguru, 2017). In other words, Sandu and Unguru (2017) argue, constructi*vism* puts social constructs at the level of the social environment, while constructio*nism* places constructs at the level of the individual. Because the qualitative phase of my study will focus on how academic advisors make meaning with the various PD constructs available to them, my study was informed by social constructionism.

Pragmatism is described as an alternative paradigm by Nastasi, Hitchcock, and Brown (2015), as well as the most common paradigm in mixed methods research. The appeal of pragmatism was the emphasis on aligning research methods to the research questions, the context, and the intended outcomes of the research (Nastasi et. al., 2015). The pragmatic approach allowed me to adjust the research questions throughout the research process. By simultaneously working within two iterative paradigms, the meta-paradigm guiding my research study was dialectical pluralism. Dialectical pluralism allows researchers to acknowledge the multiple paradigms within mixed methods research and provides a framework for acknowledging their differences (Johnson, 2017).

Step 3. The third step in designing my mixed methods research study was to establish the rationale and purpose. Collins et al. (2006) established four rationales for combining qualitative and quantitative research, which comprise: (a) participant enrichment, (b) instrument fidelity, (c) treatment

integrity, and (d) significance enhancement. As I was thinking about the design of my study, I believed that collecting and analyzing data from a small sample of academic advisors could easily be dismissed as not being applicable across the colleges in Ontario. There is much anecdotal sentiment in the Ontario college system that the needs of small versus large colleges, and urban versus rural colleges, are very different. To mitigate this risk, I wanted to conduct a qualitative research study with a manageable sample, but somehow test the conclusions with a larger, more comprehensive sample. This idea led me to reading about mixed methods research (MMR), where I discovered the exploratory sequential mixed methods research design (ESMMR; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The methodology and methods employed in an ESMMR would allow me to collect and to analyze qualitative data from a small sample size, and to legitimize the findings across the larger college system in Ontario. Therefore, the rationale for my study was twofold. First, I was concerned about obtaining significance enhancement to ensure that the qualitative data can be augmented by the quantitative data to provide a fuller view of academic advising in Ontario. Second, my rationale for choosing a mixed methods research study was instrument fidelity because I wanted to "assess the validity of information … yielded by the instrument(s)" (Collins et al., 2006 p. 77) and to collect qualitative data that was consistent across the college system in Ontario.

Step 4. Building from the rationale, the fourth step in designing the research is to articulate the purpose for mixing methods. The purpose of my research study was to ensure that the data I collected from the qualitative sample was reflective of a larger sample of academic advisors in the Ontario college system. This mixed methods study began with a qualitative phase in which I collected documentary evidence and interview data. To keep my research project manageable, I aimed to facilitate no more than 12 interviews. However, my concern was that the academic advisors who would accept the invitation for an interview would be some of the more engaged academic advisors, meaning that these academic advisors would potentially have a bias toward PD to enhance practice. The addition of a

questionnaire allowed me to gauge the extent to which the qualitative findings were relevant across a larger sample of academic advisors across the Ontario college system.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions represent an attempt to understand the nature and scope of PD practices and activities that are available to, and practiced by, academic advisors in the Ontario college system. The main research question is followed by the qualitative and quantitative follow-up questions:

Main research question:

1. How do academic advisors' approach, engage with, and make meaning of professional development practices across the Ontario College system?

Qualitative research questions:

a. How are the current nature and scope of academic advising described by academic advisors, managers, and institutional documents?

b. What professional development activities, both formal and informal, are currently available to, and practiced by academic advisors?

c. What are the professional development activities or practices that academic advisor perceive as being most important to practice, and what influences that prioritisation?

d. How do academic advisors assess the ways in which their professional development informs their practice?

Quantitative research question:

e. To what extent are the findings from the qualitative phase reflective of a larger group of academic advisors?

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

To understand fully the context of the research problem as it relates to the college system in Ontario, a few key terms have been defined in what follows. It is important to note that similar

concepts exist outside of the Ontario and Canadian educational systems, but they exist using different terminology. Both the central concepts of academic advising and professional development will be discussed further in the literature review.

Academic advising. Academic advising is the central focus of this study. For this study, academic advising refers to both the *occupation* and at times, the *practice* of academic advising. The practice of academic advising involves a faculty or staff advisor providing students with information and guidance on their academic pathway through college. Official definitions of academic advising vary and will be discussed further in the literature review.

Academic advisor. Like the term academic advising, the definition of an academic advisor differs from institution to institution. Therefore, the term academic advisor is used to refer to the *title* of the occupation and the employee who is responsible for helping students navigate their academic pathways throughout their college experiences. Academic advisors can be from either the faculty or support staff employee groups. Within the college system, academic advisors are more often referred to as Student Advisors or Student Success Advisors.

Academic advising model. The academic advising model refers to the structure, location, and reporting lines of the academic advising service (see below) on a college campus. For example, the academic advising model can be centralized, decentralized, or hybrid. Academic advisors can report centrally to a student service unit or to an academic unit. An academic advisor can be located centrally in a student service unit, or they can be imbedded in an academic unit.

Academic advising service. Academic advising service is not a common term used in the literature. However, this term is used in the study to encompass both the academic advisors and the academic advising model, specifically when the academic advising model is distinguished within an institution. For example, the academic advising service might include a centralized academic advising office. In a decentralized model, an academic advising service might not exist as a distinct entity.

Assessment versus evaluation. Assessment, sometimes synonymous with the term evaluation, is used to understand the overall *process* of improvement. Within the context of North American higher education, assessment is used as the umbrella term, whereas evaluation refers to the individual measure of an outcome (OntarioLearn, 2020). I will use to the term assessment to refer to an overall quality improvement *process*. I will use the term evaluation when I am referring to a product or tool of the assessment process. However, it must be noted that through the qualitative data collection, assessment and evaluation are used synonymously by the participants.

Occupation. An occupation is simply defined as something that people *do*, that is recognizable, and for a particular reason (Christiansen & Baum, 2005). For this study, the practice of academic advising for the benefit of student success is the occupation.

Professional development. For this study, the definition of professional development is borrowed from Guskey (2000) and includes "those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students" (p. 16). In this case, the professional role being examined is that of academic advising, and the goal of PD is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of academic advisors. This definition has been selected because of the emphasis on developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward the occupation (in this case academic advising). In addition, this definition acknowledges that there is a purpose or outcome to engaging in those processes and activities, further clarifying the role of the academic advisor.

Profession. A profession, within the context of this study, is an occupation that evolves to have specialized knowledge and expertise (Saks, 2012).

Professionalization. Professionalization is the process of an occupation transforming into a "vocation with the attributes of a profession" (Shaffer, Zalewski & Leveille, 2010, p. 68). As Shaffer et al.

(2010) state, professionalization, within the context of this study, refers to the process of academic advising becoming a recognized profession.

Training. Training is one *subset* of professional development that focuses on skill development (Guskey, 2000). However, it must be noted that through the qualitative data collection, training and professional development are perceived as synonymous by the participants.

1.6 Key Employee Groups in the Ontario College System.

In the college system in Ontario, there are three classifications of employees: administrators, faculty, and support staff. A definition of each employee group is provided:

Administrators. Administrators are a class of employees in the college system who are non-unionized and include managers, directors, associate / vice deans, deans, associate / vice presidents, and presidents. For this study, managers refer to the employees who are responsible for hiring, training, and providing PD. Within the collective agreement, support staff are not permitted to take on the role of hiring, training, or managing other staff.

Faculty. The term faculty refers to the unionized employee group whose role it is to teach in the college system in Ontario. The titles program coordinator, librarian, and counsellor are also part of the faculty employee group.

Program coordinators. According to the Ontario colleges' *Academic Employees Collective Agreement*, the definition for program coordinators reads: "Coordinators are teachers, who in addition, to their teaching responsibilities, are required to provide academic leadership, in the coordination of courses and or programs. Coordinators report to the academic manager, who assigns their specific duties, which shall be determined prior to the acceptance of the designation, subject to changes as circumstances require" (Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts & Technology, 2017 p. 30). The duties of the program coordinator at times include academic advising. However, this responsibility varies within an institution and across the colleges in Ontario.

Support staff. The term, support staff, refers to the unionized employee group who are non-teaching and are often on the frontlines of college support services (College Employer Council & Ontario Public Service Employee Union, 2017). Support staff include the advisors, student success advisors, and student advisors While the term support staff advisors is used in the Ontario system to refer to non-faculty academic advisors, for clarity for the out of province and international reader, I will use the term staff advisors to refer to this group.

1.7 Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 established the purpose of this MMR study which was to explore the nature and scope of academic advising and the role of the academic advisors in Ontario's college system. The literature review in Chapter 2 introduces a brief history of academic advising and the concept of PD. In addition, the literature review highlights the challenges of defining academic advising and how that influences the development of PD practices for academic advisors. Chapter 3 explains the MMR methodology and qualitative phase of the study, including data collection and data analysis methods. Chapter 4 outlines the findings from the qualitative phase of the study. Because the qualitative phase informed the quantitative phase of the research, Chapter 5 describes the development of the questionnaire tool and outlines the quantitative data collection and analysis methods. Chapter 6 outlines the findings from the quantitative phase of the study, while Chapter 7 discusses the findings from the study. Finally, Chapter 8 concludes with a set of recommendations for future practice in PD for academic advisors in the college system in Ontario.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Randolph (2009) introduced a typology for organizing literature reviews that requires making explicit the focus, goal, perspective, and organization of the review. To begin, the focus of this literature review is on process, meaning that the literature will examine where research on academic advising is situated in higher education and how this connects to the PD of academic advisors. The goal of the literature review is to review the sources critically to ascertain their value to the study. The current chapter will be organized following a conceptual frame, rather than, for example, a timeline, to focus on the ideas that are most pertinent to the research problem. In Chapter 1, the research problem was described as including: very little research and literature addressing PD practices for academic advisors; a lack of a consistent definition of academic advising; a lack of formal preparation for the role of academic advisors; and very little research and assessment evaluating current PD practices of academic advisors.

The literature review begins by describing my literature search strategy for the purpose of highlighting the lack of research specific to the PD practices of academic advisors. Following my search strategy, I describe the current state of academic advising by providing a brief history of academic advising in higher education. The purpose of the history is to begin to set the context for why academic advising lacks a consistent definition. I then describe how a lack of a definition leads to role confusion and inconsistent institutional advising models. Once the context has been set, I provide a brief overview of the transformative nature of PD and illustrate the PD models that are relevant to my study. Finally, I discuss the current PD practices of academic advisors and suggest a conceptual framework that describes an iterative model of PD in academic advising to support a transformative practice.

2.1 The Literature Search Strategy

The search for relevant literature on academic advising in higher education, with a specific focus on PD for academic advisors, began with a search on both Google Scholar and the University of

Liverpool's Discover search engine. The following search terms were used: academic advising AND training, academic advising AND professional development, advisor training, and advisor professional development. Inclusion criteria for sources required they be written in English, located in a peer-reviewed journal, and focused on post-secondary education after 1979 when NACADA was chartered. In addition to a periodical search, I included books related to academic advising, singling out book chapters related to PD practices. Through this series of searches, several articles and book chapters were selected; however, two challenges were noted early on.

First, very little *empirical* research exists on PD activities for academic advisors in higher education. Although articles on academic advising exist in journals focused on higher education, articles focused specifically on professional development, or training of academic advisors, are rare. For example, a search of Scopus, using the key words academic advising AND professional development produced 67 sources, only 5 of which were relevant to the study. Of the 5 relevant studies, two were written in 2020. A second search of Scopus, using the key words academic advising AND training added an additional 4 sources, 2 of which concluded with the *need* for academic advisor training. In addition, as Belyakov, Cremonini, Mfusi, and Buck (2009) pointed out, the research is often embedded in larger research projects focused on student transition. This suggests that the current focus on research related to academic advising links the existence of academic advising to student outcomes and issues of student retention, rather than linking the skill and practice of the academic advisor to student outcomes. This would mean that PD constructs and theories would have to be borrowed from fields outside of academic advising and possibly even higher education.

Second, the most prolific source of peer-reviewed literature on PD for academic advisors comes from the *NACADA Journal*. The website that houses the *NACADA Journal* (2021a) identifies itself as being both the global clearing house for all resources on academic advising and the "preeminent authority" on academic advising. Within this context, NACADA defines the mission of research on

academic advising as “advancing the scholarly inquiry … to further the profession and its impact on student success” (para. 2). Shaffer et al. (2010) warned that a single organization leading the discussion and research on academic advising is an impediment to shifting academic advising from an occupation toward a profession. In 2019, McGill wrote “the tight-knit relationship between the interests of the field and of NACADA have complicated and thus prolonged the professionalization of academic advising” (p. 95). In addition, NACADA continues to be tied to a single institution in the United States, also complicating the organization’s relationship to academic advising as a profession (McGill, 2019). This lack of diversity in institutional perspectives on the field is also reflected in non-peer-reviewed editorials, blog posts, and opinion pieces—almost all connected to NACADA or the Ontario Academic Advising Professionals (OAAP) blog.

A second literature search was conducted with a focus on PD activities and PD models in higher education. Search terms included professional development AND higher education, training AND higher education, professional development AND student services, and professional development AND student affairs. Inclusion criteria focused on articles written in English, from peer-reviewed journal, and linked to employment in higher education. The second search produced higher quality journal articles from a variety of journals focused on PD activities and included PD models and constructs related to higher education. These journal articles often introduced concepts and theories from fields within and outside of higher education, such as teaching and learning, student affairs, human resources, and social science.

2.2 A Brief History of Academic Advising

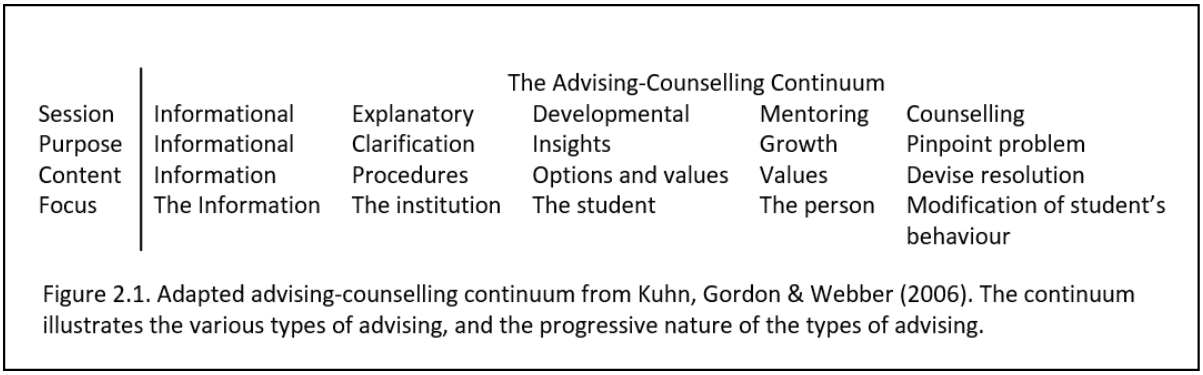
Cate and Miller (2015) described the history of academic advising in four distinct eras. The first era, from 1620 to 1870, reflects a limited curriculum with very little choice for students to make and, therefore, advising did not make up a separate function. The second era, approximately from 1870 to 1971, saw the generation of more vocational programs and, therefore, more choices for students to make. The third era begins around the 1970s, when higher education was experiencing a shift to mass

higher education and academic advising saw a resurgence of attention. In 1973, two influential articles (reprinted in 2009) shaped the idea that academic advising was a distinct occupation (Cate & Miller, 2015). The first work, written by O'Banion (2009), called "*An Academic Advising Model"*, describes advising as helping students choose programs that "will serve him in the development of his total potential" (p. 10). The second article, "*A Developmental View of Academic Advising as Teaching"*, written by Crookston (2009), challenged the idea that academic advising is more than just prescribing academic course selection to students. He argued that academic advising should promote a developmental approach, rather than a prescriptive approach, that results in learning for the student and the academic advisor (Crookston,2009). In both examples, we can see scholar practitioners attempting to distinguish the role of the academic advisor by defining the relationship between student and advisor.

What is important about the early works of Crookston (2009) and O'Banion (2009) is that they form the modern understanding of *developmental* advising as a path to student success (Grites, 2013). It was O'Banion's (2009) article that influenced the precursor to a modern understanding of the *advising continuum*, Figure 2.1, as articulated by Kuhn, Gordon, and Webber (2006).

Figure 2.1

The Advising-Counselling Continuum (a)



	The Advising-Counselling Continuum				
Session	Informational	Explanatory	Developmental	Mentoring	Counselling
Purpose	Informational	Clarification	Insights	Growth	Pinpoint problem
Content	Information	Procedures	Options and values	Values	Devise resolution
Focus	The Information	The institution	The student	The person	Modification of student's behaviour

Figure 2.1. Adapted advising-counselling continuum from Kuhn, Gordon & Webber (2006). The continuum illustrates the various types of advising, and the progressive nature of the types of advising.

On one end of the continuum, is *informational* advising, a model in which academic advisors provide guidance on course selection. In the centre of the continuum is the more preferred *developmental* advising, a model in which academic advisors work in partnership with students to clarify students' personal goals. Kuhn et al. (2006) conceived of the advising continuum primarily to distinguish advising from counselling, but nevertheless to provide a map to distinguish the purpose, content, focus and length of contact for the types of advising appointments. This is an important concept as it has informed assumptions that I have made throughout the development of my research project. For example, my assumption is that most academic advisors in the college system in Ontario focus most of their time on informational advising, rather than developmental advising. This concept is also important because researchers mapping the role and responsibilities of academic advisors will reference the time academic advisors spend on administrative or prescriptive tasks versus developmental work with students.

It was during the third era of academic advising that Cate and Miller (2015) contend that there was a recognition of the skill required in helping students navigate their educational pathways. As a result, institutions began hiring and training more full-time staff outside of the faculty to begin taking on this role and responsibility. Habley (2009) noted that, by the late 1980s, there began a shift from faculty

providing academic advising toward hired staff providing academic advising. In some cases, academic advising was becoming a shared responsibility, and more centralized student service areas began to emerge (Habley, 2009). This was happening while faculty responsibilities began shifting from teaching to research and publishing (Kuhn and Padak, 2008).

The fourth era of academic advising began around 2003, when NACADA began identifying the necessary steps to move academic advising from an occupation to becoming a profession (Cate & Miller, 2015). Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) claimed that, since this time, several attempts have been made to define what academic advising is; however, because of the unique characteristics of individual institutions in higher education, the definition, role, and function of advising have been influenced by how the specific institution functions (Cate & Miller, 2015; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019). Defining academic advising is further complicated by the observation that academic advisors do not share a common educational and work background because they are hired from a multitude of professional backgrounds (McGill, Heikkila, & Lazarowicz, 2020; NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2006a).

In 2000, leaders in advising were calling for the need to define what academic advising was and to clarify what academic advisors do (Creamer, 2000), a need Habley documented again in 2009. Even as late as 2019, McGill continued to assert that the definitions for academic advising remain plentiful. Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski, and Barkemeyer (2018) indicated that multiple definitions for academic advising exist, which they claim have only "been colloquially applied" (p. 81) to what is meant by academic advising. In addition, Larson et al. (2018) indicated that one of the problems is that academic advising is understood and described differently not only across the nation, but, at times, within the same campus.

To further the challenge of defining academic advising, Habley (2009) noted that there remains a conflict between whether academic advising is a faculty or a staff role (see section Definition of Key

Terms). Often, from my personal experience working at three colleges, this lack of clarity can create conflict among the various advising roles on campus. In practice, hiring staff in the college system in Ontario—including academic advisors—is subject to the collective agreements of various groups of unionized employees. A collective agreement exists for staff and a separate collective agreement exists for faculty. This creates problems in writing a job description in that the work of the staff must not infringe on work that is considered *academic* and, therefore, specific to faculty, though as indicated in a conversation with a chief union steward, this understanding is not actually documented. Thus, the title *Academic Advisor* is replaced with titles such as *Student Success Advisor* or *Student Advisor*. This context is important because it adds to the complexity of developing and facilitating PD activities for the various advising roles that exist.

In addition to the lack of clear definitions and job descriptions for academic advisors, Habley (1993) concluded that the academic advising service model varies from institution to institution. King (1993) observed that an institution's advising model is influenced by the local structure of the institution, the student body, and the degree to which faculty are involved in academic advising. The academic service models introduced by Habley (1993) and written about by King (1993) continue to be referenced in recent literature: see Pardee (2000); Miller (2016); Zarges, Adams, Higgins, and Muhovich (2018). The reporting structure and location of the academic advisors also vary, all of which, as McGill (2019) states, adds to the lack of clarity about what academic advising is as a field. Kuhn and Padak (2008) reported that this variation also influences the focus and outcomes of academic advising. For example, academic advising located in an academic unit might focus on student retention, whereas a student service unit might focus on student satisfaction with their advisor.

2.2.1 Toward a definition of academic advising. As Larson et al. (2018) state: "The lack of a cohesive definition means that the skills, education, training, and values necessary to advise students might also remain indeterminate" (p. 81). Through an analytical induction process, Larson et al. (2018)

developed a definition for academic advising by examining the terminology commonly used by academic advisors to describe their roles. Their definition reads, "Academic advising applies knowledge of the field to empower students and campus and community members to successfully navigate academic interactions related to higher education" (p.86). They argued that the definition was meant to be continually worked on because it was only a reflection of how academic advising was *currently* understood. Aiken-Wisniewski et al. (2015), for example, acknowledged that, given the disparity among advising definitions and role, more data are needed from specific advising communities to acknowledge these differences. For example, data from the advising community in the college system could lead to a clearer definition within the college context.

2.3 The Role of the Academic Advisor

In addition to defining what academic advising is, many attempts have been made to clarify the role and responsibilities of the academic advisor. In some cases, the role has been described as teaching, mentoring, counseling, or even customer service. For example, Crookston (2009) asserted that academic advising is akin to teaching because it "is based on a negotiated agreement between the student and the teacher in which varying degrees of learning by both parties to the transaction are the product" (p. 5). In this case, Crookston sees the relationship between advisor and student as reciprocal. The advisor has much to gain from the student to further develop their advising practice, while the student has much to gain by contributing to the dialogue. Crookston (2009) contrasts this with a prescriptive relationship, where the advisor would act as a physician, who 'prescribes' a course of action.

Boyd (2012) suggested that advising is akin to customer service. By describing academic advising as customer service, the focus of the relationship between advisor and students is on student satisfaction (Boyd, 2012) and not on the student developing self-awareness and critical thinking skills as in Crookston's (2009) model. By contrast, Strayhorn (2014) argued that academic advisors should be

cultural navigators because their role requires them to help new students acclimate to the culture of higher education and the institution. He argued that because institutions are rife with cultural norms, attitudes, and behaviours, academic advisors must be versed in *showing* students how to navigate the institutional culture, and not just provide them with information. Although Straryhorn's view is more in line with Crookston's (1972/1994) view, what Boyd and Strayhorn have in common is a focus on the external and internal forces that influence higher education, in addition to the relationship between advisors and students. For example, while Boyd (2012) was concerned with retention and institutional reputation, Strayhorn (2014) was concerned with institutional culture.

What is common among the descriptions I have provided is that at its core, academic advising involves a relationship between the academic advisor and the student. Academic advising also involves the imparting of information and knowledge. However, it is the nature of that relationship, and the nature of the information being imparted that continue to remain elusive. However, as Kuhn, Gordon, and Webber (2006) claimed, comparing advising to other fields of practice, such as customer service, only complicates positioning academic advising as a distinct practice within higher education. Schulenberg and Lindhorst (2008) also agreed that conflating academic advising with teaching and counselling, for example, only contributes to the confusion of defining what advising is and what it is not.

2.3.1. Defining the responsibilities of the academic advisor. In addition to the role of the academic advisor, the responsibilities of academic advisors are often unclear or not aligned with their role. In 2011, a national survey sponsored by NACADA aimed to determine common responsibilities of academic advisors. This survey, discussed by Huber and Miller (2013), showed that in both 2-year and 4-year colleges in the United States, academic advisors engaged in course scheduling, course registration, program mapping, new student orientation, and sitting on committees—to name the top four of 21 job activities. Some of these activities are associated with prescriptive advising, wherein the advisor is the

disseminator of information (Drake, 2015), rather than the more developmental approach of working with the student to identify their needs and goals (Creamer & Scott, 2000). What is concerning about the 2011 NACADA study is that although leaders in academic advising supported a developmental approach to advising, most academic advisors at the time were tasked with prescriptive functions.

Aiken-Wisniewski et al. (2015) also attempted to better understand how advisors describe their role and responsibilities. Through their study, Aiken-Wisniewski et al. (2015) found that there was a lack of consistency among academic advisor roles and responsibilities. Specifically, they found that job titles lacked uniformity within and across institutions; education and past work experience varied among academic advisors; and each academic advisor approached working with students very differently. My own experience confirms this: within two of the institutions, in which I have worked, the titles of academic advisors can differ within a department, across departments, and across service areas. The reason that various educational and past work experience is significant is because as Aiken-Wisniewski et al. (2015) argue, there is an inevitable discrepancy in the understanding, training and skills among academic advisors. Most concerningly, staff advisors believed that faculty did not perceive their roles to be of value, in part because of the discrepancy of educational backgrounds between staff and faculty. When participants in the study described their day-to-day responsibilities, they described spending time meeting with students and time completing administrative tasks. The administrative tasks included, in part, completing checklists with students regarding transfer credits, degree completion, and graduation planning. Aiken-Wisniewski et al. (2015) concluded that the various administrative tasks that were tacked onto the academic advisor roles lead to inconsistency in academic advising and confusion among staff and faculty.

Bridgen (2017) also conducted a study on the role of academic advisors, but was focused on understanding how administrators, faculty, and staff advisors perceived the purpose and function of academic advising. Findings from the study indicated that administrators had a bias toward seeing

academic advising as a retention tool, while staff advisors had a bias toward seeing academic advising as a tool for keeping students on track academically. Faculty advisors had a bias toward seeing academic advising to spend more time discussing philosophical issues with students. However, faculty also admitted to spending most of their time on prescriptive advising like course scheduling. What is concerning about Bridgen's study is that administrators, staff, and faculty each perceived different responsibilities for academic advising.

2.3.2 Institutional academic advising models. In addition to inconsistency in the role and responsibilities of academic advisors, there is inconsistency in academic advising models across campuses and institutions. King (1993) suggested that advising models are influenced by the context of the institution, the student audience, faculty interest and involvement in advising, and the complexity and mix of academic programming. However, Habley (1993) believed that despite academic advising structures being influenced by the context of the institution, each institutional advising structure fits into one of seven models. These models are further classified by type, which refers to the extent to which each model is centralized, decentralized, or shared; and by how the administrative unit is structured, and the role of the coordinator. Although the source of institutional advising models is rather dated, studies published as late as 2018 were referencing Habley's (1993) model to set the context for their study (see Zarges et al. 2018). Pardee (2000) expanded on Habley's work by including both the reporting structure (who coordinates the service) and the physical location of the service. Table 2.1 combines these classifications.

Table 2.1

Organizational Models of Academic Advising (Adapted from Habley, 1993 & Pardee 2000)

Academic Advising Models	Type	Administrative structure	Role of the coordinator
Faculty-only Model	Decentralized	Faculty provide advising	Little to no oversight of advising activities
Satellite Model	Decentralized	Each academic unit has its own advising unit	Provides resources and opportunities for PD
Self-contained Model	Centralized	Central service unit	Sets policy, training, PD, and evaluation
Supplementary Model	Shared	All students have a department advisor	Oversees staff in central unit
		Central unit provides training and resources; acts as a referral service	Advises institution on policy and procedure issues
Split Model	Shared	Students split between department and central unit advisors	Provides resources and opportunities for PD to central and department staff
		Central unit advisors have authority to make academic decisions to a point	
Dual Model	Shared	Students have a department advisor for academic issues and a central unit advisor for general and college-policy issues	
Total Intake Model	Shared	Initial advising of all students conducted in a central unit	
		Students referred to academic sub-unit for advising specific to program completion	

Table 2.1 demonstrates that although various advising models have been identified, the distinctions between each model, particularly the shared models, are tenuous. Within the descriptions of the academic advising models lies the issue of the location of advising services: in an academic or a student services unit. There is also the issue of the reporting structure, whether the academic advisors report to an academic unit or to the student services unit. In a structured literature review on the professionalization of advising, McGill (2019) argues that one reason advising has not yet reached "a

unified direction for the field" (p. 89) is a result of institutional decisions to house advising in either academic or student services. From personal experience working at three colleges in Ontario, and through conversation with colleagues, conflict can even arise depending on the geographic location of the central advising unit, particularly when there are multiple campuses. In addition, conflicts among academic advisors arise when the reporting lines are blurred between a central unit and an academic department.

A decentralized model operates under the assumption that advising is provided by faculty or staff directly hired by an academic unit and includes the faculty-only and satellite models. A centralized model, for example, acts as a self-contained unit with a centralized space and centralized reporting structure. Pardee (2000) wrote that, more commonly, academic advising is a shared function between academic and student services units. In a shared model, academic advising is offered within an academic department as well as in a centralized unit. The shared models of academic advising include the following: supplemental, split, dual, and total intake models. Each of these four models is distinguished by the degree to which information and resources are shared between the academic department and central unit.

As Cate and Miller (2015) wrote, the location of the advising service also is important because it dictates the reporting lines. These reporting lines are important because, as Kuhn and Padak (2008) suggested, they dictate the functional purpose of academic advising. If an academic advisor reports to an academic area, the purpose of academic advising will be to enhance retention. However, if an academic advisor reports to a student services unit, the purpose of academic advising will be to enhance student satisfaction (Kuhn & Padak, 2008). This is a generalization, but what is important about the point that Kuhn and Padak (2008) made is that the purpose of academic advising might look different, depending on its location and reporting lines. For example, from my own experience in recent years, several workshops and training seminars on improving assessment practices have been organized

specifically for student affairs practitioners, including academic advisors. Specifically, student affairs practitioners are being asked to move away from using student satisfaction as the only metric to improve practice and to consider metrics like student persistence and retention.

2.4 Professional Development in Higher Education

De Rijdt, Dochy, Bamelis and van der Vleuten (2016) explained that institutions in higher education offer a variety of PD programs and activities to ensure staff provide quality educational experiences through innovative practices. De Rijdt et al. (2016) also explained that several terms are used interchangeably to refer to PD including faculty training, staff development, and instructional training. Jaramillo-Baquerizo, Valcke and Vanderlinde (2018) stated that PD is a term that refers to the *formal activities* that are "designed and implemented … to improve the knowledge and skills of their teachers" (Jaramillo-Baquerizo et al., 2018). In this case, Jaramillo-Baquerizo's et al.'s (2018) definition was derived from the work of Merchie, Tuytens, Devos and Vandrlinde (2016), who in turn, built their definition on the work of Guskey (2000). This connection is important for two reasons, first, Guskey (2000) provided a framework for classifying the formal activities, and second, it described the iterative nature of professional development in higher education.

As Guskey (2000) described, there is a traditional view of PD as a series of workshops or activities that are provided by the institution, to be completed by the staff member. In fact, De Rijdt et al. (2016) found that most teachers still describe PD as a set of activities administered to them, and do not see themselves as part of the process. Commonly, these workshops or activities are known and referred to as *training*. Training often includes a subject area expert and facilitator who shares their knowledge with others through various activities (Jaramillo-Baquerizo et al., 2018). These activities can include workshops, presentations, group discussions, and, at times, role-playing and simulations (Guskey, 2000). However, as Guskey (2000) pointed out, training is only one of several categories of PD activities (see Table 2.3).

2.4.1 Practices and models. To better understand what PD activities are available to academic advisors, the following section describes three PD frameworks that attempt to categorize PD activities including: Guskey's (2000) *Models of Professional Development* (Table 2.2); Kennedy's (2005) *Models of Professional Development* (Table 2.3); and Amundsen and Wilson's (2012) *Educational Development Clusters*. Guskey's (2000) framework outlined seven major models of PD that are categorized based on their purpose. Within each PD model, Guskey (2000) described the assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that each model holds about professional growth. He also included the implicit and explicit demands each model made on the individuals involved, and the orientations from which they derive. For example, some models focus on improvement and "steady advancement of the profession" (p. 29), while other models focus on advancing an individual's development within an occupation.

Table 2.2

Models of Professional Development (Adapted from Guskey, 2000)

Model	Description
Training	Synonymous with PD; most commonly involves a presenter(s) who share their knowledge through group-based activities; formats vary
Mentoring	Pairs an experienced and highly successful educator with a less experienced colleague. Regular opportunities for discussion of professional goals, sharing of ideas and strategies on effective practice, reflection, observations, tactics for improvement
Study Groups	Puts staff into groups to work on solutions to common problems. Sometimes the group works on one aspect of a shared problem.
Inquiry / Action Research	Assumes a practitioner's ability to formulate valid questions and pursue objective answers; creates more reflective practitioners
Observation/assessment	Involves observing, or being observed and receiving feedback, analyzing and reflecting on the information
Involvement in a development / improvement process	Staff come together to review curriculum, design a new program, plan strategies to improve instruction, or solve a particular problem
Individually guided activities	Educators determine their own individual PD goals, then select activities they believe will result in the achievement of those goals. Assumes individuals can judge their own learning needs

Kennedy (2005) also categorized professional development activities based on the activity's capacity to support "professional autonomy and transformative practice" (p. 235). Kennedy (2005) argued that the categorizes are not definitive but meant to highlight key characteristics that illuminate the key motivation and purpose of each model (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3

Models of Professional Development (Adapted from, Kennedy, 2005)

Model	Description
Training	Skills-based, technical view, training delivered by an expert
Award-bearing	Completion of a program of study, validated by a higher education credential or professional body
Deficit	Activities designed specifically to address a gap in one's knowledge
Cascade	Individuals attend training and share learning with colleagues
Standards-based	Using professional competencies to guide practice
Coaching/Mentoring	Importance of the 1:1 relationship
Community of Practice	Learning happens through social interactions, formal and informal
Action Research	Participants engage in research examining a social problem
Transformative	Combination of above practices with conditions

Both Guskey (2000) and Kennedy (2005) included the following models in their framework: (a) training, (b) mentoring, (c) action research and (d) a model based on social learning theory (study groups, involvement in a development / improvement process and community of practice). Where the two frameworks seem to differ is that Guskey (2000) included observation and individually guided activities as specific models, each suggesting the outcome is determined by the participant. For example, a new academic advisor may choose to observe a colleague to better understand how to open a conversation with a student. By contrast, Kennedy (2005) included award bearing, deficit, cascade and standards-based models, each suggesting that the PD activity is related to pre-determined outcomes. For example, in a standards-based model, PD activities would be built upon pre-determined best practices in academic advising.

In addition to categorizing PD activities into various models, Kennedy (2005) organized the framework based on each PD model's capacity to support personal growth and transformative change.

The *Spectrum of PD Models* (Kennedy, 2005) was organized beginning with PD models that were least likely to transform practice (training model) and focused on the transmission of knowledge. PD models that were more likely to transform practice (transformative model) focused on informing and evaluating the reform itself. The transformative model is described by Kennedy (2005) as a "combination of practices and conditions" (p. 246) that result from participation in various PD models. This idea that participation in various PD activities is important as it forms the basis of my conceptual framework (Section 2.4.4).

More recently, Amundsen and Wilson (2012) proposed a framework for categorizing PD activities based on the *focus* or *goal* of each PD activity rather than the purpose of the activity. The framework (Table 2.4) was built from an empirical review of studies of the effectiveness of PD practices and includes the following six clusters: (a) skill focus, (b) method focus, (c) reflection focus, (d) institutional focus, (e) disciplinary focus, and (f) action research or inquiry focus.

Table 2.4

Educational development clusters (Adapted from Amundsen & Wilson, 2012)

Cluster Name	Description
Skills focus	Acquisition or enhancement of observable teaching skills and techniques
Method focus	Mastery of a particular teaching method
Reflection focus	Change in individual teacher's conceptions of teaching and learning
Institutional focus	Coordinated institutional plan to support teaching improvements
Disciplinary focus	Enhanced disciplinary understanding to develop pedagogical knowledge
Action research or inquiry focus	Pursuit of topics of interest by individuals or groups of faculty

The purpose of the framework, according to Amundsen and Wilson (2012), was to provide a more meaningful foundation for designing and evaluating the effectiveness of PD practice. They argued that previous empirical studies looking at the effectiveness of PD practices often showed very little evidence of their effectiveness, because studies were grouped based on the: format of the activity (workshop, lecture), the level of learning outcomes (self-report, observation), and the individual variables such as time spent on the activity. They argue that by documenting the focus or goal of each

activity instead, including the "processes and activities planned to realize the … goal, and the evidence collected to demonstrate success in achieving the … goal" (p. 90), researchers have a better chance of measuring the effectiveness of the PD activity. Their framework is important because it begins to signal an advancement from categorizing PD models to finding ways to measure the effectiveness of those PD models.

Since the focus of my thesis is on exploring what current PD practices and activities exist for academic advisors, Guskey (2000) and Kennedy's (2005) frameworks provide simple classification systems for organizing my findings. In addition, both Guskey's (2000) and Kennedy's (2005) frameworks highlight PD models that are reflective of, and familiar to, PD practices in higher education in Ontario. Most importantly, Kennedy's (2005) model provides a theoretical background that suggests engaging in various types of PD has the capacity to transform practice. Each model presented is therefore important within the scope of this study because each suggests how PD goes beyond enhancing personal practice and can, with intentional and deliberate outcomes, transform practice. For example, as I suggest in my conceptual framework (Figure 2.2), PD holds the potential to resolve issues relating to academic advisors' roles and expectations, and better articulate institutional advising structures.

2.4.2 Transfer of learning and PD practices. As I suggested earlier, more recent PD models focus on evaluating *transfer of learning*. This entails identifying the specific variables that lead to learning, and the application of that new learning by the academic advisor (Koellner & Jacobs, 2015). Transfer of learning is defined by De Rijdt et al. (2013) as "the effective and continuing application in the job environment of the skills, knowledge and conceptions gained in staff development" (p. 49). Researchers such as Jaramillo-Baquerizo et al. (2018) conducted a study seeking to understand what variables influence transfer of learning and identified: intervention design, work environment and characteristics of the learner. Therefore, in addition to the categorization of PD activities, variables that influence the

effect PD activities have on practice include the context where the PD activity takes place and the beliefs and attitudes that the participant brings to the activity.

Assessing the effectiveness of PD activities on academic advising practice is important for two reasons. First, as Zarges et al. (2018) point out, assessing the effectiveness of academic advising can establish a cyclical process in which the advising services establish a vision, mission, and learning outcomes for students. Secondly, advisor effectiveness then can be measured based on the degree to which advisors help students meet these outcomes (Zarges et al., 2018). Zarges et al. (2018) argued that assessing the effectiveness of advising "must also address the building blocks of effective advising, such as the suitability of the advising structure, effective PD for advisors…and the institutional culture of advising assessment" (p. 48). Assessing the effectiveness of academic advising practice is therefore a cyclical process in which assessing advising practice can help to inform the PD that academic advisors need to practice. Assessing the impact of PD on academic advisor practice also can play a role in better defining the role and responsibilities of the academic advisor.

However, assessing the effectiveness of PD practice in a systematic, yet rigorous, way remains quite difficult, according to Earley and Porritt (2014), who described the process in education as superficial and based on uncomplicated measures. In addition, the value of academic advising often is tied to student satisfaction and not to broader institutional outcomes like student retention (Powers et al., 2014). Finally, as Powers, Carlstrom, and Hughey (2014) pointed out, very little research focuses on the performance of academic advisors. Assessing the impact of academic advising is critical, as Cuseo (2003) argued, because it sends a strong message that academic advising is an important institutional activity. Given that systematic and rigorous assessment practices remain elusive in higher education, much work must be done to develop assessment frameworks with the aim of demonstrating the importance of academic advising.

2.4.3. Current PD activities for academic advisors. Early evidence of academic advisor PD begins in the early 1980s in the United States. In 1982, Gordon of Ohio State University argued for the need to train academic advisors prior to taking on their role and not after as was then the practice. In 1982, Gordon wrote about the development of a pre-service training model for academic advisors. In 2010, NACADA issued a manual for PD, titled *Comprehensive Advisor Training and Development: Practices That Deliver*. This manual was written to advance the best practices highlighted in a monograph commissioned by NACADA titled *Advisor Training: Exemplary Practices in the Development of Advisor Skills* (Givans Voller, Miller, & Neste, 2010). In addition to the manuals, NACADA has published several books on the practice of, and preparation for, academic advising.

Although resources such as these exist, scholar practitioners continue to criticize the progress being made on designing and implementing PD activities for academic advisors. In some cases, scholar practitioners continue to advocate for requiring PD *prior* to beginning practice as an academic advisor. For example, Habley (2009) noted that very few references exist on what training and PD activities academic advisors need prior to and during their role. In 2010, Givans Voller et al., highlighted that the state of PD for academic advisors continues to be abysmal and that "no one seems to be responsible, and advisors learn from their colleagues or through trial and error" (p. 7). Even as late as 2015, Folsom, Yoder, and Joslin stated that little progress has been made by institutions following through on designing PD activities for their academic advisors.

These comments highlight two problems. First, Habley (2009) suggested that there is very little evidence academic advisors are required to participate in PD activities prior to beginning their role, meaning academic advisors potentially lack the prior knowledge and skills for academic advising. Second, even when academic advisors begin their role, they are not necessarily required to participate in ongoing and intentional PD activities. This scenario is certainly true for all three colleges I have worked at in Ontario. For example, when we are hiring for academic advisors (usually referred to as

Student Success Advisors), we must first consider internal candidates. This means we must first consider and interview staff who already work at the college, regardless of what their past roles were, as long as their experience and skills can be transferred to the advising role. Unfortunately, the experience and skills that can be transferred are often up for debate because of the misperceptions of the various stakeholders as to what academic advising is.

2.4.4 An iterative conceptual framework for PD in academic advising. To guide my research study, I proposed a conceptual framework (Figure 2.2) that is based on the work of Guskey (2000) and Kennedy (2005) that suggests that PD can be used to advance an individual's development and professional growth, while some PD models can advance and transform an occupation. Jabareen (2009) defines a conceptual framework as "a network, or 'a plane' of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon or phenomena" (p. 51). He states that conceptual frameworks are not meant to be analytical tools but meant to provide an explanatory approach to understanding the phenomena. Bordage (2009) states that conceptual frameworks help to demonstrate and explain ways of thinking and complex problems. He argues that conceptual frameworks also help to provide a visual representation of interrelated variables and how they may interact. In addition, Green (2014) argues that the use of a conceptual framework aids in ensuring that that the research project is coherent and focused, particularly for new researchers.

The conceptual framework is useful here because it demonstrates the interrelationships between professional development activities and the growth of both individual academic advisors and the profession of academic advising. Because academic advising is an emerging profession, it must borrow PD concepts and processes from other professions. This study recommends a path forward for future PD that must be attentive to both the advancement of individual practitioners and of the profession. The framework serves as a representation of the need for an iterative approach.

For my research project, I chose to visually represent the concepts of how PD informs individual and occupational growth. The purpose of the visual representation is to underpin the value of PD for the future professionalization of academic advising. For example, as academic advising moves toward professionalization, providing PD practices and activities can aid in that goal. The conceptual framework also helps me frame the iterative and ongoing process of PD. Figure 2.2 is a visual representation of Guskey's (2000) and Kennedy's (2005) assertion that PD activities can benefit the individual advisor as well as the occupation of academic advising, represented by the arrow in the centre. As an individual academic advisor develops their practice, and as an occupation begins to advance, the new knowledge and skills are then used to inform future PR practices and activities. This iterative process is represented by the top and bottom arrow that circle back to the PD practices and activities.

Figure 2.2

Conceptual Framework

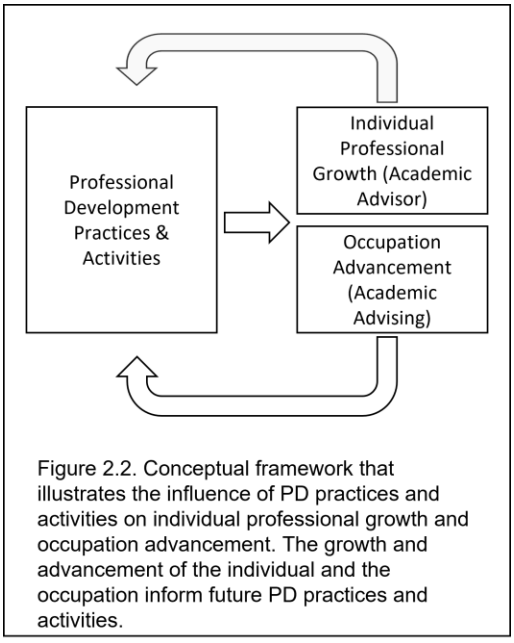


Figure 2.2. Conceptual framework that illustrates the influence of PD practices and activities on individual professional growth and occupation advancement. The growth and advancement of the individual and the occupation inform future PD practices and activities.

2.5 Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter 2, I demonstrated there is a lack of research and literature on PD practice specific to academic advisors. I have attempted to demonstrate that a lack of definition for academic advising, lack

of role and responsibility consistency as well as application of advising models, all contribute to making it difficult to find appropriate PD practices. I also attempted to demonstrate the importance of PD for both the transformation of academic advising toward a clearer set of roles and responsibilities, and the enhancement of academic advisors' practice. Finally, I have attempted to demonstrate the current state of PD activities for academic advisors. These characteristics of the field of academic advising have informed an iterative conceptual framework for PD in academic advising that proposes a transformational approach to PD.

In Chapter 3, the exploratory, sequential, mixed methods research study will be described, followed by the introduction of the qualitative data collection and data analysis process.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Moses and Knutsen (2012) advised that before answering the research questions, the researcher must make explicit the paradigm that informs the methodology and the methods chosen. In Chapter 3, I aim to describe the social constructionist and pragmatic research paradigms, the complimentary methodology, and the methods chosen to answer the research questions. I will also attempt to justify the use of an ESMMR study design to answer the main research question and the qualitative and quantitative follow-up questions: *How do academic advisors' approach, engage with, and make meaning of professional development practices across the Ontario College system?*

Qualitative research questions:

1. How are the current nature and scope of academic advising described by academic advisors, managers, and institutional documents?
2. What professional development activities, both forma and informal are currently available to, and practiced by academic advisors?
3. What are the professional development activities or practices that academic advisor perceive as being most important to practice, and what influences that prioritisation?
4. How do academic advisors assess the ways in which their professional development informs their practice?

Quantitative research question:

5. To what extent are the findings from the qualitative phase reflective of a larger group of academic advisors?

3.1 Researcher Positionality

Since beginning my research in 2017, I have accepted new work positions twice. From 2017 – 2020, I was the Director of Student Success Initiatives at a college in Ontario, and, as of 2020, I accepted the position of Director of Student Engagement and Career Success at a different college, also in

Ontario. In each case, I remained closely tied to the provision of academic advising services. As a result of my work experiences, I consider myself a scholar practitioner within the field of advising. My positionality provides me with close links and relationships to advisors within the college system. I am also trusted by my fellow managers and am sought out for advice on developing academic advising services. Given my proximity to the subject matter and the subjects, I have had to consciously be aware of my biases, values, and experience, and of how they have affected the decisions I made at each step. I had to reflect on my decisions to identify and challenge each assumption I made.

According to Moses and Knutsen (2012), the researcher's paradigm includes understanding and aligning their ontological, epistemological, and methodological perspectives. The ontological perspective is concerned with understanding how one perceives what the "world is made out of" (p. 4), while the epistemological perspective references an understanding of what knowledge is. The methodological perspective is concerned with identifying how knowledge is acquired (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). In Chapter 1, I stated that the meta-paradigm guiding my research study was dialectical pluralism. Dialectical pluralism acknowledges the use of multiple paradigms within one research study and is defined by Johnson (2017) as a process that is meant to "carefully, systematically, and thoughtfully listen, understand, appreciate and learn from multiple paradigms, disciplines, values, methodologies, standpoints, ethnicities, and perspectives" (p. 156). In this case, dialectical pluralism allows me to understand the nature and scope of academic advising from multiple methodologies including documentary evidence, semi-structured interviews, and a questionnaire.

From an ontological perspective, dialectical pluralism suggests that reality is interpreted in multiple ways (Johnson, 2017). Johnson (2017) recommends identifying one's ontological perspective by making explicit the (a) subjective reality, (b) intersubjective reality, and (c) objective reality informing it. For my ESMMR study, I acknowledge that my subjective reality is interpreted through the meaning-making of individual academic advisors who participated in PD practices. Specifically, I asked academic

advisors to list the PD activities they have participated in and explain which activities were important to their practice and why. The objective reality I would like to make explicit is the assumption that the findings from the academic advisors (subjects) can be ascertained, and assumed representative, across the larger community of academic advisors (intersubjective), in the college system in Ontario (object). In short, I am assuming that the findings from my study, for example PD activities deemed *important* by academic advisors, hold true for many academic advisors in the college system in Ontario.

From an epistemological perspective, dialectical pluralism suggests that multiple research paradigms can be used to understand the theory of knowledge (Johnson, 2017). The two research paradigms that inform my study include social constructionism and pragmatism. As Creswell (2009) states, constructivist researchers seek to understand and to make meaning of the world in which they live, acknowledging that this meaning will be subjective and value laden. Social constructionism is derived from the idea that learners must create meaning from what they are hearing and seeing from an instructor, and through this process construct meaning (Alanazi, 2019). My research questions ask academic advisors to describe their journey to becoming an academic advisor, identify what PD activities they participate in, and what PD activities are important to their practice. As a result, I am interested in learning how individual academic advisors have constructed meaning from their experiences learning their roles

3.2 Justification for MMR

My research study is also informed by pragmatism, a commonly cited paradigm in mixed methods research (Nastasi et al., 2015). A pragmatic approach allows the researcher to align the research methodology to the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This, in turn, allows the researcher to combine data collection methods and analysis from different epistemological paradigms. In short, a pragmatic approach justifies the use of MMR in this study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) suggested several advantages to using MMR including utilizing the strengths of both qualitative and

quantitative research traditions, providing more evidence, answering complex questions, and providing new insights that would not have been apparent having used only one research method. Finally, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) argued that MMR allows for the incorporation of multiple worldviews and paradigms. My main research question asks, how do academic advisors' approach, engage with and make meaning of professional development activities across the Ontario college system. This question suggests both a qualitative and quantitative approach. The aim of gaining a deeper understanding of how academic advisors make meaning of professional development activities requires a qualitative research methodology because I will interact directly with academic advisors within their context-specific setting (Gray, 2014). Qualitative research is usually associated with a constructivist orientation whereby knowledge is formed by individuals based on their personal and shared contexts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). From this perspective, knowledge is created by generalizing a wide range of individual perspectives. The qualitative phase of my study will apply constructivist data collection and analysis by collecting documentary evidence and conducting individual interviews with academic advisors.

To meet the goals of this study, quantitative research would be needed to demonstrate the validity of the data collected in the qualitative phase. A qualitative research approach suggests a research study that concentrates on collecting data from a small sample of participants (Gray, 2014). With 24 colleges, collecting and analyzing qualitative data from across the Ontario college system would have been unrealistic because of the time and resources involved (Gray, 2014). In addition, Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) noted that expanding qualitative research beyond a small number of participants leads to data saturation with diminishing returns on the interviews conducted. However, the small data set is problematic in the context of this study because I also aim to learn how academic advisors make meaning across the Ontario college system. Because any recommendations would have to be able to be implemented across a diverse system due to the unique nature of the labour relations

in the Ontario college system, my findings would have to be proven to be generalizable across this system to be implemented. In order to learn how academic advisors, make meaning across the college system, I would need to apply quantitative research methods to understand the extent to which the meaning making could be generalizable across a larger sample of academic advisors across the college system. From a methodological perspective, therefore, I would be using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis.

Quantitative research is usually associated with a postpositivist orientation to knowledge formation where researchers make claims about: determinism or cause-and-effect thinking; reductionism, by narrowing and focusing on interrelated variables; detailed observations and measures of variables; and the testing of theories (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative phase of my study includes generating a questionnaire (Appendix D) from the findings (categories) of the qualitative phase of my study. In essence, the survey is presenting the qualitative findings to a larger sample, to ascertain how representative those findings are in the wider population of academic advisors.

Although there are many advantages to using an MMR study design, there are also several challenges that a researcher must be prepared for when engaging in an MMR study. For example, an MMR study requires that the researcher have experience in both the qualitative and quantitative research traditions prior to attempting to mix both (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In addition to skills, the researcher must also consider the time and resources that are required as an MMR study assumes more data will be collected and subsequently analyzed. The final challenge, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) is that MMR continues to be considered a newer research method and the researcher will likely have to educate and convince fellow researchers of its merit as a paradigm.

Despite these limitations, MMR has significant advantages over other methods considered for this study. One alternative to MMR that I had considered includes action research. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) describe action research as a “scientific approach to study the resolution of important

social or organizational issues together with those who experience these issues directly" (p. 6). This approach has three main assumptions; first, action research is a "research *in* action, rather than research *about* action" (p. 6), meaning that knowledge is gained within the process of the research study. Furthermore, when the community is involved in the process, the outcomes of the research will be more effective because the community had a voice in the process (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014). Secondly, action research assumes a shared and collaborative process between the researcher and those being researched because each group holds responsibility throughout the process. Finally, action research is an iterative approach to problem solving that requires the cooperation of both the researcher and subjects in the data gathering, analysis and planning.

I believe that action research would have been beneficial to answer the research problem because it would have engaged the advisors in researching and developing PD practices for academic advising. The research problem begins with the understanding that academic advising lacks a concrete definition and therefore the PD needs of academic advisors need to be established. By engaging in action research, academic advisors could have collectively worked to define what academic advising is within the context of the Ontario colleges. Furthermore, the advisors could have collectively established what PD practices would enable them to enhance their practice. Given the iterative nature of action research, academic advisors could have laid out a process where their PD activities and practices could reflect the iterative nature of PD within their context. For example, as new academic advisors were hired, their development as practitioners (through PD activities) would have contributed to a deeper understanding of advising as a profession that would in turn have sharpened the focus of their PD.

As Coghlan and Brannick (2014) explain, engaging in action research is not a neutral nor straight-forward process, particularly if one is an insider researcher because "they are either organizational members whose actions influence the reality that they see, or they are outsiders who are contracted to influence what they see" (p. 4). As a practitioner who has had the responsibility to develop PD practices

for academic advisors and consult on PD practices for academic advisors for colleagues, I would fall into both categories. In addition, Gray (2014) explains how action research can be very time consuming and although the research may result in actionable outcomes for the researcher and participants, the research may not be generalizable or reach the public domain. Therefore, I concluded that participating in action research would have been too time consuming within the confines of a doctoral thesis and it likely would not have met my goal of adding to the growing body of research on academic advising.

3.3 Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Research (ESMMR)

MMR is focused on understanding the nature of phenomena, albeit through combining various perspectives and generating more questions (Greene, 2005). Creswell and Tashakkori (2007) suggested that MMR can be assigned the role of an overarching paradigm, or a methodological approach. However, it must be noted that Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that MMR is considered by some a distinct paradigm in addition to postpositivism and constructivism. Earlier, I made the claim that my meta-paradigmatic approach to my research was dialectical pluaralism, which acknowledged that I was mixing paradigms for the purpose of understanding my area of research from various perspectives (Johnson, 2017). From this perspective, I have attempted to approach my MMR study as an overarching paradigm, rather than from two (constructionist and postpositivist) distinct paradigms.

3.3.1. Study design. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), there are three main MMR study designs including: convergent (b) explanatory sequential, and exploratory sequential. When choosing a study design, researchers are urged to choose a design that aligns with the purpose of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Because the purpose of my research was to identify what PD activities existed and were important for academic advisors, and then measure how generalizable their answers were, I chose to work within the exploratory sequential design. The research was exploratory in that it first focused on the experiences of the participants to begin constructing a picture of the current

advising landscape. It was sequential in that I first needed to construct this picture of the current advising landscape before testing its generalisability.

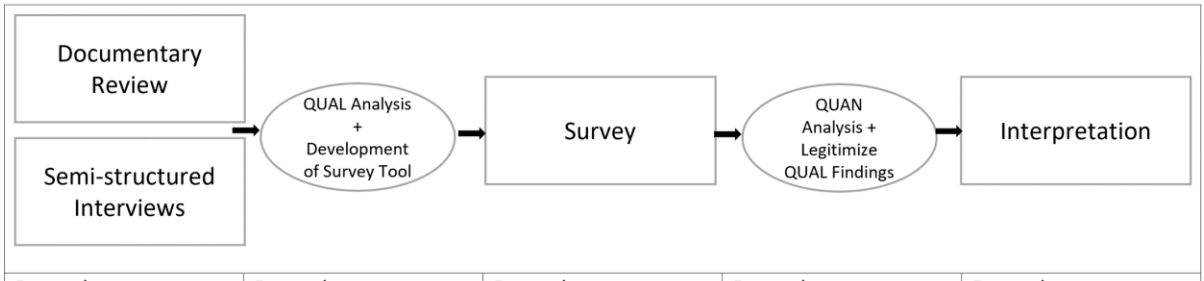
Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) described that the qualitative phase of the ESMMR is "grounded in the views of participants" (p. 84) and the quantitative feature is "based on the culture or setting of participants" (p. 84). The benefit of designing research around the experience of the participants is that this improves the chances that participants will see the value of the research toward their own practices (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). For my study, conducting a document review would allow me to explore what PD activities exist, and the semi-structured interviews would allow me to understand how academic advisors construct meaning from those PD activities.

It was the collection and analysis of these experiences taken from a smaller group of participants that were then used to build the quantitative instrument that examined the extent to which the landscape is applicable to a larger advising community. This approach took the larger setting of the Ontario college system into account. As I stated in the introduction, I wanted to mitigate against the anecdotal perception that what works for one college will not work for the others. Therefore, I believed that if I could explore the qualitative experiences of a small, manageable group of academic advisors, and test the findings quantitatively across a larger community of academic advisors, my study would be more credible in the college system in Ontario.

The ESMMR design for this study is highlighted in Figure 3.1 For the qualitative phase of the study, I collected documentary evidence and conducted semi-structured interviews (Appendix C) with 11 participants at four colleges in Ontario. Each data set then was analyzed using qualitative comparative analysis techniques. The findings were then used to inform the development of the questionnaire. The questionnaire (Appendix D) was distributed across 16 of the 22 English-speaking colleges in Ontario. In the final phase of the study, data from both the qualitative and quantitative phases were integrated for an overall interpretation of the findings.

Figure 3.1

ESMMR Design (Adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018)



Procedures: Purposeful, voluntary sampling Collect documents Conduct interviews	Procedures: Thematic analysis Develop questionnaire tool	Procedures: Purposeful, voluntary sampling Disseminate questionnaire	Procedures: Descriptive & inferential statistics	Procedure Integration
Product: Semi-structured interview protocol	Product: Qualitative findings Questionnaire tool	Product: Quantitative findings	Product: QUAL + QUAN findings	Product: Themes + Recommendations

Figure 3.1. Diagram illustrating the ESMMR study design adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark (2018). Included in the figure are the chosen research procedures and the intended outcome or product of those procedures..

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) state that a mixed methods research study is best applied when the data collected from one method would be insufficient, and there is a need first to understand what one set of data is indicating. A qualitative study looking at the experiences of advisors through interviews would have provided a sense of the experiences of those who had participated but may not have been relevant to the experiences of academic advisors outside of the institutions who participated in the study. In addition, the findings collected from participant experience would have helped to create a foundational understanding of how advising services were structured, the environment within which they were created, and the expectations of PD. This would have been useful but given the variety of approaches to advising services across the province, the findings would not necessarily have been representative or transferable across institutions.

Similarly, devising a quantitative study focused on the application of a questionnaire would have provided an idea of the views of participants on the current state of advising in the province. This questionnaire would have produced perhaps a mix of quantitative and qualitative results but would have been based on assumptions made by the researcher and not grounded in the experience of the participants. As Creswell and Clark (2018) state, the risk of limiting the study to quantitative data collections would make it difficult for the researcher to make meaning of the data, especially in the case of a new research topic like academic advising in the Ontario college system. Therefore, neither a qualitative nor a quantitative approach would have sufficiently answered my main research question on its own.

3.3.2. Relationship between qualitative and quantitative phases. In Chapter 1, I explained that the purpose for applying both qualitative and quantitative research methods was to ensure that the data I collected from a small qualitative sample was reflective of a larger sample of academic advisors in the Ontario college system. I also argued that academic advising lacks a common definition, and literature on PD activities and practices of academic advisors is lacking. Gray (2014) states that in mixed methods research, the mixing can happen at different stages of the research process. A common practice, for example, is to use findings from a qualitative data analysis to inform the design of the quantitative phase of the study when little information exists about the research problem (Gray, 2014). Knowing that very little information exists on PD practices for academic advisors, it made sense to choose a research methodology for an under researched problem. In such a research context, the purpose of the qualitative phase is to bring clarity to the variables that require further investigation. As I demonstrate in the following chapter, I used the findings from the qualitative phase to develop the questions and variables in the questionnaire tool.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the strength of using both qualitative and quantitative methods is that the quantitative phase can help to support the findings for a more

quantitative audience. In addition, the qualitative phase can be used to develop a new instrument or tool that can be used by multiple audiences (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). In this way, mixed methods research proves to be useful for multiple purposes and audiences. Integration between the qualitative and quantitative phases in my ESMMR design happens at the stage of using the results from the qualitative phase to develop the quantitative tool. Integration also happens after the results of the quantitative tool have been analysed. Together these two sets of data allow a researcher to draw conclusions about how the quantitative results support the findings from the qualitative phase (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

The interrelationship of the qualitative and quantitative phases of an MMR study also carries the potential for any bias in one phase to be magnified in the second. When analyzing the findings of the qualitative research and considering the development of the quantitative tool, the researcher must make decisions on what findings to use and simultaneously be skilled at developing the findings into quantitative measures (Creswell, 2009). Engaging in qualitative research requires a high level of awareness of personal bias, particularly when one is an insider researcher like myself. If the qualitative data decisions add further bias to the development of the quantitative tool, this in turn would create a situation where the quantitative tool would only reinforce the bias of the researcher. I explore this in the limitations of my study in Chapter 8.

3.4 Qualitative Research Methods

The qualitative data collection began with requesting and analyzing documentary evidence, followed by conducting semi-structured interviews. The data collection and analysis methods for the documentary evidence and the semi-structured interviews were similar and will be described together. The description of the quantitative data collection phase, including data analysis, will remain separate because it is distinct from the qualitative phase (see Chapter 5).

3.4.1 Site selection. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) indicate that qualitative data procedures begin with identifying and justifying the site and sample of the population to be studied. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) indicate, researchers are faced with making decisions about how to select a group of participants who represent the larger group for the purpose of the study. The sampling decisions include choosing the site or the context, then identifying the issues to be studied and the artefacts or information that will inform the study (Cohen et al., 2011). The site selection for my study includes the colleges in Ontario. There are 24 colleges in Ontario: 22 English-speaking and 2 French-speaking. Of the 24 colleges, there are 8 large (pop. > 18,000 FT students), 8 medium (pop. 5,000 – 18,000 FT students), and 8 small (pop. < 5,000 FT students) colleges (Coordinating Committee of Vice Presidents Students, 2016).

For both phases of this study, colleges of all 3 sizes were included to ensure generalisability of the results. For pragmatic reasons, only English-speaking colleges were selected for the study because I am not fluent in the French language. Canada has two official languages: English and French. This means that employees working at French-language colleges have the right to conduct all business in French. Converting documents and interview transcripts into French would have been very time-consuming and expensive. Further inclusion criteria for the qualitative study were a willingness to share institutional documents related to PD practices and activities for academic advisors. Participating institutions were asked to invite the manager of advising and two academic advisors to participate in semi-structured interviews. These institutions also had to agree to appoint an institutional contact to work with me to coordinate email invitations and set up interviews on their campus.

3.4.2. Sample size. As Cohen et al. (2011) pointed out, novice researchers are challenged by deciding how large their samples should be. This decision is influenced by the purpose of the research and the context in which the research is situated. In addition, the sample size for both qualitative and quantitative research should be representative of the population, but dependent on the variables

differentiating that population (Cohen et al., 2011). This research study was focused on the college system in Ontario, meaning a closed system of 24 colleges. In addition, the variable differentiating the population was simply the size of the institution—small, medium, or large. Therefore, to keep the qualitative phase small and manageable, I chose to include four colleges. This would allow me to collect four sets of documentary evidence, and it would allow me to interview one manager and two FT academic advisors, for a total of 12 interviews. According to Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006), data saturation within interview data collection occurs within about 12 interviews, meaning that any themes or meta-themes begin to present themselves within the first 6 to 12 interviews.

3.4.3. Sample selection. Gray (2014) identified that in an MMR study, mixing could even happen at the level of sampling and includes the following four types: identical, parallel, nested, and multilevel. Gray (2014) noted that in identical sampling, the same participants are studied in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. In parallel sampling, different groups from the same population are used, while in nested sampling, a subset of the main group is used in either the qualitative or quantitative phase. Finally, in multilevel sampling, different groups from the same or various populations are studied in either the qualitative or quantitative phase of the study. For my study, I chose nested sampling, since the participants in the qualitative phase of the study are a subset of the same population as the participants in the quantitative phase of the study.

In addition to identifying the sampling strategy, the researcher must choose between two main sampling techniques: (a) probability or random sampling, and (b) purposeful sampling (Cohen et al., 2011). However, within a mixed methods study, the researcher may mix probability and purposeful sampling techniques (Cohen et al., 2011). For my study, I chose purposeful voluntary sampling. The sampling was purposeful because institutions participating in my research had to meet a set of criteria including having an institutional advising program, a willingness to share documents, a willingness to assign an institutional contact to help me coordinate my study at their institution, and a willingness to

invite full-time academic advisors to participate in my study. The sampling was voluntary because I allowed institutions and interview participants to self-select into the study.

Of the 22 institutions invited, exactly 4 institutions replied to me directly to indicate their interest in participating in the study. Three of these four institutions provided me with the contact details of the manager of advising services. The fourth institution had a vacancy in the manager position but assigned one of the academic advisors as the institutional contact. I had intended to include four institutions in the study, and exactly four institutions contacted me, so I kept the institution without a manager in the study. Table 3.1 provides the size and location of the four participating institutions. The table also shows the institution that did not provide documentary evidence, and the institution where only two interviews were conducted due to the vacancy in the manager position (more details to follow).

Table 3.1

Participating Institutions

Participating Institutions	Demographics	Documentary Evidence	Interviews
Institution A	Large, urban college	Yes	3
Institution B	Large, urban college	Yes	3
Institution C	Large, urban college	No	3
Institution D	Medium, urban college	Yes	2

Purposeful voluntary sampling was also chosen for the selection of interview participants. The sample was purposeful because interview participants were required to be a full-time employee and spend most of their time at work advising students. The sample was voluntary because interview participants were asked to self-select into the study. The choice to select only full-time employees was made because their position on campus was less transient, and as full-time employees, participants presumably would have had more access to PD activities. The second criteria, that the participant must spend most of their time advising students, came from my personal knowledge that sometimes

academic advising is only part of one's role, as in the example of faculty. The demographics of the interview participants are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Interviewee Demographics

Interviewee	Institution Size	Role	Experience	Work Experience
A1	Large	Manager	3 years	Housing, student affairs
A2	Large	Advisor	3 years	Not for profit
A3	Large	Advisor	4 years	Student at the college, student services
B1	Large	Advisor	4 years	High school teacher, not-for-profit, career advisor
B2	Large	Advisor	2 years	Student affairs
B3	Large	Manager	3 years	Residence life, student affairs
C1	Large	Advisor	1 year	Faculty, student advisor
C2	Large	Advisor	7 years	Student advisor
C3	Large	Manager	< 1 year	Not for profit, student affairs
D1	Medium	Advisor	unknown	Student at the college, student services
D2	Medium	Advisor	3 years	Student advisor

The advisors who self-selected into the study revealed a variety of educational and work experience backgrounds (Table 3.2). For example, three interviewees were graduates of the college they worked for, having built up their experience and skill by taking on new challenges to progress to the advisor position. There were several interviewees who had completed undergraduate degrees and worked in unrelated fields, but who had experience advising teenagers, adults, clients and / or students. One interviewee was a foreign-trained worker who had to rebuild her career after arriving in Canada. One advisor also had worked as a faculty member and had experience as a faculty advisor.

3.4.4. Obtaining permissions. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) noted, there is a need to identify ethical considerations in obtaining permission to access the research site and participants. According to Gray (2014), ethical considerations for qualitative research can be challenging, especially when the researcher is connected to and has worked over a long period of time with the research populations. Issues might arise around privacy, especially in my case where I am working with a small population of employees within the college system in Ontario. For the qualitative phase of my study, I

did not encounter any issues around obtaining permission. However, one institution said they declined to participate in my study because they only had one advisor and, therefore, I would not be able to maintain confidentiality.

3.4.5. Research ethics approval. Research ethics clearance was obtained in full from the OCMS, as well as the VPREC (see Appendix A), and my institution of employment. The Ontario colleges host a central research ethics board called the Ontario College Multi-Site Research Ethics Board (OCMS). The OCMS acts as an umbrella committee that represents all twenty-two English-speaking colleges that have signed on to the OCMS. In some cases, where the qualitative approach is particularly iterative, the researcher must constantly revisit the issue of consent because the research participants must always be made aware of any changes to the research questions to avoid deception (Gray, 2014). The iterative approach of ESMMR required that when I applied to the OCMS for research ethics clearance for the qualitative phase of my study, I also indicated that an amendment would follow prior to commencing the quantitative phase of my study. The amendment was sent when I had completed the qualitative phase of my study and was approved.

3.4.6. Recruitment. Recruitment for the qualitative data collection began with an email invitation that went to out to all 22 English-speaking colleges via a Heads of Student Affairs (HOSA) listserv. Each institution has at least one designate who has access to this listserv. My access to the listserv was provided by the HOSA designate at the institution where I was employed. The email invitation included a brief introduction to the study, a brief justification for why I believed the study was important, and the requirements of institutions for participating in the study. The email invitation also included a more detailed outline of the research study, the Research Ethics Approval form from OCMS, and the Participant Information Sheet (see Appendices A and B). Institutions who were interested in participating in the study were asked to contact me, the researcher, directly. Finally, the email indicated that institutions would be selected on a first-come, first-served basis.

Following the selection of the four participating institutions, I had to work with the institutional contacts to invite the academic advisors to participate in the semi-structured interviews. The invitation to participate in the semi-structured interview included a summary of the research, a brief justification for why I believed the study was important, and an opportunity to receive a $20 coffee gift card as compensation for their time. A study by Singer and Ye (2012) on providing incentives, found that providing incentives can increase the number of responses to a research study, although there was no effect on quality of response. I decided to provide compensation as it was informally customary within research studies, I have personally participated in. The email requesting interview participants also included the Research Ethics Approval from OCMS and the Participant Information Sheet as attachments (see Appendices A and B). As in the initial email to the institutions, academic advisors were told that interviews would be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

3.5 Data Collection

Qualitative data collection can include personal accounts of phenomena, but also can include non-human data sources like documentary evidence (Cohen et al., 2011). Data collection in this first phase included collecting institutional documentation, followed by conducting semi-structured interviews. For the documentary evidence, the intended goal was to receive the documents in advance of conducting the semi-structured interviews. However, I failed to make this expectation clear, and the documents were all received on the day of the interviews or after a reminder following the interviews. When the documents were received, digital documents were saved in a password-protected folder on my personal computer, and paper files were stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. Table 3.3 is a list of the documents that I received. The first column indicates the name of the document, and the second column describes the type of information found in each document. Each participating institution was labelled A, B, C and D for privacy.

Table 3.3

Document Label, Name and Type

Label	Name	Type
A1	Advising Services: Learning and Development Program Plan	Staff resource
A2	Advising CoP & Advising Network: Learning and Development Plan	Chart
A3	Webinar in Advising	Presentation slides
A4	Get Started Guide for Supervisors	Task list
A5	Centralized Advising Service Kick-Off	Training agenda
A6	Supporting Students Summit	Training agenda
A7	Role Clarification	Presentation slides
A8	Advising Network Continuum: Roles and Responsibilities	Table of roles
A9	Advisor Training and Development: Building Structures that Support Success	Presentation slides
A10	Advisor Meeting	Meeting agenda
B1	2018 Advisor Training Conference	Meeting agenda
B2	Advisor Training 2018 Theme: The NACADA core competencies	Chart
B3	Learning Outcomes for Sessions	List of training topics
B4	Advisor Training Meeting	Meeting agenda
B5	Advisor Training Proposal 2018-2019	Summary document
B6	Advisor Training Proposal 2018-2019	Flow chart
B7	Advisor Training Proposal 2018-2019	Report
D1	Holistic Advisor Training Summit	Module descriptions
D2	Holistic Advising Assessment Plan	Report
D3	Holistic Advising: Measures of Success	Presentation Slides
D4	Holistic Advising Metrics	Framework / Table
D5	Advising Focus Group Questions	List of questions

I specifically asked each institutional representative to provide documents that were related to PD activities such as academic advisor training and learning plans. I also asked for documents related to the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors such as job expectations and job descriptions. Documents related to PD activities allowed me to begin to explore what PD activities were available to academic advisors. Similarly, documents related to the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors allowed me to understand the relationship between what was expected of academic advisors and what PD activities were available.

3.5.1. Interview protocol. When planning interviews, consideration must be given to the number of interviews, the length and timing of the interviews, and the location where the interviews are to take place (Cohen et al., 2011). I chose to interview 12 individuals, three from each of the four

institutions. Creswell (2009) suggested creating an interview protocol to keep the researcher on task. The protocol includes a written document that includes the date and time of the interview and instructions for the researcher to follow so that the process remains consistent. I describe the interview protocol in the following section.

I selected semi-structured interviews because this would allow me to ask questions that were related to the main research question but would also provide flexibility for the participants. The interview questions (see Appendix C) would provide enough structure to keep interview participants focused on PD practices and activities, while allowing enough flexibility to introduce new ideas and concepts. There were seven main questions, each with two or three probing questions that were included in case participants needed better to understand or to contextualize the questions. For example, the first question asked participants to share their journey to becoming an academic advisor. If I thought that the participant was sharing information outside of the scope of study, I would prompt them to talk about their educational pathway or past work experience. The same set of questions was used for both the managers of advising and the academic advisors. The seven main questions were designed for the semi-structured interview and were sent to the participants in advance. Providing the questions in advance is considered good practice for participants with accessibility needs. As well, providing the question in advance offers an alternative format for participants with auditory needs, issues with comprehension, or with memory (CAST, 2018).

For the semi-structured interviews, I provided each participant, separately, a selection of dates and times to facilitate an interview. I selected the same dates for participants at each individual institution, with the goal of being able to visit and conduct the interviews at each institution one time only. In addition, the institutional contacts were able to help me book a room in which to conduct the interviews. Interviews were recorded on-site, using a microphone connected to my personal laptop and using a software program called Sonocent© (2021). Sonocent© (2021) allows for both the recording

and follow-up transcription of interviews in one software program (Sonocent©, 2021). The recordings were complemented by hand-written notes.

With the help of the institutional contact, I was able to interview the manager and two academic advisors on the same day at three of the four institutions. For Institution B, I interviewed the two academic advisors on one day and the manager on a separate day due to a scheduling conflict. Each of the 11 interviews took approximately 45 minutes to complete, which was both long enough to capture data related to my study and manageable from a transcription perspective. On reflection, I believe it would have been beneficial to pilot the interview questions in advance to get a sense of how the interviewees would perceive the questions and to measure the length of time the interviews would take. After the first interview, which was with a manager, I saw that the interview questions had been designed specifically for academic advisors and might have been adjusted for the managers. However, because I had already interviewed one manager with the original questions, the remaining two managers received the same set of questions.

The recordings were saved in a password-protected folder on my laptop, and all hand-written notes were stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. Interview transcripts were labelled A, B, C, or D to corresponded with documentary evidence and numbered to correspond with the order in which the participants were interviewed. For example, the first interview from Institution B was labelled B1, the second B2, and so forth. The labels for the documentary evidence and semi-structured interviews were stored in a password-protected file on my personal computer. The manager of advising interview at Institution B was not recorded because I failed to activate Sonocent© properly. Instead, the hand-written notes were typed and saved as the transcript of that interview in a password-protected Word document.

3.6 Qualitative Research Analysis

Both the documentary evidence and semi-structured interview transcripts collected through the qualitative phase of the study were analyzed using content analysis. Gray (2014) described content analysis as a common method for making inferences within a data set by "systematically and objectively identifying" categories within the data (p. 607). Both Gray (2014) and Hsieh and Shannon (2005) stated that content analysis is generally considered a deductive approach because categories are often established prior to approaching the analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) stated that there are several approaches to content analysis including conventional, directed, and summative approaches. The focus of each approach is to derive meaning from the content, but they differ in how the content is analyzed by way of coding schemes and categories. In the conventional approach, the coding categories come directly from the collected data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In contrast, a directed approach to content analysis begins with coding categories derived from relevant research or theory. Finally, summative content analysis requires counting and comparing keywords or ideas throughout the data. For my study, the documentary evidence was analyzed using conventional content analysis where I attempted to note and analyze categories from the documentary evidence. Following this, the interview data was analyzed using directed content analysis with categories derived from data drawn from the documentary evidence.

Gray (2014) indicated that there are three ways of identifying categories in the data including *common*, *special,* and *theoretical* categories. Common categories include easily identifiable characteristics such as age and employment status. Special categories include those that the community being studied would use to distinguish themselves from other communities. Finally, theoretical categories include those that emerge from the data that identify key patterns in the data. From this perspective, my approach to identifying categories from the documentary evidence used special categories because of my familiarity with academic advising in the college system in Ontario. As a

scholar practitioner, I acknowledge my familiarity of the field and participation in advising influenced my selection of categories.

3.7 Documentary Analysis

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) described a process for conventional content analysis which I have summarised and described as steps in Table 3.4. In the following section, I describe how I approached and completed each step in the process. The following analysis was conducted in the awareness that because the documents were provided to me, rather than collected by me, they could reflect institutional bias.

Table 3.4

Conventional Content Analysis (summarized from Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)

Step	Description of Process
Step 1	Read and reread data to understand data as a whole
Step 2	Read data and highlight key thoughts and concepts
Step 3	Make notes on first impressions and thoughts; begin to develop initial codes
Step 4	Sort codes into categories based on relationship between codes; begin to sort categories into larger clusters
Step 5	Develop definitions for each category or cluster; identify exemplars for each category

3.7.1. Steps 1 and 2: The first step in conventional content analysis entails full immersion in the data set by reading and re-reading the documents. This step is followed by highlighting my initial thoughts about the documents. After I read through each document, I began the process of familiarizing myself with the documentary evidence by labelling the documents. I then created a chart (see Table 3.3) in Excel to keep track of the name of the document and the document type, and I wrote a brief description of the content of each document. Because the documents varied considerably in aim and focus among institutions, organizing the data using a chart (also referred to as a matrix) became essential. Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2018) argued that using a visual display, such as a matrix, to display a data set can add credibility and trustworthiness to the analysis. Miles et al. (2018) described a

matrix as “the ‘intersection’ of two lists, set up as rows and columns” (p. 109). Following the creation of the matrix, I then read through each document a second time, refining the description of the documents. The description of each document (see Chapter 4) became the basis for my preliminary ideas around codes and possible categories.

3.7.2 Step 3. The third step in conventional content analysis requires turning the initial ideas into initial codes (Braun & Clark, 2006). As I noted, I began using the description of each document to formulate my initial codes. I used these codes to review the entire data set. My initial set of codes, based on the analysis of each document, included: (a) types of advising / advising models, (b) institutional advising model / strategy, (c) definition of advising roles, (d) advisor training plan, (e) training agenda, (f) advisor training sessions / learning outcomes, (g) job checklists, (h) assessment frameworks, and (i) future directions.

3.7.3 Step 4. Once the data have been coded, the list of codes must be arranged into potential categories. I studied the spreadsheet to begin to understand which of my initial codes were similar and could be grouped into subsequent categories. When grouping codes into categories, my decisions were based on putting similar concepts together, and somewhat influenced by the preponderance of the concept across institutional documents. My initial list of codes was consolidated into the following four categories: (a) types of advising, (b) roles and responsibilities of academic advisors, (c) professional development practices, and (d) assessment of advising practices.

Once I established a set of categories I tested the categories against the entire data set. To test my categories, I created a new matrix using the four categories as the rows, and the three institutions as the columns. In each cell, I included coded text from each document that reflected the category. Once I was satisfied with the organization of my spreadsheet, I reviewed each document in full to ensure I had captured all the ideas related to my four initial categories. To simplify the matrix even further, I replaced

the coded text with the label of each document (see Table 3.3 for labels). This process allowed me to see the preponderance of each category across all three institutions (see Chapter 4).

3.7.4 Step 5. The final step in analyzing the documents included finalizing the name and definition of each category (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). After reviewing the categories, no further changes were made to the four categories listed in section 3.6.2. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) suggested that at this phase the researcher should write a description of each category, so that it is clear to readers what concepts and ideas are contained within each category. Table 3.5 demonstrates the definitions for each category.

Table 3.5

Documentary analysis: Categories & definitions

Category	Definition
Types of advising	Content that references established models of advising such as: transactional advising, informational advising & developmental advising
Roles & responsibilities	Content that references staff roles or titles associated with advising such as: faculty advisors or staff advisors Content that references what advisors do such as: providing information on important dates or helping students plan academic pathways
PD practices	Content the references PD activities or programs that advisors engage with or seek out
Assessing advisor practice	Content that references how academic advisors measure their skill development and or student outcomes

3.8 Interview Data Analysis

In the following section, I will describe the directed content analysis process for the semi-structured interview transcripts. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) state that the purpose of a directed approach to content analysis is to "validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory" (p. 1281), meaning that the analysis of the interview transcripts is to support the initial coding from the documentary evidence. I describe the process for directed content analysis in Table 3.5

Table 3.6

Directed Content Analysis (summarized from Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)

Step	Description of the process
Step 1	Identify key concepts or variables as potential codes
Step 2	Determine operational definitions of each code
Step 3	Read, identify, and categorize all incidents related to the codes
Step 4	Code all passages related to the predetermined codes; identify new codes
Step 5	Highlight exemplars and provide descriptive evidence

3.8.1 Steps 1 and 2. The concepts used to code the transcripts were discovered through the analysis of the documentary evidence. These codes included: (a) types of advising, (b) roles and responsibilities of academic advisors, (c) professional development practices, and (d) assessment of advising practices. The working definitions of each code remained the same as in the documentary evidence phase of analysis (see table 3.5).

3.8.2 Step 3. In this next step, I began by first reading through the interview transcripts to familiarize myself with the collected data. I was conscious that when reading through the interview transcripts, I might have already been biased as I was predisposed to the categories that emerged during the documentary analysis. Therefore, I attempted to read through the interview transcripts to identify new key concepts as potential new codes. As I began my second reading of the interview transcripts, I coded each passage that related to the four categories identified and noted new ideas.

3.8.3 Steps 4 & 5. Once I had coded the interview transcripts, I reread the interview transcripts and recorded new ideas that I had noted from the previous step. I sorted these ideas and identified a new and fifth category I named *Institutional Advising Model*. I subsequently defined this category as the structural location and reporting lines of advising services within an institution including whether an advising service is centralized or decentralized. Following this, I created a matrix in Excel where the rows reflected the interview questions and the columns represented each of the 11 interviews. In each cell, I

recorded the coded text from the transcripts in an attempt to highlight the exemplars of my chosen categories. The complete list of categories and descriptions are provided in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

List of final 5 categories and their definitions

Category	Definition
Types of advising	Content that references established models of advising such as: transactional advising, informational advising & developmental advising
Institutional advising model	Content that references the structural location of, or reporting lines of academic advising within an institution such as: centralized or decentralized
Roles & responsibilities	Content that references staff roles or titles associated with advising such as: faculty advisors or staff advisors Content that references what advisors do such as: providing information on important dates or helping students plan academic pathways
PD practices	Content the references PD activities or programs that advisors engage with or seek out
Assessing advisor practice	Content that references how academic advisors measure their skill development and or student outcomes

3.9 Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter 3, I highlighted my positionality as a scholar-researcher and insider, noting the potential bias that can result. I explained that the variety of tools used in this study, including documentary evidence, semi-structured interviews, and a questionnaire, led to a dialectical pluralist approach. In justifying my choice of MMR, I explained that a lack of research in the field resulted in a need for qualitative research, while a need to generalize the results of the qualitative phase required the validation of a quantitative approach. An MMR approach was therefore most appropriate. Furthermore, the approach was of necessity exploratory and sequential, resulting in an ESMMR study. The qualitative process consisted of a first phase of research of documentary evidence, which used a conventional approach to content analysis. Subsequently, a second phase of qualitative research involved analysis of interview transcripts using a directed content analysis with categories based on those found in phase 1, the analysis of the documentary evidence. The categories used for the qualitative study included 4

determined during the first phase of documentary analysis, which were (a) types of advising, (b) roles and responsibilities of academic advisors, (c) professional development practices, and (d) assessment of advising practices. The second phase of qualitative analysis of transcripts revealed an additional category, (e) institutional advising model. I also noted in this chapter that while action research would have been a possible approach that had the benefits of including participants as active researchers co-constructing knowledge, it was impractical both in terms of the resources required, which fall outside the scope of this dissertation, and in terms of the generalizability of its findings, which would have negatively impacted my ability to make recommendations for the Ontario college system.

In Chapter 4, I will introduce the findings from the analysis of the qualitative phase of my study. A detailed discussion of the quantitative research methods of this study appears in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4: Qualitative Research Findings

Chapter 4 will focus on the findings from the qualitative phase of the ESMMR study. The qualitative data was analyzed using Hsieh and Shannon's (2005) steps for conventional (documentary analysis) and directed (interview transcripts) content analysis. In addition, matrices were used throughout the phases to visually display, and enhance the credibility of, the findings (Miles et al., 2018). Finally, the analysis of the qualitative data included Bazeley's (2009) *describe* – *compare* – *relate* model to extract more meaning from the data.

4.1 Findings from Documentary Analysis

Conventional content analysis of the documents began with labeling and describing the content of each document. The document labels and descriptions were recorded on a matrix. From the descriptions, a set of codes was identified. After re-reading the documents, the identified codes were amalgamated into the following four categories: (a) types of advising, (b) roles and responsibilities of the academic advisor, (c) PD practices and (d) assessment of advising practice. Table 4.1 illustrates the four categories as they relate to the descriptions of each document, as well as the preponderance of each category throughout the data set.

Table 4.1

Description of Documents and Potential Categories

Label	Description	Categories
A1	A staff resource guide including a definition of who is part of the advising network and a chart that describes advising roles and what they are responsible for learning. The chart column headings include module name, learning goals, competency, notes, time frame and primary audience; The rows describe the area of the college and roles.	Role & responsibility PD activities
A2	A worksheet for advisors to assess their competency in various skills from developing to intermediate to mastery	PD activities Assessment of practice
A3	Presentation slides focused on the launch of the institutional advising strategy including vision, mission, types of advising, description of advising roles, relationships between departments, the advising committee and additional resources	Types of advising Role & responsibility
A4	A list of technical tasks for supervisors to complete when onboarding a new advisor	PD activities
A5	Agenda for training modules	PD activities
A6	Annual gathering of the advising network agenda which includes a learning purpose and the schedule of sessions with session titles	PD activities
A7	Presentation slides for a session for counsellors and administrators on what is and is not professional advising. Includes role descriptions, time spent on various aspects of the role, description of responsibilities, typical student scenarios that an advisor would handle (vs. counsellor)	Role & responsibility
A8	Table listing the roles, responsibilities, and parameters of the information / tasks of all advising positions	Role & responsibility
A9	Presentation slides illustrating an institutional advising model presented at a national student affairs conference. Slides focus on the training elements for advisors at the institution	PD activities
A10	A list of presentations to the advisors on new and existing campus services.	
B1	A schedule for a 2-day training conference. No training topics named.	PD activities
B2	A table of training topics under three headings, which include: conceptual, informational, and relational	PD activities
B3	List of training sessions, including name, topics covered, and learning outcomes	PD activities
B4	A meeting agenda including a list of topics to be discussed when planning advisor training	Assessment of practice
B5	A summary of a future advisor training plan and future institutional advising model	Role & responsibility PD activities
B6	A visual of the proposed institutional advising model, including a core and advanced stream	PD activities
B7	An in-depth report proposing a future advisor training plan and institutional advising model, timeline, and task list	Types of advising PD activities
D1	Training modules listing topics and corresponding learning outcomes	PD activities
D2	An assessment plan with background data for proposed holistic advising strategy	Assessment of practice
D3	Presentation slides including usage statistics, student feedback, student outcomes, key performance indicators, communication, and advisor feedback	Assessment of practice
D4	A list of assessment tools with corresponding descriptions, methods of data collection, outcomes, timeframe, and follow-up research	Assessment of practice
D5	Questions for a student focus group on students' experience with advising services	Assessment of practice

4.1.1 Category 1: Types of advising. The main research question asked how academic advisors approach, engage with and make meaning of professional development activities across the Ontario College system. To begin answering this question, I devised four qualitative follow-up questions, the first which asked how the nature and scope of academic advising is described by academic advisors. The first category identified references the nature of academic advising by highlighting ideas that mention established models of advising. Document A3, for example, refers to wanting to move away from *transactional* advising toward *developmental* advising. The concepts of transactional and developmental advising are likely referring to Kuhn et al.'s (2006) advising continuum, wherein the type of advising delivered is based on the purpose, content, and focus of the advising role. The advising continuum was developed as a framework to distinguish academic advising from counselling (see Chapter 2 for more details). Document B7 refers to NACADA's (2017) core competency model for academic advisors, as well as several training models from various colleges and universities in Canada and the United States. In comparing the two documents that reference types of advising, we can see a difference in the models referenced. Institution A uses terms that appear in Kuhn et al. (2006), while Institution B references NACADA's (2017) core competency framework as the foundation for building their academic advisor PD practices.

Although this category, types of advising, only appears in two of 22 documents (but 2 of the 4 institutions), I have noted it as a category because it is related to the literature on academic advising. For example, in the literature review, I indicated that as far back as the early 1970's, scholar practitioners were advocating for a more developmental approach to academic advising (see Crookston, 2009; O'Banion, 2009). In addition, I have indicated that academic advising involves a relationship between an academic advisor and student where information and knowledge is imparted. It is the nature of how this relationship is defined and the knowledge that is imparted that informs the type of advising. Therefore,

with evidence that institutions are attempting to define the type of advising in relation to their advising structures, I have included it as a category for further exploration.

4.1.2 Category 2: Role and responsibilities of academic advisors. The second category, also referencing the main research question, includes the various staff titles associated with academic advising, and what academic advisors do. Institution A first delineates between two main advising roles which include *school advisors* and *central service advisors*. School advisors are responsible for "orientation to school, program-specific, academic requirements," (Document A1, p. 1) whereas the central service advisors are responsible for "pathway advising, PLAR, transfer credit, WSIB, and career" (Document A1, p. 1). PLAR is the acronym for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. This is a process that allows students to obtain credit for previously completed courses or work experience toward a new certificate, degree, or diploma. WSIB is the acronym for Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. WSIB provides funding for injured workers in Canada to take courses or to complete a certificate, diploma, or degree. The following additional staff positions fall within the *school* or *central service* advisor dichotomy, depending on the institution: success advisors, pathway advisors, specialist advisors (career, co-op and financial aid), faculty advisors, learning strategists and counsellors.

Institution B also delineates types of academic advising by staff role, but distinguishes between *non-developmental advisors* who coach or guide students, and *core function advisors* who spend the majority of their time advising students. Like institution A, the following staff roles fall within this dichotomy: student success advisors, career advisors, employment advisors and faculty advisors. When comparing the advising roles and responsibilities between institutions, both institutions seem to include various roles within the institutional advising model. What I mean by this is that rather than acknowledging academic advising as a separate and distinct role, both institutions attempt to include most, if not all, existing advising roles on campus. It is interesting to note that within the college system in Ontario, the role of the advisor does not appear (at this point in my study) to be strictly tied to

academic or program-specific advising. From the documentary evidence, it appears as though advising, as a role, can be tied to additional college services including career services, international student services and even financial aid advising.

As I demonstrated in the literature review, the role and responsibilities of academic advisors remain unclear (Huber & Miller, 2013). In addition, a study by Bridgen (2017) highlighted that within an institution, administrators, faculty, and staff advisors can each hold different views on what the purpose and function of academic advising is. Finally, Larson et al. (2018) stated that without a common definition for academic advising, administrators continue to "create any rubric to hire, supervise, or assign advisors" (p. 82) and "others can make claims about advising or advising practitioners that may or may not represent the responsibilities of advising" (p. 83). This background is important as it begins to demonstrate the context in which the college system is developing their institutional academic advising models. For example, without a clear definition of academic advising, or a definition of what academic advisors do, it is not surprising that none of the institutions include the role *academic advisor* within their model.

4.1.3 Category 3: Professional development practices. The second follow-up research question asks what PD activities are available to, and practiced by, academic advisors. The third category, therefore, includes content specific to PD practices or activities. Content came in the form of PD agendas that include date, time, and format of the PD. Content for PD practices also included lists of workshop names, descriptions, and learning outcomes. The majority of documents included content on this category. For example, Institution A mentioned a CoP, an advising onboarding task list, a training summit, and an advising committee as part of the advisor learning and PD plan. Institution B provided content on an existing 2-day training conference and documents that propose future online learning modules, an annual advisor conference, and participation in a CoP. Institution D provided a document called *Holistic Advisor Training Summit* that describes advisor training in the form of 10 modules.

In comparing the documents as they related to PD practices, each institution offered an advisor training program that included at least two days of workshops. Each institution provided a list of anticipated learning outcomes from participation in the workshops, and each of the three institutions made reference to NACADA and CACUSS as reference points for establishing the advisor training foundation. What was different about each institution's approach was that Institution A had an established format for academic advisor pre-service and in-service training. Institution B also had an established annual training program, but at the time they were attempting to establish a fuller training program that set out expectations for pre-service training. Finally, the training program submitted by Institution D was aspirational in nature and had not, at least in 2017, been rolled out. In relation to the literature review, Folsom et al. (2015) indicated that little progress had been made on following through on designing PD activities. It is not surprising then, that in 2017, the advisor training programs continue to be at various stages of development within the Ontario college system.

4.1.4 Category 4: Assessing advising practice. The fourth follow up research question asked academic advisors to tell us how participating in PD informs their practice. The final category, therefore, references ideas that focus on assessing academic advisor skill development, as a result of training. Institution A included a chart for advisors to measure their competency development against five pillars. Advisors could reflect on their skill acquisition as either developing, intermediate, or mastery. Institution B did not provide documents that reference assessment or evaluation tools for academic advisors. The documents submitted by Institution D reflect an overall assessment plan, including a chart that lists the various evaluation tools that the institution was planning on implementing. However, as of 2017, I was told, the assessment plan had not been put in place.

In comparing the documents, my first observation is that assessment practices are limited and in their early stages. The most advanced document was provided by Institution A in a chart for advisors to note their progress towards mastery of that skill. However, the chart does not note any indicators of

what a developing coach and mentor does versus an intermediate coach and mentor. Figure 4.1 provides a sample of the chart.

Figure 4.1

Learning Development Program Plan (Document A2)

	Competency	Developing	Intermediate	Mastery
Relational Pillar Building meaningful and trusting relationships with students	Coaching & mentoring			
	Active listening			
	Creating a positive space			
	Unconscious bias training			
	Mental Health First Aid			

As this relates to the literature, assessing advising practice helps to establish a cyclical process of continuous improvement and development (Zarges et al., 2018). It can also evaluate how well advisors help students meet their academic goals (Zarges et al., 2018). Therefore, as institutions begin the process of establishing their PD practices and further defining advisor roles and structures, assessment becomes important. However, the state of the documentary evidence supports Earley and Porritt's (2014) contention that assessing the practice of advising continues to be superficial.

4.2 Findings from the Interview Transcripts

As I mentioned in Chapter 3, analysis of the transcripts took place following the documentary evidence analysis. As a result, the transcripts were analyzed deductively using *a priori* categories that included: (a) types of advising, (b) role and responsibilities of academic advisors, (c) PD practices and (d) assessment of advising practice. An additional category emerged from the data, leading to a total of 5 categories, including: (a) types of advising, (b) *institutional advising model*, (c) roles and responsibilities of the academic advisor, (d) PD practices and (e) assessment of advising practice. Like the document analysis, my system for interpretation included using Hsieh nd Shannon's (2005) steps for directive content analysis, and the use of matrices (Miles et al., 2018) to display and compare my findings. I also

used Bazeley's (2009) *describe – compare – relate* model to describe my findings. The findings in relation to the five main categories are discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Category 1: Type of advising. The first category that emerged was a focus on the type of advising expected of the academic advisors. Throughout the interviews, both advisors and training managers consistently spoke about the disconnect between the type of advising expected of them, and the type of advising they wanted to do. Specifically, the advisors believed they were spending too much time on transactional advising, described at times as customer service and explaining policies. Advisors expressed interest in participating in developmental advising that requires helping students map out their academic journey. Most academic advisors believed this was due to a general misunderstanding by academic units about what the role of academic advisor was. There was a desire, however, on the part of all three managers to move more toward developmental advising. The manager from Institution A stated:

> The current state of the college was very prescriptive and transactional, and knowing that the goal was to elevate advising more to be not counselling, but more around coaching and developing goals and helping students identify values and interests and connect them. (Interviewee A1)

One advisor, from Institution C, mentioned that there seemed to be a disconnect between what they believed to be an important skill, which was the ability to build rapport with students, and what was expected of them as an employee: "I am finding a bit of a disconnect … we need to build that relationship and that goal with students, and yet it's not necessarily encouraged or the norm here and I'm finding that interestingly challenging" (Interviewee C1).

Table 4.2 provides a visual comparison of the types of advising models referenced across both the documentary and transcript evidence.

Table 4.2

Types of Advising

	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Institution D
Transactional vs. developmental	Focus is on transactional advising (2 responses) Wants to elevate advising from transactional to developmental	Some people think they do advising because they 'explain policies' Do not see importance in developmental advising	Can be very transactional Relational not focused on What is happening now is informational	n/a
Advising appointment models	Tension between walk-ins vs. appointments Academic schools concerned with 'customer service', 'front line service' & 'clearing the line"		Walk-ins force very quick informational advising Walk-in model problematic because students don't get developmental advising	Volume is an issue; 15-minute appointments can be draining

We can see from the cross-institutional comparison that some managers and academic advisors also mention walk-in advising appointments. When referencing walk-in appointments, managers and academic advisors express their frustration with this model, because their perception is that it forces a very transactional experience due to the lack of time, and lack of preparation required on the part of the student and advisor.

Although this category only appeared twice in the documentary analysis, the category was noted by all managers, and some advisors across three of the four institutions through the transcripts. Grites (2013) states that developmental advising continues to be important because it provides a "fundamental and comprehensive" (p. 5) approach to academic advising. Grites (2013) contends that developmental advising provides a framework for addressing the academic and psycho-social needs of students. Developmental advising also supports the need for creating a deeper relationship between

academic advisor and student, and the building of an academic and social pathway for academic success. From the perspective of the advisor, it is possible that the desire to engage in developmental advising is far more rewarding, and requires a higher skill set, than repeating institutional policies.

4.2.2 Category 2: Institutional advising model. The institutional advising model references whether advising is centralized, decentralized, or a shared service. The advising model also has implications for the reporting structure and location of advising services on campus. For example, three of the four institutions had advisors located within a central service unit, in addition to having advisors embedded within the academic schools. However, the advisors embedded within the academic unit either reported directly to the academic unit, or they reported to a student services unit. Regardless of reporting structures, three of the four institutions offered a central PD program coordinated by a student service unit.

Institutional advising model emerged as a category from the transcript data for two reasons. First, the reporting structure played a role in an academic advisor's access to PD. Interviewee A3 said, "I had to get approval from my former manager…but I kind of had to make a plea as to why this is really good for me". Second, the institutional advising model influenced the type of advising that happened. For example all three managers I interviewed spoke about how the advising model on their campus was influenced by the institutional politics and union rules and they often had to tread very carefully in terms of what was considered a staff role and what was considered a faculty role. One of the training managers revealed the following:

> The faculty union, that organization has a lot of power and so that is really at the core. We had some coordinators that were willing to say, "Here, take it all. We don't want any of it," and then we had others that were "Back off: don't talk to my students," and so I had to support the advising team in managing those political boundaries, if you will. (Interviewee C3)

The data collected from the interviews regarding the institutional advising model reflected the documentary evidence. Institution A had a central advising service for general inquiries, and they had advisors embedded within the academic schools. The advisors in the central advising service reported to student services, and the advisors embedded in the academic schools reported to their academic areas. According to Pardee (2000), this would be considered a dual model (see Table 2.1). However, since training is offered centrally, this could also be considered a supplemental model. Institution C used a similar model, except that not all academic units had an embedded advisor, making the model inconsistent across campuses. It was unclear whether the advisors from the central unit had to directly support the academic areas without academic advisors. However, given the walk-in nature of the central advising unit, I do not believe that this was the case.

Institution B also had a central advising service for general inquiries, but the academic advisors also spent some of their time inside the academic unit. These academic advisors reported centrally to a student services unit. To complicate matters, some academic units had their own academic advisors who reported to the academic unit. Institution D, at the time the research was being conducted, had a central advising unit that offered academic and learning support advising. The academic advisors indicated that there had not been any centrally organized PD activities for the academic advisors, but that they worked together to develop and facilitate learning for their group. According to Pardee (2000), this would be described as a self-contained model. However, I learned through the interview process that the current model was under review and was likely going to change. Table 4.3 illustrates the comparison between the institutional advising models.

Table 4.3

Institutional Advising Models

	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Institution D
Advising Model	Shared (Supplementary / Dual Model)	Shared (Supplementary)	Shared (Supplementary / Dual Model)	Central (Self-contained Model)
Location	Central Embedded	Central Embedded	Central Embedded	Central
Reporting	Central – Student Services Embedded – Academic Units	Central – Student Services Embedded – Mix of Student Services & Academic Units	Central – Student Services Embedded – Academic Units	Central – Student Services unit

The state of institutional advising models emerging from the data is reflected in the literature. As late as 2019, McGill stated that the reporting structures and location of academic advising remain varied across, and at times within, institutions. This, in turn, adds to the lack of clarity of what academic advising is, and what the intended focus and outcomes of academic advising are (Kuhn and Padak, 2008). It is not surprising, then, that institutional advising models remain inconsistent within institutions, and that there is a conflict between what academic units believe academic advising should be and what student service units believe academic advising should be.

4.2.3 Category 3: Roles and responsibilities of the academic advisor. The third category that emerged included content that referenced either the role or the responsibilities of the academic advisor. All 11 interviewees mentioned that the advising role on campus often was misunderstood or confused with other roles. For example, Interviewee 3B said, "I think [other] advisors know what we do, but I don't think that others in the post-secondary field know what we do in the same way" (Interviewee 3B). Some interviewees mentioned that the academic advising role is sometimes confused with or conflated with faculty advising and counselling roles. For example, Interviewee A2 stated that "[faculty]

roles do not include advising but they do it a lot" (Interviewee A2). From the manager's perspective, they also toiled with the question of who was and who was not an advisor. The manager from Institution B admitted that a lot of people think "they do advising" because they have contact with students. Table 4.4 illustrates findings that reference the role of advisors on campus.

Table 4.4

Roles and responsibilities of Academic Advisors

	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Institution D
Role confusion	Professional advisor vs. staff Some grey area between advising and counselling	People think they 'do advising' Some academic units have their own advisors Faculty are technically advisors	Student Success Advisors vs. Academic Advisors Academic Advisors don't really 'do' advising Role is defined by the model you work in (ex. walk-in)	Advising on academic progression is 'faculty work'
Role misunderstanding	Advisors lack respect because of their titles Constant push/ pull with academic units not understanding	Need to build relationships with academic units to access students	We know what we do but others don't Advisors not seen as professionals because role is more abstract	Faculty have various perceptions on what the role of advisors are Title is *Student Advisor* and people think we are students

What remains consistent in comparing the data across institutions is a conflict between advising roles. First, we see a conflict between staff and faculty advising roles, and second, we see a general misunderstanding of the purpose of staff advising roles. This even held true for one advisor at Institution D, with a clear central advising unit, and no embedded advisors, who described the conflict between her staff advising role and the faculty advising role.

To obtain a better understanding of the scope of practice for academic advisors, I read through each of the transcripts and noted each time an advisor mentioned a particular skill or job function. I performed this task because I wanted to learn from a larger of community of advisors (in the quantitative phase), how they spent their time. The list of skills and functions ranged from uploading courses for students to developing and facilitating learning skills workshops. The list of skills and job functions were analyzed using thematic analysis in a separate process, and are illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Responsibilities of the Academic Advisors

- Know and understand how to follow institutional systems, policies, and procedures
- Retrieve information for personal and student benefit
- Plan and build an academic pathway for students
- Help students problem solve
- Learn about students and their diverse experiences
- Develop interpersonal skills to build rapport with students and build relationships with faculty
- Develop and facilitate information-sharing opportunities and workshops
- Take initiative to participate in professional development
- Engage in critical self-reflection
- Develop a personal approach to advising practice
- Contribute to the development of the advising team

It must be noted that this list is not comprehensive because the advisors were not directly asked to speak about their responsibilities. However, this table is meant to demonstrate some of the perceptions that academic advisors have of their role and responsibilities.

As I mentioned in the literature review, the role and responsibilities of the academic advisor remain unclear (Huber & Miller, 2013). This is in part due to the lack of a clear definition of academic advising (Larson et al. 2018) and inconsistent institutional advising models across, and within, institutions (McGill, 2019). It is not surprising then, to see managers and advisors in the college system describe conflict between their role and faculty roles. It is also not surprising that the role of the advisor is misunderstood across campuses.

4.2.4 Category 4: Professional development practices. The fourth category relates specifically to PD practices and activities in which academic advisors participate. Interviewees were asked to describe how they approached learning their roles, and they were asked to describe the types of training they had participated in related to their current role. As I was coding the data, I noted that six interviewees indicated that they approached their advising roles by applying knowledge from their previous work experience, outside of higher education. I also noted that nine of the interviewees said that they approached learning about their roles by reading and researching, or by seeking out PD activities on their own. Table 4.5 illustrates the PD offerings for advisors through central student services units, internal institutional PD offerings, and PD offerings external to the institution.

Table 4.5

PD Practices and Activities

	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Institution D
Advisor-specific PD	Central – led by manager	Central – led by manager	Central – led by advisors	
Central Student Services Unit Offerings	Pre-service training Annual advisor training CoP Shadowing Seeking out PD	Case studies Annual advisor training CoP Shadowing Reading & researching Self-reflection Seeking out PD	Training circles IPR manual CoP Lunch'n'learns Shadowing Reading & researching Self-reflection Seeking out PD	Workshops led by advisors Book club Learning from others Seeking out PD
Institutional PD offerings	Organizational Learning	Organizational Learning Teaching & Learning	Organizational Learning	Organizational Learning Teaching & Learning
External PD offerings	OAAP & NACADA conferences	OAAP & NACADA conferences	OAAP & NACADA conferences	OAAP & NACADA conferences NACADA Training Institute

From Table 4.5 we can see that three of the four institutions offer some form of a centralized PD specific to academic advisors. Institution C did not provide documents, but through the transcript analysis I learned that PD specific to advising did happen, though it was contingent upon the advisors organizing the training. In addition, a new manager had only begun the role and had plans to significantly increase the PD offered to academic advisors. Institution D did not have centrally organized training for academic advisors, and, like Institution C, training was often organized by the advisors

themselves. Additionally, each of the four institutions relied on Organizational Learning and Teaching and Learning offices to supplement some of their PD activities. In some cases, advisors sought out this training on their own. On the topic of Organizational Learning, Interviewee C1 stated:

> The workshops through Organizational Learning and Training are not specifically catered to advisors. They're kind of open to anybody, so again we're on the hunt for our own, learning what we think would be a good addition to our learning. (Interview C1)

The literature on PD practices, as it relates to academic advising, demonstrates that although PD practices exist, academic advisors are not necessarily expected to participate in them prior to beginning their role (Habley, 2009). We can see from the documentary and transcript evidence that advisors in the Ontario college system are not required to participate in PD activities prior to beginning their advising role. Only institution A provided a list of pre-service training that advisors were expected to attend. However, the list of activities centred around technical skill development such as learning data management and appointment booking systems. The literature also indicates that although PD practices exist, institutions are not consistent in designing and implementing academic advising PD activities for their advisors (Folsom et al., 2015). Again, this was confirmed through the qualitative data: only two of the four institutions had a centrally organized advisor training designed specifically for advisors on their campus, and, in some cases, advisors were left to design their own PD experience.

4.2.5 Category 5: Assessment of advising practice. The final category reflected how academic advisors assess their advising practice as it related to participation in PD activities. In the interviews, advisors were asked, *how do you integrate what you learn into your advising practice?* The question was designed to learn more about how advisors identified what they learned in training, and how they applied that learning. However, some of the interviewees understood the question to mean - *how do I assess my advising practice*? – not in relation to PD participation. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, piloting

the semi-structured interview questions would have allowed me to compensate for this; however, the answers to this question remain relevant to the study. The interview data indicated that most advisors rely on student feedback and self-reflection to gauge the success of their advising practices. Table 4.6 illustrates the current assessment practices of advisors.

Table 4.6

Assessment Practices

	A	B	C	D
Current assessment practices	Need to grow in assessment Need to introduce assessment because "we don't know if we're being effective"	Wants to develop a post-appointment assessment	Not sure if institution has looked at student outcomes; has not tried it personally	
How advisors know they are being effective	Verbal feedback from students Students engage by checking their email Student returns Student meets their personal goal	Verbal feedback from students such as "you're really good at your job" Student leaves satisfied	Verbal feedback from students Students' stress has been alleviated	Verbal feedback from students Student returns

Many advisors indicated relying on student feedback. Student feedback was described as verbal cues or affirmations, body language, and student reactions (non-verbal cues) that indicated understanding by the student. Advisors also considered actions taken by the student, like making a follow-up appointment, or sharing a success with an advisor, as a measure of their effectiveness as advisors. Finally, some advisors mentioned self-reflection as a tool for assessing their advising practice. For example, Interviewee C2 stated the following:

> So, I think a lot of this has to do with reflection. When I learn something new, I would try and reflect on how that relates to what I am doing currently…I try and do a mental assessment of how I think my current practice is being received by students. (Interview C2)

Another technique used by two advisors was to ask students what their goals were for the advising session. At the end of the session, the advisor asked the student whether their goal for the session had been met, and, if so, the advisor considered the advising session to be a success. For example, to establish the goal for the session, Interviewee 4B started by asking students, "Okay what do you need? What are your questions? Let's write them down together" (Interview 4B). Then, at the end of the session, the advisor would ask if the goal had been met by saying "Let's regroup and make sure I've actually given you the information that you need" (Interview FB). All three managers interviewed discussed a desire to implement a student survey to be completed after a student meets with an advisor. In addition to the survey, one manager indicated that they were attempting to develop a self-assessment tool for advisors to gauge their own competency development. For example, this manager stated, "[the self-assessment tool] is currently used for advisors: they see the training framework, and they are able to self-identify what they've attended" (Interviewee A1). This manager also hoped to eventually use the self-assessment tool to gauge whether advisors were meeting their role expectations.

As I indicated earlier, Earley and Porritt (2014) stated that assessing the practice of academic advisors lacks depth. Ideally, assessing advisor practice would help to establish a cycle of continuous improvement, and demonstrate effectiveness in helping students to achieve their academic goals (Zarges et al., 2018). To achieve continuous improvement, Zarges et al. (2018) stated institutions must assess their advising structure, the effectiveness of PD on advisor practice and student outcomes. However, the qualitative data indicated a very

rudimentary understanding of assessment that almost entirely focuses on the advisors' own assessment of their personal effectiveness.

4.3 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 4 began by describing what content analysis is and why it was chosen for the analysis of the quantitative findings. I suggested that I chose content analysis because it is a straight-forward process for coding and categorizing qualitative data. Coding allowed me to organize all of the documents and to begin recording the nature and content of each document in a flexible but systematic way. Furthermore, organizing the documents enabled me to see how PD practices for academic advisors were approached very differently across institutions and extract common categories across institutions. I was able to identify terms and concepts that were familiar to me through the literature and my own experience. For example, in all three institutions that provided documents, each referred at some point to the NACADA (2017) core competencies model and Kuhn et al.'s (2006) advising continuum.

In addition to content analysis, I included the use of matrices to further exemplify and support my initial coding and categorization. Using content analysis and developing matrices, I was able to generate the four following categories: (a) types of advising, (b) roles and responsibilities, (c) PD practices, and (d) assessment of advising practice. The categories generated from the documentary evidence were used to inform the analysis of the transcript data, which ultimately generated an additional category, labelled: (e) institutional advising model. The benefit of content analysis, therefore, is that it was flexible enough that I could use pre-existing codes while generating new ideas for the additional qualitative data. Chapter 5 will introduce the quantitative phase of the research study and describe how the quantitative research tool was developed in relation to the findings of the qualitative phase of the study.

Chapter 5: Questionnaire Development & Quantitative Research Methods

As I described in Chapter 4, an ESMMR study begins with qualitative data collection and analysis followed by quantitative data collection and analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For my study, the qualitative findings from the documentary evidence and interview transcripts were used to inform the development of a questionnaire tool (see Appendix D). The application of the questionnaire tool, or quantitative method, was meant to legitimize the observations made in the qualitative phase via triangulation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). I describe the connection between the qualitative findings and how they informed the development of the questionnaire throughout the following chapter.

5.1 Building the Questionnaire Tool

Gray (2014) described the stages of developing a survey tool, which are: designing the survey in relation to the research questions, identifying the frame of reference, and selecting the sample and the sample frame. The final step includes a pilot phase wherein the survey items are tested and refined. In an ESMMR study, the questionnaire design begins in relation to the research questions but also designed in relation to the analysis of the qualitative phase of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). For example, as we see in Chapter 4, one of the findings from my qualitative analysis indicated a misalignment between what academic advisors expected their responsibilities to be and what their responsibilities were. As a result, I added an option for questionnaire participants to indicate the degree to which they agreed with the following statement: my day-to-day responsibilities align with the expectations of my job description. The following discussion explains the demographic data collected and describes how each category was addressed in the questionnaire.

5.1.1 Demographic questions. The questionnaire began with a set of demographic items aimed at ensuring the inclusion criteria were met and to identify demographic variables. The first set of items also helped to establish the context within which the study sits. For example, participants were asked if they worked in a college in Ontario and, if so, to indicate the size of the institution. Participants were

further asked to indicate if they were a faculty advisor or staff advisor and if they worked full-time or part-time. Finally, participants were asked to indicate how many years they had been advising and the highest level of education they attained. The responses to these items would be used to determine whether any of these variables had an effect on how academic advisors perceived the nature and scope of academic advising, and what PD practice they perceived as being most important to their practice.

5.1.2 Types of advising. One of the findings that emerged from both the documentary evidence and interview transcripts was a focus on the type of academic advising. For example, respondents referenced wanting to move from transactional to developmental advising. I determined these responses were referencing the advising-counselling continuum established by Kuhn et al. (2006; see Figure 2.1), which defined informational, explanatory, and developmental advising. I wanted to know whether this category carried beyond the four institutions included in the qualitative phase. Participants were asked whether they were familiar with the advising hierarchy and were asked to indicate which of the three types of advising they predominantly provide to students: informational, transactional, or developmental. I would like to note that I chose to replace the word *explanatory* with *transactional* because that was the word used by the interviewees to describe their practice. Although interviewees were not asked to define what they meant by transactional advising, they typically used it in relation to helping students complete tasks like course scheduling, or sharing institutional policies, activities that align with Kuhn et al's (2006) explanatory type.

5.1.3 Institutional advising model. The interviewees indicated that they reported to, and were located in, either an academic unit or a student service unit. In addition, interviewees suggested that reporting structures and locations influenced how much time they spent on advising. The next set of questions focused on the variables related to institutional advising models including location, reporting lines, and the percentage of their role spent on advising activities. Respondents were asked where the

location of their advising service was and to whom they reported. Finally, they were asked what percentage of their role comprised academic advising.

5.1.4 Roles and responsibilities. The interviewees suggested that their role on campus often was confused with other roles, and they found that they spent a lot of time either explaining their roles or defending the importance of their roles. In addition, the interviewees suggested that their roles as described in their job descriptions did not always align with their day-to-day responsibilities. For example, interviewees who reported to academic units indicated that they felt pressure to 'clear the line', rather than spend time providing developmental advising. Therefore, I wanted to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the advisors and how they currently function in the Ontario college system. Consequently, the respondents were asked what types of appointments they offered and what types of information they shared with students. To investigate role clarity, they were then asked whether their role was understood by faculty and staff and whether their responsibilities matched their job descriptions. A further question asked whether the institution saw their role as related to student retention. Finally, they were asked whether their role required relationships with faculty and staff.

5.1.5 PD programs and activities. Both the documentary evidence and the interview transcripts revealed a variety of approaches to PD that were available to and practiced by academic advisors. To test the generalizability of these findings, the focus of the next category of questions was on exploring what PD activities advisors participated in and which activities they believed were the most valuable. The questions began by first asking if PD was encouraged and offered at their institution. Participants then were asked to indicate the importance of a list of various PD activities. The list of PD activities was extracted directly from the documentary evidence and interview transcripts. Participants then were asked to indicate the importance of a list of various PD topics. 0Related to PD, I wanted to understand what role the NACADA competencies played in the advisors' understanding of their roles. Participants were asked if they were familiar with the NACADA competencies, and, if so, to indicate the most

important competency. Participants were also asked about how they approached developing their practice. Several interviewees indicated that they often sought out training on their own. These interviewees acknowledged that their institution did, at times, provide training, but each seemed to gravitate toward finding their own learning and I wanted to test this tendency in a larger population.

5.1.6 Assessing advisor practice. The interview data suggested that there was a reliance on student feedback and reflection in advisor self-assessment. Again, I wanted to test this among a larger sample to determine whether this was the predominant method for evaluating one's practice. The final category of questions was therefore designed to understand better how advisors assess how engaging with PD informs their practice. Participants were asked to indicate the most valuable way for them to measure the effectiveness of their practices.

5.2 Quantitative Research Methods

The quantitative data collection began following the development of the questionnaire tool. The data collection and analysis methods related to the quantitative data collection will be described in the following section.

5.2.1 Site selection. In the qualitative phase of my study, I indicated that the site selection included the colleges in Ontario. However, only four of the 22 English-speaking colleges participated. For the quantitative phase, advisors from all 22 English-speaking colleges in Ontario were asked to participate in disseminating the questionnaire instrument. It is typical in an ESMMR study, according to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), that the participants in the qualitative study are not the same individuals who participated in the quantitative study. For my study, the original four institutions were invited to participate in the questionnaire along with the remaining 18 English-speaking colleges. I included the first four institutions in the quantitative phase because I wanted to include the remaining staff and faculty advisors who did not participate in the interviews. This would ensure a higher response rate to the questionnaire.

5.2.2. Size of sample. For the quantitative phase, the size of the sample was dependent upon how many staff and faculty advisors received the invitation to participate in the questionnaire. Once an institution approved the research ethics application and agreed to facilitate the dissemination of the questionnaire, I asked the institution to provide me with the number of individuals at their institution that received the questionnaire. I kept track of how many individuals received the questionnaire and compared it to how many individuals completed the survey. This would give me a rough estimate of completion rates. This was an imperfect system, but it allowed the institution flexibility in disseminating the survey.

5.2.3. Sample selection. In the qualitative phase of my study, I indicated that I chose a nested sampling technique, since the participants in both the qualitative and quantitative phase of my study were from the same population. However, unlike the qualitative phase, the questionnaire collected responses from faculty advisors in addition to staff advisors. Like the qualitative phase, the questionnaire was administered using purposeful voluntary sampling. The sampling was purposeful because part of participants' role responsibilities must have included advising, regardless of whether the name "Advisor" appeared in their job title. Participants could have been part-time or full-time staff, but they must have been currently employed at one of the colleges in Ontario. Unlike for the first phase, part-time advisors were included in the quantitative phase. This provided an opportunity to reflect the voices of part-time advisors at colleges across Ontario, as well as to increase the number of participants in the questionnaire. The sampling was voluntary because participants receiving the invitation to participate had the option to participate or not participate in the questionnaire. Out of the 22 English-speaking colleges in Ontario, 16 colleges approved the study, but only 14 colleges disseminated the questionnaire. The reasons for only 14 institutions participating will be explained over the next two sections. Participants included 82 staff advisors and 38 faculty advisors, for a total of 120 respondents.

5.2.4. Obtaining permissions. According to Gray (2014), a critical component of the ethical considerations for disseminating a questionnaire includes "informed consent and the protection of confidentiality" (p. 262). Unlike the qualitative phase of my study, I did encounter some issues related to obtaining permission. As I indicated earlier, only 14 of the 22 colleges participated. Interestingly, one of the colleges was initially hesitant to participate because it was 4 months away from launching a PD program for its academic advisors and believed the answers provided would look different merely 4 months later. However, when I explained the exploratory nature of my study, the institution agreed to participate. Of the 8 that did not participate, one declined because the representative stated that it was a small college, and they only had one advisor whose role in advising was only part of their role, and, therefore, the questionnaire would not have been anonymous. One of the small colleges did not have a research ethics board, and four colleges did not respond to my research ethics application or provide an internal administrator to sponsor my research study. The remaining two colleges approved my study, but the internal contact did not respond to my requests to disseminate the questionnaire.

5.2.5. Research ethics. Once the questionnaire had been developed, an addendum to the original research ethics application was submitted to the original four colleges from the qualitative phase of the study. The addendum explained the purpose of the questionnaire, addressed issues of confidentiality, and explained how the survey would be administered. All four colleges approved the addendum to the original research ethics application. The addendum was also submitted to the Ontario College Multi-Site (OCMS) research ethics board and the VPREC for approval. VPREC did not initially approve the addendum due to the demographic question that asked participants to indicate whether they worked at a large, medium, or small institution. This question raised privacy concerns for VPREC because it was believed that if only one small college participated, for example, there was the possibility that the respondents could be identified by me, the researcher. To ensure anonymity, I proposed to include a minimum of three colleges in each size category in my study. For example, if only two small

sized colleges agreed to administer the questionnaire, I would not include small colleges in the study. VPREC accepted my proposal and approved the addendum.

As I indicated earlier, the OCMS approved the addendum to the original research proposal. In Ontario, the OCMS is a centralized research ethics board that functions as an overarching approval body. In theory, if the OCMS approves a study, all the colleges that have signed on to the OCMS should follow suit and approve the study. The OCMS approval form was sent to the individual research ethics boards of all 22 English-speaking colleges for approval. However, despite the approval of the OCMS, several of the colleges required re-submission of the original research ethics application to their own research ethics boards. Unfortunately, the entire research ethics process added a further 5 months to the study, even though the function of the OCMS is to provide a blanket ethics approval. The intention was to send the questionnaire out in September of 2018, but some of the colleges sent the questionnaire out as late as January 2019.

All 8 of the large colleges approved the study through a delegated review, meaning clearance was provided efficiently because of the OCMS approval. However, only 6 colleges followed through on disseminating the questionnaire to their advisors. Of the 8 medium colleges, only 5 approved the study, and all 5 disseminated the questionnaire. In one instance, a medium-sized college wanted considerable alterations that would have required an entirely separate questionnaire and process to administer. I therefore removed them from the study. Of the 6 eligible small colleges, 3 approved the study and all 3 disseminated the questionnaire. In total, 14 of the 22 colleges administered the questionnaire.

5.2.6. Recruitment. The addendum to the research ethics application indicated that I would work with the institutional research ethics boards to identify their preferred way of administering the questionnaire. The response, again, was mixed. Some research ethics boards took on the task of emailing the questionnaire to academic advisors, and some institutions provided an institutional contact who disseminated the questionnaire. Two institutions pointed me to the campus directory and

indicated I could email the advisors directly. All academic advisors were invited to participate in the questionnaire via a standard email that included a reason for the study, a link to the questionnaire, and the *Participant Information and Consent Form* attached (see Appendix B). Participants accessed the questionnaire by clicking on the link included in the email invitation.

Table 5.1 estimates the number of individuals to which the email was sent and indicates the number of individuals who completed the survey. We can estimate a response rate to the questionnaire based on the number of emails to which the questionnaire was sent. The number of individuals who received the email is a self-report number from each of the colleges that administered the questionnaire. It must be noted, however, that the email could have been forwarded along by advisors to faculty or other staff who they believed had missed the email. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012) a response rate of 70% or higher is considered ideal to be representative of a population. The overall estimated completion rate for my study was 20%, with the medium sized colleges demonstrating the highest response rate at 32%. In addition, calculating the number of advisors in the Ontario system to estimate sample size is almost impossible, given the various job titles, job responsibilities, and job categories (staff vs. faculty). Therefore, the response rates to the questionnaire alone are not necessarily reflective of the entire population.

Table 5.1

Response rate by Institution Size

Institution Size	# Emails sent out	# Completed Questionnaires	Completion Rate:
Small (3)	93	16	17%
Medium (5)	96	31	32%
Large (5)	411	73	18%
TOTAL	600	120	20%

5.2.7 Data collection. The questionnaire was created via Qualtrics, a questionnaire software platform that was available through my institution. Because I was using an institutional software platform, where there was an administrator superuser who could potentially access my data, I was

required by the VPREC to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The MOU would ensure that the institutional Qualtrics administrator superuser would not access my data and that my data would not break any laws or put the institution at risk. The questionnaire data was protected by an individual login and password and was not shared with any other employees at the college. Questionnaire data would be stored on Qualtrics for a maximum of 10 years, as per my research ethics application. Data that I downloaded for analysis was kept on a password protected excel file.

5.3 Quantitative Research Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. Gray (2014) said that descriptive statistics are used to summarize the findings and key variables related to a research study, whereas inferential statistics are used to make assumptions from the findings, related to the general population. For this study, quantitative data analysis began by using descriptive statistics mainly to summarize the overall findings, such as the distribution of variables among the entire data set. For example, descriptive statistics were used to analyze how many individuals participated from small, medium, or large colleges. The application of inferential statistics allowed for testing the statistical significance of differences between faculty and staff advisors.

The analysis for this study included the application of independent sample *t*-tests and *Z*-tests, as well as chi-square tests. Independent sample *t*-tests are applied when measuring the difference between the means of a bivariate sample—in this case, faculty, and staff (Cohen et al., 2011)—with respect to a second quantitative variable, such as years of practice. A chi-square test is used to measure the statistical significance of difference between two categorical variables (Cohen et al., 2011). Cohen et al. (2011) describe the use of chi-square tests to measure the difference in a bivariate analysis, in this case the difference between faculty and staff advisors with respect to other categorical variables, such as various types of training activities. Determining the difference between faculty and staff, and the statistical significance of that difference, is important for making inferences about the difference in

perceptions and needs between the two groups. Specifically, the PD that a faculty advisor perceives as being important to their practice might be different from the perception of a staff, which is important to consider when making recommendations for future practice.

5.3.1 Pilot study. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, a small pilot study was conducted to ensure the questionnaire made sense to the readers and that the questionnaire data would answer the research questions. Neuman (2011) stated that a pilot study is recommended to recognize any challenges to validity and to uncover areas that need adjustment. In addition, Gray (2014) stated that piloting a questionnaire also ensures that the questionnaire is "accurate, unambiguous, and simple to complete" (p. 372). To pilot the study, I asked five colleagues from my advising network to complete the questionnaire and to provide feedback on the flow, language, and variables included in the questionnaire. Minor revisions, such as rewording questions and adjusting grammar, were made based on the collected feedback. The data collected from the pilot study were deleted; however, the five colleagues remained eligible to participate in the study.

5.4 Establishing Validity in a Questionnaire

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) described general principles in addressing validity in mixed methods research. First, the researcher must address validity threats that correspond with both qualitative and quantitative research. In addition, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) indicated that the researcher must address potential threats to validity in mixed methods research as a whole. In Chapter 3, I addressed the issue of validity as it related to the qualitative phase of my research study. The following section will address issues of validity as they relate to the quantitative phase of my research study. Potential threats to validity, or legitimation, as they relate to MMR will be addressed in the concluding chapter.

Establishing validity in quantitative research must take into consideration both internal and external validity (Cohen et al., 2011). Internal validity in quantitative research, according to Gray (2014),

is concerned with the ability to make causal claims from analyzed data in relation to the research questions. External validity is concerned with the ability to generalize from the findings with respect to the larger population. In the following section I will describe my process for addressing both internal and external validity of the quantitative findings.

The internal threats to quantitative research identified by Cohen et al. (2011) that I believe are related to my study include: instrumentation, selection bias and Type I and Type II errors. The first threat, instrumentation, refers to the reliability of the questionnaire if changes are introduced through the research process (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). To mitigate the risk of instrumentation, I pilot tested the questionnaire with a group of colleagues familiar with academic advising. As I indicated earlier, piloting the questionnaire, as Neuman (2011) stated, helped to uncover areas of ambiguity, and test the ease of completion for respondents.

The next threat, selection bias, was a large threat to my study. Given the ambiguity of job titles and role and responsibilities uncovered through the qualitative phase of the study, it was possible that some staff and faculty might have considered themselves to be academic advisors when they were not, according to how the term has been defined for this study. The reverse could also be a possibility where individuals are fulfilling the function of what my study considers to be academic advising, but their title does not indicate that. In addition, due to the political nature of academic advising in colleges in Ontario (see Chapter 1.1), I left it up to the institutions to share the survey with the faculty advisors. To mitigate the risk of selection bias, I included criteria that respondents had to satisfy in my sampling which included that part of their responsibilities had to include advising students, whether they held the position of program coordinator or had the word advisor in their job title.

Finally, Type I and Type II errors happen when the researcher fails to find a relationship between variables when one exists, or when the researcher records a relationship between variables when it does not exist (Cohen, et al., 2011). To address the risk of Type I and Type II errors, I have used

Statistical Conclusion validity which "refers to the validity with which we can infer those two variables are related and the strength of that relationship" (Johnson & Christensen, 2012 p. 263). Johnson and Christensen (2012) state this is accomplished by first determining if a relationship between two variables exists, followed by measuring the size of the effect between two variables. To satisfy the first step, I conducted a series of *t* tests and chi-square tests. A *t* test is used to calculate a population mean (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004), which would allow the researcher to make inferences about the population in terms of the average response. From the mean, the researcher can then test the probability of seeing that mean across the sample population. A chi-square test measures the distribution of the statistical finding to determine how well the distribution reflects between populations (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). For example, chi-square tests allow the researcher to determine whether a finding is significant between two populations, in this case between staff and faculty advisors. In this study, a chi-square test allowed me to make inferences about how similarly or differently staff and faculty viewed the nature and scope of their advising roles. In addition, the chi-square test allowed me to make inferences about the similarities or differences between the importance of PD activities to staff and faculty advisors.

To satisfy the second condition, I calculated the effect size of the chi-square tests using Cramer's *V*. By calculating the effect size, I could determine the strength of the significant findings between two dichotomous variables (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004), in this case staff and faculty advisors. A Cramer's *V* effect size of 0.1, for example, indicates a small effect, while an effect size of 0.3 indicates a medium association, and an effect size of 0.5 indicates a strong association (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2004). Determining the effect size was important because it allowed me to make inferences between staff and faculty responses to the nature and scope of their advising roles, and inferences about PD practices each group perceives as important.

External threats to validity in quantitative research that I believe are related to my study include: a failure to adequately describe independent variables, and a lack of representation of the target populations, (Cohen et al., 2011). The independent variables in my study were institution size, role title, and educational background of the advisors. To address external validity, I used registration data (described in Chapter 3) to determine institution size. I based role titles on the language of Collective Agreements governing employees in the Ontario colleges (as described in Chapter 1.6) and I used the Ontario Qualifications Framework (Ministry of Colleges & Universities, 2018), to describe educational background (see Chapter 1). To begin addressing external validity in representation of the target populations, I purposefully chose an MMR study so that I could test findings from a qualitative lens from a small select group of the target population against a larger group of the target population. The use of multiple methods of data collection is referred to as triangulation (Cohen et al., 2011). According to Cohen et al. (2011), triangulation allows the researcher to study a research topic from various viewpoints, thus increasing the validity of the findings. For example, the risk of studying a small population of academic advisors through a qualitative study increases the risk to validity through selection bias. It is entirely plausible that only highly engaged academic advisors, who are motivated to learn and develop their advising skills, would agree to participate in the qualitative phase of my study. Therefore, by including a questionnaire to validate the qualitative findings against a larger population, I increased the confidence, or external validity of my findings.

5.5 Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter 5, I explained the process for building the questionnaire, and I described how the questionnaire was developed from the data collected and analyzed in the qualitative phase of the study. Specifically, I described how the findings from the documentary evidence and interview data informed the questions and the variables that would be tested against a larger population of academic advisors. I believe having the five categories established through the qualitative phase of my study helped me to

narrow down and focus the questions I wanted to ask in the quantitative phase of the study. The challenge, however, was articulating questions to quantify qualitative observations that, through the process of analysis, were reduced into singular categories. For example, through the semi-structured interviews, I surmised that the role and responsibility of academic advisors did not align with their daily activities because several academic advisors in the interviews felt they were not doing the work that they wanted to do. To quantify this, my question had to assume that this was a sentiment felt by all advisors in the college system in Ontario. I therefore had to quantify this by asking advisors to indicate the degree to which, or "how much" this sentiment was true.

Following this, I justified the quantitative data collection and analysis methods, and explained my process for establishing validity through the quantitative phase of the study. The quantitative phase of my study turned out to be the most challenging due to structural and procedural barriers. For example, completing the research ethics process and the selection of the sample site and size required several adjustments to my plan. First, I had planned to administer the questionnaire across all 22 English-speaking colleges in Ontario. However, I had to adjust my plan based on the changes some institutions wanted to the research ethics application, the availability of an institutional contact and the lack of institutional definitions and consistent job descriptions for advisors. For example, as each institution worked through the research ethics application, some would require changes to the methodology. However, some of the institutions had already approved the application and a change would have required reapplication to those institutions that approved the study. As a result, some institutions were left out of the study. Finally, without a definition of academic advising, some of the colleges I was in contact with struggled to identify who on their campus were advisors. Therefore, to gauge the actual size of the population of academic advisors and compare it to the number of individuals who participated in the questionnaire would be inaccurate. However, I asked each institution

to let me know how many individuals received the questionnaire through email and I was able to make an estimate.

The findings from the quantitative phase of the study are outlined in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Quantitative Research Findings

Because this was an ESMMR study, the purpose of the quantitative questionnaire tool was to legitimize the categories identified in the first, qualitative, phase of the study. The quantitative findings are discussed in the following sections: first, participant demographics, followed by the categories identified in the qualitative phase of the study, (a) type of advising, (b) the institutional advising model, (c) the role and responsibilities of academic advisor, (d) PD activities, and (e) assessment of advising practice. In total, 14 colleges in Ontario participated in the quantitative phase of the study.

6.1 Demographic Data

6.1.1 College and institution size. Participants were asked to indicate whether they worked at a small, a medium, or a large institution (Table 5.1). Responses were recorded as follows: small: 13% (*n* = 16), medium: 26% (*n* = 31), and large: 61% (*n* = 73). The second question asked participants if they worked in a college in Ontario. Two participants indicated they did not work in a college in Ontario, although it is possible that they had previously worked at a college. However, given the scope of the study, those two responses were removed, yielding a final sample size of 120 respondents.

6.1.2 Employee group. Participants were asked to indicate whether they belonged to the faculty employee group, which includes program coordinators, or to the staff faculty group (Table 6.1). In total there were 15 faculty responses and 23 program coordinator responses. Although faculty and program coordinators did self-identify as such, they were subsequently grouped together under the role of faculty for analysis because there were only 38 responses. In total, there were 82 staff responses. Of note, there were no faculty responses from medium-sized colleges.

Table 6.1

Employee Group by Institution Size

Employee Group	Small	Medium	Large
Staff (*n* = 82)	14	31	37
	17%	38%	45%
Faculty Member (*n* = 38)	2	0	36
	5%	0%	95%

6.1.3 Workload status. Of all the participants, only one faculty participant indicated they were a part-time employee, whereas six staff self-identified as part-time employees. The remaining participants (*n* = 113 or 94% of participants) indicated having a full-time position at the college. The difference in proportion of part-time employees between faculty (3%) and staff (7%) was too small to analyze, and so this variable was not analyzed further.

6.1.4 Years of experience. Participants were asked to indicate how many years they had been advising in their current roles. To investigate any differences between staff and faculty, years of experience were compared with employee group (Table 6.2). A Pearson's chi-squared test (Cohen et al., 2011) was performed, and there was no statistically significant evidence of a relationship between years of experience and employee group ($X^2[3]= 3.79$, $p = .29$).

Table 6.2

Years of Experience by Employee Group

Employee Group	0-2 years	3-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years
Staff (*n* = 82)	28	26	9	19
	34%	32%	11%	23%
Faculty (*n* = 38)	10	8	6	14
	26%	21%	16%	37%

6.1.5 Highest level of education. Level of education was compared to both the employee group and years of experience to identify any statistically significant results (Table 6.3). Based on a Pearson's chi-squared test, faculty have higher levels of education than do staff (see Appendix E). This finding is not surprising because the standards and expectations of faculty and staff are different. Faculty typically

must have a minimum of a master's degree to teach in the college system, whereas many staff positions only require a college diploma. A Pearson's chi-square test revealed no statistically significant evidence of a relationship between years of experience and level of education ($X^2[15]= 18.30$, $p = .25$).

Table 6.3

Education by Employee Group

Employee Group	Diploma	Bachelor's degree	Post-Graduate Certificate	Master's degree	Doctorate
Staff	34	20	9	19	0
(*n* = 82)	41.5%	24.4%	11%	23.1%	-
Faculty (*n* = 38)	1	2	4	27	4
	3%	5%	10.5%	71%	10.5%

6.1.6 Additional credentials. Following highest level of education, respondents were asked if they had completed a post-graduate certificate or additional credential specific to advising. Of note, of the 120 respondents, only 31 (26%) indicated having completed a post-graduate certificate specifically in advising, in addition to their post-secondary education.

6.1.7 Job title. When asked to indicate whether the word "Advisor" was in their job title, 83 (69%) respondents indicated that it was. Of the 83 respondents, 15 (12.5%) were faculty members.

6.1.8 Skills and past work experience. Participants were asked whether there were any skills or work experience that helped to enhance or to inform their advising practice. Of the 120 participants, 109 (91%) indicated yes and, of these, 107 participants provided a written response. Like the interview data, responses were listed and then sorted into similar categories. In general, the participants noted past work experience, volunteer experiences, and some noted their current experiences as advisors. The experiences shared were specific to higher education, including teaching, counselling, and PD. Some participants further qualified their answer to include curriculum/program design, counselling within a high school or community or crisis centre, and shadowing other advisors. Some respondents referenced work experiences outside of higher education—for example, work as a camp counsellor or

coach for youth sports. Some indicated life experience, volunteer work, or their undergraduate degree—including social work, theatre, and psychology.

6.2 Types of Advising

The participants were asked about their familiarity with the common types of advising, including *informational, transactional,* and *developmental advising.* Table 6.4 shows that staff were far more familiar with the advising hierarchy (60%) than were faculty (24%). In addition, more faculty appeared to be familiar with the advising hierarchy (24%) than with the NACADA framework (5%).

Table 6.4

Familiarity with Advising Hierarchy by Employee Group

Employee Group	Yes	Maybe	No
Staff (n = 82)	49 60%	6 7%	27 33%
Faculty (n = 38)	9 24%	28 74%	0 0%

A Pearson's chi-square test revealed a statistically significant relationship between role type and familiarity with the advising hierarchy ($X^2[2]= 19.36$, $p < .0001$). Cramer's V was 0.4 demonstrating a medium association. Specifically, the faculty were statistically significantly less likely to be familiar with the NACADA competency framework than were the staff. To understand this further, a chi-square test was performed to determine the effect, if any, that education and experience had on participants' familiarity with the advising hierarchy and competency framework. Results indicated that both education ($X^2[10]= 15.08$, $p = .13$) and experience ($X^2[6]= 5.77$, $p = .45$) had no statistically significant effect.

Participants who indicated that they were familiar or "maybe" familiar with the advising hierarchy then were asked to identify the type of advising that they predominantly employed (Table

6.5). Both staff and faculty advisors who were familiar or maybe familiar with the advising hierarchy indicated spending most of their time on developmental (45%) and informational advising (45%).

Table 6.5

Type of Advising by Employee Group

Employee Group	Transactional	Informational	Developmental
Staff (*n* = 55)	6	24	25
	11%	44%	45%
Faculty (*n* = 9)	0	5	4
	0%	56%	44%

6.3 Institutional Advising Model

6.3.1 Time dedicated to advising. Participants were asked to indicate how much of their time is dedicated to advising. Overall, only 46 respondents (38%) indicated spending more than three quarters of their time advising, none of whom were faculty (Table 6.6). Only 56% of staff advisors (*n* = 46) spent most of their time advising. The majority of faculty (97%), however, spent less than one half their time advising. A chi-square test revealed a statistically significant relationship between role type and time spent advising ($X^2[3]= 6.174$, $p < .0001$), meaning that, overall, the staff spent more time advising than did the faculty. Cramer's *V* is 0.8, demonstrating a strong association.

Table 6.6

Time Spent Advising by Employee Group

Employee Group	0-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Staff (n = 82)	1	5	8	22	46
	1%	6%	10%	27%	56%
Faculty (n = 38)	11	20	6	1	0
	29%	53%	16%	3%	0%

6.3.2 Reporting structure and location of advising. Participants were asked to indicate where advising services were located and to whom they reported. These choices were pre-populated based on documentary evidence and interview data. The data indicated that 82% of faculty were physically located in an academic unit or program area. In contrast, only 44% of the staff were in an academic

unit, whereas 39% were located in a student services unit (Table 6.7). Like the faculty, those who chose "other" and provided written responses often indicated a student service or an ancillary unit. What is important to note is that student service areas, such as the registrar's office or the library, for example, can report up to either the Vice President Academic or a Vice President Student Services.

Table 6.7

Location of Advising Services by Employee Group

Location of Advising Services	Staff (n = 82)	Faculty (n = 38)	Total (n = 120)
Academic Unit or Program Area	36	31	67
	44%	82%	56%
Student Affairs or Student Success office	26	0	26
	32%	0%	21.5%
Registrars or Enrollment Office	1	0	1
	1%	0%	0.5%
Career Services	3	0	3
	4%	0%	2.5%
Learning Support or Library	2	0	2
	2%	0%	2%
Other	14	7	21
	17%	18%	17.5%

All faculty indicated that they reported to an academic unit or program area. Of the seven faculty who chose "other," their written responses were similar to "academic unit". Therefore, I assumed that all faculty were located in an academic unit. For example, some respondents indicated that they advised "in their office," which is presumably located in, nearby, or associated with an academic unit. Although almost one half of the staff advisors were in an academic unit or program area, more advisors (71%) reported to a student services area (Table 6.8).

Table 6.8

Reporting Structure of Advising Services by Employee Group

	Staff (*n* = 82)	Faculty (*n* = 38)	Total (*n* = 120)
Academic Unit or Program area	24	38	62
	29%	100%	52%
Student Affairs / Student Success office	44	0	44
	54%	0%	37%
Registrars or Enrollment Office	1	0	1
	1%	0%	1%
Career Services	3	0	3
	4%	0%	2.5%
Learning Support or Library	1	0	1
	1%	0%	1%
Other	9	0	9
	11%	0%	7.5%

6.4 The Role of the Academic Advisor

6.4.1 Advising delivery. The next question asked participants to indicate how they facilitated their advising appointments. Participants could choose all of the modalities that applied to their situation. The data indicated that both faculty and staff offered scheduled appointments approximately 25% of the time, email advising approximately 25% of the time, and drop-in appointments approximately 25% of the time (Table 6.9). Faculty and staff spent less time advising over the phone and online (at least 3 years prior to COVID-19).

Table 6.9

How Advising is Administered by Employee Group

Advising Meetings	Staff (*n* = 82)	Faculty (*n* = 38)	Total (*n* = 120)
Scheduled	71	34	105
	87%	89%	87.5%
Email	67	33	100
	82%	87%	83%
Drop-In	65	30	95
	79%	79%	79%
Phone	49	22	71
	60%	56%	59%
Online	14	10	24
	17%	26%	20%
Other	8	1	9
	10%	3%	7.5%

6.4.2 Types of information. Participants were asked to identify the types of information they shared with students during an advising session. Participants were able to choose "all that apply" (Table 6.10).

Table 6.10

Information Shared During an Advising Session by Employee Group

Information Shared with Students	Staff (*n* = 82)	Faculty (*n* = 38)	Total (*n* = 120)
Academic Policies	69	37	106
	84%	97%	88%
Course Selection	59	35	94
	72%	92%	78%
Goal Setting	68	15	83
	83%	39%	69%
Program Mapping	58	27	85
	71%	71%	71%
Learning Skills	55	26	81
	55%	68%	67.5%
Program Selection	55	18	73
	55%	47%	61%
Career Advising	43	24	67
	52%	63%	56%
Transfer Advising	46	16	62
	56%	42%	52%
Financial Aid	31	2	33
	38%	5%	27.5%

Table 6.11 illustrates the preponderance of each selected item. Specifically, in this table, the top five types of information shared with students are presented.

Table 6.11

Top Five Types of Information Shared by Employee Group

Staff	Faculty	Staff + Faculty
1. Academic Policies	1. Academic Policies	1. Academic Policies
2. Goal Setting	2. Course Selection	2. Course Selection
3. Course Selection	3. Program Mapping	3. Program Mapping
4. Program Mapping	4. Learning Skills	4. Goal Setting
5. Learning Skills and Program Selection	5. Career Advising	5. Learning Skills

To test for differences in the proportions of staff and faculty offering each of the listed services, a series of *Z*-tests was performed. The question asked respondents to choose all the answers that apply, which makes a chi-square test inappropriate because each questionnaire respondent is counted more than once in the table. To mitigate this risk, the question was approached as a multiple comparison

problem, and the Bonferroni correction was applied. This was undertaken by taking the standard significance level (alpha) and dividing it by the number of tests: in this case, there were 10 possible responses; therefore, the statistical significance threshold for α was reduced from .05 to .005. By using the new, corrected significance value, I found that more staff advisors indicated that they provided information on financial aid and goal setting than did the faculty, but the other differences were not statistically significant. Given the possible number of responses to this question, Cohen's *h* was selected because it allows for the comparison of pairs of proportions (Yu, Tam, Wong, Lam & Stewart, 2012), rather than means. Using Cohen's *h*, the effect size for financial aid was -0.9 and goal setting was -0.94, both suggesting a large effect (Yu et. al., 2012).

6.4.3 Role Clarity. Participants then were asked to indicate how much they agreed with a set of four statements that centre on role clarity. These statements were written directly from the interview data to seek to legitimize the category. A 5-point, Likert-format scale (i.e., 1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree) was used. A higher mean Likert-format score indicates that the two groups are more likely to disagree (Table 6.12).

Table 6.12

Table of Mean Likert-Format Scores – Role Clarity by Employee Group

	Staff (*n* = 82)		Faculty (*n* = 38)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Role clearly understood	2.71	1.22	2.95	1.23
Responsibilities align with job description	2.11	1.04	2.84	1.33
Location of office is appropriate	2.07	1.31	2.79	1.40
Role requires strong relationships	1.24	0.53	1.71	0.84

To test for statistical significance in the mean Likert-format scores between staff and faculty, a series of independent chi-square tests was performed, again, addressing the multiple comparison testing problem. Considering four possible responses, a Bonferroni correction of α = .0125 was applied

to control for the inflation of Type I error. It was found that, on average, faculty tended to disagree more than did staff with the following two statements:

1. My day-to-day responsibilities align with my job description ($X^2[3]= 17.24$, $p = .002$), $V = 0.4$)
2. My role requires strong relationships with faculty and staff across campus ($X^2[3]= 15.91$, $p = .001$, $V = 0.4$)

6.4.4 Strategic link to retention. Participants were asked to indicate whether they believed that advising was an important retention activity at their institution. Overall, 96 respondents (80%) agreed that advising was recognized as an important retention activity at their institution (Table 6.13). In contrast, seven respondents (6%) indicated that advising was not recognized as an important retention activity, and 17 respondents (14%) were not sure. A chi-square test was applied to determine whether there was a relationship between the faculty and staff responses. The results of the chi-square test revealed a statistically significant relationship between role type and belief in advising as a retention activity ($X^2[2]= 7.3277$, $p = .026$). Specifically, the staff were more likely to believe that advising was seen as an important retention activity than were the faculty. However, Cramer's V was 0.2 demonstrating a weak association.

Table 6.13

Advising as a Retention Activity by Employee Group

Employee Group	Yes	No	Maybe
Staff (n = 82)	69	6	7
	84%	7%	8.5%
Faculty (n = 38)	27	1	10
	71%	2.5%	26%

6.5 Professional Development Activities

6.5.1 Support for training. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with a set of eight statements that focused on the institutional support for PD provided to advisors. Again, a 5-point Likert-format scale (i.e., 1 = strongly agree, and 5 = strongly disagree) was used. A

higher mean Likert-format score indicates a higher level of disagreements within the group. Table 6.14 shows the mean Likert-format scores and standard deviation for each of the statements for staff and faculty and, again, we can see a discrepancy between staff and faculty.

Table 6.14

Table of Mean Likert-Format Scores – Support for Training by Employee Group

Support for Training	Staff (n = 82)		Faculty (n = 38)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Training is encouraged	1.66	0.84	2.61	1.29
Onboarding for advising exists	2.66	1.28	3.70	1.31
Ongoing training is offered	2.65	1.28	3.65	1.32
Institution recognizes all advising roles	2.42	1.20	2.84	1.20
I seek out training	1.52	0.61	2.59	1.26
I demonstrate my skills regularly	1.80	0.97	2.57	1.19
Advising practice is assessed regularly	2.84	1.27	4.00	1.23
I receive feedback	2.90	1.34	3.57	1.39

To test for significant differences in the mean Likert-format scores between staff and faculty, a series of independent chi-square tests was performed, again, addressing the multiple comparison testing problem. Considering eight possible sets of responses, a Bonferroni correction $\alpha = .00625$ was applied to control for the inflation of Type I error. On average, faculty tended to disagree more than did staff with the following statements:

1. Training and PD are encouraged , ($X^2[4]= 22.46$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.4$)
2. PD is offered as part of advisor on-boarding ($X^2[4]= 16.17$, $p = .003$, $V = 0.4$)
3. Ongoing training & PD is offered specific to my advising role ($X^2[4]= 14.45$, $p = .006$, $V = 0.3$)
4. I personally seek out PD opportunities ($X^2[4]= 36.28$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.6$)
5. There are opportunities to demonstrate my skills ($X^2[4]= 21.29$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.4$)
6. My advising practice is assessed on a regular basis ($X^2[4]= 24.19$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.5$)

6.5.2 Professional development activities. Participants were asked to indicate the importance of various training modalities using a rating scale of 1 = extremely important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = not important at all, and 4 = not applicable. A higher mean rating scale score indicates that the respondent is more likely to indicate something is not important or not applicable. Table 6.15 demonstrates that for staff, attending workshops, reflective practice, and attending coordinated advisor training are important for their advising practices. The faculty rated reflective practice and reading as being important, followed closely by attending a community of practice.

Table 6.15

Mean Ratings – Types of Training by Employee Group

Types of Training	Staff (n = 82)		Faculty (n = 38)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Community of Practice	1.72	0.88	2.06	1.01
Conferences	1.82	0.82	2.58	1.08
Advisor Training	1.49	0.81	2.22	1.08
Reading	1.57	0.52	1.84	0.80
Reflection	1.48	0.62	1.70	0.91
Research	2.06	0.89	2.65	0.95
Shadowing	1.60	0.70	2.08	0.95
Workshops	1.48	0.65	2.32	1.03

Using the mean scores, we can see that both staff and faculty ranked reflection in the highest position (Table 6.16). We can also see that both staff and faculty ranked reflection, advisor training, reading, shadowing, and community of practice in their top five, albeit in a different order.

Table 6.16

Top 5 Types of Training Ranked by Employee Group

Staff	Faculty
1. Reflection	1. Reflection
2. Workshops (tied with reflection)	2. Reading
3. Advisor Training	3. Community of Practice
4. Reading	4. Shadowing
5. Shadowing	5. Advisor Training

To test for statistically significant differences in the mean rating scores comparing staff and faculty, a series of independent chi-square tests was applied. With nine possible responses, a Bonferroni correction of $\alpha = .00556$ was applied to adjust for the inflation of Type I error. These chi-square tests indicated no statistical significance with respect to how staff ranked training topics, but did reveal that faculty are statistically significantly less likely to rank the following five training options highly:

1. Conferences ($X^2[3]= 18.91$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.4$)
2. Coordinated advisor training ($X^2[3]= 16.64$, $p = .001$, $V = 0.4$)
3. Reading ($X^2[3]= 12.67$, $p = .005$, $V = 0.3$)
4. Reflective Practice ($X^2[3]= 14.57$, $p = .002$, $V = 0.4$)
5. Workshops and webinars ($X^2[3]= 24.53$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.5$)

The participants were provided with an "other" option to provide written responses to indicate what other training offerings advisors found to be important. Written responses were listed and then sorted into "like" categories. Participants offered the following responses: professional associations, shadowing other service areas, team meetings to discuss scenarios, individual coaching, practice through their post-secondary credential, speaking to students, and finally life experience, including "common sense."

6.5.3 Training topics. Participants were asked to indicate the importance of various training topics using a rating scale of 1 = extremely important, 2 = somewhat important, and 3 = not important at all. A higher mean rating scale score indicates a response is not important. Table 6.17 demonstrates the mean ratings for both staff and faculty.

Table 6.17

Mean Ratings – Importance of Training Topics by Employee Group

Training Topics	Staff (n = 82)		Faculty (n = 38)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Advising Theory	1.27	0.47	1.62	0.68
Communication	1.10	0.30	1.17	0.38
Critical Thinking	1.10	0.34	1.39	0.55
Diversity	1.12	0.33	1.32	0.53
Goal Setting	1.27	0.45	1.44	0.56
Institutional Mission	1.69	0.63	2.17	0.70
Competencies	1.30	0.51	1.56	0.61
Service Tours	1.68	0.65	2.22	0.76
Student Development Theory	1.51	0.57	1.97	0.79
Wellness	1.10	0.30	1.36	0.54
Study Skills	1.39	0.60	1.39	0.49
Team Building	1.55	0.59	1.72	0.70
Technical Systems	1.61	0.54	2.17	0.76
Student Populations	1.24	0.46	1.67	0.59

Using the mean scores, we can see that both staff and faculty ranked all of the topics between extremely important and somewhat important, with the exception of faculty rating the institutional mission, service tours, and technical systems between somewhat important and not important at all. Both faculty and staff ranked communication skills the highest, and faculty and staff included critical thinking / problem solving; student wellness and safety; and diversity, equity, and social inclusion in their top five ranked training topics (Table 6.18). The top five training topics were derived from the mean scores from Table 6.17.

Table 6.18

Top Five Training Topics Ranked by Employee Group

Staff	Faculty
1. Communication Skills	1. Communication Skills
2. Critical Thinking / Problem Solving	2. Diversity, Equity & Social Inclusion
3. Student Wellness and Safety	3. Student Wellness & Safety
4. Diversity, Equity and Social Inclusion	4. Critical Thinking / Problem Solving
5. Unique Student Populations	5. Study Skills or Learning Strategies

As with the previous question, the mean ratings were tested for statistical significance by using a series of independent chi-square tests for each statement. A Bonferroni correction of $\alpha = .0035$ was applied to reference the 14 sets of possible responses. The independent chi-square tests indicated that faculty were less likely to rank the following six training topics as highly as did the staff:

1. Critical thinking ($X^2[2]= 13.75$, $p = .001$, $V = 0.3$)
2. Institutional mission, vision, values ($X^2[2]= 13.38$, $p = .001$, $V = 0.3$)
3. Services & campus tours ($X^2[2]= 17.1$, $p < .0001$ $V = 0.4$)
4. Student development theory ($X^2[2]= 16.01$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.3$)
5. Technical systems and training ($X^2[2]= 28.87$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.5$)
6. Unique student populations ($X^2[2]= 16.14$, $p < .0001$, $V = 0.4$)

6.5.4 Professional community. To learn more about an advisor's professional community, participants were asked whether they sought out information from colleagues at other colleges in Ontario. Data from Table 6.19 demonstrate that one half of the staff (50%) and only 37% of faculty sought out their professional community outside of their organization.

Table 6.19

Seeking Information from Colleagues by Employee Group

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Staff	41	37	2
(*n* = 82)	50%	45%	2%
Faculty	14	21	2
(*n* = 38)	37%	55%	5%

6.5.5 NACADA's Competency framework. To learn more about the core competencies applied to their advising practice, the following two questions asked advisors about their familiarity with the NACADA's competency framework. Of the 120 respondents (Table 6.20), only 34 (28%) indicated that they were familiar with NACADA's competency framework. Of the 34 respondents, 32 were staff (94%) and 2 were faculty (5%).

Table 6.20

F*amiliarity with NACADA's Competency Framework by Employee Group*

Employee Group	Yes	No	Maybe
Staff (*n* = 82)	32	36	13
	39%	44%	16%
Faculty (*n* = 38)	2	1	34
	5%	3%	89%

A Pearson's chi-square test revealed a strong relationship between role type and familiarity with NACADA's competency framework ($X^2[2]= 23.70$, $p < .0001$). Specifically, faculty were less likely to be familiar with the competency framework. Cramer's *V* is 0.4, demonstrating a medium association. To analyze this difference further, a chi-square test was applied against role type (faculty or staff) and level of education and years of experience to determine whether either played a role in staff and faculty's familiarity with the NACADA framework. Neither education nor work experience were determined to play a statistically significant role.

Participants who chose "yes" or "maybe" in response to the question then were asked to indicate which of the three competencies in the NACADA framework was the most important. Of the

respondents who were familiar or maybe familiar with the competency framework, 65% indicated that the *relational* competency was the most important for their advising practice, whereas 20% of the respondents indicated that *informational* was the most important (Table 6.21).

Table 6.21

Importance of Individual Competencies in NACADA's Competency Framework by Employee Group

Employee Group	Conceptual	Informational	Relational	Not Sure
Staff (*n* = 46)	1	9	30	6
	2%	20%	65%	13%
Faculty (*n* = 3)	0	1	2	0
	0%	33%	67%	0%

6.6 Assessing Advisor Practice

6.6.1 Developing advising practice. The following set of questions asked participants to reflect on what the most effective strategy for developing their advising practices has been. Participants could choose one from a list of options that were developed from the documentary and interview data. We can see from Table 6.22 that approximately one half of the staff and one half of the faculty sought out training on their own. Approximately 23% of the staff found attending external conferences and workshops to be effective, whereas 30% of faculty chose "other." Written responses from the "other" category included the following: self-reliance, experience, past education, peer support, and training directly from the supervisor. Three respondents indicated "none." A Pearson's chi-square test was applied to examine the difference between faculty and staff responses. The chi-square test indicated there is a statistically significant relationship between role type and development strategy ($X^2[4]= 4.39$, $p = .003$). Specifically, faculty were less likely to attend external conferences and workshops. Cramer's *V* was 0.4, showing a medium association.

Table 6.22

Most Effective Strategy for Developing Advising Practice by Employee Group

Employee Group	Seeking out training on my own	Attending institutional training	Attending institutional advisor training	Attending external conferences	Other
Staff	36	12	8	19	7
(n = 82)	44%	15%	10%	23%	9%
Faculty	18	6	1	1	11
(n=38)	49%	16%	3%	3%	30%

6.6.2 Measuring effectiveness. Focusing on the assessment of impact, Question 19 asked participants to select the most effective way to measure the effectiveness of their advising practice. Participants were only able to select one option because I wanted them to indicate the single most important strategy. Table 6.23 shows us that most staff (61%) and faculty (76%) relied on student feedback to assess their practices. A Pearson's chi-square test was applied and revealed no statistically significant relationship between role type and measuring effectiveness.

Table 6.23

Measuring Effectiveness of Advising Practice by Employee Group

Employee Group	Student survey	Student feedback	Retention data	Manager feedback	Other
Staff (n = 82)	9	50	9	9	5
	11%	61%	11%	11%	6%
Faculty	3	29	1	2	3
(n = 38)	8%	76%	3%	5%	8%

6.7 Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Results

In Chapter 4, the results from the qualitative study, which included analysis of documentary evidence and semi-structured interviews, were summarized into five categories (Figure 6.1). Results from the questionnaire were compared to the results from the qualitative data to further legitimize the identified categories. A brief review of the categories compared to the questionnaire data is discussed in the next section. The overview includes a qualitative statements column that includes categories

extracted through the content analysis and subsequently used to inform the development of the questionnaire tool. The quantitative results column highlights the results from the questionnaire tool that either support or contradict the findings from the qualitative study. In general, the Figure 6.1 is an illustrative example of how the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study relate.

Figure 6.1

Summary of Qualitative and Quantitative Results

Main Categories	Qualitative statements	Quantitative results
1: Types of Advising	• PD documents focus on developmental advising • Advisors indicate spending most of their time on transactional advising • Advisors would prefer to spend their time on developmental advising	• Most time is spent explaining academic policies, course selection, and program mapping • Advisors neither agree nor disagree their responsibilities align with their job description (faculty disagree more) • Half of the advisors engage in informational advising • More than half of the advisors spend less than 75% of their time advising
2: Institutional Advising Model	• Documents attempt to define the institutional advising model based on various advising roles • Advisors do not always know an academic advising model exists • Advisors located in an academic unit or student service unit • Advisors report to academic unit or student service unit	• Most faculty are located in, and report to, an academic unit • Staff advisors are somewhat evenly located in an academic or student service unit • Approximately 75% of staff advisors report to a student service unit
3: Role of the Academic Advisor	• Advisors indicate there is inconsistency in job expectations and job description • Advisors report a conflict between reporting structures and advising roles • Advisors indicate there is conflict between faculty and staff advising	• Staff advisors neither agree nor disagree that their role is understood or recognized, faculty tend to disagree more • Most advisors are not familiar with the NACADA competency model • Most advisors are familiar with developmental advising
4: Professional Development Practices	• Documents provide evidence of institution-led PD practices and activities • PD practices and activities not consistent across institutions • Advisors believed that institutional-led training not adequate • Advisors indicate having to look for PD activities on their own • Advisors indicate reading, shadowing, and reflective practice as being important practices	• Staff advisors believed PD is encouraged, faculty disagree • Staff advisors seek out PD, whereas faculty do not • 50% of staff and faculty advisors believe seeking out PD is most effective strategy • Approximately 25% of staff advisors believe institutional-led PD is most effective • Staff advisors believe reflection is the most important PD practice, whereas

	• Advisors indicate relational as most important skill to learn	faculty disagree • Advisors list communication as the most important PD topic • Advisors indicate relational as the most important skill to learn
5: Assessment of Advising Practice	• Documents reference evaluation of PD activities or evaluation of advising practice • Advisors indicate relying on student feedback and reflection as tools to evaluate their advising practice	• Staff agree they can demonstrate their skills regularly, but neither agree nor disagree that their advising practice is assessed, or that they receive feedback • Faculty disagree they demonstrate their advising skills regularly; their advising practice is assessed or that they receive feedback • Majority of advisors believe student feedback is most effective to evaluate advising practice

6.7.1 Types of advising. The qualitative data indicated that there was a preference for developmental advising via both the documentary evidence and the interview responses. The quantitative data indicated that the information staff advisors spent time sharing academic policies, goal setting, course selection, and program mapping. Faculty indicated that they spent most of their time informing students about academic policies, course selection, program mapping, learning skills, and career advising. Together, academic advisors spent most of their time advising on academic policies, course selection, and program mapping. When asked if their responsibilities aligned with their job description, both staff and faculty neither agreed nor disagreed. Faculty, however, were statistically significantly more likely to disagree than were staff.

When asked what type of advising faculty and staff engaged in, approximately one half indicated informational advising and one half indicated developmental advising. Interestingly, only 11% of staff indicated participating in transactional advising. This contrasts with indications from the interview data. However, the quantitative data showed that only approximately one half of the staff advisors spent 75% or more of their time advising. This suggests that for staff, advising was only part of their roles. This is in line with what the qualitative data from the interviews indicated. Approximately one half of the faculty spent approximately one quarter of their time advising.

6.7.2 Institutional advising model. The documentary evidence in the qualitative data indicated that there was an effort to identify the institutional advising model. However, the interview data indicated that although an institutional advising model existed, it was not consistent across campuses and that the reporting structure had an impact on academic advisors' access to PD training.

The questionnaire data indicated that 82% of the faculty advisors were located in an academic unit, and all the faculty reported to an academic unit. Staff indicated that they were evenly split between being located in either an academic or student services unit; however, three quarters of the staff advisors reported to a student service unit only. When asked about the location of their office for advising, more faculty than staff advisors disagreed that their space was appropriate.

6.7.3 Role of the academic advisor. The qualitative data collected from the documentary evidence suggested that institutions defined the role of the advisor in relation to the institutional advising model, whether it be centralized, decentralized, or shared. In addition, the institutional advising model determined the responsibilities with which academic advisors were tasked. The quantitative data indicated that both staff and faculty neither agreed nor disagreed that their role was clearly understood on campus, and they both tended to neither agree nor disagree that the institution recognized all of the advising roles as being connected to the institutional advising model. In each case, faculty tended to disagree more than staff advisors. The quantitative data also indicated that most support and faculty advisors were not familiar with the NACADA competencies, which would have outlined the important competencies for their roles.

6.7.4 Professional development practices. There were several models of PD identified from the qualitative data. In reference to Guskey (2000) and Kennedy (2005) in Tables 2.2 and 2.3, respectively, the advising models referenced through the documentary evidence included: training, CoP, observation, and standards-based. In the interviews, academic advisors referenced in training, CoP, observation, and the deficit model. The questionnaire asked participants first to consider the support for PD practices

and activities that were provided to them. On average, the staff tended to agree that PD was encouraged, whereas the faculty tended to disagree. Although the staff tended neither to agree nor disagree that onboarding and ongoing PD were offered, faculty were more likely to disagree. This evidence is in line with the interview data.

The staff were more likely to agree that they sought out PD opportunities on their own, whereas the faculty strongly disagreed. However, one half of both staff and faculty indicated that seeking out PD on their own was the most effective strategy for developing their advising practices. Approximately one quarter of staff and faculty believed that institutional training was the most effective strategy. Although the interviewees were not asked to speak to the most effective strategy, the interviewees spoke of the need to seek out training on their own.

Participants in the quantitative study were asked to indicate the importance of various PD activities derived from the qualitative study. Both faculty and staff reported that reflection was the most important issue for both groups. Staff also listed workshops, institutional advisor training, reading, and shadowing in their top five PD activities, whereas faculty indicated reading, CoP, and shadowing as their top five PD activities.

Finally, participants in the quantitative study were asked to rank the importance of a list of training topics derived from the interview data. Again, both staff and faculty ranked communication skills as the top training topic, and each included critical thinking; student wellness and safety; and diversity, equity, and social inclusion in their top five. Unique to staff was the issue of student populations, and unique to faculty were those of study skills or learning strategies.

6.7.5 Assessment of advising practice. The documentary evidence that related to assessing academic advising practice included a rubric for measuring advisor competency development from Institution A, and an institutional assessment plan that included various evaluation methods and outcomes that had not yet been implemented. The interview analysis indicated that academic advisors

evaluated their practice by focusing on student verbal and nonverbal feedback, and through reflection. The quantitative data indicated that although staff were likely to agree that they could demonstrate their skills regularly, they were more likely neither to agree nor to disagree that their advising practice was assessed regularly or that they received feedback on their practice. Faculty, however, disagreed that they could demonstrate their advising skills, their advising practice was assessed regularly and that they received feedback. When asked about the most effective measure of their advising practice, 61% of staff and 76% of faculty indicated student feedback. The remaining staff were split among student survey data, institutional retention data, and manager feedback. Much like the interview data, most questionnaire respondents indicated that student feedback was how they evaluated their advising practices.

6.8 Chapter Conclusion

By using descriptive and inferential statistics, I was able to demonstrate that some of the categories collected through the small, qualitative sample were legitimized by the larger quantitative sample, and reflected the literature. The process of learning and applying descriptive statistics was straight-forward and the process of applying inferential statistics was aided using SPSS. By engaging in quantitative analysis, I also learned about calculating and demonstrating the degree to which a finding is true by using Cramer's V and Cohen's h. For example, I learned that staff advisors were significantly more likely to understand academic advising as a retention activity, and therefore I assumed staff advisors were more aware of the impact of this activity than faculty. However, when I measured the degree to which this was true, it demonstrated a very weak association.

In general, the findings from the quantitative data supported the findings from the qualitative data, and we were able to learn more about the similarities and difference between staff advisors and faculty advisors summarized in Figure 6.1. For example, both the qualitative and quantitative data suggest that at least half of the advisors in the college system spend less than 75% of their time on

advising. However, some findings suggest that the categories from the qualitative data were not as widespread. For example, the qualitative data indicated that advisors desired to spend more time engaging in developmental advising. However, the quantitative data suggested that most staff advisors already spend most of their time engaging in developmental advising.

In Chapter 7, I will be discussing the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative phases in relation to the literature.

Chapter 7: Discussion

My experience in the Ontario college system, both as an academic advisor and as an administrator managing advisors, taught me that there is a lack of clarity across the system in defining the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors. I also saw a lack of consistency in the application of academic advising on college campuses in Ontario. This understanding was confirmed through an examination of the available literature and research on the concept of academic advising and the role of the academic advisor, which demonstrated that academic advising in Canada continues to lack a unified definition, and the role and responsibilities of the academic advisor remain inconsistent (Aiken-Wisniewski et al., 2015; Creamer, 2000; Larson et al., 2018; McGill, 2019; McGill et al., 2020; Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008). This lack of a definition and consistency in practice are characteristics that have, in part, slowed academic advising's progression as a profession. Professional Development (PD) emerged in the literature as a practice that both informs and is informed by academic advising's emergence as a profession. Noting a lack of literature on the specific experience of academic advisors in the Ontario college system, especially as they related to PD, this study undertook to explore the nature and scope of academic advising, and to find out what PD activities were currently available to, and deemed important by, academic advisors in the Ontario college context. Furthermore, the research questions aimed to explore how academic advisors assess the impact of PD on their practice. In this way, suggestions could be made towards future PD activities that would push the practice of academic advising in the Ontario college system forward.

This chapter discusses my findings in light of the 5 categories identified in my qualitative study and then tested in my quantitative study. The five categories include: (a) types of advising, (b) institutional advising model, (c) roles and responsibilities of the academic advisor, (d) PD practices, and (e) assessment of advisor practice. The findings will also be discussed in relation to any differences between advisors in staff and faculty roles. Of all of the independent variables tested, role revealed the

only statistically significant results. For example, no significant findings were found using the variables of size of institution or years of practice (see Chapter 6 for a full analysis of the data).

7.1 Types of Advising

The first category, types of advising, refers to the concept of transactional versus developmental advising. I first noted the concept through the documentary evidence provided by institutions where the term developmental advising was associated primarily with student success advisors. There were two significant findings here: first, an inconsistency between what these advisors thought their roles should be and what they were required to do; and second, a preference for developmental advising among advisors. While the institutional documents referenced developmental advising as the primary responsibility of advisors, the interview transcripts revealed a different story. Many of the interviewees stated that they spent too much time on transactional advising and would prefer to engage with more developmental advising. The interviewees suggested that this disparity between their described role and what they actually did could be attributed to inconsistent institutional advising models and reporting lines, in addition to unclear roles and responsibilities of the academic advisors. These findings were supported by the literature, which revealed academic advising continues to lack a clear definition (Schulenberg & Lindhorst, 2008) and consistent application of advising models (Cate & Miller, 2015).

The second finding, that there is a preference for developmental advising among staff academic advisors, is also supported by the literature. Developmental advising looks specifically at the social, emotional, and intellectual development of students (Drake, 2015). Creamer and Scott (2000) described developmental advising as an intentional practice that encourages students to discuss their future goals related to their career aspirations, rather than focusing on course selection. The reason there is a preference for developmental advising, Grites (2013) contended, is that it is easy to understand and its holistic approach to student achievement is appealing. I would agree with the latter because I believe the appeal of developmental advising is due to the nature of helping students achieve their academic

and personal goals. The interview transcripts also described how much advisors wanted to develop relationships with students beyond purely transactional interactions.

To better understand the generalizability of these findings, the questionnaire (see Appendix D) asked respondents if they were familiar with the differences among informational, transactional, and developmental advising, and which of the three they predominantly provided in their current role. The quantitative data suggests that more than half of staff (60%) were familiar with the three types of advising models, while the majority of faculty were 'maybe' (74%) familiar with the advising models. Furthermore, the quantitative data suggests that the staff and faculty who are familiar, or maybe familiar, with the advising models spend half their time on developmental advising and half their time on informational advising. This finding shows that both models are equally applied across the system.

While this split could contribute to role confusion, it is perhaps required to respond to the growing needs of our at-risk student population and an institutional focus on retention and student outcomes. The transcripts show that time spent on developmental advising might also be rewarding for individual advisors. We must be careful to note that the 50% split between transactional and developmental advising does not translate to 50% of individual advisors' time being spent on developmental advising. In addition to being asked what type of advising academic advisors were engaged in, questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate how much of their time they spent on academic advising as part of their total responsibilities. The questionnaire showed that only one half (46%) of the staff advisors spend most of their time advising, while a third (36%) spend about half of their time advising students. This means that although most of the staff advisors believed they engaged in developmental advising, they were only spending a quarter of their time on developmental advising. More concerningly, only a quarter of faculty respondents (18%) spend a quarter or more of their time advising. The majority of faculty advisors (82%) spent less than a quarter of their time advising. It is not surprising that faculty were only spending a fraction of their time advising, given their other

administrative and teaching responsibilities. This finding is supported in the literature which linked the diffusion of academic advising tasks with various other administrative tasks to inconsistency in academic advising and confusion among staff and faculty (Aiken-Wisniewski et al. 2015). Taken together, these findings show that there is perhaps less developmental advising taking place in the college system in Ontario than might be needed. We can say that in Ontario, although we are making progress toward understanding the value of developmental advising in supporting student outcomes, academic advisors are likely spending most of their time completing administrative and transactional functions, as suggested by the interview evidence.

7.2 Institutional Academic Advising Model

The second category that emerged from the findings related to the institutional advising model, which I have defined as including the reporting structures and location, within either an academic or service unit. As I described in Chapter 2, the institutional advising model can be centralized, decentralized, or shared (Pardee, 2000). For example, an academic advising service might be located centrally, dispersed among academic units, or both. In terms of reporting structures, an academic advisor might report to an academic or student service unit. The qualitative phase of the study demonstrated that three institutions had a shared supplementary model, while one had a central, self-contained model (see Table 4.3). This suggests that there is a variety of advising models in the Ontario system in which both staff and faculty provide academic advising. Although the questionnaire did not include direct questions about the institutional advising model, respondents were asked to indicate if they were located in, and reported to, an academic or student success unit. The findings were that one third of the staff across the college system reported to a student services unit, whereas the remaining two thirds reported to an academic unit. Not surprisingly, all the faculty who responded to the questionnaire indicated they are part of and report to an academic unit. This suggests that while central

advising units exist in the Ontario colleges, the purpose of academic advising continues to be dictated in large part by the academic units.

7.2.1 Reporting lines. The distinction between centralized and decentralized models of advising is important because, as Kuhn and Padak (2008) suggested, the reporting lines dictate the purpose of advising. Advisors who report to an academic unit might have different responsibilities and goals than might an advisor who reports to a student service unit. This was evident in one of the institutions where the academic advisors who reported to an academic unit believed that they spent more time on transactional tasks because that was what the academic unit needed them to do. What is also of interest is that from the quantitative findings, more staff believed that advising is an important retention activity, whereas a significant number of faculty did not believe this. This suggests that within a student service unit, staff advisors believed that the purpose of academic advising was to enhance retention, while the focus of advising in an academic success unit was on customer service, in the case of staff advisors, and on learning and career support, in the case of faculty advisors. As Bridgen (2017) pointed out in his study, administrators, faculty, and staff all perceive the purpose and function of academic advising differently. Although in my study respondents were not asked specifically what they perceived the value of advising to be, as in the Bridgen study, they were asked whether or not advising was recognized as a retention activity his findings are still supported by mine. Only staff saw the value of advising as a retention tool. The academic advisors also suggested that the institutional advising model had implications for academic advisors' access to PD activities. In some cases, when an advisor reported to an academic unit, they believed that they had to explain why PD specific to advising was important. The fact that a majority of academic advisors report to academic units might therefore have implications for institutional support of PD specific to academic advising.

7.2.2 Location of advising services. The interview data suggested that many Ontario colleges have implemented a supplementary academic advising model, where advising is shared between a

central advising centre and advisors located in academic units (Pardee, 2000). However, the supplementary model was not applied consistently across any of the three institutions studied. For example, in two institutions studied, staff advisors indicated that some of the academic units had staff academic advisors in addition to faculty advisors, while others did not. Furthermore, in two of the institutions, the advisors embedded in the academic unit reported to the academic unit, while at the remaining two institutions, staff advisors reported to a student service unit.

When the institutional advising model is not applied consistently within a given institution, it creates several problems. First, as the interviewees indicated, an inconsistent academic advising model creates confusion for staff across campus. As McGill (2019) argued, inconsistency in institutional advising models results in a lack of clear definition and direction for academic advising. For example, when a student calls the institutions' general inquiry line, the person answering the call must be familiar with each program's model, and must know whether the program coordinator, staff advisor (if they exist), faculty advisor or central service advisor is the best person to answer the student's question. For some perspective on how overwhelming a task this can be, each of the three Ontario colleges that I have worked at have 100+ program offerings.

Advisors also indicated that an inconsistent institutional advising model creates an inconsistent student experience. For example, in some academic programs, students have a staff or faculty advisor who is well versed in the students' program of choice and, in some cases, career pathways. However, within the same institution, where an embedded advisor does not exist, students must rely on a centralized academic advisor with more general knowledge of the program area. Further research in this area would be needed to ascertain to what extent the advising model influences the student experience, though we can see how this inconsistency in service level might result in student dissatisfaction, which could affect advisors' sense of their own effectiveness.

7.3. Roles and Responsibilities of Academic Advisors

The third category that emerged from the data suggested the role of the staff advisor was misunderstood, and there was a mismatch between the actual responsibilities of the staff advisors and what they expected to be doing. The focus on staff role confusion in the qualitative data is a result of the small sample size, in which no faculty advisors were represented. However, the findings were consistent with the literature: as Aiken-Wisniewski et al. (2015) pointed out, there continues to be a "lack of common experience, understanding, titling, and responsibilities among advisors across institutions and positions" (p. 66). Through the interview analysis, staff advisors and managers indicated that the role of the staff advisor was often misunderstood and conflicted with the faculty and program coordinator advisor roles. Within the college system, this issue is further complicated by the fact that staff and faculty are governed by separate collective agreements. This means that any attempts to better define the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors would require the cooperation of both student services and academic units. Cate and Miller (2015) suggested why this obstacle to role clarity is problematic, arguing that lack of a clear definition of who undertakes advising only serves to complicate discussions around what academic advisors do and what their roles and responsibilities are within higher education.

In addition to a misunderstanding of the role of the staff advisor, interview transcript analysis showed that staff advisors believed that there was a mismatch between what they expected their responsibilities to be (developmental advising) and what was expected of them (transactional advising). Bartlett (2006), writing about academic advising, stated that one of the issues to which new professionals must be introduced is the "mismatch between their expectations in relation to their classification and role within the unit" (p. 93). It is therefore not surprising that without clear definition of advising roles and related responsibilities, staff advisors are experiencing a mismatch between the responsibilities they have been tasked with and those they believe are of value to their role.

In order to generalize the finding of the lack of clarity of the staff role and the mismatch between expectations and daily responsibilities, the questionnaire asked respondents from both staff and faculty groups to indicate how much they agreed with the following statements: my role is clearly understood by faculty and staff on campus; and my day-to-day responsibilities align with the expectations of my job description. Surprisingly, findings from the questionnaire suggest that staff advisors neither agreed nor disagreed that their roles were understood, while faculty disagreed more. This discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative results could suggest that staff and faculty in the larger quantitative group believed their responsibilities were aligned with their role. However, it could also suggest that they themselves are not aware of what their advising role could be. The larger quantitative group self-reported less awareness of NACADA's competency framework and the hierarchy of advising models. The results could also point to a flaw in the questions used to collect data on this point in the qualitative phase. At the very least, more work has to be done to investigate role clarity of the staff and faculty advisors on campus.

7.4 PD Program and Activity Models

The fourth category identified from my study includes a list of PD program and activity models that are available to and practiced by academic advisors. In addition to listing the PD program and activity models, interview participants and questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate the importance of each. Figure 7.1 lists the various PD programs and activities that were observed and deemed important through both the qualitative and quantitative phases of my study.

Figure 7.1

PD Program and Activity Models

Observed Models		Important to Practice	
Documentary Evidence	Interviews	Support Staff	Faculty
• Training • Standards-based • Observation • CoP	• IGA • Training • Observation • CoP • Deficit model • Award bearing	• IGA: Reflection, reading, workshops • Training • Observation	• IGA: Reflection, reading • CoP • Shadowing

Figure 7.3. Illustrates the PD models observed through the documentary evidence, and interview transcripts, and those deemed important to practice by questionnaire respondents. IGA refers to Guskey's (2000) Individually Guided Activities. See Chapter 2.4 for more details.

The documentary evidence demonstrated that institutional-led PD models included training, standards-based, observation, and CoP's. I identified standards-based models when I observed in the documents a citation towards NACADA's competency model, the CAS standards and the CACUSS competency model. The NACADA (NACADA The Global Community for Academic Advising, 2017) and CACUSS competency models (CACUSS, 2017) focus on practitioner competencies, while the CAS standards focus more on the structures of the service area (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2019). Observation was noted when interviewees noted shadowing their peers to learn how to facilitate an advising session. CoP's were noted in the documentary evidence, although no specific details were provided in terms of the structure of the CoP. Through the interview transcripts, staff advisors indicated attending CoP's and finding value in sharing common advising experiences. Finally, in addition to institutional offerings, I observed that interviewees participated in IGA's when they mentioned reading and researching academic advising to learn more.

7.4.1 Important PD models. The questionnaire respondents were asked to rank the importance of the following PD activities: IGA's (reading, reflective practice and researching), institution-led advisor

training, observation (shadowing), and CoP's. The following sections interpret the data collected on each important PD model in relation to the literature on effective PD practices. The main findings in this category show a diversity of PD models in practice. Each has benefits and risks, but the data show that all are perceived as effective by both staff and faculty advisors. What this suggests is that despite academic advising being relatively new in the college system in Ontario, a variety of PD models are available. If their benefits can be harnessed properly, they could be transformative in better defining the institutional advising model and the roles and responsibilities of advisors (Kennedy, 2005).

7.4.1.1. Individually guided activities. The qualitative and quantitative data unanimously indicated that IGA's not only were the predominant and preferred method, but also were perceived to be the most important and most effective by academic advisors. What is unknown is whether IGA is preferred because of a lack of viable alternatives, given the emerging nature of the profession. Knowing that there is a misalignment between what an academic advisor expects of their role and what their actual responsibilities are, and knowing that faculty, in particular, believe their role is misunderstood, it is not unreasonable to assume that academic advisors are required to seek out PD activities on their own. It is also possible that self-guided activities suit the interests of people who go into the field of academic advising. Both faculty and staff academic advisors must stay up to date on academic programs and changes to institutional policies and procedures. Therefore, it is possible that the nature of the role of the academic advisor encourages constant learning.

Beginning with the qualitative data, one of the first ideas that emerged was that all of the interviewees specifically mentioned learning their roles through reading and researching advising. They described how typically the advisors were responsible for developing their own training pathways, sometimes in collaboration with their colleagues. The advisors mentioned wanting to stay current with the advising literature, and several had made it a habit to stay connected with a professional advising association. These observations led me to identify these as representing both IGA's and, in some cases,

the deficit model. According to Guskey (2000), the underlying assumptions with IGA's are that individuals can best determine their needs and find the learning to meet those needs. IGA's allow advisors to reflect on their personal needs and to choose a professional development pathway that is customized to their needs. In this case, academic advisors were consciously developing their own guided activities based on their own identified goals and areas for growth. However, when an academic advisor chooses a workshop to gain competencies, they feel they lack, they are choosing the deficit model (Kennedy, 2005). There was some evidence of advisors using the deficit model in the transcripts. However, this was not a variable tested in the quantitative phase. The challenge with both the IGA and deficit approaches is that there could be repetition of PD activities that could be more efficient if the activity were presented once, to an entire group. In addition, the IGA model could result in "little collaboration or professional sharing" (Guskey, 2000 p. 28). The solitary nature of the IGA activities described by participants would support these critiques. However, any move to address these critiques would have to take into account the stated preference for IGA by most of this study's participants.

7.4.1.2 Institution-led advisor training. The qualitative data indicated that three of the four institutions studied offered institution-led training opportunities. The training model, according to Kennedy (2005), is the most common and recognizable PD model. It is recognized for having an expert impart knowledge to the learner and, at times, the training allows for the learner to demonstrate their competence (Kennedy, 2005). According to Kennedy (2005), the challenge with the training model is that it does not demonstrate the connection between knowledge and practice and places the participant in a passive role. In the present study, three of the four institutions provided institutional advisor training to everyone who participated in advising students in some capacity. This included both staff and faculty advisors. This observation is important because it reveals that institutional advising models take a cross-campus view of advising that could establish connections between staff and faculty advisors and therefore compensate for variance in advising models. In general, the training offered

through the central advising service focused on facilitating workshops and establishing communities of practice. In some cases, the NACADA competency model was mentioned and acted as a foundation from which the training model was developed. In general, the qualitative data indicated that advisors believed that training offered centrally or organized by a colleague was helpful, but it was not among their preferred methods.

The questionnaire participants were asked to indicate the most effective way for learning their roles as advisors from a list including attending institution-led training. The questionnaire data indicated that only a tenth of staff surveyed believed that institutional training was effective, and only two of the 38 faculty surveyed indicated institutional advisor training to be effective. These results confirm the qualitative data. It's interesting to note the questionnaire data showed that whereas most staff advisors agreed that training is encouraged, in comparison, a statistically significant proportion of faculty advisors were less likely to agree. Therefore, the theoretical potential of institutional training to establish consistent competencies in staff and faculty advisors may not always materialize.

7.4.1.3 Observation. Both faculty and staff advisors indicated that observing a colleague was an effective practice. Guskey (2000) identified observation—known as shadowing within the academic advising context—as a recognized PD model. Observation entails one advisor sitting in on an advising session between a more experienced advisor and a student in order to note the interaction. The observing advisor then can reflect on the experience and how any new strategies can be used within their own practice. Conversely, observation can include having the more experienced advisor observe an advising session between a less experienced advisor and a student. In this scenario, the less experienced advisor receives immediate feedback on their performance (Guskey, 2000). This process can also help the less experienced advisor receive feedback on strengths and challenges that the advisor had not noticed themselves. The benefit of observation is that it leads to a consistency of practice and student experience and leads to learning for both the observer and the observed (Guskey, 2000). For

example, Guskey (2000) states that analyzing and reflecting on the feedback for both the observer and the observed, is an important element of professional growth. This model was observed in both the documentary and interview evidence and was noted as important to both staff and faculty groups. Given the perceived effectiveness of this approach, it is an area that merits future study.

7.4.1.4 Community of practice. Ingvarson, Meiers, and Beavis (2005) have demonstrated that PD activities offering a professional community have a significant impact on practice, especially when the professional community is encouraged by the institution and provides academic advisors with the opportunity to talk about their practice. De Rijdt, Stes, van der Vleuten, and Dochy (2013) stated that peer support is also responsible for the transfer of learning. Documents submitted by two of the three institutions included a reference to an advisor CoP established on their campus. Institution B, for example, set out the expectation that advisors attend the CoP to achieve credit in their future iteration of advisor training. Interview data also indicated that managers at two institutions coordinated CoP's, and staff advisors indicated having attended CoP's.

One of the benefits of a CoP's is that it provides, as described by Wenger (2000) "the building blocks of a social learning system" (p. 229) because it acts as a repository of what it means to be competent within that system. For example, a CoP for academic advisors could act as the repository for what it means to be an effective advisor. In the qualitative data, managers supported this by indicating that the value of the CoP was to provide an opportunity for advisors from across campus to share their practice. Kennedy (2005) describes the CoP model as being where the learning happens as a result of engagement and sharing knowledge among members. Kennedy (2005) reminds us that the purpose of a CoP is to be non-hierarchical and that members are responsible for initiating the direction of the community. This aspect of CoP's was reflected in the responses of the staff advisors who talked about the value of attending CoP's residing in building a network of peers across the institution.

The risk of the CoP, according to Kennedy (2005), is that it can "potentially serve to perpetuate dominant discourses in an uncritical manner" (p. 245). However, if applied consistently, the CoP has potential to begin building consensus around the knowledge and skills required to be a competent advisor. Also, given the opportunity to network and share experiences, the CoP could be an avenue for better defining the various advising roles across campus. The quantitative data shows that both staff and faculty ranked CoP highly, indicating that it has potential for future practice.

7.5 Assessing Advising Practice

The fifth, and final category referenced how academic advisors assess their advising practice. Assessment of academic advising practice was almost entirely missing from the documentary evidence. Institution A provided a checklist for advisors to self-report their progress through training. Institution B relied on questionnaire data collected at the end of a 2-day training period. Institution D, however, used various assessment practices to build a case for the development of a robust advising service on campus, including looking at institutional data and conducting student focus groups. In the literature, we learned that very little empirical research exists that focuses specifically on the performance of academic advisors (Powers et al., 2014) and it is not surprising that assessment is not yet built into institutional advisor training.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate how much they agree with the following statements: there are opportunities for me to demonstrate my advising competencies and skills; My advising practice is assessed on a regular basis; and I receive feedback from my manager on my advising practice on a regular basis. The quantitative data indicated that very few respondents relied on manager feedback to assess their practices. The staff advisors generally disagreed that they receive feedback from their manager and that their practice was assessed regularly. This finding was even more pronounced in faculty advisors, who disagreed more that they received feedback and that their advising

practice was assessed regularly. This is concerning because of the importance of feedback. As Givans Voller (2012) indicated, assessing academic advisor practice is important for the following reasons:

> Assessment of advisor outcomes identifies the strengths and gaps in advisor competencies to develop the appropriate training and professional development opportunities … [It] improves the consistency and accuracy of information, internal and external communication, and builds a sense of trust with students to increase student learning and progress toward degree completion. (p. 51)

Therefore, not only do assessment practices provide feedback on advisor learning and on student outcomes, but they provide a feedback loop that informs institutional advising structures, role clarity, and consistency of experience across the institution.

In the absence of institutional frameworks, when asked how they assessed their advising practice, interviewees indicated that they relied on verbal and non-verbal communication from students. In two cases, the advisors assessed their practice by beginning each advising session by asking students what they needed out of the advising session. When the session was complete, the advisor would ask the student whether their needs were met, and if the student indicated yes, the advisor considered the appointment successful. Questionnaire data from the current study also indicated that most staff (61%) and most faculty advisors (76%) rely on student feedback to assess their practice, and a few participants said they relied on student surveys. The challenge with relying on student feedback is that, unless the approach to feedback is consistent and uses an instrument that yields valid and reliable scores, the data will be unreliable (Alderman, Towers, & Bannah, 2012).

In addition to student feedback, the interview analysis revealed that academic advisors engage in reflection as a tool to assess their practice. The quantitative questionnaire asked participants to indicate whether reflection was the most important type of training required. I realize now that self-reflection should have been included not as a "type of training," but as part of how advisors assess their

practices. However, the questionnaire respondents indicated that reflection was the most important training topic. Bringle and Hatcher (1999) indicated that, as a practice, reflection is important because when it is applied purposefully, it leads to learning. They stress that reflection is more than just thinking: it requires an individual to analyze their preconceived ideas, values, and attitudes, and then compare them to new information. Through this process, reflection can lead to new understandings and a change in attitude. In some cases, reflection can lead to new approaches to one's practice (Rogers, 2001). In the case of academic advising in the Ontario college context, reflection is a tool that should be encouraged because it has the potential to inform the institutional advising model and the role of the academic advisor. It is also not subject to the limitations in reliability of student feedback.

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter 7, I discussed the findings from the ESMMR study in relation to the problem statement, the literature on academic advising and the five categories that were developed through the qualitative and quantitative analysis. In writing the discussion chapter, I was faced with the challenge of being aware of my positionality as an insider researcher as I attempted to consolidate my findings in relation to my assumptions. As I did this, I tried to pay attention to the findings from the quantitative data that did not necessarily support my assumptions and use those findings to think more critically of the factors that could be influencing these findings. For example, one of the findings that I continue to think about is that staff advisors who completed the questionnaire did not overwhelmingly believe that their role was misunderstood on campus. Both my personal experiences, as I explained in Chapter 1, and data gathered from the interview transcripts indicated that these roles were misunderstood. This demonstrated the value of using an ESMMR study that highlighted this discrepancy between my assumptions and the quantitative data.

Through the discussion I established that although staff advisors believe they spend some time on developmental advising, overall, most advisors only spend part of their time advising. The discussion

further established that institutional advising models tend to be shared, but not applied consistently across campuses. In relation to PD practices, academic advisors believed that IGA's such as reading and reflective practice were the most effective PD practices. Finally, I established that assessment of advising practice is in its infancy, but important to help further define the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors.

In Chapter 8, I will conclude my ESMMR study by discussing a set of recommendations that I believe have the potential to transform academic advising practice in the college system in Ontario.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In Chapter 7, I discussed the findings from my research study in relation to the literature on academic advising, and I began to lay out the implications of my research. First, I will discuss these implications in relation to the research questions. Then, I will describe the recommendations supported by my findings. Specifically, I concluded that the findings indicate that while the existing range of choice of PD practices and activities for advisors does help build advisor knowledge and skill, assessment of advising practice is in its infancy, and efforts should be made to develop meaningful assessment practices. I also concluded that there should be consistency in the design of institutional advising models, and in defining the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors. Following the recommendations, I discuss the contribution my study makes to the field and introduce an iterative conceptual framework in which I demonstrate the role PD and assessment can play in shaping both the institutional models and the roles and responsibilities of advisors. The chapter ends with a discussion of the limitations of the research, indications for future research, and a reflection on my development as a researcher.

8.1 Addressing the Main Research Question

To address the main research question, the ESMMR study allowed me to conduct a qualitative study with a small group of academic advisors and then test the findings across a larger population of academic advisors in the college system in Ontario. Given the findings, and their relevance to the main research question, I believe that the ESMMR turned out to be useful in answering the follow-up research questions. Although there were a few design flaws, which I have highlighted in Chapters 3 and 5, the ESMMR allowed me to pursue an in-depth understanding of how academic advising is perceived, practiced, and assessed in the Ontario college system.

8.1.1 Nature and scope of academic advising. The first follow-up research question asked how the nature and scope of academic advising were described by academic advisors and managers, and in

institutional documents. The design of the study turned out to be useful in answering this research question because I was able to collect a detailed transcript of how academic advisors describe the nature and scope of academic advising on their campus. For example, I learned that faculty and staff advisors generally described their roles as being misunderstood and that there was a mismatch between their expected responsibilities and what they were tasked with on a daily basis. This is consistent with the literature on academic advising that suggests academic advising is still developing as a profession due to the lack of a consistent definition (McGill, 2019).

Academic advisors also revealed in the transcripts that although some institutions have a shared institutional advising model, the model is not applied consistently across campus. King (1993) indicated that advising models are influenced by the context of the institution. This was found to be true as the colleges have each pursued their own development of academic advising as it is a relatively recent innovation within their existing structures (see Chapter 1). Therefore, as McGill (2019) noted, academic advising is housed in either student services or academic areas, and in some colleges, a mix of the two. It is therefore not surprising that the institutional advising model is not consistently applied either among or within institutions.

The ESMMR study allowed me to test these findings across a larger community of academic advisors. The results of the larger study strengthened the findings about consistency of models, though the results were neutral about a mismatch between expectations and daily tasks. The value of this question was that I was able to better understand how institutional context and structures influence the development of the institutional advising model. The scope of academic advising as it is currently practiced in the Ontario college system is wide because it includes many positions from different divisions within both academic and student support areas. Its nature is that it is understood as having different value by faculty and staff in these different areas. These factors contribute to inconsistencies

that are barriers to fully realizing the potential of academic advising within the college system in Ontario.

8.1.2 PD activities available to and practiced by academic advisors. The second follow-up research question asked what PD activities, both formal and informal, were currently available to and practiced by academic advisors in the Ontario College system. Through the qualitative process, I was able to collect a list of PD activities that were either offered by the institution or a professional organization, as well as activities that the academic advisors sought out on their own. I learned that several formal PD models (see Chapter 2) existed for academic advisors including institution-led training (incorporating standards models), shadowing (observation), and CoP's. In a few cases, academic advisors sought out post-graduate certificates (award-bearing) in advising practices. I also learned that academic advisors consistently engage in IGA's such as reading, researching and reflective practice. The quantitative study showed this range of PD activities was practiced across the system. The discovery of a variety of PD activities is not further evidence of inconsistency, nor is it a barrier to the future development of academic advising. Researchers looking at the value of PD in education have noted a combination of PD models led to transformative practice (Guskey,2000; and Kennedy,2005). This insight has not been explored in extant literature about PD in academic advising, so this finding suggests some intriguing possibilities for future study.

Several textbooks have been written about PD practices and activities for academic advisors (Folsom et al., 2015; Givans Voller et al., 2010; Gordon et al., 2000; Grites et al., 2016). However, according to Folsom et al. (2015) very little progress has been made by institutions in designing PD activities for their academic advisors. Through this research question, I learned that some institutional advisor training exists, but that academic advisors seek out training on their own to learn about the advising role. This is a new finding and suggests that even though academic advising is still an emerging profession lacking definition, individual advisors are eager to further develop and define their practice.

8.1.3 Important PD activities. The third follow-up research question aimed to find out which PD activities academic advisors perceived as being important and why. The semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C) were useful in yielding information on what PD activities academic advisors perceived as being important to their practice. More importantly, these findings were tested against a larger population where I was able to better understand to what extent each PD model was important to academic advisors across Ontario. Through the study I learned that both staff and faculty advisors agreed that IGA's including reading and reflection, institution-led training, and shadowing other advisors were important to their practice. In addition, both staff and faculty advisors indicated that CoP's were important, although faculty ranked CoP's higher in their top 5. This finding about CoP's is interesting in light of Ingvarson et al's (2005) insight into the value of collaborative PD activities.

The ESMMR design of the study was particularly valuable in tracking the importance of various training topics. First, I collected all of the training topics that were written in the documents or mentioned by the advisors, and then grouped them by topic. The interviewees were not asked to comment on the value or the efficacy of the training topics; they were simply asked to list PD activities they had attended. The list of training topics then was used in the questionnaire tool, and participants were asked to indicate which topics were most important to their practice. Figure 8.1 illustrates the top five topics listed by importance for staff and faculty.

Figure 8.1

Top 5 Training Topics Ranked by Employee Group

Staff	Faculty
• Communication Skills	• Communication Skills
• Critical Thinking / Problem Solving	• Diversity, Equity, and Social Inclusion
• Student Wellness and Safety	• Student Wellness and Safety
• Diversity, Equity, and Social Inclusion	• Critical Thinking / Problem Solving
• Unique Student Populations	• Study Skills or Learning Strategies

As Figure 8.1 shows, both staff and faculty rated communication skills as the most important topic for training. This confirms a recent study using the Delphi method by Menke, Stuck and Ackerson

(2018), in which advisors indicated that communication skills were most important. It is also notable that there is so much congruence between staff and faculty, as both groups named the same next 3 topics, though in a slightly different order. These three are all related to the complexity of the needs presented by the diverse student populations recruited through the access model of the Ontario college system. The only difference between the two groups was in their identification of the last of their top 5 topics of importance. Staff wanted to learn about unique student populations while faculty indicated a preference for study skills or learning strategies. This difference may be accounted for by the different areas of the college they represent, as faculty might naturally consider student academic success as part of their purview. These findings show that, while some textbooks, such as Givans Voller et al., 2010, treat staff and faculty training as separate topics, there is potential in designing PD that caters to both groups.

Both the qualitative and quantitative phases of my study involved asking participants to indicate whether they were familiar with the NACADA competences, which includes an informational, conceptual, and relational dimension, as first described by Habley in 1987. If they were familiar with the competencies, advisors were asked to indicate which of the three was most important. The interview and questionnaire data indicated that both staff and faculty advisors recognized the relational aspect of advising to be critical to the success of their practices. When the interviewees were asked to describe why the relational competency was most important, they provided two main reasons. First, relationship building was identified as a critical component of the current advising model because it is critical to gain the trust of students. Good communication helped advisors understand what students hoped to accomplish in their advising sessions. In addition, a good relationship with the student enabled the advisor to evaluate the success of their advising sessions with students. Second, relationship building was identified as a critical component of the various institutional advising structures. For example, whether advisors were embedded centrally or in an academic unit, building relationships with

administrators and faculty was critical to receiving the information advisors needed to share with students.

The value of this research question was that it allowed me to collect the various models of PD that academic advisors engage in, as well as learning about the models and topics that academic advisors believed to be important. When staff and faculty advisors were asked about the most effective strategy for developing their advising practice, overall, half of the academic advisors believed that seeking out PD on their own was the most effective, followed by institution-led training. This is an important finding for managers who are developing academic advisor PD activities at their institution and should recognize and include time for self-directed learning. PD offerings should also include both staff and faculty, take advantage of the benefits of collaboration and focus on the relational dimension of advising. This information is critical for managers attempting to design and implement institution-led training and design PD activities for continual development of advising practice.

8.1.4 Assessment of PD practices. The final qualitative follow-up research question focused on finding out how academic advisors assess their practice in relation to PD activities. As I indicated earlier, my intention was to find out how advisors assess their practice in relation to PD, but the data collected and analyzed did not reveal the connection. This was, in part, an outcome of the study design and the fact that my interview questions (see Appendix C) were not clear enough. The qualitative data indicated that academic advisors assess their advising practices, but the connection to how PD influenced their advising practices was not clear. The analysis of the interview transcripts indicated that academic advisors relied on student verbal and non-verbal feedback as well as reflective practice to assess their advising practice. When tested against the larger advising population, most academic advisors believed that student feedback was the most effective way to assess their practices. The problem with relying on student feedback, according to Folsom, Scobie and Shultz (2010) is that it "cannot effectively address the question of whether advisors, as a result of training and development efforts, have achieved the

desired learning outcomes" (p. 34). This points to a need for more effective assessment practices in student advising, especially as related to PD activities.

According to Folsom et al. (2010) building assessment into PD activities is essential for ensuring accountability because it provides information for institutional stakeholders and it can measure the growth and development of individual advisor practice. Folsom et al. (2010) state that assessment begins by articulating learning outcomes and then devise ways to measure those outcomes. Yet, as Powers, Carlstrom & Hughey (2014) point out, very little research focuses on the performance of academic advisors. McClellan (2011) states that although measuring student learning is an essential component to an effective academic advising service, more has to be done to understand advising from an institutional structural lens, as it is only within the context in which advising takes place that we can begin to develop meaningful assessment plans.

The value of this final follow-up research question was that it demonstrated a deficiency in current assessment practices for academic advising in the Ontario college system. I had intended to learn what assessment practices were in place to measure learning outcomes through PD, but through my design-error, I was able to understand only what assessment practices existed more broadly. This demonstrates the need to develop an assessment framework for academic advising that will measure not only the effectiveness of PD on advisor practice, but also the effectiveness of the institutional advising model and the various advising roles.

8.2 Recommendations

In the following section, I briefly describe each of the four recommendations as they relate to my findings. I also describe the scale of change required and suggest how to begin the process of implementation. While I argue that the colleges in Ontario are part of a complex system that posed many challenges to my study, each of the four recommendations I make can be implemented by individual colleges. I acknowledge that each individual college is also a complex system and as I describe

below, the more complex the system, the harder it is to make change (Chandler, 2013) within that system. Although I would like to advocate for systemic change across the college system in Ontario, I believe that change is more effective when each individual system is engaged in the process of making change (McCaffrey, 2004). In addition, my experience within the college system has taught me that while the types of changes suggested in my recommendations may have implications for larger systemic change in future, all of them can be implemented with the engagement of multiple stakeholders at the institutional level. Therefore, the four recommendations for individual institutions are:

1. Continue to provide multiple PD practices and activities for academic advisors.
2. Design and implement assessment practices for both the institutional advising model and academic advisor practice
3. Clearly define the roles of staff and faculty advisors.
4. Consistently apply an institutional advising model across academic and student services divisions.

Three of the four recommendations require institutions to adapt and change. Barnett (2011) indicated that for change to happen in higher education, institutions must be recognized as a complex system. This is important, because as Chandler (2013) argued, complex systems (particularly in higher education) seem to be more resistant to change. To demonstrate the complexity of the college system in Ontario, I highlighted in Chapter 1 that the colleges function as part of a system collectively governed by the MCU. Through this system, the colleges are subject to central strategic policies and mandates, some of which are universal and some of which are individual to the institutions, such as the Strategic Mandate Agreements signed between the colleges and the MCU. Adding to this complexity, the colleges in Ontario are governed by an overarching Ministry of Colleges and Universities and operate within the boundaries of both a faculty and support staff collective agreement. Within this context, effecting change in the

system in Ontario can be challenging and subject to the review and resistance of several external and internal forces.

McCaffery (2004) cautioned us that change that is imposed on an institution and its individual parts will not work. He argued that imposed change often looks good on paper, but rarely works out the way it is intended because when change is imposed, it can address issues that are explicit, but often fails to address issues that are hidden within an organization. For example, advocating for the application of a pre-established academic advising service at a particular institution may look good as a service offering to students, but would fail to align with the various institutional departments that may have a stake in the advising service. It may therefore only serve to expose rifts between faculty and staff, and even between service departments that are sometimes historical and deeply entrenched.

McCaffery (2004) also argued that change that is imposed may result in compliance, but it does not increase commitment from staff. Chandler (2013) argued that triggers for resistance to change include "the nature of faculty culture, a sense of territory, friction between functional divisions, resource allocation, traditions, leadership, communication, the power of unions and individual idiosyncrasies" (p. 243). Given the complex nature of the colleges in Ontario, it is important to consider the barriers to change when making recommendations for future practice. In Chapter 2, I explained the complexity of faculty versus staff advising, and each of the triggers for resistance highlighted by Chandler (2013) would need to be considered. For example, introducing staff advisors within an academic environment where faculty have traditionally held the role will likely be met with resistance due to an existing culture and job functions within the department.

To engage in institutional change in higher education, various approaches are recommended. For example, McCaffery (2004) stated that change requires leaders "supporting

and guiding people through the painful process" (p. 308), thereby establishing institutional networks that encourage individuals to understand and support change initiatives. Lumadi & Mampuru (2010) argued that strong communication and participation of all stakeholders are fundamental to the change process and ignoring these would result in resistance to change. Through a study of organizational change in a higher education setting, Barnett (2011) concluded that successful change requires: a) creating a representative voice and b) creating relevance and commonality. Therefore, it is critical that as institutions consider the recommendations I make, they take the time to inventory all the campus stakeholders and develop cross-institutional alliances.

Lumadi and Mampuru (2010) stated that institutional change takes place within three spaces, specifically: structural, technological, and behavioural. Structural changes are described as those that affect how services are run. For example, a structural change might include allocating academic advising roles within academic units to staff, rather than faculty. Technological changes involve adjusting processes, equipment, and reimagining mechanisms for efficiency. This type of change may include introducing a software platform for all advisors (faculty and staff) that allows students to make appointments and advisors to make notes. Introducing a software program that formalizes appointments, instead of allowing students to send an email request directly, can fundamentally change how an advisor works. People or behavioural changes relate to the institutional culture, beliefs, values, and attitudes of the personnel. Behavioural changes may include establishing a consistent purpose for and student outcomes related to advising that all advisors are expected to adhere to. Finally, Lumadi and Mampuru (2010) cautioned that when change is made in one area, administrators must be aware that it will create change in another area. In addition, critical to change is understanding the

timeline of the change and the scope, or how much change is required. Within these parameters, I will attempt to describe the scope of change required for each recommendation I propose.

8.2.1 Recommendation 1. My first recommendation is to continue providing multiple PD opportunities and practices for staff and faculty advisors. The value of providing multiple options for PD is that, together, multiple PD opportunities can have an impact on both defining the roles and responsibilities of the academic advisor and establishing the institutional advising model. Guskey (2000) indicated that PD practices and activities must be deliberate, ongoing, and systematic. Deliberate and ongoing practices should include providing institutional training that includes topics such as communication skills; student wellness and safety; critical thinking; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Deliberate and ongoing practices should also include providing staff and faculty advisors with the opportunity to engage in individually guided activities so they can work on skill development where they believe they have a deficit. Staff and faculty advisors should be encouraged to engage in IGA activities such as reading, research and reflection; and finally, advisors should engage in observation. Interestingly, a study by Ingvarson et al. (2005) found that collaboration between colleagues, such as through shadowing and CoP, was a significant predictor of learning, meaning collaboration between colleagues should be considered when designing and developing PD activities for academic advisors. As Givans Voller (2016) stated, "each time academic advisors learn or teach other advisors about the complex informational, relational, and conceptual components of the field, they move the profession forward" (p. 253).

Using Lumadi and Mampuru's (2010) typology, I believe that this recommendation requires technological change, making it the most readily available for institutions to address. A technological change may be required depending on the PD activities that are currently available at the institution. For example, managers may choose to begin by assessing what PD resources are available within their institutions to begin building a cohesive PD program. Depending on the state of institutional resources,

managers might consider developing or purchasing new PD technologies that can be shared with advisors across the college. Many of the tools and frameworks required to facilitate these PD activities are already in place, as evidenced by the amount of PD that is being undertaken across the system already. What is required to further develop in this area is to study best practices in PD in education to find additional models from which to borrow. In addition, advisors should be given time to engage in more self-directed PD practices.

Behavioural change may come in to play as institutions begin to implement or further refine their PD activities and programs and provide more opportunities to engage in IGA. The behavioural change that is required includes working with campus stakeholders to build a case for the importance of PD activities for faculty and staff advisors. Campus stakeholders would have to agree to support advisors attending PD and or participate in developing PD activities for their advisors. In addition, advisors themselves would have to also come to see the value in attending a PD program to strengthen their practice. As I indicated above, strong leadership would be required to work with campus stakeholders to come to agree on the importance of PD programs for academic advisors and individual leaders would have to encourage and coach advisors to participate.

8.2.2 Recommendation 2. My second recommendation includes clearly defining the roles of the staff and faculty advisor. Clearly defining the roles of the advisor and aligning the roles with the type of advising that complements the intended outcomes of the roles would provide advisors with a better understanding of what the expectations are for them and the work they do with students. It is possible that not clearly defining the role of the advisor offers flexibility for institutions to continue to design and develop advising services that reflect the changing needs of the students and fit within the constructs of individual departments. However, clearly defining the role of advisors and aligning the type of advising with that role should allow for a more seamless and equitable experience for students within an institution. In addition, it would make the work of frontline workers, those who serve as students' first

point of contact with the institution, more manageable, as it would be clear to whom they should refer a student inquiry.

This particular change includes structural change, and possibly behavioural change depending on the maturity of the academic advising service at an institution. As someone who has worked in the college system in Ontario for almost 18 years, I concede this recommendation will be challenging to implement. A structural change may include revising the reporting structure and location of advising services. For example, if an institution is considering adjusting their advising model (see recommendation 3) it is possible that this will affect whether faculty or staff engage in advising for a particular academic area. In this case, this would require a behavioural change where faculty and staff will have to work together differently. For example, a faculty member who is adept at advising students within their program may resist the change of having a staff person take on that responsibility. In this case strong leadership is required to ensure that the faculty and staff can work together and begin to build trust between staff.

In addition to structural and behavioural change, clearly defining the roles of advisors would require the cooperation of all employee groups: administrators, faculty, and staff; it would require cooperation between academic units and student services units; and it would require the cooperation of both the staff and faculty unions. Nevertheless, I recommend beginning this process following mapping out the institutional advising model. Because of its complexity, this project would be confined to an institutional, rather than a systemic, level. This could only be achieved with input from all stakeholders, perhaps in the form of a task force or working group. In the Ontario college system, this typically requires the involvement of senior administrators, who would have to be convinced of its importance.

8.2.3 Recommendation 3. My third recommendation is that institutions should consistently apply an institutional advising model across academic and student services divisions. My research study indicated that many colleges in Ontario have a shared institutional advising model; however, findings

indicate that the model is not necessarily applied consistently across campuses. Consistently applying the institutional advising model would work to mitigate any role confusion and it would communicate to institutional stakeholders the purpose and value of academic advising services. In addition, a consistent advising model would allow for the development of an assessment process, which, in turn, would feed into an iterative loop of advising service development and PD activities.

This is likely the most challenging and difficult of the recommendations. Consistently applying an advising model would require each academic unit to adhere to a similar structure. As a result, this would require a big structural, technological, and behavioural change. As I have demonstrated, some academic units in colleges have designed their own advising services, while others rely on a central advising service. As well, some central advising units and some academic units may already have a technological strategy in place that allows students to make advising appointments. Changes to the advising model would also require updating job descriptions, reporting lines and even the location of individual personnel. Anytime an institution changes these elements of individual staff or faculty, a strong justification is required, and a process must ensue that involves human resources and the established collective agreements.

To begin this process, I would recommend that institutions map out their current institutional advising model. In the map, institutions should include all staff and faculty advising roles including the location and reporting lines for each position, and for each campus. Following this process, institutions can identify gaps and begin to develop a plan for clarifying roles and responsibilities for their staff and faculty advisors. For example, they may consider a change management process that recognizes small and incremental changes. The change management process would require input and buy-in from stakeholders across the college.

8.2.4 Recommendation 4. My final recommendation includes designing and implementing assessment practices that measure the effectiveness of the institutional advising model, the impact of

PD on advisor practice, and the impact of advisor practice on student outcomes. Additionally, I recommend engaging with assessment at all phases of any academic advising initiative beginning with PD activities. The practice of advising is enhanced by assessment (Cuseo, 2003; Powers et al., 2014; Zarges et al., 2018). It is my contention that assessment can also clarify the influence the practices of advisors have on the advising model and on the roles and responsibilities of advisors. This iterative relationship is explained in section 8.3 where I discuss my conceptual model.

Designing and implementing assessment practices would also require structural, technological, and behavioural changes. Structural change within this context refers to adding the expectation that academic advisors engage in assessment practices. Technological change involves developing a system for measuring, recording, and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data. Finally, behavioural change would require that administrators and advisors spend time learning about assessment and developing tools and frameworks for measuring the outcomes of advising practice. From my experience, implementing an expectation for assessing advising practice can be a very big structural and behavioural change for staff. Staff can learn how to use the new technological tools rather easily, but engagement with technology can be a source of fear and frustration. For example, when staff are asked to have their advising practice evaluated by students for the first time, some staff are reluctant because they believe it is a new level of oversight. Therefore, from my personal experience, it is incredibly important to approach this change slowly and with a lot of encouragement.

To begin the process of assessment, I would recommend assigning someone to coordinate the research and development of the process, as it is quite complex. This process should approach assessment for each component of advising independently. To assess the advising model, complete an inventory of the positions that exist, the students they serve, the referral model and the structural processes and policies that are in place to see where there are gaps or redundancies. To assess PD, start with the learning outcomes for each activity and then assess participant learning against those

outcomes. To assess advisor practice, consider student satisfaction, but also objective data like student retention and progression. As we can see, the development of such a model of assessment requires much more than a survey of student feedback, which cannot give an institution a complete picture of the effectiveness of its advising practices.

Though they are beyond the scope of this study, system-wide changes could be derived from these institutional changes. For example, in the interest of academic advising maturing as a profession, over time, colleges in Ontario should gather to begin sharing knowledge and best practices for advising college students. Having robust assessment structures in place would enhance the effectiveness of such sharing.

8.3 The Contribution of the Study

As I indicated in Chapter 1, the aim of my ESMMR research study was to explore the nature and scope of academic advising and the role of academic advisors in the college system in Ontario. I specifically sought to learn what PD practices were available to and practiced by academic advisors. The goal of the study was to provide a set of recommendations that could facilitate the future planning of PD activities for academic advisors in Ontario. The recommendations from the study add value to the discourse on academic advising in several ways. First, the study adds much-needed empirical research on academic advising and effective PD related to academic advisors. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, there is a focus on moving academic advising from being an occupation and toward a profession. Habley (2009) argued that to be a profession, an occupation must have "specialized knowledge, extended training, and systematic scholarship and research that leads to a body of knowledge" (p. 76). Therefore, this study adds to the conversation by providing knowledge on PD practices for academic advisors. It also addresses an even more critical gap in the literature on academic advising in the college system in Ontario.

Throughout this study, I also indicated that academic advising lacks a unified definition: as a result, the roles of academic advisors often are misunderstood, and the responsibilities of academic advisors do not align with their roles. The findings from the study add clarity to this issue by suggesting resolutions for better defining what academic advising is. For example, I suggest via a conceptual framework (Figure 2.2) that PD practices and activities inform individual professional growth of academic advisors; and the occupational transformation of academic advising toward a profession. In return, the individual growth and occupational transformation inform future PD practices and activities. This conceptual model was informed by the work of Kennedy (2005) who suggested that engaging in various types of PD activities can lead to transformational practice when advisors are engaged in the process and when various models are used. In other words, by engaging in a combination of PD activities from training to action research, academic advisors have the potential to shape the future of academic advising. However, having completed the research, I have come to a better understanding of the importance of assessment in this iterative process. I therefore recommend updating the conceptual framework (Figure 8.2) to reflect the role assessment plays in collecting the evidence needed to define the institutional model and the roles of academic advisors. As the institutional advising model is assessed, this not only informs changes to the model, but also influences PD practices. In turn, PD practices that are assessed can lead to transformation of the model. The same is true for the roles of academic advisors. Assessment of these roles transforms both the roles and the PD practices that support them. Engagement with reflective PD practices that are assessed will also influence the roles of the advisors.

Figure 8.2

Updated Conceptual Framework

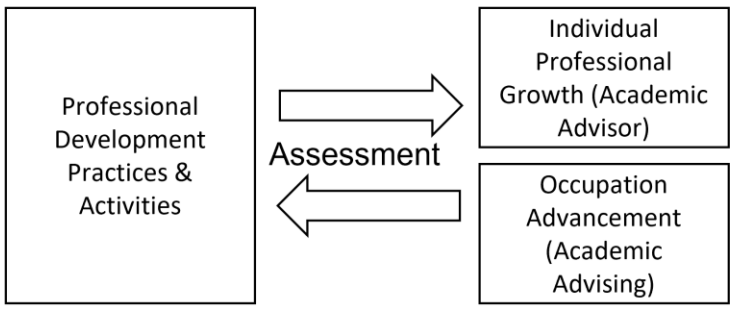


Figure 8.2. Conceptual framework that illustrates that assessment of PD practices and activities informs individual professional growth and occupational transformation. In return, assessment of individual professional growth and occupational transformation inform future PD practices and activities.

Finally, this study contributes to academic advising practice by providing evidence of how advisors approach and engage with PD activities. The study demonstrated advisors' preference for IGA's, but also acknowledged the value of CoP's and institutional training. The findings demonstrated that academic advisors believe that the relational competency is critical to their practices because it helps to build relationships with students and colleagues across the institution. Therefore, these findings can be used by practitioners who are developing PD activities within their own institutions.

8.4 Limitations and Threats to Legitimation

In Chapter 3 I addressed threats to legitimation as they relate to the qualitative phase of my study and in Chapter 5, I addressed the threats to validity as they relate to the quantitative phase of my study. Also in Chapter 5, I indicated that potential threats to legitimation, as they relate to an MMR study, would be addressed in the concluding chapter. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) argue that the problem of validity in an MMR study is a problem of integration. This means that the way in which qualitative and quantitative research methods, data collection, data analysis and findings are mixed, and when they are mixed, can be problematic. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) list nine legitimation types

that are related to MMR studies including: (a) sample integration legitimation, (b) inside-outside legitimation, (c) weakness minimization, (d) sequential, (e) conversion, (f) paradigmatic mixing, (g) commensurability, and (h) multiple validities. As I reflect on the limitations to my study, I will attempt to align them to one of these legitimation types.

The first limitation of the study I would like to point out is that I did not interview any faculty advisors. As Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) stated, this is a threat to sample integration because it requires that the "exact same groups are involved in both the qualitative and quantitative components" (p. 56) of the research study. At the beginning of the research process, I decided that I wanted to keep my study simple by focusing solely on staff advisors. They were the population with which I was familiar and with whom I had worked for several years. However, throughout the documentary evidence and the interviews, it became clear that the role of the faculty advisor and the staff advisor played a big part in the institutional advising model and the role and responsibilities of the advisors. If I were to approach the study again, I would include the voices of faculty in the qualitative study.

A second limitation of my study included the fact that I am an insider within the academic advising diaspora in the college system in Ontario. I began my career as an academic advisor for international students and several years later I was a manager responsible for developing a training program for academic advisors. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) described this as inside-outside legitimation where the researcher must assess the extent to which their meta-inferences are influenced by personal experience versus experience as an outside observer. As I was reading and making notes on the documentary evidence, I found I could not separate myself from the assumptions I formed as an insider researcher. It would be disingenuous for me to say that these variables did not impact my thinking as I analyzed by the documentary and interview transcript evidence. For example, as an insider, I knew that there was often conflict between staff and faculty advisors. As I read through the interview transcripts, I could not help but note each time a participant talked about this conflict. One strategy to

mitigate inside-outside legitimation is to work with peers to review findings. To mitigate this threat, during the qualitative phase of my study, I used a member-checking strategy that provided interviewees with an opportunity to read and review the transcript analysis. During the quantitative phase of my study, I asked several colleagues to pilot test the questionnaire.

The third limitation I would like to address is multiple-validities legitimation, which Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) stated is relevant to almost every MMR study. Multiple-validities legitimation is concerned with the extent to which validity (or legitimation) is addressed and satisfied in the qualitative, quantitative and data integration phases of the studies. As I mentioned earlier, I described the methods of validity I used in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5. However, the ultimate test of my meta-inferences will come down to the extent to which academic advisors in Ontario believe I have described their experience accurately, and the extent to which my study can be replicated.

8.5 Implications for Future Research

This ESMMR study is one of very few studies on academic advising in Ontario. From a broader perspective, this study is one very few empirical studies on PD practices and activities for academic advisors in the scholarship of academic advising. This alone implies there is still much research left to do on PD practices for academic advisors. Related to my study, I would recommend future research that focuses on developing and testing evaluation tools to measure the impact of PD practices on academic advising. My study aimed to explore what PD activities were available and what activities academic advisors believed were important to their practice. Although there is much value in understanding academic practice from the perspective of the advisors, I did not evaluate the relationship between PD activities and the practice of academic advisors. Research to examine how PD influences the thinking and practice of academic advisors would be a first step. This would then need to be extended to examining how those changes in practice influence student outcomes and their experiences of the service.

Throughout the study, I also suggested that PD practices can have an impact on defining academic advising. An interesting research question could further explore the extent to which this is true. For example, a longitudinal study looking at the outcomes of a CoP for academic advisors could help us understand how that process influences the role of the academic advisor within the institution.

In this study, I also mention the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors. I think a future research study examining specifically the responsibilities of advisors within the college system in Ontario should be useful for colleges who are still building their academic advising services. This could be especially helpful for distinguishing the staff advising role from the faculty advising role. As I highlighted through the literature review, institutional advising models are unique to the context of each individual institution. This might appear to add to the confusion of defining what academic advising is, but I believe that the roles and responsibilities of the advisors can be consistent within various institutional models. If, through research, we can establish the responsibilities that align with each advising role, so that they compliment rather than compete with the various roles, we can provide a more consistent experience for students.

8.6 Personal Development as a Researcher Practitioner

As I reflected on my doctoral journey, I believe that my development as a researcher and scholar practitioner was slow. First, I had to learn to believe that I could be a researcher. As I worked my way through the courses, the feedback I often received from the faculty was that although my work was organized in a coherent manner, I needed to learn how to be more critical. In the beginning, I believed that I did not know how to be more critical. I would read a research article and often doubt that I knew enough to even ask appropriate questions about the value of the work I was reading. Slowly, as each year and course went by, I began noticing that as I read, I became quicker at picking up discrepancies. I started to recognize bias and social and political leanings within a work. I began to understand that being more critical was a process that required practice and patience. Throughout the doctoral journey,

this particular skill has been the one that I fretted over the most, but also the one I believe I made the most gains in.

Having completed a complex research design that required a lot of organization and planning, I now believe that I am a scholar practitioner. I have gone through the steps of planning and implementing a research study, followed by collecting and analyzing the data. Throughout the process, I had to pay close attention to ensuring that each step aligned with both the research methodology and the research questions. This was not a simple or straightforward process. However, it was through the errors that I made that required rethinking how everything aligns that I learned the most. I believe that this process of starting and reversing and moving forward has helped me to better hone my research skills.

Finally, as a practitioner, I have come to appreciate the dedication and loyalty to student success that academic advisors exhibit. I have learned that despite a lack of clarity on institutional advising models and roles and responsibilities, academic advisors themselves find ways to learn and develop their advising skills. As an administrator it is my responsibility to ensure that staff and faculty who report to me have access to the PD activities, they need to be successful. What I have learned through my research study is that in addition to providing access to PD activities, I must trust that academic advisors are adept at recognizing gaps in their own knowledge and skills. Like the academic advisors, I too, through participating in this doctorate process, have learned to recognize gaps in my own knowledge and skills, and have taken appropriate steps to plan professional development activities to address those gaps. This is a lifelong skill that will ensure constant growth and development for the rest of my career.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval - University of Liverpool

Dear Melissa Gallo,	
I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.	
Sub-Committee:	EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)
Review type:	Expedited
PI:	Melissa Gallo (supervised by Kalman Winston)
School:	Professional Education
Title:	Toward the Professionalization of Advising Practice: An Exploration of Current Practices in the Ontario College Context
First Reviewer:	Kathleen M Kelm
Second Reviewer:	Jan Smith
Other members of the Committee	Dr. Yota Dimitriadi, Dr. Josè Resi Jorge, Dr Lucilla Costa, Dr. Kalman Winston
Date of Approval:	4/7/2018

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions	None

This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc.

Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher's behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).

Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.

Kind regards,

Dr. Lucilla Crosta
EdD. VPREC

Appendix B: Sample Participant Information and Consent Form

The following participant information sheet is to provide you with the required rationale, details and potential benefits and harm, to fully inform your decision to participate in this study. The research project I describe below is for completion of my doctoral thesis with the University of Liverpool. At the end of the research study I will submit my thesis with findings and recommendations that I hope to publish in the future.

Title of Research Project: *Toward the professionalization of advising practice: An exploration of current practices in the Ontario college context.*

Research Activity: Document Analysis and Interview

Researcher: Melissa Gallo, M.Sc., Doctoral Candidate, University of Liverpool

Purpose: The purpose of the following study is to better understand the training and professional development needs of advisors in a post-secondary setting in Ontario. It has been noted that the field of advising is rather new and in general, under-researched. One area that deserves attention includes defining the needs of professional advisors based on their experiences and institutional context. My proposed research project aims to explore the training needs of advisors by first analyzing training requirements and programs set out by each institution followed by interviewing academic advisors and training managers to learn more about their experience.

Procedure: To participate, please read and sign this form. You will have received an invitation to participate in this research study by email. The email requests digital copies of any advisor training document (agenda, learning outcomes, expectations) that the institution is willing to share for analysis. The purpose for analysis is exploratory in nature and is not meant as an assessment of practice or content.

The email also requests an interview with the training manager and two full-time primary-role advisors. The training manager will receive the invitation and is asked to kindly forward the email invitation to the advisors. After having read, signed and returned the *Participant Information and Consent Form,* the researcher will work with the training manager to set up a time and location for the interviews. The interview date and time will be confirmed by email to each individual participant. The interviews will take place on the training managers' campus on a date and time negotiated by the researcher and training manager.

Each interview will take between 45 – 60 minutes in total. An audio recording of the interviews will be taken along with researcher notes. The interview will be semi-structured and consist of six open-ended questions. The audio recording will be used to create a transcript of the session. The audio recording will not be published in any form. The transcripts will be secured in a password-protected file and will be coded and analyzed to reveal training and development themes. Participant information will be anonymized; however, the researcher may use anonymized direct quotes to illustrate a point.

Potential risks and discomforts: The interview is designed to gather more information about the training and professional development experiences of training managers and advisors. As such, there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to an individual through participation in the interviews and there

are no direct benefits. Participants will be informed of the purpose and process of the interview in advance, as well as the opportunity to opt out at any time.

One potential risk to the institution is that the researcher intends to interview four colleges with established advising programs. It is possible through the description of the advising program or advising structure that each institution can be identified by readers familiar with the institutions. To mitigate this risk, I will assign a code to each institution and I will not pair an anonymous advisors' quote with any particular institution. I will use institutional documents and individual interviews to theme the data so as not to assign a particular construct with one institution. Finally, if requested, I will allow each institution to read my findings before being published.

Possible benefits: There are no known benefits for participants in this study

Confidentiality: Any digital files collected from the participating institutions will be saved in a password protected file. For the interviews, names will not be recorded in association with a typed transcript of the session. Instead, an ID number will be assigned to each participant. The anonymized transcript will be stored in a password protected electronic file. Electronic anonymized data files may be stored electronically for a period of ten years; however, no identifying information will be contained in such records. At the end of this period all data will be destroyed.

Withdrawal Procedures: Participation in the interview is voluntary. Anyone who agrees to participate may change his/her mind at any time. Individuals may refuse to answer any questions and/or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. All data collected until the point of withdrawal **will be included**, unless explicitly indicated verbally or in writing to the researcher. Participants can withdraw from the interview by informing the facilitator (myself) at any time and will receive the $20 gift card regardless. Participants are encouraged to ask questions at any time (before, during, or after participating). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Melissa Gallo (melissa.gallo@online.liverpool.ac.uk or 905-870-1396).

Follow-up: The findings from the interview will be used for the purpose of completing a doctoral thesis. Findings from the research will be presented at national and/or international conferences and possibly published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. No reference will be made in any report which would link an individual participant to the study. Participants wishing to know more about the research findings may contact the principal investigator to receive a written summary of the results.

Rights of Participants: You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without consequences. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Mohawk College Research Ethics Board (MCREB), the Ontario Community College Multi-Site Research Ethics Panel. Participants are encouraged to ask questions at any time (before, during, or after participating).

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting Melissa Gallo melissa.gallo@online.liverpool.ac.uk or 905-870-1396 or Dr. Kalman Winston kalman.winston@online.liverpool.ac.uk *and we will try to help. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Chair of the Liverpool Online Research Ethics Committee at liverpoolethics@liverpool-online.com When contacting the Chair,*

please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make."

CONSENT STATEMENT

I have carefully read the Participant Information Sheet for the research project ***"Toward the professionalization of advising practice: An exploration of current practices in the Ontario college context"*** as describe herein***.***

- I understand the scope of the research project and that if I have any additional questions about the survey, I can contact Melissa Gallo (Melissa.gallo@online.liverpool.ac.uk or 905-870-1396) at any time before, during or after participating in the small group session.
- I understand that this project has been approved by the Mohawk College and Ontario Community College Multi-Site Research Ethics Panel. If I have any questions about my rights as a survey respondent, I can contact Dr. Kalman Winston from the University of Liverpool or the REB Coordinator at Mohawk College.
- I also understand that I may decline or withdraw from participation at any time without negative consequences.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read the information above, that all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and that I agree to participate in this study.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

_____	_____
Name of Participant (please print)	Name of Institution
_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Date

The contact details of the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool are:

001-612-312-1210 (USA number)

Email address liverpoolethics@ohecampus.com

Please keep/print a copy of the Participant Information Sheet for your reference. Please contact me and/or the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool with any question or concerns you may have.

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your journey to becoming an advisor.
    a. What was your educational pathway?
    b. What has been your experience?
2. How do you approach learning about your role?
3. What types of training have you participated in since taking on your role as an advisor?
    a. How long did each training take place?
    b. How often do you participate in training?
    c. What topics were covered?
    d. Did you seek opportunities outside of the college? Was it supported by the institution?
4. In reflecting on the NACADA framework what would you say are:
    a. Important content for your practice?
    b. Important experience to gain for your practice?
    c. What important skills were developed for your practice?
5. How do you integrate what you have learned into your practice?
    a. How do you know it is affective?
6. What have you learned from other advisors at your institution?
    a. From other colleagues from colleges across the system?
7. Do you consider yourself a professional? If yes, why?

Appendix D: Questionnaire

Block: Letter of Information (1 Question)
Standard: Section 1: Your Personal Role (9 Questions)
Standard: Section 2: College Advising Model (7 Questions)
Standard: Section 3: Training and Professional Development (3 Questions)
Standard: Section 4: Advisor Training (2 Questions)
Standard: Section 5: Professional Community (5 Questions)
Standard: Section 6: Profession (3 Questions)

Start of Block: Letter of Information

Q1: By clicking "**Yes, I would like to participate in the survey**", I confirm that I have read the information above, that all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and that I agree to participate in this study.

- ○ Yes, I would like to participate in the survey (1)
- ○ No, I would not like to participate in the survey (2)

Q2: Are you employed at a small, medium or large college in Ontario? See the chart below to find your institution (choose 1).

College size		
Small	**Medium**	**Large**
College Boreal	Cambrian	Algonquin
Canadore	Conestoga	Centennial
Confederation	Durham	Fanshawe
La Cite Collegiale	Fleming	George Brown
Lambton	Georgian	Humber
Loyalist	Niagara	Mohawk
Northern	St. Clair	Seneca
Sault	St. Lawrence	Sheridan

- ○ Small (1)
- ○ Medium (2)
- ○ Large (3)
- ○ I do not work in a college in Ontario (4)

Q3 Which of the following describes your current job classification? (choose one)

- ○ Support Staff (1)
- ○ Faculty Member (2)
- ○ Program Coordinator / Program Chair (3)
- ○ Other: (4) _____

Q4 Which of the following describes your current workload? (choose one)

- ○ Full-time (1)
- ○ Part-time (2)
- ○ Partial load (3)
- ○ Occasional (4)

Q5 How many years have you been advising in your current role? (choose one)

- ○ 0-2 years (1)
- ○ 3-5 years (2)
- ○ 6-9 years (3)
- ○ 10+ years (4)

Q6 What is the ***highest*** level of education you have attained? (choose one)

- ○ Diploma (1)
- ○ Bachelors Degree (2)
- ○ Masters Degree (3)
- ○ Post-Graduate Certificate (4)
- ○ Doctorate (5)
- ○ Other: (6) _____

Q7 Did you complete a post-graduate certificate or additional credential specific to advising? (choose one)

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q8 Is the word ***'advisor'*** in your job title? (choose one)

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q9 Other than your formal education, are there any skills or work experiences that have helped to enhance or inform your advising practice?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q9.5 What skills or work experiences have helped to enhance or inform your advising practice?

Q10 Advising is recognized as an important retention activity at my institution. (choose one)

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Not Sure (3)

Q11 What percentage of your current role is dedicated to advising? (choose one)

- ○ 0 -10% of my role (1)
- ○ 11-25% of my role (2)
- ○ 26-50% of my role (3)
- ○ 51-75% of my role (4)
- ○ 76-100% of my role (5)

Q12 Where is the physical location of your advising space. If you do not see your division listed below, please indicate the service area in 'other'. (choose one)

- ○ Academic unit or program area (embedded advisor) (1)
- ○ Student affairs or student success (central advisor) (2)
- ○ Registrar's or enrollment office (3)
- ○ Learning support or library (4)
- ○ Career services (5)
- ○ Other (6) _____

Q13 What division do you report to at your institution. If you do not see your division listed below, please indicate the service area in 'other'. (choose one)

- ○ Academic unit or program area (embedded advisor) (1)
- ○ Student affairs or student success (central advisor) (2)
- ○ Registrar's or enrollment office (3)
- ○ Learning support or library (4)
- ○ Career services (5)
- ○ Other (6) _____

Q14 As an advisor, what type of service do you primarily provide to students? (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Drop-in appointments (1)
- ☐ Scheduled appointments (2)
- ☐ Online appointments (3)
- ☐ Phone appointments (4)
- ☐ Email advising (5)
- ☐ Other: (6) _____

Q15 Within your current role, what type(s) of information do you provide? (choose all that apply)

- ☐ Course selection, add / drop (1)
- ☐ Academic policies, procedures (2)
- ☐ Program selection (3)
- ☐ Financial aid (4)
- ☐ Learning / study skills (5)
- ☐ Career advising (6)
- ☐ Transfer advising (7)
- ☐ Goal setting (8)
- ☐ Program mapping (9)
- ☐ Other: (10) _____

Q16 Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
My role is clearly understood by faculty and staff on campus (1)	○	○	○	○	○
My day to day responsibilities align with the expectations of my job description (2)	○	○	○	○	○
The physical location of my advising space is appropriate (3)	○	○	○	○	○
My role requires strong relationships with faculty and staff across campus (4)	○	○	○	○	○

Q17 Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements with reference to your current advising role:

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Training & professional development are encouraged (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Training & professional development are offered as part of advisor on-boarding (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Ongoing training & professional development is offered specific to my advising role (3)	○	○	○	○	○
My institution recognizes all advising roles as part of an institutional advising community (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I personally seek out training and professional development opportunities to enhance my advising practice (5)	○	○	○	○	○
There are opportunities for me to demonstrate my advising competencies and skills (6)	○	○	○	○	○
My advising practice is assessed on a regular basis (7)	○	○	○	○	○
I receive feedback from my manager on my advising practice on a regular basis (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Q18 What has been the most effective strategy for developing your advising practice: (choose one)

- ○ Seeking out training on my own (1)
- ○ Attending institutional training (ex. HR, CTL offerings) (2)
- ○ Attending institutional advisor training (3)
- ○ Attending external conferences and workshops (4)
- ○ Other: (5) _____

Q19 The most valuable way to measure the effectiveness of my advising practice is: (choose one)

- ○ Student satisfaction survey (1)
- ○ Student feedback (2)
- ○ Institutional retention data (3)
- ○ Manager feedback (4)
- ○ Other: (5) _____

Q20 Please indicate the importance of the following training offerings specific to your advising practice:

	Extremely Important (1)	Somewhat Important (2)	Not Important at All (3)	N/A (4)
Community of Practice (1)	○	○	○	○
Conferences (OAAP, NACADA, etc.) (2)	○	○	○	○
Coordinated advisor training (3)	○	○	○	○
Reading (4)	○	○	○	○
Reflective Practice (5)	○	○	○	○
Research, special projects (6)	○	○	○	○
Shadowing other advisors (7)	○	○	○	○
Workshops, webinars (8)	○	○	○	○
Other: (9)	○	○	○	○

Q21 Please indicate the importance of the following professional development topics for your advising practice:

	Extremely Important (1)	Somewhat Important (2)	Not Important at All (3)
Advising approaches, strategies & theories (1)	○	○	○
Communication skills (2)	○	○	○
Critical thinking / problem solving (3)	○	○	○
Diversity, equity & social inclusion (4)	○	○	○
Goal setting and pathway planning (5)	○	○	○
Institutional mission, vision, values (6)	○	○	○
Professional competencies (7)	○	○	○
Services & campus tours (8)	○	○	○
Student development theory (9)	○	○	○
Student wellness & safety (10)	○	○	○
Study skills or learning strategies (11)	○	○	○
Team building (12)	○	○	○
Technical & systems training (CRM) (13)	○	○	○
Unique student populations (ex. access, first generation) (14)	○	○	○

Q22 As part of my practice I seek out information from colleagues at other colleges in Ontario: (choose one)

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Not sure (3)

Q23 Are you familiar with NACADA's competency framework (ie. conceptual, informational, relational)? (choose one)

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Maybe (3)

Q24 Which competency do you believe is the most important for your advising practice? (choose one)

- ○ Conceptual (1)
- ○ Informational (2)
- ○ Relational (3)
- ○ Not Sure (4)

Q25 Are you familiar with the advising hierarchy that includes ***transactional, informational*** and ***developmental advising***? (choose one)

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Maybe (3)

Q26 What type of advising do you predominantly provide in your current role? (choose one)

- ○ Informational (1)
- ○ Developmental (2)
- ○ Transactional (3)

Q27 The definition of a ***'profession'*** commonly includes the following criteria: "Specialized knowledge, formalized training, systematic research, a body of knowledge, certification and delivery standards".

Q28 Using the definition above, is advising a profession? (choose one)

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Maybe (3)

Q29 Do you consider yourself a '***professional'*** advisor? (choose one)

- ○ Yes, because I hold myself to a high standard of practice. (1)
- ○ Yes, because advising has a set of expectations and responsibilities. (2)
- ○ No, because advising is not recognized as a profession. (3)
- ○ No, because I do not have to complete formalized training to enter an advising role. (4)

Appendix E: Examples of Inferential Statistics

t-Test example: Job Classification by Role Type

One-Sample Test

Which of the following describes your current job classification? (choose one) - Selected Choice		Test Value = 0 t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Support Staff	What percentage of your current role is dedicated to advising? (choose one)	40.410	81	.000	4.305	4.09	4.52
Faculty Member	What percentage of your current role is dedicated to advising? (choose one)	15.808	37	.000	1.921	1.67	2.17

Pearson's Chi-squared test: Job Classification vs. Role Type

Chi-Square Tests

Which of the following describes your current job classification? (choose one) - Selected Choice		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Support Staff	Pearson Chi-Square	6.174[a]	8	.628
	Likelihood Ratio	4.856	8	.773
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.384	1	.536
	N of Valid Cases	82		
Faculty Member	Pearson Chi-Square	.715[b]	3	.870
	Likelihood Ratio	1.028	3	.794
	Linear-by-Linear Association	.667	1	.414
	N of Valid Cases	38		

a. 10 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.

b. 5 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

Bonferroni correction: Importance of Professional Development Topics by Role Type

Table of Mean Likert Scores

ROLE	Q20_1	Q20_2	Q20_3	Q20_4	Q20_5	Q20_6	Q20_7	Q20_8	Q20_9
1 Staff	1.72	1.82	1.49	1.57	1.48	2.06	1.6	1.48	3.19
2 Faculty	2.06	2.58	2.22	1.84	1.70	2.65	2.08	2.32	3.58

t-tests for equality of two population means (Bonferroni Correction: $\alpha = 0.00556$)

```
##   Question `P-value`
## 1 Q20_1    0.0895
## 2 Q20_2    0.000289
## 3 Q20_3    0.000572
## 4 Q20_4    0.0662
## 5 Q20_5    0.184
## 6 Q20_6    0.00224
## 7 Q20_7    0.00824
## 8 Q20_8    0.0000279
## 9 Q20_9    0.204
```

99.44% Confidence Intervals:

```
##   Question `Lower bound` `Upper bound`
## 1 Q20_1          -0.896       0.224
## 2 Q20_2          -1.33       -0.193
## 3 Q20_3          -1.30       -0.154
## 4 Q20_4          -0.686       0.146
## 5 Q20_5          -0.697       0.254
## 6 Q20_6          -1.12       -0.0580
## 7 Q20_7          -0.988       0.0255
## 8 Q20_8          -1.38       -0.316
## 9 Q20_9          -1.28        0.495
```

Cramer's V: Role Type by Importance of PD Topic – Reflective Practice

Step 1:

Crosstab

Count

		Please indicate the importance of the following training offerings specific to your advising practice: - Reflective Practice				
		Extremely Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important at All	N/A	Total
Which of the following describes your current job classification? (choose one) - Selected Choice	Support Staff	46	32	2	1	81
	Faculty Member	21	7	8	1	37
Total		67	39	10	2	118

Step 2:

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.574[a]	3	.002
Likelihood Ratio	13.960	3	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.376	1	.123
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 3 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .63.

Step 3:

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standard Error[a]	Approximate T[b]	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.351			.002
	Cramer's V	.351			.002
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.143	.101	1.551	.124[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.080	.100	.859	.392[c]
N of Valid Cases		118			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Z-Test: Advising Services Offered by Role Type

Table of Proportions

## ROLE	P_1	P_2	P_3	P_4	P_5	P_6	P_7	P_8	P_9	P_10
## 1 Staff	0.720	0.841	0.671	0.378	0.671	0.524	0.561	0.829	0.707	0.244
## 2 Faculty	0.921	0.974	0.474	0.0526	0.684	0.632	0.421	0.395	0.737	0.158

Z-tests for equality of two population proportions (Bonferroni Correction: α = 0.005).

```
##    Question   `P-value`
##  1 Q15_1      0.0127
##  2 Q15_2      0.0358
##  3 Q15_3      0.0397
##  4 Q15_4      0.000204
##  5 Q15_5      0.883
##  6 Q15_6      0.271
##  7 Q15_7      0.154
##  8 Q15_8      0.00000163
##  9 Q15_9    0.738
## 10 Q15_10   0.287
```

99.5% Confidence Intervals:

```
##     Question `Lower bound` `Upper bound`
##   1 Q15_1           0.0322         0.482
##   2 Q15_2           0.0448         0.510
##   3 Q15_3          -0.426          0.0681
##   4 Q15_4          -0.542         -0.165
##   5 Q15_5          -0.240          0.267
##   6 Q15_6          -0.142          0.331
##   7 Q15_7          -0.359          0.116
##   8 Q15_8          -0.694         -0.188
##   9 Q15_9          -0.230          0.293
##  10 Q15_10         -0.379          0.160
```

Cohen's h: Advising Services Offered by Role Type

Calculation $h=\varphi 1-\varphi 2$

	p1	p2	h
1	0.89	0.63	0.62
2	0.93	0.65	0.72
3	0.57	0.75	-0.38
4	0.59	0.94	-0.90
5	0.69	0.68	0.03
6	0.74	0.64	0.20
7	0.62	0.74	-0.26
8	0.38	0.82	-0.94
9	0.71	0.67	0.07
10	0.66	0.77	-0.24