Supplemental Instruction and Student Engagement in Higher Education: Reconceptualizing Engagement as a Process of Co-Creation

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Abstract

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) invest copious amounts of resources into developing pedagogical initiatives with the goal of engaging students. Yet HEIs have tended to overlook students themselves as valuable potential partners in this pursuit. This study presents a theoretical and empirical examination of the phenomenon of engagement within the context of an alternative academic support program: Supplemental Instruction (SI). The SI model proactively targets the issue of disengagement among students (rather than reactively targeting at-risk students) by engaging peer-leaders in supporting fellow students through historically difficult courses. While engagement continues to enjoy a high profile in higher education, recent research has called for a reconceptualization that moves beyond mainstream approaches to engagement. Drawing from diverse theoretical approaches (e.g., traditional education, psychology, student voice), I conduct an in-depth qualitative investigation of engagement. Following the student voice and co-created learning research of Bovill and colleagues (2011; 2016) as a guiding framework, I present a new conceptual model of engagement grounded in the perceptions and experiences of students and educators involved in a well-established SI program at a Canadian university. I advance an alternative conceptualization of engagement as a co-created process of engaging students, educators and institutions in deconstructing and rebuilding educational norms, values and practices. The paper concludes with recommendations regarding the SI model's utility to enhance engagement in higher education and the broader implications of adopting a co-created engagement model within the mainstream education system.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Author's Connection to the Research

> I remember sitting in my 7th grade French class and not having any idea why I was there. I did not know any French people, and nothing around me suggested I ever would. France was a rock rotating around another sun in another galaxy around another sun in another sky that I would never cross. Why precisely was I sitting in this classroom? The question was never answered. I was a curious boy, but the schools were not concerned with curiosity, they were concerned with compliance. I loved a few of my teachers, but I cannot say that I truly believed any of them.
>
> –Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*, 2015

In one of his award-winning works, *Between the World and Me*, black journalist, intellectual, and activist, Ta-Nehisi Coates, addresses his fifteen-year-old son in the form of a letter, imploring him to fully understand the dangerous reality of living in a racialized, and specifically black, body in America today through his own pursuit of this same understanding. In detailing his experience growing up in Baltimore in the 1980s, and the paradoxical role that the educational system played in his life, Coates identifies so clearly the tangible ways in which education fits and feeds into other oppressive structures found within our society (e.g., such as the school-to-prison pipeline).

While of course my own experience with schooling was very different from that of Coates in several substantive ways, this passage and the piercing questions it poses, hits home in both a personal and political way for me. Indeed, his description of the utter disconnection between students (especially those from racialized and marginalized communities) and their learning pursuits, laid plain that which I have felt so deeply regarding the importance of engagement in education and have attempted to articulate for years.

What and who is education for? Why do we prioritize it so highly that all children and youth are mandated to participate in this deeply entrenched societal institution? While many may truly value education and its potential to slowly change the world over generations, others may regard it as simply a given without a second thought as to the pivotal role it plays in each of our formative years, and in its lasting impacts on our collective lives. In either case, it remains reality that both the structure and content of our education system were not built with, nor specifically for, students. That is, the vast majority of schools do not have the capacity nor infrastructure to identify and draw on the unique value that each of us has to offer in order to connect our children

and youth to their own inherent value and potential as humans. On the contrary, as Coates makes very clear, students are expected to conform to the system rather than the system stretching and growing based on the evolving needs of each new individual, cohort, and generation.

While the present thesis study does not endeavor to answer the aforementioned questions exactly, this project symbolizes the culmination of several different paths I have travelled throughout my life thus far and their unexpected intersections with regard to engagement. Specifically, I have always been fascinated by the concept of engagement as an inherently political and value-based concept.

My passion for engagement began as part of my personal journey through mental health issues experienced throughout my teenage years. While I am luckier than many others to have received support from my family and close friends, I found that I still struggled to find meaning in the pain and confusion. It was not until I was introduced to an alternative for-youth-by-youth approach to mental health education that I felt truly *engaged*, or, in my own teenage words "like I had an actual purpose". I realized that I could have worth and potentially offer something of value to another human being living a similar experience. Further, I finally felt like an important partner in my own health and wellness journey, rather than a passive patient of the biomedical system who needed someone else to "fix" or "save" them.

While I did not know the terminology at the time, I realize now that what I was experiencing with this alternative approach was the development of my own personal autonomy, gained through the process of developing genuine partnerships with peer supporters and adult allies (who, at the time, perhaps also did not realize the transformative impact they had had in my life, and surely, the lives of many other marginalized and/or struggling young people).

I have long regarded education as one of the main societal pillars at the root of generational shifts in various societal domains, including mental health and social justice. To a great extent, we trust the institution of education with the cognitive, emotional and moral development of our children, and therefore, our future. Thus, my conviction is that we should all be more concerned with not just the content of our educational system, but also with the developmental methods, approaches and processes employed by said system that have both intended and unintended consequences.

My own long and uncertain journey through the youth mental health and education systems informs my positionality as a researcher in the present study and provides a deeper

context for the qualitative analysis (Chapter 6) and conceptual modeling (Chapter 7) developed and presented through the present research. I also hope that this background will underscore the need for such research to be applicable to the lives and experiences of real educators and students, and to arm them with knowledge and evidence to drive sustainable change from the bottom up.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

> The public school structure has existed for almost a century. Our ancestors created this structure to produce a workforce for the industrialized nation. […] Schools are still structured for that uniformity. All the students sit in the same classes, they get all the same credits and, thus, they all get the same diploma. […] Our world has changed so much, but the structure of our public schools has not. I believe we're boring our kids and this traditional method doesn't work.
>
> – Stephanie Garber, *Saving Our Kids from a Traditional Education*, 2016

As an elementary and high school principal, Stephanie Garber has seen countless students move through the mainstream public school system, from their first day of kindergarten to their high school graduation day. She has witnessed first-hand their "love of learning, their passion for school [diminish]" as they continue through this system. Scholars (e.g., Bates, 2006; Fredricks, 2014; Fullan, 2013) and educators (e.g., Garber, 2016) alike view this phenomenon as a widespread problem of increasing *dis*engagement among students, considering it a direct result of a traditional pedagogical approach to education. Specifically, this traditional model tends to create unilateral, instructor-centered environments that view and treat students as passive vessels, which the educator (as the official authority and single knowledge-holder) must act *upon* in order to transmit information, skills, etc., (Bovill & Bulley, 2011). Despite slow progress towards more dynamic, student-centered learning environments, particularly in private and alternative educational settings (e.g., such as the Montessori educational method), the vast majority of students are still served by this one-size-fits-all approach (Bates, 2006; Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Gasiewski, Eagan, Garcia, Hurtado & Chang, 2012).

The problem of mainstream disengagement at the secondary level creates something of a perfect storm for learners. While more students than ever before are continuing on to post-secondary education (Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2014-15), their capacity to successfully engage in a large, socially diverse and highly demanding academic setting is compromised. Indeed, this engagement crisis is only exacerbated further in the transition to post-

secondary, wherein students tend to feel isolated from fellow students (Scanlon, Rowling & Weber, 2007), and wherein one instructor may address up to 700 students in a single class (Kerr, 2011).

The problem of disengagement is concerning enough when examined at the level of individual students' well-being and academic achievement, yet it must be recognized that this engagement crisis goes well beyond the walls of the classroom. Indeed, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (OMTCU, 2013) states that one of its primary objectives is to produce critically thinking, socio-politically conscious, and responsible citizens that are capable of collaborating effectively across divides to make real and sustainable change in the face of the complex, globalized challenges facing us today.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) acknowledge their responsibility to ensure that all students have access to high quality education, are supported to remain engaged throughout their educational pursuits, and graduate as engaged citizens (OMTCU, 2013). While no universal definition currently exists, engagement is generally understood in the mainstream education field as a set of student-centred factors, such as participation, effort, satisfaction, etc., relating to academic success (Krause & Coates, 2008). Thus, although the present thesis project problematizes how the concept of engagement is conceived, competitive HEIs invest copious amounts of resources into researching, developing, and implementing pedagogical initiatives, with the ultimate goal of engaging their students (Dawson, Meer, Skalicky, & Cowley, 2014; Kahn, 2014). However, while these institutions recognize the importance of engagement, at least rhetorically, a preliminary scan of the literature reveals that with the increasing marketization and commodification of education, engagement tends to be used as a simplistic measure of academic performance, as opposed to a valuable and integral process that, if invested in, could yield positive outcomes for students, as well as downstream ripple effects well beyond the educational institution.

1.2.1 Engagement in Society

In general, level of engagement is already used as a benchmark of success for stakeholders in many public and private areas, from marketing, to technology, to public health, to entertainment, to democracy, etc., For example, advertising is used as a tool to *entice* potential customers; social media platforms are specially designed to hold the user's *attention* for as long as possible; public health initiatives aim to increase the general population's *compliance* with

preventative health behaviours; and a functioning democratic society requires *participation* from the masses to decide who gets to wield political power. Despite vastly different desired outcomes, engagement in all of these cases refers to the extent to which individuals are exhibiting a specific set of feelings and behaviours (e.g., buying products, voting, etc.,).

Concerns have been raised with respect to trends of *dis*engagement across all of these domains, and more. For example, the troublingly low levels of civic engagement among younger demographics have been well-documented (e.g., Aarts & Hees, 2003; Turcotte, 2015); increased technology usages and secularism in the general population is coinciding with a decline in tight-knit communities and greater social isolation (Pew Research Centre, 2009; 2011); and countless scientists and activists have made clear the need for much greater public engagement in environmental activism on a global scale in order to push national and international bodies to take effective action against the growing climate crisis (Corner, Markowitz, & Pidgeon, 2014).

While the cause(s) of disengagement in these differing domains cannot be easily generalized as one and the same, it is worth noting that the problem of disengagement is inextricably linked to the development, growth and maintenance of democracy, as well as our collective capacity to tangibly move towards economic, social, racial and environmental justice. Indeed, many of the challenges we face in today's complex, globalized world require transnational, multidisciplinary, and collaborative approaches in order to develop and implement sustainable solutions. Thus, the concept of engagement can be understood as inherently interdisciplinary and should, therefore, be of deep interest and concern for those in charge of not only educational institutions, but of corporations, governmental bodies, public policy, and the private sector (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018).

In sum, even if we do not necessarily hold a shared set of terms to conceptualize it as such, engagement is at the heart of all of our important interactions in modern day, as well as integral to the efficacy of the institutions we have built to prepare younger generations to participate fully in the world beyond the classroom. This makes engagement a difficult concept to examine broadly because it is both so widespread, and yet not universally understood or regarded. Thus, while the present study focuses exclusively on engagement within the field of education, the greater importance and meaning of engagement as a socio-political construct should be kept in mind given its implications across multiple societal domains.

1.2.2 Engagement in Education

The virtually ubiquitous presence of the term "engagement" across the education research and policy literature indicates its importance as a fundamental concept in education. However, the concept of engagement itself has been the topic of extensive deliberation from a diversity of perspectives. The term is used frequently to describe various aspects of educational environments, learning experiences, and student behaviours. As such, a unified, comprehensive and practically useful definition remains difficult to pinpoint. Its high profile also raises concern, with many labelling it a buzzword whose critical meaning and implications for students, educators, institutions and broader society have been diluted (Kahu, 2013; Maxwell-Stuart & Huisman, 2018; Payne, 2017; Zepke, 2014).

As a central phenomenon within education, engagement should maintain its high profile; yet how researchers, educators and students themselves approach and understand engagement must also be recognized as a critical determinant of whether engagement can fulfill its transformative potential or simply reinforce traditional one-size-fits-all educational models.

1.3 Research Objectives

In order to move beyond its buzzword status, some scholars have articulated the necessity of revisiting the conceptual basis of engagement by drawing on a diversity of research traditions (Kahu, 2013; Kuh, 2007; Zepke, 2014). As a complex concept with layers of antecedents, internal dimensions, and external outcomes, some have come to describe engagement as a meta-construct (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Zepke, 2015). I contend, therefore, that engagement also cannot be fully understood through a simplistic theoretical framework developed from the perspective of any *single* discipline. Thus, it is incumbent upon educational researchers to unpack the various theoretical applications of engagement with a view to enhancing the quality, experience and impact of education.

Important work has recently been done in this area to expand traditional notions of engagement in terms of identifying different ways that students may feel and act engaged (e.g., Kahu, 2013; Payne, 2017) and to explore the emancipatory potential of more holistic approaches to engagement (e.g., Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018; Zepke, 2015). However, rarely have the perspectives and major advancements of student voice and co-created learning theorists, such as Fielding, Bovill, Bulley, Cook-Sather, and Felton (among others) been

brought into the mainstream conceptual mix. Indeed, the majority of the literature remains focused on engagement as an individual-level variable that can only be observed through behaviours (e.g., students actively participating in class discussions) or measured by internal experiences (e.g., student satisfaction with the quality of education), and HEIs have been slow to depart from such traditional approaches.

By bringing together diverse bodies of knowledge to develop a novel conceptualization of engagement, this MA thesis research offers practical pathways for HEIs to enhance engagement at the individual, interpersonal and institutional levels. With a view to ensuring that this work can be built on in future, I systematically develop this alternative conceptual model of engagement, drawing from both an examination of the available peer-reviewed literature and a qualitative analysis of first-hand accounts from students and educators involved in a peer-led academic support program, *Supplemental Instruction*. This systematic process is outlined here in detail.

First, I review three broad theoretical approaches to engagement, which I have termed "outcome-based", "state-based", and "process-based", in order to develop a solid foundational understanding of the construct as it is currently conceptualized. In order to ground the present study's conceptual exploration within a practical context, I also conduct a review of relevant research related to the Supplemental Instruction (SI) model. As an alternative, student-led academic support program used in higher education, the SI model positions students as leaders who provide alternative pedagogical support for difficult courses by designing and facilitating weekly workshops for their fellow students (Dawson et al., 2014). Given that the "vast majority" of students have come up through the mainstream public education system (Van Pelt, Clemens, Brown, & Palacios, 2015, p. 13), it is critical to consider instances in which students may have experienced different kinds of engagement. Distinct from other common academic supports (e.g., tutorials, tutoring services), the SI model provides an opportunity for further inquiry into the interplay of different engagement theories and their practical application in higher education.

Second, I present a preliminary conceptual framework based on the works of relevant student voice and co-created learning scholars (e.g., Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, & Moore-Cherry, 2016; Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014;) that is meant to guide the subsequent data collection and analysis process. While this section technically presents a conceptual model, it is termed here as a "framework" and considered preliminary as it maps

out the initially proposed theoretical linkages between different facets of the engagement construct primarily based on my analysis of the existing literature.

Third, using the co-created learning theory lens (Bovill et al., 2011; 2016), I analyze qualitative accounts of students and educators involved in an SI program at a Canadian university regarding their perceptions and experiences of engagement (through focus groups and interviews).

Fourth, integrating these primary research findings into the conceptualizations offered by the peer-reviewed literature, I develop a more comprehensive conceptual model of engagement as a process-based meta-construct. Five diagrams are presented in order to visually explain the sub-facets of this novel engagement model, their conceptual linkages, and the ways in which they operate across individual, interpersonal and institutional dimensions.

Finally, I conclude with a discussion which offers recommendations regarding the SI model's utility to enhance student engagement in higher education through progressive but practical steps, as well as suggested directions for future research and advancement in the area of engagement in education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Theoretical Approaches

In order to expand our conceptual understanding of engagement, a thorough exploration of key theoretical and empirical research on student engagement from multiple theoretical angles is necessary. While no fully comprehensive literature review of such a prominent concept is possible, the scope of the present review is concerned with: (1) identifying prominent theoretical traditions and operationalizations of engagement and, (2) examining their practical application within the context of the SI model and higher education. The wide array of literature is categorized using three theoretical lenses: (1) an outcome-based lens (i.e., stemming from traditional education research), (2) a state-based lens (i.e., stemming from psychological research), and (3) a process-based lens (i.e., stemming from an alternative education).

While there are other methods of organizing such diverse bodies of literature (e.g., see Kahu, 2013), this approach was taken to introduce and integrate the work of co-created learning and student voice scholars (i.e., the process-based, alternative educational lens) into the mainstream collection of literature on student engagement. Each theoretical perspective

acknowledges the broad and complex nature of engagement as a concept, yet each also approaches engagement by emphasizing a particular facet or function of engagement, particularly in education. The traditional approach tends to perceive engagement as a behavioural outcome of good quality education; the psychological approach views it as an internal state of being or experience related to different types of motivation; and the alternative lens offers a more holistic view of engagement as a transformative process of student empowerment. Table 1 provides an overview of the three approaches presented and discussed in the following review.

Table 1

Three Theoretical Approaches to Engagement

Theoretical Lens	Description	Operationalizations	Example of use
Outcome: Traditional Education (Coates, Krause, Kuh)	The level of student satisfaction and effort in relation to the quality of educational conditions	• Student effort • Student satisfaction • High-impact practices	*I am engaged* in this conversation (by responding to questions, offering info, etc.,)
State: Social Psychology (Black, Csikszentmihalyi, Deci, Ryan)	Feeling of intrinsic motivation or experience of flow related to educational activities/environments	• Intrinsic motivation • Flow • Autonomy-supportive environment	*I am feeling* engaged in this conversation (interested in other person, to continue talking, etc.,)
Process: Alt. Education (Bovill, Bulley, Cook-Sather, Felton, Fielding)	The shifting of traditional educators-student roles to transform expectations and incentives for students in education	• Co-creation of learning • Student voice and leadership • Student-educator partnerships	*We are engaging* in conversation (by asking questions, by sharing info, by listening and connecting, etc.,)

Note. Overview of three key theoretical approaches to engagement (and the prominent scholars advancing them), operationalizations (and common associated terms), as well as an example illustrating each.

2.2 Engagement as an Outcome: The Traditional Education Approach

Coates (2007), one of the few considerably well-known theorists in the area of student engagement research, describes engagement as "a broad construct intended to encompass salient academic as well as certain non-academic aspects of the student experience" (p. 122). This is but one of the myriad understandings of engagement in education, which demonstrates its expansive nature as a theoretical concept. Indeed, multiple educational scholars (Cavanagh, 2015; Trowler,

2010; Dawson, Meer, Skalicky, & Cowley, 2014) have lamented the unpacking of the heterogeneous theoretical and methodological approaches to student engagement as an especially daunting task. Fortunately, a fairly comprehensive review of one body of student engagement literature was conducted by the Higher Education Academy at the University of Lancaster (Trowler, 2010). The author makes a salient comparison that "acting without feeling engaged is just involvement or even compliance; feeling engaged without acting is dissociation." (p. 5), providing a glimpse into the complexity of engagement as a central phenomenon to the student experience. Thus, while this approach to engagement tends to describe it as "the quality of the student learning experience" and acknowledges the necessity of a certain internal state (i.e., students *feeling* engaged), when operationalized, it focuses predominantly on engagement as a behavioural outcome (i.e., students *acting* engaged) of high-quality education.

This theoretical tradition is rooted in the North American and Australasian education research context (Coates, 2007; Krause & Coates, 2008) and explains engagement as encompassing the three dimensions (behavioural, emotional and cognitive), which exist along a spectrum from negative to neutral to positive. Drawing from multiple theorists, Trowler (2010) describes a model which demonstrates how an individual can be seen as either engaged or *dis*engaged. Further, a student can be engaged *negatively* or *positively* in any one of the behavioural, emotional or cognitive dimensions. For example, a student may be *engaged* in conflict with another student (negative connotation) or *engaged* in a group discussion (positive connotation). Regardless of the valence of the "engagement", both negative and positive ends of the continuum involve a state of *action* on the part of the student.

Emerging from this conceptual understanding is a practical definition, advanced by Krause and Coates (2008), who view engagement as "the extent to which students are engaging in activities that higher education research has shown to be linked with high-quality learning outcomes" (p. 493). In this sense, engagement is inextricably tied to external markers of academic achievement (e.g., course grades, retention rates, etc.,) and therefore tends to be used as a "proxy for student success and educational quality" (Kahu, 2013; Zepke, 2014, p. 703). Thus, educational applications of this conception of engagement have most notably existed in the form of programs, initiatives and teaching techniques adopted by institutions in order to promote positive engagement in the form of desired behavioural *outcomes* (Early, et al., 2016; Fredricks, 2014).

Some scholars (e.g., Krause & Coates, 2008; Kuh, 2007) have gone further to develop more sophisticated frameworks of student engagement. Coates (2007), for example, developed normative typologies, which he calls *styles* of engagement that include: collaborative, intense, passive and independent forms of engagement. These styles can be understood as ways in which students behave within the academic and social areas of higher education. Other similar models have since been developed, such as Chi and Wylie's (2014) ICAP framework, which further differentiate overt (i.e., observable) student engagement behaviours into the following categories: "*Interactive, Constructive, Active and Passive*" (p. 219). However, even in the development of such similar models, there is little overlap within the theorizing process, pointing to a critical lack of cohesion across the field of engagement research and a need for the development of more integrated engagement frameworks that can encompass broader perspectives and approaches.

Given this view of engagement as performative in nature, this area of research has most notably prompted the development of standardized measures of the quality of student engagement, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE aims to assess "the level of student participation and engagement in activities deemed to be educationally effective" (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2017, p. 2). Specifically, the NSSE measures: (1) challenging learning conditions; (2) student effort to actively participate; (3) quality of student-educator interactions; and (4) supportive educational community (Coates, 2007; Trowler, 2010). The NSSE is disseminated annually to many post-secondary institutions with a view to advancing student engagement research in the North American context (Trowler, 2010). Through the development and use of these engagement facets, research has identified a range of practices and ideal conditions for promoting an engaged student body (see Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research's NSSE 2017 Annual Results report).

Despite the immense success of the NSSE and its international iterations (e.g., Australasian Survey of Student Engagement), some scholars suggest that these practical dimensions of engagement have been empirically explored "without [first] seeking to theorise how these elements work together to effect gains of various kinds" (Kahn, 2014, p. 1006). Indeed, this tradition of engagement research has been plagued by a history of debate regarding the instrument's validity, disparate and precarious methodological approaches, and a potential

lack of solid theoretical underpinnings (Cavanagh, 2015; Kahn, 2014; Kahu, 2013; Krause & Coates, 2008; Dawson et al., 2014). According to Kahu (2013),

> Due to its development as a tool for institutional improvement and comparison (Coates 2010; Kuh 2009a), the definition of student engagement within the behavioural perspective is limited and unclear. This restricts its usefulness as a research perspective for understanding student engagement. (p. 760)

This approach to student engagement has also received criticism for its alignment with a neoliberal political ideology, wherein student success is normalized, commodified and narrowly defined in terms of "marketable knowledge and skills [and] services" (Zepke, 2014, p. 702). Indeed, the impetus for some of the early pioneers to approach engagement from this traditional lens was partially a reaction to significant decreases in student retention, effort, motivation and compliance with behavioural expectations of HEIs (Fredricks et al., 2004). In other words, it was identified as a student-specific problem that needed to be corrected with the introduction of student engagement interventions.

Engagement in education was, and continues to be, a primarily outcomes-focused endeavor where broader purposes, values and implications of education, such as seeking truth, knowledge and contributing to a more equitable society, may be lost in favour of short-term, economically desirable performance outcomes (Zepke, 2015). Indeed, Zgaga, Teichler, Schuetze, and Wolter (2015) describe the trajectory of this issue over the last several decades as it relates to "the expanding marketisation and privatisation of higher education, […] altering forms of university governance and the changing role of the academic profession" (p. 11). They go on to express concern regarding "changes in the role of students from 'learners' to 'consumers'" and "the adoption of management techniques and cost-benefit calculations developed and used by private corporations" (p. 11). As such, despite the significant strides researchers and educators have made in this area, the traditional educational approach privileges a singular and exclusive conceptualization of engagement, restricting HEIs to implement only those engagement practices that are deemed effective within this strict, capitalistic accountability framework.

2.3 Engagement as a State: The Psychological Approach

As if in answer to the critical considerations of scholars within the realm of traditional education, other conceptualizations with origins in social psychology provide insight into another facet of engagement. Specifically, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides both an alternative

and complementary description of engagement, as well as a solid theoretical framework through which to understand one important aspect of engagement in education. Ryan and Deci's (2000) well-established SDT framework posits that all humans have three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competency and relatedness. The fulfillment or thwarting of these needs impacts processes of motivation and self-regulation.

From the perspective of engagement as a psychological phenomenon, SDT theorists operationalize it as a sense of *intrinsic motivation* (i.e., a genuine interest for pursuing a goal or willfully participating in a particular activity). While this definition refers to the internal state experienced by an individual, Kusukar, Croiset, and Ten Cate (2011) explain that intrinsic motivation can be "observed when one engages in an activity out of genuine interest and is truly self-determined" (p. 978). Decades of research have established positive educational outcomes associated with intrinsic motivation (Lin, McKeachie, & Kim, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). As such, in practice, the basis of SDT-informed educational initiatives has been the development of autonomy-supportive learning environments (i.e., those that support a student's sense of choice), which have been shown to promote intrinsic motivation (Black & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

While both competency and relatedness are considered fundamental psychological needs as well, given this trajectory of SDT within the alternative educational movement towards autonomy-supportive pedagogical methods, the need for autonomy is considered here as most closely related to engagement in education. That is, educational contexts which are characterized by an autonomy-supportive approach to teaching and learning tend to lead to increased intrinsic motivation primarily due to students feeling a greater sense of personal autonomy (i.e., that their self-determined interests and choices are respected and supported) in these spaces. However, this approach also helps to fulfill the other two fundamental psychological needs (competency and relatedness). Specifically, autonomy-supportive learning environments tend to utilize more group-based and peer-to-peer learning methods (Kusukar, Croiset, & Ten Cate, 2011). As such, they intentionally value student effort and encourage capacity-building (i.e., building their sense of competency) as well as help students feel more connected to their teachers and fellow students (i.e., increasing their sense of relatedness) through active participation and interaction.

Given the larger neoliberal paradigm within which our education system is embedded, it is a reality that the majority of educational institutions rely primarily on *extrinsic* rewards to

motivate students (e.g., good grades and scholarships for high performance) (Merry, 2018). Although extrinsic motivation on its own can lead to short-term performance outcomes, students who also exhibit higher intrinsic motivation towards learning experience greater sustained engagement and academic success in the longer-term (Lin, et al., 2003; Saeed & Zyngier, 2012).

A distinct part of the SDT conceptualization of engagement in education is Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi's concept of *flow* (2009). Principal Stephanie Garber speaks to this essential element of engagement when she asks her students: "have you ever been so into a project that you lost track of time?". Flow is defined as a psychological state which "encourages a person to persist at and return to an activity because of the experiential rewards it promises, and thereby fosters the growth of skills over time" (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 95-96). While Csikszentmihalyi (2002) considers flow to be a certain kind of intrinsic motivation, it is emphasized here as it most effectively pinpoints the essential *feeling* of engagement as it is occurring. In relation to the traditional education approach, it also provides a theoretical basis for the first two facets measured through the National Survey of Student Engagement (i.e., academic challenge and active student effort). Both flow and intrinsic motivation have often been applied to educational contexts directly (e.g., the Montessori school model) and studies have demonstrated a relationship between intrinsic motivation, flow experiences and greater academic commitment and achievement (Cavanagh, 2015; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

While psychological conceptualizations of engagement have fit well with the outcome-driven engagement research produced through the traditional approach, they differ primarily in the ideologies they advance and their divergent trajectories in the field of education. Whereas the traditional approach has led to an international system of accountability and quality assurance used to measure and compare different HEIs (Trowler, 2010; Zepke, 2014), the impacts of SDT on the field of education have led to the development of more holistic, learner-centered approaches to education – ones that tend to value and focus on fulfilling students' fundamental psychological needs (Jeno, 2015). In this way, the psychological perspective has turned the study of engagement inward, positioning an understanding of an individual's internal states as the key to understanding engagement and, ultimately, to identifying ideal practices that HEIs may employ to enhance student feelings regarding the quality of education and their behavioural investment in the learning process.

Nonetheless, the traditional and psychological perspectives represent the two widely accepted forms of engagement (Kahu, 2013), neither of which moves beyond the individual into a consideration of engagement as an inherently social, political or collective process.

2.4 Engagement as a Process: The Alternative Approach

Closer to a truly alternative approach to student engagement is the socio-cultural and holistic perspectives, described by Kahu (2013) as stemming from feminist and constructivist literatures. This approach perceives engagement as it pertains to student identity and, particularly, how "non-traditional students" (p. 764) may fit into higher education contexts. This non-traditional label can include groups of students who may be marginalized by one or more aspects of their identity, such as: race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, language and ability, among other factors. While more intersectional and progressive in nature, these approaches generally do not diverge conceptually in terms of what actually makes up engagement as a construct, but focus rather on investigating a broader range of antecedents and consequences of engagement as it is currently conceptualized by the mainstream behavioural and psychological works (e.g., Payne, 2017; Zepke, 2014).

One notable exception here is Lawson and Lawson's (2013) in-depth theoretical review of multi-disciplinary engagement research conducted from a sociological, systems-oriented perspective. This valuable contribution departs from its predecessors, expanding the engagement construct and its reach by discussing engagement "as a dynamic system of social and psychological constructs as well as a synergistic process" (p. 432). It represents a significant step towards shifting the mainstream understanding of engagement from simply a one-way response to a technical problem, to a fluid non-linear *process* that must be approached in innovative and collaborative ways. Specifically, Lawson and Lawson (2013) conclude that:

> Nuanced intervention research guided by new engagement models and strategies is needed, especially efforts that help practitioners and policymakers better understand what engagement-related policies and practices work, for whom, where, under what circumstances, when, why, and for how long. (p. 462)

Their research paves the way for the present study to do just what this call to action suggests: to introduce a new, interdisciplinary engagement model and link it directly with real-world policies and practices (in this case, through collaboration with a fully operating Supplemental Instruction

program established at a Canadian university) in order to enhance engagement strategies on multiple levels.

It is critical to note as well that even in Lawson and Lawson's (2013) in-depth review, research from the areas of co-created learning and student voice remains largely unrepresented. As such, this section of the review focuses on the relatively distinct body of literature which advances the notion of engagement as a *transformative* process of student empowerment within (and in some cases beyond) educational systems. This research tradition has its roots in interdisciplinary research and practice from community development (Arnstein, 1969), child and youth rights (Hart, 1992), student voice (Fielding, 2011; Kane & Chimwayange; 2014), and co-created learning in education (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Bovill, Bulley, & Morss, 2011; Bovill et al., 2016; Cook-Sather et al., 2014).

Despite marked differences (e.g., in terminology, disciplinary origins), this operationalization of engagement as empowerment and partnership does overlap in some ways with the aforementioned psychological and traditional education engagement literatures. Indeed, decades before Self-Determination Theorists were demonstrating the positive educational outcomes associated with the psychological experience of engagement as intrinsic motivation or flow, early pioneers of the student voice movement were applying the central tenets of SDT within educational institutions.

Lanskey and Rudduck (2010) describe how leaders of some independent schools in the early twentieth century who "shared a dislike of what they perceived to be a narrow educational outlook and undemocratic practices in existing schools […] established initiatives to enable students to participate in the collective leadership of the school community and the personal leadership of their own learning" (p. 803). In one specific example from the 1940s, Alex Bloom, an English School Master, radically restructured his secondary school to form what he called "a consciously democratic community", stating that "fundamentally, this was about the eradication of fear as the prime incentive to 'progress'" (Bloom, as quoted in Fielding, 2011, p. 7). Thus, despite the lack of explicit focus on student empowerment in other areas of student engagement research, the efforts of progressive educators to shift traditional roles, expectations and incentives for students should be recognized as a defining feature of the student engagement movement as a whole.

On a conceptual basis, prominent scholars within the student voice movement, such as Bovill and Bulley (2011), endorse a model of *co-created learning*, employing the term *active student participation* (ASP) to describe engagement as an empowerment-based process of action, interest, and interactivity. In this way, engagement is here defined in opposition to the traditional pedagogical expectation "that students are passive, and simply absorb knowledge transmitted by their teacher" (Bovill & Bulley, 2011, p. 1). From this lens, the *process* of engagement is inextricably linked with the process of co-created learning, where **"**student engagement is both a requirement for, and an outcome of, *partnership*" (Bovill et al., 2016, p. 2, italics added for emphasis). Thus, co-created learning researchers (e.g., Bovill et al., 2011; 2016) tend to identify engagement as a complex phenomenon which involves more than just one-sided behavioural and psychological investment from students.

This alternative interpretation of student engagement also diverges from the former bodies of literature with regard to its primary research foci and practical objectives. Particularly, in research examining processes of co-created learning and student voice (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Bovill et al., 2011; 2016; Cook-Sather et al., 2014) there is a smaller emphasis on the individual's experience of engagement in one's own learning process. Rather, this area of research is predominantly concerned with student engagement as an alternative approach to teaching and learning and the collective educational project, more broadly. Bovill and Bulley (2011) comment that "one of the key differences in this literature to traditional 'delivery' styles of education is that the learner is viewed as a knowledgeable and critical partner in learning" (p. 3). In this way, the central intention of this body of research is to position students as active and valuable members of the educational community who are empowered as collaborative partners both within and beyond the classroom.

The ASP ladder model for understanding the process of co-creation in education was developed by Bovill and Bulley (2011). The model flows from the seminal work of Sherry Arnstein (1969), who developed a hierarchical framework of community engagement (categorizing the extent to which community members are meaningfully involved in matters of

importance to them). Adapting Arnstein's model to the educational context, Bovill and Bulley's (2011) model depicts eight levels of student involvement in pedagogical decisions[1].

Adaptations of Arnstein's ladder model have proliferated to describe participatory processes in several contexts. For example, Fielding's (2011) Patterns of Partnership model identifies levels of student involvement as it pertains to the structure and functioning of educational institutions. While this and other versions of the ladder model (e.g., Hart, 1992) offer unique value to engagement research, given the present study's focus on Supplemental Instruction as one of various possible manifestations of co-created learning models, Bovill and Bulley's (2011) ASP model is drawn on in the present work as the primary theoretical framework. Other frameworks of engagement as co-created learning have been developed (e.g., Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Healey, et al., 2014; Lanskey & Rudduck, 2010) and are referenced here as further examples that should be incorporated into mainstream thinking and research on engagement in education. Most notably, recent work by Bovill and colleagues' (2016) has mapped out typologies that specify roles that students typically take on in situations of co-created learning in higher education, including students as: "(1) consultant"; "(2) co-researcher"; "(3) pedagogical co-designer"; and "(4) representative" (p. 3).

In terms of practical applications, some recent studies have included students as representatives in order to amplify the collective student voice in institutional decision-making (McFarlane, Spes-Skrbis & Taib, 2017), while others have provided roles for students as pedagogical co-designers, in transforming the classroom dynamic through student-teacher dialogue. Kane and Chimwayange (2014), for example, witnessed a process of engagement wherein high school teachers slowly overcame their traditional resistance to listening and valuing their students' voices and where "both teachers and students found a sense of empowerment as they negotiated new ways of acting in the classroom" (p. 60). While traditional engagement research and interventions tend to focus solely on student-centered outcomes, Kane and Chimwayange's (2014) findings exemplify the benefits of engagement as a co-created learning process not just for students, but for educators as well.

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[1] See Bovill and Bulley (2011, p. 180) for Ladder of Active Student Participation (ASP) model depicting the level of student involvement in shaping curriculum content and learning process.

In addition to exploring the practical, pedagogical implications of student-educator partnerships, others have taken a participatory action research (PAR) approach to begin investigating the mechanics of engagement. Gardner and colleagues (2016), for example, sought to examine "how […] youth-adult teams experience, understand and conceptualize their partnership" (p. 20). This valuable example of mixed methods research explored the PAR student-educator partnership through a five-year, longitudinal study into student voice in educational reform. Critically, their investigation revealed many of the same factors that contribute to authentic student engagement as identified across the multiple bodies of literature reviewed in this paper. Indeed, Gardner et al. (2016) describe the following themes as being central to authentic engagement: a genuine, autonomy-supportive relationship between students and teachers (Ryan & Deci, 2000), a sense of shared control and ownership of educational and research projects (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Bovill et al., 2016), a culture of open and inclusive collaboration (Krause & Coates, 2008), and a transformation of understanding and practice for both students and educators (Kane & Chimwayange, 2014).

The findings presented in this body of research on engagement as a co-created learning process mark a significant shift in student engagement research, underscoring the need to investigate how this type of engagement operates and is experienced by students and educators in relation to mainstream approaches to engagement in higher education. This is particularly important in order to promote the adoption of the co-creation process as a valid form of engagement within the mainstream conceptualization of engagement wherein co-created learning initiatives might engender behavioural and psychological forms of engagement and, therefore, should also be associated with overall student success. That is, the evidence from the three separate bodies of literature reviewed here suggest that while the alternative, process-oriented conceptualization of engagement may have the capacity to encompass conceptualizations of engagement-as-outcome and engagement-as-state, the reverse is not necessarily true.

2.5 Supplemental Instruction (SI): Student Engagement Theories in Practice

Given the wide-spread origins of student engagement literature in the context of higher education, the little overlap between these areas of research is not entirely surprising. The three theoretical traditions (i.e., student engagement as an educational outcome, as a student's state of being, and as a transformative process) seem to employ substantially different

operationalizations of engagement. However, it is through practice that these theories can be most effectively brought together.

Supplemental Instruction (SI), a well-established, peer-led academic support model, is one example of the successful application of different student engagement theories in higher education. Developed in the 1970s at the University of Missouri-Kansas as a cost-effective way to complement traditional lecture-style teaching (Dawson et al., 2014), the SI model supports historically difficult courses by providing weekly peer-assisted study sessions, open to all students enrolled in SI-supported courses (Malm, Bryngfors, & Mörner, 2011).

Similar to the advent of the "traditional" approach towards engagement, the SI model was born out of the need to fill gaps in student academic support services with limited resources and, as such, was essentially a convenient technical solution that succeeded by fitting *within* a neoliberal higher education framework rather than presenting a challenge to it. Critically, however, it also found a way to incorporate a novel resource (i.e., students as peer leaders) which, whether by design or not, sparked the potential for a slow structural shift away from traditional educational models which "[tend] to encourage one-way, passive, superficial learning" (Gasiewski et al., 2012, p. 230). It does so, for example, by proactively targeting the widespread issue of disengagement among undergraduate students in difficult courses, rather than reactively targeting at-risk or struggling students.

SI programs operate by training students (called SI Leaders) to design and facilitate weekly workshops meant to engage their fellow students in collaboratively exploring course content[2].Critically, The SI model has proliferated to universities around the world yet has also managed to keep a relatively uniform structure across diverse post-secondary contexts (Malm et al., 2011). Dawson and colleagues (2014) attribute this streamlined nature of SI programs to the support of national and regional SI centers, which provide standardized training, manuals and support. As such, SI programs have garnered much scholarly attention given the growing "need for interventions to support greater bodies of more diverse students at financially constrained tertiary institutions" (Dawson et al., 2014, p. 612; Ontario & Ministry of Training, 2013).

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[2] See https://info.umkc.edu/si/faq/ (The International Centre for Supplemental Instruction, 2021) for an in-depth description of the SI model and how it works and see https://laverne.edu/asc/employment-opportunities/si-leader-job-description/ (University of La Verne, 2021) for an overall description of the typical SI Student Leader's role, job requirements and general tasks.

In terms of efficacy, the U.S. Department of Education has validated the SI model based on a multitude of research which consistently finds SI related to higher course grades, lower failure rates and higher graduation rates (Dawson et al., 2014; Malm et al., 2011). Despite this, SI's effectiveness has been primarily evaluated based on restrictive markers of academic success (e.g., higher mean grades, retention rates, etc.,), with a much smaller focus on its potential for deeper or sustained impacts on student engagement.

Notably, a few studies have examined SI's positive impact on areas including intrinsic motivation, collaborative learning, academic social support and reaching a wider range of learners (e.g., Gasiewski et al., 2012). For example, in response to traditional pedagogical approaches which expect all students to absorb and retain large amounts of information, Peterfreund, Rath, Xenos, & Bayliss (2008) conducted a six-year longitudinal study into the effectiveness of SI on the academic engagement of underrepresented minorities (URM). Positive impacts were seen for students who enrolled in the SI program to such an extent that the academic performance of URM students either equaled or surpassed that of non-URM students in a control group who did not participate in the program.

This work also revealed an important trend wherein students who participated in SI for introductory courses (e.g., biology) were more likely to re-enroll in further courses in that area (Peterfreund et al., 2008). This finding could be interpreted as an indicator that SI promotes greater intrinsic motivation in SI-supported subject areas. While such causal relationships cannot be determined given the voluntary nature of SI programs (Bowles & Jones, 2003), the researchers at least confirmed that better performance was not a function of participants in the SI group being "better students" (p. 493) based on participants' SAT scores and high school GPA.

Dawson et al. (2014) present other findings highlighting that the open, student-centered and voluntary nature of SI programs may also foster the autonomy-supportive and collaborative learning conditions that allow for psychological engagement (Black & Deci, 2000; Cavanagh, 2015; Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). Particularly, it is believed to build a sense of control over one's own learning experience by minimizing the presence of authority figures and facilitating ongoing peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Through this collaborative process, students can be more comfortable to explore the material more deeply, while also drawing on others' knowledge and experiences. Indeed, Malm et al. (2011) point out that "the idea behind SI is that learning a subject is enhanced by an exchange of thoughts and ideas among students" (p. 282). Thus, this

research essentially brings the SI model in line with theories of student engagement that define it as a desired outcome of positive academic involvement (Krause & Coates, 2008), as a feeling of intrinsic motivation for one's own learning (Ryan & Deci, 2000) *and* as a co-created learning process (Bovill et al., 2016).

Despite the focus of most SI research on effectiveness related to academic success, the SI model offers a useful example of one co-creation initiative which occupies a particular space within Bovill and Bulley's (2011) ASP framework, as students are given control of a range of pedagogical decisions. Indeed, the official slogan offered by the International Centre for Supplemental Instruction (2021) is: "tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand" (n.p.), which evokes a clear connection between meaningfully engaging students as active partners in the educational process and positive academic outcomes.

In practice, with the hierarchical dynamics of the traditional classroom structure significantly reduced (Dawson et al., 2014; Malm et al., 2011), students are both free and supported to engage in the teaching and learning process on their own terms and in unconventional ways. Within this paradigm, the SI model positions students as competent educational actors who directly supplement the primary instructor-led teaching process, thus, unofficially embodying co-creation theorists' belief that "student engagement and partnership can be enhanced through shared learning communities" (Bovill at al., 2016, p. 2). While direct partnerships are not typically formed between SI students and instructors in most cases (Drake, 2011), *both* still participate in a process of pedagogical co-creation in their own separate ways. In SI-supported courses, the instructor supplies the curricular material and initial instruction, while SI leaders develop and carry out an alternative vision for the teaching and learning of that material.

Although it may seem that SI programs are missing the central student-educator partnership piece described in most of the co-creation literature, Bovill and colleagues (2016) also "recognise that not all co-creation involves partnership […] but all partnership involves co-creation and student engagement" (p. 5). Moreover, as many other student voice initiatives (e.g., Fielding, 2011; Gardner et al., 2016; Kane & Chimwayange, 2014) are led by educators and/or researchers, the SI model stands out given the lack of formal involvement on the part of the instructor, allowing a predominately student-led co-created learning process. Thus, the practical connection between the alternative education literature and the SI model lies with its student

leaders. As such, there is also value in examining engagement experiences of student SI facilitators, especially as some research suggests that they may be even more positively impacted by their involvement in the program than the student participants (Miles, 2010; Stout & McDaniel, 2006).

Crucially, some research *has* also utilized the SI model as a direct opportunity for partnership engagement. One recent empirical use of the SI model by McFarlane, Spes-Skrbis and Taib (2017) did so by using peer-assisted learning techniques to foster student confidence in English communication and to build social support. Using a PAR approach, McFarlane et al., (2017) ensured that students maintained a voice in everything from the new program's design to its service-provision and expansion. Given this and other examples (Moleko, Hlalele, Mahlomaholo, 2014), the SI model's unique capacity to support (whether directly or indirectly) various co-created learning processes indicates the need for further empirical investigation. Further, the existence of SI programs provides critical infrastructure necessary not only for the development of new conceptual models of engagement, but also provides practical in-roads towards advancing greater structural change for higher education institutions.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

3.1 Preliminary Conceptual Framework

As demonstrated by the current state of student engagement research, diverse approaches to conceptualizing, measuring and implementing student engagement in higher education continue to exist and flourish in their own respective disciplines. Regardless of the theoretical roots or operationalization of the concept, research has consistently demonstrated a link between engagement and positive educational outcomes (Bovill et al., 2011; Cavanagh, 2015; Coates, 2007; Healey et al., 2014; Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). This wealth of interdisciplinary evidence suggests that these diverse branches of engagement research may in fact be "tapping into" different facets of the same complex phenomenon.

Zepke (2015) calls on mainstream engagement theorists "to widen their field of enquiry to extend their research beyond the marketisation of knowledge, performativity, accountability" and to "recognise that engagement is more than a 'one size fits all' set of 'how to' suggestions" (p. 704). While this is an important realization in itself, responses to it must offer strategies to shift such deeply ingrained ways of thinking and practicing in higher education. Although progressive scholars have advocated for a more expansive view of engagement and have begun

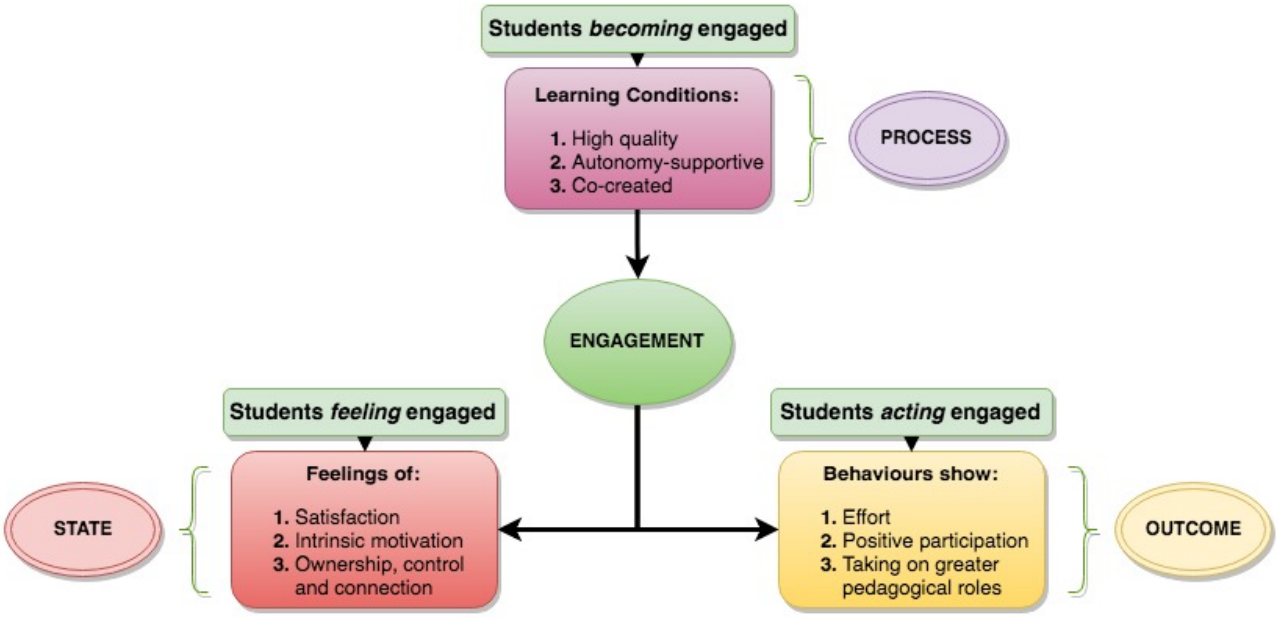
to push the conceptual envelope (e.g., Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Zepke, 2015), they still tend to do so without connection to the student voice and co-created learning literature. This critical missing link in reconceptualizing engagement ultimately does a disservice to the students, educators and institutions that could benefit practically from the adoption of an engagement framework based on co-created learning principles.

The field of Supplemental Instruction (SI) could similarly benefit from its own expansion in theoretical scope, as it was born out of the marriage of theoretical traditions (e.g., such as developmental psychology) and a practical need to address issues of attrition with greater student support (Arendale, 2002; Martin & Arendale, 1992). That is, while the SI model, as it is currently applied, points to practical ways in which students and educators may be positioned as effective partners, its own latent potential to transform traditional norms on a larger institutional level have not yet been realized. Thus, the SI model is a fitting space within which to conduct such a conceptual exploration into engagement, as it offers an in-practice example of student voice and the co-created learning process without necessarily making its own coherent connection between its overt practices and these theoretical underpinnings. In developing a preliminary conceptual model of engagement, several elements were considered.

First, my own personal and professional background as a student within both mainstream and alternative school settings, as a peer-support worker, and as an educator in alternative educational contexts (e.g., the youth mental health sector), has afforded me an informal understanding of engagement in practice. The model is further informed by previous first-hand research in the area of social psychology, in particular, the examination of constructs related to self-determination and social identity theories, such as personal autonomy, autonomy-supportive learning environments, and self-regulatory processes (e.g., Cooligan, Werner, & Milyavskaya, 2017). Finally, through an extensive review of key engagement theories and relevant research relating to education, the general conceptualization was refined into a framework which organizes the fundamental aspects of each theory into a cohesive whole. Specifically, the proposed conceptual model of engagement shown in Figure 1 depicts a multi-dimensional and fluid construct, spanning across multiple fields of research and practice, and encompassing three distinct facets of engagement as a: (1) process, (2) state, and (3) outcome.

Figure 1

Preliminary Conceptual Model of Engagement in Education

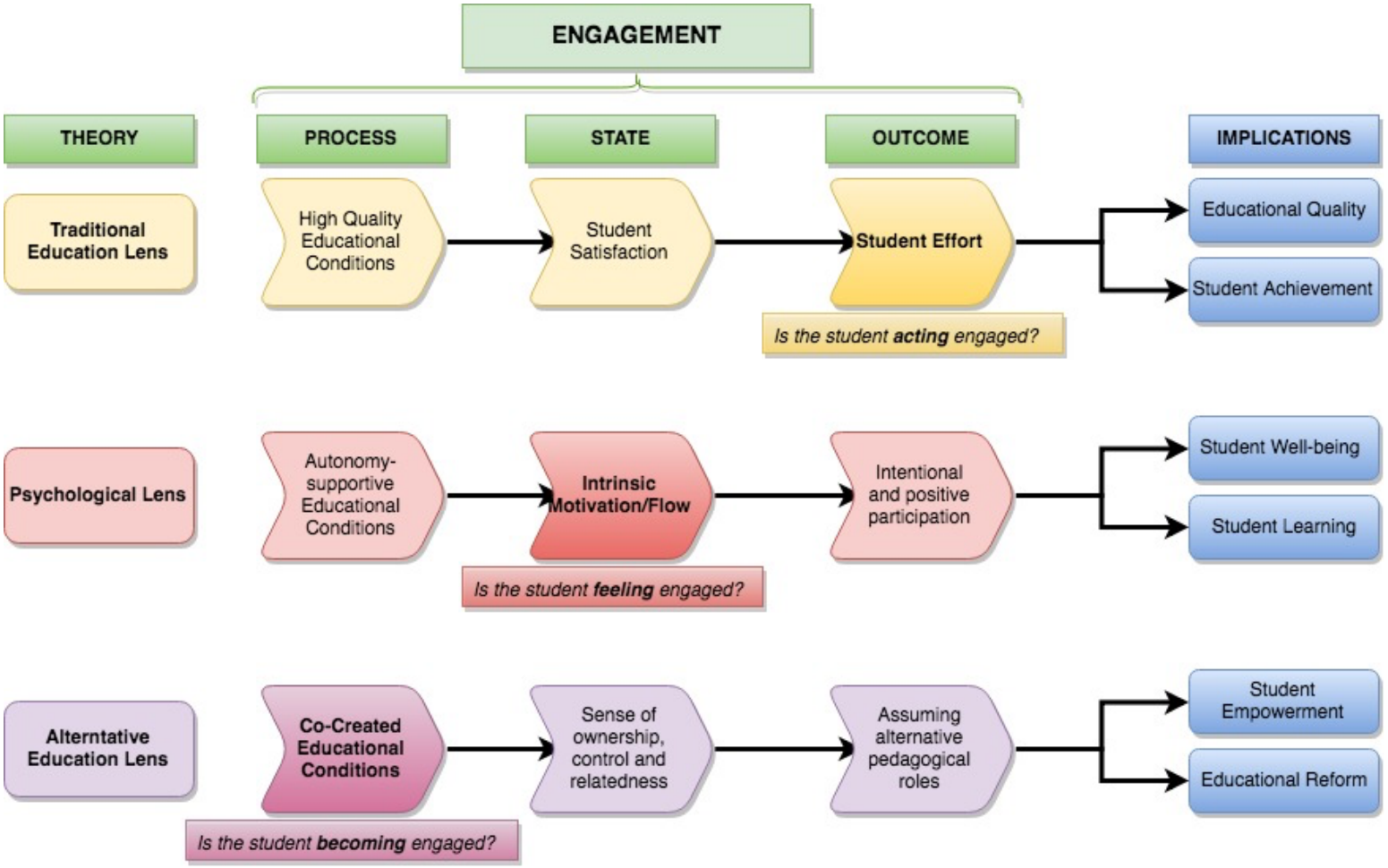


Note. This preliminary model brings together three traditionally separate conceptualizations as facets of engagement: process, state, and outcome.

Figure 2 (below) depicts a breakdown of the separate foci, contributions and implications of each dimension of engagement (as conceptualized through each theoretical lens). These theoretical strands of engagement are important to examine as part of a single conceptual framework as it is apparent from the research reviewed thus far that they may work together, or alternatively, each facet may also operate independently of one another.

Figure 2

Dimensions of Engagement: Contributions and Implications



Note. Visual depiction of the separate, but related, contributions and implications of each dimension of engagement based on three traditionally separate conceptualizations of engagement.

This operationally independent view, which has been demonstrated in much of the research on engagement thus far (Zepke, 2015), has therefore separated engagement into distinct, but related constructs (Kahu, 2013). For example, an HEI might employ highly skilled faculty with the intention of eliciting positive engagement behaviours from their students, yet these conditions will not necessarily always result in more psychologically engaged students, nor will the presence of expert faculty inevitably result in the development of collaborative student-educator partnerships in teaching and learning. Conversely, students may begin their educational careers feeling intrinsically motivated to learn, yet this internal psychological experience may not be supported by the educational conditions given that some learning environments are autonomy-controlling versus autonomy-supportive (Black & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Consequently, students may channel their feelings of engagement in different directions that do not necessarily lead to behaviours that contribute to academic success, supporting the theorizing of traditional student engagement scholars (e.g., Krause & Coates, 2008).

In terms of adding process-based engagement to the conceptual framework, it logically follows that the development of partnerships that shift traditional roles for both students and educators (i.e., co-creating the teaching and learning experience) should be considered a legitimate aspect of engagement, even if not all students *feel* or *act* engaged through or as a result of the process (Bovill, et al., 2016; Healey, et a., 2014).

These elements are examined in depth through the qualitative analysis of student and educator perceptions and experiences that follows. Indeed, as students and educators involved in an SI program may have differing understandings and experiences of engagement, their first-hand perspectives are important to explore in order to more fully understand the interplay of engagement theory and practice.

3.2 Research Questions

The preliminary framework presented here is used to provide a conceptual basis upon which to examine various engagement practices, perceptions and experiences related to the SI model and aids in addressing the following research questions:

1. How do students and educators involved with the Supplemental Instruction model perceive and experience engagement in higher education?
2. In what ways does the Supplemental Instruction model differentially engage students?

Chapter 4: Methods

4.1 Methodological Approach and Design

In order to examine the interplay of engagement theory and practice, I followed Bovill and colleagues' (2011; 2016) co-created learning model as a theoretical framework to ground the reconceptualization of engagement in student perspectives and experiences. Given the deliberate standardization and streamlining of the Supplemental Instruction model when implemented across diverse settings (Malm, Bryngfors, & Mörner, 2011), a qualitative case study of a representative SI program allowed a more nuanced account of the SI model's efficacy and relationship to engagement. This approach is also in line with previous research calling for further examination of SI programs in Ontario to add to the Canadian SI landscape (Miles, 2010).

4.2 Participants and Procedure

As Creswell (2012) contends, "in qualitative research, we identify our participants and sites on purposeful sampling, based on places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon" (p. 205). Thus, to connect with students who may have had experience with multiple models of engagement, I developed a research partnership with a well-established SI program (operating for over a decade) at a Canadian university.

4.2.1 Student Focus Group and Interview

In order to have representation from students who had varying levels of experience with the SI model, I sought to recruit students from three different groups: (1) SI Student Leaders (those *leading* the SI program), (2) Student SI Participants (those *participating* in the SI program), (3) Student Non-SI-Participants (those *eligible* to participate in the SI program, but who have chosen not to attend). See Appendix A (Table A1) for an overview of these groups and the recruitment procedure.

For the first group (Student SI leaders), I met with them in-person to promote this research project, invite them to promote it to other students, and to participate themselves, if interested. SI Leaders then made in-class announcements in their SI-supported courses (see Appendix B for in-class recruitment announcement), inviting both of the other student groups to participate in an online survey as part of a larger program of study. I then sent an email to those

who had completed the online survey (with their consent - see Appendix F for the request for consent to follow up by email for those interested) inviting them to participate in a focus group (see Appendix B for online recruitment announcement and Appendix B for consent forms approved by both institutions' research ethics boards).

In February 2019, I conducted a focus group with nine SI student leaders (n = 9) and an interview with one SI student participant (n = 1) were conducted (N = 10).

While efforts were made to recruit more students in order to have representation from the three different groups of students, the response rate to the email invitations was low and additional resource-based barriers made it unfeasible to extend the recruitment period and conduct additional focus groups. As such, although the interview with the SI student participant provides insight into the ideas and experiences of students accessing the SI program sessions, the primary student voices represented in the following analysis are SI student leaders. A discussion of the important differences and similarities between these student groups, and their respective perspectives, is provided in section 5.1.1 Characterization of Findings: Students.

In terms of procedure, the focus group and interview questions were designed to guide a semi-structured discussion and elicit students' own experiences and perceptions around engagement in multiple different learning conditions (e.g., traditional lecture-style versus alternative peer-led conditions). One example of questions posed to SI student leaders in the focus group is: "As an SI student leader, what do you bring to the teaching and learning process in the SI workshop sessions?". One example of questions posed to the SI student participant in the interview is: "If you were "in charge" of the SI-supported course, how would you engage the students?". All students (and educators) were also asked more general questions, such as: "What does the term "engagement" (in education) mean to you?" and "Can you think of and describe a time in which you felt really engaged in school?". See Appendix C for the student focus group guide and the order in which questions were asked.

4.2.2 Educator Interviews

I sought out two kinds of educators to include in this study: (1) a currently active course instructor teaching the general student population and (2) an educator and trainer with the SI program teaching the SI-student population (i.e., primarily SI Student Leaders). Through the research partnership formed with the host university, I requested an interview with a core SI program staff member and the program manager volunteered to participate. At my request, the SI

Manager then referred me to several faculty members who were currently teaching an SI-supported course. I then followed up by email to invite them to participate in an interview. See Appendix B for the educator recruitment notice and Appendix C for consent forms approved by both institutions' research ethics boards)..

Once recruited, I conducted two interviews: (1) with an SI-supported course instructor and (2) with an SI program staff member (N = 2). In line with Bovill and colleagues' (2011; 2015) co-created learning models, including perspectives of educators is important in understanding student-educator partnership engagement. Further, given that the purpose of the present research effort was focused around expanding our overall understanding and approach to engagement in education, both educator and student voices are critical to include as the primary figures that act, and are acted upon, within the teaching and learning process.

The SI-supported course instructor was asked the following question: "As the instructor of an SI-supported course, what kind of relationship or interaction do you tend to have with: (1) Students in the course? (2) The student SI leaders for the course?". The SI program manager was asked the same question, but in reference to their own educator role and dynamic with students. Examples of the interview questions posed to both educators include: "Can you think of and describe a time in which you felt your students were particularly engaged?" and "Do you find that the SI program engages students in a different way than other learning environments (e.g., lectures, tutorials, other academic support services)?". Educators were also asked the same general questions about engagement as students (see above examples in section 4.2.1). See Appendix E for the educator interview guide and the order in which questions were asked.

4.3 Data Analysis

4.3.1 Qualitative Approach: Directed Content Analysis

As this study is predicated upon already-existing theories of engagement, this research does not intend to reinvent the wheel by exploring the concept of engagement through entirely inductive means. Rather, in seeking to further refine and expand upon these theories within a particular educational context, Assarroudi, Nabavi, Armat, Ebadi, and Vaismoradi (2018) suggest qualitative, directed content analysis as the most appropriate analytical technique. Following the procedure described by Hseih and Shannon (2005) and Assarroudi et al. (2018), the focus group and interview data were examined by:

1. Developing a preliminary coding scheme based on the theoretical approaches and conceptual framework presented earlier[3];
2. Immersing myself in the data through the transcribing and initial exploratory review process, which included identifying content (e.g., words, phrases, patterns) that fit within one or more coding category;
3. Revising and refining the coding scheme through the creation of subcategories and new categories for participant experiences that do not fit with initial categories;
4. Identifying links between codes and inductively abstracting them into larger categories that help to generate a full conceptual picture of the phenomenon of engagement from a co-created learning perspective.

While quantitative instruments intended to measure and compare students on various engagement indicators (e.g., satisfaction with their HEI, quality of student-educator interactions, presence and extent of co-created learning factors, etc.,) were used in another part of the larger research program, for the present study, I opted to pursue a qualitative approach for several reasons.

First, those scholars who have called for a reimagining of engagement in education beyond the mainstream have also emphasized the importance of conducting in-depth qualitative investigations into the expansive nature and transformative potential of engagement (Brooman, Darwent, & Pimor, 2015; Lawson & Lawons, 2013; Zepke, 2015). Second, and more importantly, quantitative measures would help to "describe, explain, or predict normative engagement experiences and outcomes for 'average' students across an 'average' and/or singular set of social-institutional or community conditions" (Lawson & Lawson, 2013, p. 434). While such measures can be valuable tools, Kahu (2013) explains that "surveys obscure the participant voice with no opportunity for a perspective that does not fit the predefined questions" (p. 760). Thus, as the explicit purpose of the present study is to examine the phenomenon of engagement from a more holistic perspective in order to broaden the conceptual boundaries of engagement as a construct, the use of such normative quantitative instruments would be counterproductive in this case. Nonetheless, the additional quantitative data collected through this research endeavour

[3] As per Hseih and Shannon's (2005) suggestion to increase trustworthiness in the analysis, the predetermined coding categories were vetted by a subject matter expert (i.e., the researcher's thesis supervisor, who has over a decade of experience in the area of student voice).

is useful for further investigations into the nature of engagement as an expanded, co-created learning phenomenon (see Chapter 8 for recommendations for future research).

4.3.2 Steps to Ensure Trustworthiness of Analysis

In discussing the validity and reliability of qualitative data analysis, the recurrent challenge of attempting to clearly define, standardize and consistently measure broad concepts must also be noted. Indeed, in the U.S. National Research Council's (2011) workshop on assessing the development of common metrics in behavioural and social science research, some scholars questioned whether this should always be our objective. For example, one participating scholar (Norman Bradburn of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago),

> observed that one of the tensions in the social sciences is that the more one refines a concept and the more precise one tries to make it, the more one may lose some of the associations and original meaning, and comparability across uses may suffer. (p. 54)

Another participating scholar (Sheila Jasanoff of Harvard University) challenged the pursuit of complete standardization in the name of validity and reliability as she "questioned if different conceptual unpacking could be employed to avoid using one word across very different kinds of domains of the social sciences and their relationship to policy" (p. 67). With these tensions and challenges in front-of-mind, I took two approaches when it came to bolstering validity and reliability: (1) refining the concept of engagement based on participants' reflexive associations, and (2) conceptually unpacking the engagement construct through expanding (rather than collapsing) terminology that could help its relation to practice.

First, as the present study aimed to explore the concept of engagement from participants' own perspectives, which are based in their personal experiences, my general approach is described by Creswell (2006) as a data collection and analysis process through which "the parties negotiate the meaning of the stories, adding a validation check to the analysis" (p. 57). Specifically, focus group questions were developed in order to elicit students' own understandings of engagement as a concept, as well as to prompt them to reflect on their experiences in different learning environments (e.g., lectures versus SI workshop sessions) and identify any specifically engaging (or disengaging) aspects of their experience. Using these questions to facilitate a discussion (particularly with the SI student leaders), I sought to reveal the meaning of students' stories based on their own informal analyses of what their experiences

mean in relation to engagement. This give-and-take process was also extremely fruitful with the educators, given their training and years of experience with various teaching and learning models that the students lacked, which allowed for a higher level of self-awareness and reflection. This approach provided some assurance that I, as the researcher, was not simply projecting my own ideas onto participants' experiences, but rather, engaging in a reciprocal process of listening, analyzing and re-analyzing.

Second, as per Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olsen, and Spiers' (2002) explanation that "qualitative research is iterative rather than linear" (p. 17) in nature, throughout the analysis I intentionally "[moved] back and forth between design and implementation to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies, and analysis" (p. 17). For example, in approaching responses that seemed overly general upon initial examination, I took steps to establish reliability and validity of the qualitative analysis, such as revisiting the research questions, how these questions were operationalized through data collection (i.e., how focus group and interview questions were posed), as well as the relevant literature on various forms of, and terms related to, engagement in education. This cyclical analysis process aided in identifying deeper patterns in the data, which in turn, aided the development of a novel conceptual framework of engagement in education presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 5. Findings (Part 1): Preliminary Qualitative Analysis

5.1 Characterization of Findings

The findings from the present research study are broken down into two parts. In this first part (Chapter 5), I provide a characterization of the findings through a profile of each kind (i.e., grouping) of participant: (1) students and (2) educators. Then, to make a logical pathway between the literature reviewed previously and the novel conceptualizations of engagement presented in Chapter 6, I present the results of a preliminary qualitative analysis of the participants' perceptions and experiences as they pertain to the traditional notions of engagement (i.e., outcome- and state-based engagement). This chapter also presents two central elements inherent in defining engagement (activity versus passivity, and connection versus disconnection) identified through the preliminary analysis.

5.1.1 Characterization of Findings: Students

Two types of students participated in the present case study research: (1) Student SI Leaders (i.e., those that facilitate the peer-assisted study sessions) and (2) Student SI Participants (i.e., those that are enrolled in an SI-supported course and participate in SI sessions).

The SI Leaders participating in the focus group (n = 9) ranged in age from 19-30 (the majority between 19-21). Most were in their second, third or fourth year of undergraduate studies (which they entered immediately following high school) while one participant was a mature student. Participants were a mix of first-time and returning SI Leaders, offering more variety in terms of depth of experience with the SI program as an alternative engagement model.

The single SI Participant (age 20) who granted an interview (n = 1) was completing his second year of undergraduate studies and had attended SI sessions for more than one SI-supported course he was enrolled in.

As no participants from the planned third student group (i.e., "Student Non-SI-Participants") were successfully recruited for this study, their absence may be viewed as an important indicator relating to the differing behavioural engagement levels of students in the various groups (e.g., I was able to recruit 9 from the SI leader group, 1 from the SI Participant group, and 0 from the Non-Participant group). As such, while the voices of those students who are typically least engaged in academic and university life are missing from this analysis, this missingness also reveals a natural selection bias issue that exists in most studies and therefore supports the overall aim of the present study to identify and develop more co-created engagement methods that can be used to reach those student groups who are generally underrepresented in social science research (e.g., see Peterfreund et al., 2008). Indeed, it is more difficult to recruit participants from a population which is, by definition, less behaviourally engaged in general (i.e., those who were eligible for, but chose not to access the SI program, tend not to be responsive to other calls for participation in other activities or opportunities).

In terms of the two groups of students who are represented in this study, there is much more similarity between SI Leaders and SI participants than difference. Indeed, as students can apply to become SI Leaders as early as second year of an undergraduate degree, they are close both in terms of level of experience and academic achievement.

First, regarding experience, SI Leaders do not necessarily need to have had leadership training or experience prior to taking on the SI Leader role. Second, based on the interview with

the SI Program Manager and focus group with SI Leaders, it was not proven to be the case that SI Leaders are always the most motivated or high-achieving students already. This finding lends further support to the efficacy of Supplemental Instruction as, given its voluntary nature, motivation of students participating in SI programs has always been one of the main questions of previous research (see Peterfreund et al., 2008). Importantly, while successful completion of the relevant course with at least an 80% (i.e., A- in most grading schemes) is a requirement to qualify as an SI Leader in most SI programs (although some differ – e.g., see University of La Verne, 2021 for other SI Leader job requirements), this standard is not so high that only the most devoted, high-achieving students can hope to fulfill the role. Moreover, inherent in the role is the recognition that SI Leaders are not expected to provide specialized expertise in the course subject matter, but rather are meant to offer peer assistance to fellow students to engage with the course materials in more active and collaborative ways.

The most significant difference between these two student groups (SI Leaders and SI Participants) is the roles they have been designated by their educational institution: one designated as a leader, and the other designated as simply a student. While this may not seem like a significant distinction, becoming part of the SI program as a leader introduces students to an alternative pedagogical space (many for the first time in their entire educational careers, according to the SI Program Manager) and supports them to step into an educational leadership role while still retaining their student status and identity.

In terms of their differential role, SI Leaders receive both pre- and in-service training in order to lead interactive, weekly workshops for their fellow students. The pre-service training for SI Leaders typically includes two full days of training in the following areas: collaborative learning approaches, leading as a guiding peer versus an authority figure or subject expert, scaffolding methods, etc., (Mask & Mazur, 2014). Further in-service trainings and ongoing development typically include monthly or bimonthly two- to three-hour training sessions on various topics (e.g., integrating further theoretical and practical principles of student leadership, such as Kouzes & Posner's student leadership challenge, 2008) as well as a peer observation, feedback and mentorship process (see Appendix G for an example of SI training materials used for this ongoing learning).

Having attended training sessions held by more than one Canadian SI program, I can attest that these trainings tend to be fairly streamlined to support effective peer-led group

facilitation based on direction from the International and Canadian Supplemental Instruction Centres. Further, given the extensive and ongoing nature of SI facilitator training, which is intended to translate validated pedagogical knowledge into practically useful techniques, I have also witnessed first-hand the direct implementation of alternative pedagogical concepts promoted in trainings into SI sessions. SI Leaders are also supported by smaller peer mentorship groups (e.g., often meeting biweekly with fellow SI Leaders to discuss their workshop development plans and experiences), which encourage them to continuously try out new techniques they have learned through more formal training sessions, allowing them to improve their ability to connect theory to practice through discussion and peer feedback.

While the overall character of responses was similar between SI Leaders and the SI participant, the most notable difference was the depth of responses and the kind of language that was used to describe their perceptions and experiences of engagement (presumably due to SI Leaders' frequent opportunities to discuss and reflect upon the concept). Specifically, the SI Participant spoke plainly, using general terms regarding his educational experiences and was sometimes vague unless prompted to elaborate further (e.g., when asked what engagement meant to him, his first response was "it means just being able to participate in something, basically"). In contrast, by virtue of their peer leadership role and knowledge from their pre- and in-service training, the SI Leaders appeared more capable of walking the line between student *and* educator. That is, as they were allowed into that liminal space between the two roles, SI Leaders spoke both in plain terms about their experiences (e.g., speaking of intrinsic motivation: "I'm really engaged in something if it's something I make jokes about", speaking of disengaging educational environments: "they're teaching it, but the information is not getting put into my head", etc.,) as well as utilized more specialized terminology relating to engagement and pedagogical approaches (e.g., "good indicator of engagement", "gaps in learning", "self-efficacy", etc.,).

Without generalizing to all students, given the small sample size within the present study, this clear difference, along with several other variables held constant (e.g., similar age, year, level of previous leadership experience and academic achievement, etc.,) offers some preliminary evidence of the value and efficacy of the SI leadership's alternative model for engaging students.

5.1.2 Characterization of Findings: Educators

Two educators were interviewed for the present research: one SI Program Manager and one SI-supported Course Professor (N = 2). In terms of background, the SI Program Manager has been studying, applying, as well as training others, in alternative engagement practices for several years as the manager of a long-standing SI program at a Canadian University. The Professor, who was herself a former SI Leader during her undergraduate degree, has been an instructor for SI-supported courses for several years at the same university.

Although the Professor acknowledged that she often draws on her past experience as an SI Leader, she also admitted that implementing many of the engagement strategies advanced by the SI model is made more difficult by the sheer volume of students with whom she is expected to work. Indeed, while both the Program Manager and the Course Professor are educators, their scope of work differs greatly in terms of which student groups they work with, the extent and depth of interaction with students, and the ways in which they typically work "with" students. For example, the Professor works directly with the general student population, as she teaches first- and second-year courses, which draw an average attendance of over 500 students to each lecture. In contrast, the SI Program Manager works directly with students in their roles as SI Leaders and Mentors, allowing for a much more in-depth professional relationship. Indeed, when asked about his relationship with SI leaders the SI Manager noted, "It's quite deep. I was surprised when I took this role the extent of how deep it is actually".

Given the nature of their roles, there were noticeable differences in responses between them. For example, although both clearly had a broad theoretical understanding of engagement, the Professor generally took a more traditional stance than the Manager in terms of how engagement might be approached and enhanced in practice. Further, both presented different orientations regarding what is needed for enhanced engagement as well as the end goal of engagement interventions. For example, the Professor generally expressed a need for more resources with which to engage her large student audience, the end goal generally being to see a larger portion of her students motivated and actively pursuing their academic potential. Building on this academic-centred perspective, the Manager identified a need for more student leadership, more student-educator collaboration, and envisioned a broader direction for engagement in terms of its capacity to build community, integrate learning and application, *as well as* bolster individual academic success.

5.2 Preliminary Understanding of Engagement

While there are some important variations and distinctions in the way that the educators and students interviewed for the present study conceptualized engagement, there was much more similarity than difference overall. When asked what the term "engagement" means to them, the first inclination of both students and educators was to describe engagement as an individual, student-focused concept. That is, regardless of their level of involvement in the SI program, most participants began by applying engagement as an attribute that students possess, feel or demonstrate, aligning with traditional notions of engagement still advanced by mainstream scholars (see the National Survey of Student Engagement).

As behavioural and psychological facets of the engagement construct have already been covered extensively and legitimized in other works (e.g., Coates, 2007; Fredricks et al., 2004; Payne, 2017), they are not the focus of the present research program. However, the following section offers a preliminary analysis of the perceptions of educators and students which pertain primarily to engagement as a behavioural outcome, a psychological state, or a combination of both. This overview is provided here to offer context within which alternative conceptualizations of engagement expressed by educators and students (based on their first-hand experiences) are analyzed and compared later on. Further, through this preliminary analysis, I identify central dichotomies inherent in conceptualizing (and reconceptualizing) engagement through any lens, including: (1) activity versus passivity and (2) connection versus disconnection.

As an overview of all three theoretical perspectives examined in this study (i.e., an outcome approach, a state approach, and a process approach), Table 2 (presented at the end of this chapter, see p. 42-44) summarizes the themes (and sub-themes) that emerged through the qualitative analysis of student and educator responses. The first two approaches are addressed in the present chapter, while the third, alternative approach is examined further in the next chapter. Table 2 also presents selected passages from participants to demonstrate the evidence in support of each identified facet (or dimension) of the expanded engagement construct. Finally, following this section, I refer to both behavioural and psychological engagement together as the "traditional" approach, with a view to differentiating and examining in depth the alternative, process-based approach to engagement and to elucidate how it relates to and interacts with the first two theoretical approaches as the mainstream educational paradigm.

5.2.1 Behavioural engagement

Despite expressing several examples of alternative engagement, the Professor, as an educator who operates within traditional learning environments, generally conceptualized engagement as a behaviour-based construct related to student academic performance: "I feel like I can look at a student and tell whether or not they are engaged". This understanding that engagement can be observed as such was also shared by some Student SI Leaders. For example, referring to participants in their SI sessions, one SI Leader shared:

> Say you give them an activity to do. You can see the students actively engaging in that by actually trying it out. They might be stuck […] but they're going through the notes and trying to figure out how to get there. Then there's the other student who's not engaged, just sitting there waiting […] for the answer to get taken up.

Aligning closely with Krause and Coates' (2008) definition, engagement is used here as a proxy for the higher-achieving or "model" student who participates "positively" and exhibits behaviours that research has shown lead to better educational outcomes. As explained in the engagement-as-outcome section of the literature review (see Trowler, 2010 in particular), not all definitions of student engagement are considered "positive" in this way. However, while we may subscribe to multiple points of view, this more traditional perspective tends to be the first expressed by educators as it relates to overt behaviours that they can directly witness and assess from students.

Regarding ways to enhance engagement, participants (particularly the educators) expressed an understanding that engagement relates directly to motivation, connecting their behaviour-based conceptualization to the psychological element.

5.2.2 Psychological Engagement

While the traditional approach to engagement may be less likely to measure it from a psychological perspective, an understanding seemed to emerge among all participants that engagement encompasses more than just student behaviours. For example, without using the specific terminology, the SI Program Manager described engagement as a sense of intrinsic motivation: "They [students] are motivated more than by just the result or grade. They're motivated by learning". Speaking of the approach the SI program takes, the SI Manager also added: "It just makes learning funner [sic]". This recognition that people will tend to persist at tasks and projects that they enjoy is consistent with previous research on flow and engagement

(Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) and reinforces the notion that engagement is also intertwined with students' feelings and experiences as they move through the educational process.

Participants spoke at length about the different factors that affect students' feelings of engagement. The Professor explained that "it stems from a drive to do well overall in all their courses and a lot of that is motivated by future plans". She then provided the following example of differences in engagement between groups of students:

> For business students […] many of them do not need [my course] to get into their grad programs […] so there is a very noticeable difference in motivation to do well based on what is going to come after your undergrad. That's something that I think drives a lot of the differences in motivation and engagement I see between different classes. […] There's a much stronger attitude of 'why do I need this course?'. I think there's a bit more of 'I just need to pass' as opposed to 'I need my 90'.

Indeed, past research on motivation and goal-pursuit (Lin, et al., 2003) consistently demonstrates that students will be motivated by a combination of factors that produce intrinsic motivation (i.e., engaging because learning is enjoyable and fulfills a sense of purpose) *and* extrinsic motivation (i.e., engaging for the sake of one's future outcomes, such as acceptance into graduate school).

In contrast, a view also emerged that psychological engagement is an individual characteristic that is essentially fixed despite variations in motivational factors, as explained multiple times by the Professor: "those ones that tend to be a bit more engaged, [it's] just the nature of their personalities." While students with certain personality trait configurations (e.g., higher conscientiousness) may in some ways be naturally better equipped to succeed in traditional learning environments (Conrad & Patry, 2012), therein lies the fundamental issue with tethering engagement to a set of feelings and behaviours (that not all students will exhibit) aligned with external markers of academic success. Although factually accurate, it reveals that the traditional approach views engagement as little more than a proxy for the habits of high-achieving students.

This reality is chief among the reasons why the psychological approach, to a certain extent, has diverted from traditional, mainstream education, spawning alternative educational structures, such as the Montessori school system, based in principles of promoting intrinsic motivation through autonomy-supportive learning environments (Lillard, 2005). While not always rising to the level of the co-created learning approach to engagement, this developmental and social psychological approach has provided a solid theoretical basis for more radically

alternative approaches to be explored as potentially valuable in reaching the achievement-based outcomes considered paramount within the traditional educational system.

5.2.3 Interplay of Behavioural and Psychological Engagement

One SI Student Leader aptly described a critical interplay between behavioural and psychological engagement:

> I feel like engagement is something that starts internally. It's an interest in something and it's a desire to be involved in that thing […] but you're not necessarily engaged in it unless you undertake actions that get you involved into or immersed.

In this and other comments, educators and students both pinpointed how the different facets of engagement lead to and reinforce one another. The Professor, for example, explained that when there is a high enough academic challenge, students whose motivation stems from a mixture of fear of failure and the need to achieve high grades, will be more motivated to engage behaviourally in the course.

> There is that math phobia that always comes into it and students who, again, are motivated to do well, are going to take every opportunity to try to learn and to learn from their mistakes […] because they know this is going to be a difficult topic for them.

Importantly, however, the psychological engagement that is necessary to sustain long-term behavioural engagement tends to spring from a deeper well of mixed intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Indeed, a wealth of research (Cavanagh, 2015; Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Lillard, 2005; Lin, et al., 2003) has reliably demonstrated how difficult is it to sustain engagement in an area that presents too few intrinsic rewards (i.e., something that is too great a cognitive challenge to master). This is in line with one SI Student Leader who spoke to this notion that one must "get" something out of the endeavor internally (such as feeling a sense of accomplishment at working through a difficult task), describing engagement as "being challenged in a way that when you achieve it, it's very rewarding, but at the same time, not so big of a challenge that it seems impossible".

Participants also identified ways in which behavioural and psychological engagement may flow in the opposite direction. For example, the Professor described:

> being engaged just in the university as a whole helps with sort of realizing […] you'll get out of things what you put into it […] If they can see how that applies to their university social life, they can see how it applies to their university academic life [… and] having them feel like they are part of the community might make them more excited about getting the whole education part of it.

This relationship is both supported by previous research (Bovill et al., 2011; Krause & Coates, 2008) and also exemplifies the theory that psychological engagement can follow from taking action first (e.g., forcing oneself to begin a project, such as a research paper) without that internal feeling driving you. Indeed, as decades of procrastination research attest, we cannot always expect action to flow from motivation, given the various forms (or orientations) of motivation which naturally fluctuate (Katz, Eliot, & Nevo, 2014; Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). In this case, the logic is aligned with the National Survey of Student Engagement's (NSSE) conceptualization of engagement, which hypothesizes that students who participate more in their educational community will, in turn, feel more psychologically engaged in the academic portion of their post-secondary experience as well (see NSSE "Annual Results 2017").

The primary objective of the traditional education model remains the engagement of individual students in the academic domain (i.e., sought as an outcome). Nonetheless, it is important that educators, like the professor interviewed here, advocate for moving from isolation to community for the benefit of both students and educators alike (Deeley & Bovill, 2017; Kerr, 2011).

5.3 Central Dichotomies Inherent in Defining Engagement

Flowing from the traditional approach as a starting point, both students and educators (and especially those directly involved in SI) went on to describe engagement as a complex bundle of behaviours, feelings *and* interactions. Although the kind and depth of engagement experiences differed between students and educators (as expected), there was overall consensus around engagement itself as being more than just a set of feelings and behaviours that can be measured by observation or one-size-fits-all self-report scales. Further, out of both educator and student descriptions emerged two dichotomies central to an overall understanding of the phenomenon of engagement: (1) activity versus passivity and (2) connection versus disconnection.

These dichotomies are important to briefly unpack here as they provide the foundational building blocks for understanding engagement as both a state and outcome (as is already understood in the traditional engagement paradigm), as well as a process (as is understood in the alternative, co-created learning approach elucidated in later sections of this analysis).

5.3.1 Activity Versus Passivity

Throughout the focus groups and interviews, the terms "active" and "passive" continuously came up as a central delineator of engagement (i.e., versus disengagement). While the activity-versus-passivity paradigm fits with both the traditional and alternative engagement theories, the difference lies in how each approach applies this paradigm.

First, the behavioural approach attributes engagement only to students, prescribing specific actions that individual students can choose to take or not. Exemplifying this definition, the Professor described engagement thusly: "When I think of engagement, I think of [students] being active and proactive as opposed to just being passive and sort of sitting there hoping stuff gets absorbed, hoping help comes to you". In this traditional sense, "activity" refers to students displaying behavioural engagement, or in other words, effort (Krause & Coates, 2008).

Second, from a psychological perspective, engagement is conceptualized in terms of *internal* activity – as in cognitive or emotional action (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Trowler, 2010). Thus, while a student may not be displaying outward signs of "activity" (e.g., not asking questions, not contributing to discussion, doodling, etc.,) they still may be listening intently, or thinking silently, and absorbing the stimuli in their environment (Fredricks, 2014). This is a subtle form of activity (engagement) which may be incorrectly perceived as passivity (disengagement) when approaching engagement as exclusively observable or performative.

Third, and by contrast, the alternative approach refers to activity in terms of the set of collective practices which pertain to both students and educators. As with Bovil and Bulley's (2011) Active Student Participation (ASP) ladder, for example, while the term "active" is still technically attached to students, the scale itself measures the extent to which *educators* view and treat students as partners in the teaching and learning process, as opposed to the extent to which the students themselves are performing specific behaviours. Importantly, however, it must also be acknowledged that a certain level of activity on the part of students is still necessary for a co-created learning process to occur. However, the range of student behaviours considered appropriate and related to engagement is much wider and more self-determined than with the traditional approach (Bovill, et al., 2011; Healey, et al., 2014).

5.3.2 Connection Versus Disconnection

Another dichotomy that emerged as a central element of engagement centred on the concept of *connection*. While connection was expressed in various ways (e.g., particularly in the

context of interaction among students and educators, and more in-depth collaboration among students), the SI Course Professor succinctly expressed how integral connection is to understanding engagement: “What it looks like for a student to be engaged is just connecting, somehow, with some part of the course”. In this simple statement lies a complexity of meanings about engagement that, when unpacked, shows the depth of connection as a central feature of engagement of all kinds. That is, connection in this case can refer to multiple happenings.

In one way, connection can refer to the psychological sense within oneself of engaging with the course subject matter in a certain way (i.e., the feeling of genuine interest and intrinsic motivation to engage in the learning process, as in, “I feel a connection to this subject”). A common example of this type of connection is a student who might be struggling with math reaching a certain point where their relationship with the subject or material shifts (i.e., an appreciable shift that has commonly been described as something suddenly “clicking” in one’s mind or a light bulb being turned on). One SI Leader spoke of her experience with mathematics in this way, identifying the vast difference between her strong connection to the material now, compared to her total disconnection (described as “hate” even) from this subject in high school.

In another way, connection can refer to the interpersonal nature of engagement, relating to the connection between students and various others, including: the course instructor, teaching assistants, fellow students, and course-related supports, such as SI Leaders, among others. Indeed, the SI Program Manager specified that engagement for him is precisely when “students are working together, working with their faculty, TAs, [etc.,]”. With the existence of different educational communities as part of the post-secondary experience (e.g., campus clubs, study groups, etc.,), connection in this regard also pertains to a sense of social belonging as well as the ways in which individuals form connections through collaboration and collective experiences.

In a third way, connection can be applied in a more abstract philosophical or even moral sense, relating to the transformative and empowering experiences that pierce the veil between theoretical learning and practical, “real-world” application. In this sense, it relates to the internal-external connections within and between oneself, one’s own educational journey, and beyond (i.e., feeling and understanding the connection between course material and its greater purposes in one’s life and in broader society). Multiple SI Student Leaders expressed this sentiment as:

> Realizing like, yes, we’re learning in a class context but we’re learning because it applies to the real world and because it matters […] and you’re learning it because you’re making those connections.

As these students described their own experience, it became evident that when engagement is occurring, the material reaches students on a deeper level. While it is a valuable skill to learn to persevere through challenging or uninteresting endeavours, the fact remains that any successful learning process necessitates some kind and level of activity and connection (a.k.a. engagement) (Cavanagh, 2015; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

For many students whose natural predispositions are not matched with the traditional approach to education, it is inherently more difficult to remain proactive or form and maintain deep connections as the appropriate environment, resources, and relationships are not readily apparent or accessible (Fredricks, 2014; Lillard, 2005). As such, if the educational system is set up so that students are required to put sustained effort into a range of activities that do not hold any deeper meaning for them beyond individual outcomes, such as course grades, it is unreasonable to expect them to remain engaged over the long-term. Thus, regardless of which paradigm(s) one subscribes to (outcome-, state- or process-engagement), both activity and connection must be considered central elements that characterize *any* effective approach to engagement as a fundamental educational construct.

Table 2

Overview of Qualitative Findings on Student and Educator Perceptions of Engagement

Engagement as Behavioural Outcomes		
Category	***Description***	***Example Passages***
Student Effort	Students demonstrate effort by interacting with educational materials and striving toward expectations set out by the institution.	*"You can see the students actively engaging in that [activity you gave] by actually trying it out. They might be stuck […] but they're going through the notes and trying to figure out how to get there. Then there's the other student who's not engaged, just sitting there waiting […] for the answer to get taken up'."* (SI Leader)
Student Participation	Students demonstrate motivation by seeking out additional participation opportunities outside of the classroom.	*"Trying to learn outside of lectures […,] being engaged in something like participating in clubs and extracurricular activities, basically, generally, doing stuff."* (SI Participant) *"They [students] ask questions in class, […] to their peers, they use office hours, they talk to their TAs, they work together to study, they look beyond the course materials to auxiliary sources, could be YouTube or other texts."* (SI Manager)
Student Initiative	Students demonstrate initiative by proactively accessing the resources available to them.	*"Getting in touch with the resources. If you're really here for class and have questions and everything, you'll go to your prof's office; you'll talk to the TA; you'll be prepared for the lab because you want to be there and do it.*" (SI Leader) *"The ones that tend to be extra motivated […] the interaction is very active on their part, they'll come to me much more frequently, they don't hesitate to e-mail me."* (Professor)

Table 2 Continued

Engagement as Psychological States		
Category	***Description***	***Example Passages***
Cognitive Stimulation	Students feel cognitively activated by educational materials, challenges, or conditions.	*"Being challenged in a way that when you achieve it, it's very rewarding, but at the same time, not so big of a challenge that it seems impossible."* (SI Leader) *"There is that math phobia that always comes into it and students who, again, are motivated to do well, are going to take every opportunity to try to learn and to learn from their mistakes […] because they know this is going to be a difficult topic for them"* (Professor)
Intrinsic Motivation / Flow	Students feel a genuine sense of interest in or enjoyment during (or related to) educational tasks or activities.	*"I think it's more of the mindset of like, man, I get to learn this rather than I have to do this and it's due on this date or whatever."; "Being excited about the material not just in class but applying it to the real world"* (SI Leaders) *"They [students] are motivated more than by just the result or grade. They're motivated by learning."* (SI Manager)
Belonging / Relatedness	Students feel connected to each other and/or part of meaningful educational group(s).	*"Just getting to talk to these people and hear what's going on in their lives and be connected with people that you would otherwise never meet […] It's like 3 hours, but I got to walk with them for that 3 hours, and that's really exciting."* (SI Leader) *"Having them feel like they are part of the community might make them more excited about getting the whole education part of it."* (Professor)

Table 2 Continued

Engagement as Co-Creation Processes		
Category	***Description***	***Example Passages***
Collaboration (co-creation of educational relationships)	Ongoing process of building genuine partnerships among students, and between educators and students.	*"I think one of the easiest indicators for me in session is when they come to just interact with me vs. when they […] are willing to interact with each other, because they're there for a kind of a learning process"* (SI Leader) *"I'd really like to be able to do more collaborative group learning. […] You can get the stronger students to help the weaker students [… and] have that group effort of 'let's stumble through this together'. […] If I can put that in as part of the structure that would be amazing. That's just hard to do."* (Professor)
Democratization (co-creation of the educational process)	Ongoing process of reorganizing pedagogical roles through diversification of educational value sources and the transferral of ownership over teaching and learning processes.	*"You're in charge of your own studying. So being engaged was like coming to a point of […] realizing I don't understand this part and having to go back and look and sometimes go on YouTube […] knowing alternative resources and being able to find them by myself."* (SI Leader) *"Someone might come for the first time and be engaged […] in the way that the [SI] leader has structured it, and as the semester progresses […] they see students who haven't attended before and then they can take over some of the supporting […] because leaders are trained to step back and allow students to work together – that gives the space for people to step forward as leaders themselves among the attendees and then take the session over."* (SI Manager)
Emancipation (co-creation of society through education)	Ongoing process of transforming relationships between the educational process and broader society by developing meaningful connections / contributions through educational pursuits.	*"It's like taking responsibility for your own contributions to whatever you're engaged with and then also making the broad connections outside of that little community […] to real life."* (SI Leader) *"I feel most engaged when it's something that you can connect to the real world, and then also when […] you feel you're contributing to the world in some way by using that knowledge."* (SI Leader)

Note. Overview of engagement broken down into its outcome-based (behavioural), state-based (psychological), and process-based sub-facets (or dimensions) based on perspectives from students and educators involved in a Supplemental Instruction (SI) program.

Chapter 6. Findings (Part 2): Thematic Analysis of Engagement as a Co-Creation Process

6.1 Overview of Thematic Analysis Findings

Overall, participants' responses traced a shift in perspective from initially viewing engagement as an individual attribute and something we must push students to do or feel, to defining it more holistically as a process to be developed and participated in collectively. Indeed, in addition to confirming mainstream notions of engagement, most participants also endorsed an alternative conceptualization of engagement as a transformative, ongoing *process* of collaboration and connection between educators, students, educational institutions, and the broader community. The diversity both between participants' insights and across participants' own responses was enlightening in itself as it demonstrated the range of factors that could be ascribed to the phenomenon of engagement when approaching it from the alternative, co-creation lens. As such, the present analysis delves particularly into those responses which describe a more expansive vision of engagement with the understanding that these facets are generally not identified or labeled as such within mainstream engagement literature.

The present chapter details the findings of the second part of the directed content analysis, out of which the following three facets of engagement-as-process emerged: (1) Collaboration, (2) Democratization, and (3) Emancipation. The first sub-theme (or facet of engagement-as-process) (1) refers to the ongoing negotiation and re-negotiation of educational spaces and relationships; the second facet (2) refers to the transferral of ownership over the educational process from the one to the many; and the third facet (3) refers to the transformative expansion of the bounds and fundamental purpose(s) of education. Along with an overview of facets of traditional engagement, Table 2 (at the end of Chapter 5) provides a breakdown of this alternative reconceptualization of engagement which materialized through this analysis, offering definitions and examples (i.e., quotes from case study participants) of each facet of engagement as a process of co-creation.

The subsequent discussion chapter (Chapter 7) offers a novel conceptual model of engagement in education based on the integration of the present section's findings and the preliminary conceptual framework (see Chapter 3: Preliminary Conceptual Framework) developed from the engagement literature.

6.2 Emergent Theme #1: Engagement as a Process of Collaboration

The first major theme that emerged from the analysis of both student and educator voices speaks to engagement as a process of collaboration and, more specifically, the process of co-creating educational relationships and dynamics. Overall, this facet of alternative engagement can be understood as the ongoing negotiation and building of genuine connections among students, and between educators and students. This view of engagement as a collaboration process aligns with Fullan's (2013) call for a "new pedagogy" that views the "teacher as 'change agent or activator,' and student as proactive partner in learning" (p. 25). He goes on to note that

> Not only would this require radically new learning relationships between students and teachers, but also among them. The next step, and that is what we are working on, is to map out what this new learning relationship would look like. (p. 25)

Critically, the students and educators in the present sample naturally took this "next step" by recognizing and identifying their own first-hand examples of engagement as a practice of sustained collaboration, as opposed to shallow or short-term interactions with singular others.

Indeed, one SI leader identified this facet of process-based engagement in her SI sessions as: "when [students] come to just interact with me versus when they come and are willing to interact with each other, because they're there for a kind of a learning process". In this way, students could understand the development of the classroom as a shared educational and relational space. As such, engagement in this case is not necessarily what students get out of that space (i.e., learning quality), nor the space itself, but rather, the journey of striving towards something collaboratively (Akhilesh, 2017).

From this perspective, engagement is best understood as a process of give-and-take where multiple parties guide one another in different ways through the creation of that particular learning space, shifting and redefining roles and expectations as they go. This inherently collaborative nature of engagement as a process is reinforced by the SI Program Manager, who explained it as a fundamental shift from an individual- to a group-based learning approach. Given his years of experience with the SI model, he credits his students' shift in understanding to their exposure to the SI model's alternative approach:

> It's teaching people how to learn in an active and engaged way […,] *how* to learn in groups. […] Even some of our [SI] leaders have reflected on that. They've said, in their first year they thought, 'well I'm just an individual learner, I'm a pretty good learner, I don't really need the group work', […] but through their experience of being a leader, they see the power of the techniques [… and] you develop a community of practice.

As such, this collaboration process is not about different learning styles or preferences of students, but rather, refers to a fundamental shift in engagement philosophy and practice at the student, educator and institutional levels.

6.2.1 Student-to-Student Collaboration

According to both of the educators interviewed, the collaboration process among students can take several forms. Such forms include: interactivity within traditional classroom environments, often led by official educators (e.g., assigned group-work); informal group-learning (e.g., self-organized study groups); and more formalized peer-led collaboration efforts (e.g., SI sessions facilitated by institutionally recognized student leaders). Within the SI program context, a student leader may take on the formal role of facilitator, but they also intentionally prioritize flexibility within their sessions to ensure participants have opportunities to communicate what they need out of the sessions, shape the structure to some extent, and even take part in leading sections themselves. The SI Manger described how this process tends to unfold in detail:

> There's definitely a shift that happens […]. Someone might come for the first time and might be engaged with the leader and the other students in the way that the leader has structured it, and, as the semester progresses, maybe that person is attending regularly and they see the same group of people attending regularly and they become more comfortable working with them and advocating for their needs. And also, they see students who haven't attended before and then they can take over some of the supporting that student in working with the group and making sure they feel included. They are reinforcing the format and eventually, because leaders are trained to step back and allow students to work together, that gives the space for people to step forward as leaders themselves among the attendees and then take the session over.

In this sense, the SI model promotes multiple forms of student-to-student collaboration. In addition to facilitating a collective learning process within SI sessions, SI leaders in this sample also attend class in order to model effective study habits. Thus, SI leaders act as both supportive peers and model participants within the collaboration process, a central element found in most SI programs across institutions (Mask & Mazur, 2014). The SI Manager's account of this progression speaks not only to the importance of opportunities for various forms of student interactivity, but also to the transferal of ownership over the learning process from educators to students and their peers. While both are important elements of process-based engagement to unpack, the student empowerment element is examined in-depth in the following section (see 6.3) on democratization as another facet of process-based engagement.

According to the SI Course Professor, the kind of collaboration fostered by the SI model is also unique as the negotiation of roles can occur more consistently given that SI leaders are students themselves and, therefore, do not have a role in evaluating other students. For example, the Professor noted:

> I get that it is hard to approach your instructor at times, so I rather they go to an [SI session] than not come to anything at all. […] I think it just creates maybe a less intimidating environment and especially for students who maybe are at different levels.

As supported by previous SI research (Dawson et al., 2014; Malm, Bryngfors and Mörner, 2011), the removal of educational authority figures encourages a dynamic that fosters a more organic co-created learning process as the hierarchical roles are either less defined or enforced.

Within more traditional learning environments, the SI Course Professor also recognized that the kind and structure of educational space matters, noting that (since engagement is inherently interactive) students must have the *opportunity* to be interactive in order to become engaged. When asked what roles students could play in the teaching and learning process to enhance engagement, she explained her hopes for the direction of mainstream educational structures in line with engagement-as-collaboration:

> One thing I'd really like to be able to do more is just the collaborative group learning. I can do it in smaller classes. […] You can kind of get the stronger students to help the weaker students […] and take on that sort of [Supplemental Instruction] model […] Unfortunately, it's just not feasible in 600+ lecture halls. […] There's not the space, there is not the resources, you have no way of policing that people are […] taking it upon themselves to help each other out […] If I can put that in as part of the structure that would be amazing, that's just hard to do.

Indeed, beyond endorsing collaboration among students as one part of an effective learning strategy, the SI Course Professor consistently expressed wanting to infuse collaboration into the structure of her teaching process. Multiple students in this sample expressed a similar desire, with one SI Leader suggesting that "smaller class settings […] makes a big difference". The student went on to add:

> I know some classes have labs and some have seminars, but some classes are just lectures, so maybe adding that extra component where you're in a smaller group and you're able to interact with students (other students in the class) and discuss.

While many educators may hold progressive beliefs around alternative engagement, and students themselves articulating the need for more student-to-student collaboration, they remain largely confined within a narrow operational framework that generally does not offer the time, resources, nor infrastructure to realistically develop such a co-creation process among students

(Cook-Sather, 2016; Bovill, et al., 2016; Healey, et al., 2014). However, despite the myriad barriers within traditional learning conditions, this professor has tried to build interactivity among students into the course in smaller ways (e.g., using audience-polling software, asking students to pair up and discuss problems together, etc.,). While not all are applicable given the large class sizes, which allow little opportunity for more than one-way or surface-level interaction (Kerr, 2011), the SI Course Professor admitted to basing her efforts to initiate and nurture some kind of collaborative process on her own previous experience as an SI Student Leader.

6.2.2 Student-Educator Partnerships

Cook-Sather and colleagues (2014) explain student-educator partnership as a "collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis" (p. 6-7). This distinction of equal, but different, is an important one that students in this sample identified for themselves, as no one was calling for a complete abolition of all current educational structures, but rather, for their unique voices and contributions to be sought after and valued.

6.2.2.1 Partnership with Student Leaders. Indeed, while SI student leaders were grateful for the opportunity to take on such alternative pedagogical roles (i.e., as peer leaders in partnership with their fellow students), they also expressed the value of partnership *with* official educators – a direction that some researchers have advocated for as best-practice for implementing the SI model most effectively (Drake, 2011). Emphasizing the notion that we can accomplish much more together than separately, SI Leaders identified ways in which the course professor could help them with their preparation (e.g., ensuring mock midterms are not misleading for students), as well as ways in which they could help the professor. For example, as one SI leader who has supported the same course several times explained:

> I know all the funny punch lines, all the cool examples. […] It's getting to the point where we go through the same example [and] because it's right on the lecture slide, I already know the answer without punching it into the calculator.

Given their level of familiarity, SI leaders expressed ways in which they might change the course content or delivery if they were the ones in charge (e.g., "with one professor I would definitely go over more hands-on written examples"). A process of engagement in this case could involve intentional collaboration between SI leaders and course instructors with a view to pooling their

differential knowledge and perspectives to enhance engagement in ways that could only be the joint product of a *partnership* engagement process (Bovill, 2014; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Specifically, drawing on Bovill and colleagues' (2016) description of students as pedagogical co-designers, the SI model offers fertile ground and a solid infrastructure for the partnership development process to occur.

6.2.2.2 Partnerships with Regular Students. Importantly, all student-educator partnerships need not look or function the same way, nor serve the same purpose. For example, speaking from their perspective as regular students in their own courses, many SI Leaders also identified that having little-to-no choice in terms of what courses they must take, what they might learn and how they are expected to operate within each course was entirely disengaging. For example, one SI leader shared: "I feel like teaching is like a dictatorship. There's a set agenda, so it's not open-ended questions, it's: 'we're going to get through *this* content'" (italics added for emphasis). Another SI leader expressed how:

> Students have a lack of ability to tell the prof how to teach them. […] It's like a learning gap. They're teaching it, but the information is not getting put into my head. […] Students have very minimal say in how the information is delivered.

Pinpointing the sixth and seventh rungs of Bovill and Bulley's (2011) active student participation (ASP) ladder (where students have varying levels of choice and influence), students explained that they were not looking for total free reign (i.e., the top rung of the ASP ladder, where students are completely in control), but rather, that having some say over a selection of curricular and pedagogical decisions would be a welcome, and inevitably engaging change.

In line with previous student voice research (e.g., Lanskey & Rudduck, 2010), students in the present case study articulated an understandable unease regarding educators offering the illusion of choice or surface-level influence within the classroom or course. Calling explicitly for a genuine and responsive feedback loop between students and instructors, one student offered the following example:

> They give us opportunity to give feedback, but it's not feedback we ever see. […] [But one professor] took the 600-people lecture hall, he gave an index card and said 'give me your thoughts'. He read them all and the next Monday he came in and he said 'you guys said this; you wanted the notes to bring to class; you wanted me to do more written problems in class' – just that willingness to help the students that way.

Even though this process could not have resulted in the psychological or behavioural engagement of all students, nor the fulfillment of the diversity of learning needs in a 600-plus

classroom, the students *were* heard and their voices deemed important by the educational authority. Thus, it was the reciprocal feedback process itself (that the class engaged in together) that the students saw as a valuable outcome in this case. Recent student voice research in higher education supports this view of the engagement process as an end in itself, given clear links between student voice initiatives and the positive educational outcomes specified by traditional engagement literature (e.g., higher motivation, behavioural investment, retention, academic success, etc.,) (Bovill, et al., 2011; Brooman et al., 2015; Cook-Sather et al., 2015; Healey, et al., 2014; Lawson & Lawson, 2013).

In this instance, the SI student leaders were actually able to identify the different elements of engagement as a process of co-creation. Wherein the *willingness* on the part of the instructor to engage in this process with his students would normally be considered only an *antecedent* to the engagement that occurred, it is the actual *process* involving: (1) proactively seeking the students' input, (2) valuing their voices by genuinely listening to his students and implementing some of their suggestions, and (3) going back to share how their interaction and input made a difference for both parties, that constitutes engagement.

6.2.3 Student-Educator Partnership within the SI Program Structure

In the SI model context, student-educator partnerships progress much deeper than students fulfilling the role of consultants (Bovil et al., 2015) sharing their voice for course instructors to consider (or not) as they deem fit. Indeed, in the SI Program Manager's own account, the relationship between SI Student Leaders and the educators who support the SI program is "quite deep". These educators include the SI program manager, supervisor, assistant, and learning specialists, who offer both educational and administrative support (e.g., designing and facilitating pre- and in-service trainings for SI Student Leaders, providing a connection to additional resources to students leading and participating in the SI program, etc.,).

The development of the student-educator relationship in this context is unique and does not always generalize beyond the structure of the SI program itself, even in more progressive institutions with a strong culture of peer leadership, such as with the present case study site. That is, beyond educators involved directly in peer-based learning, there is little interaction between most educators (i.e., course instructors) and student leaders, despite their official and institutionally sanctioned positions. The SI Course Professor explained that in her case:

> I almost leave it entirely up to them, the level of interaction they want to have […] I don't necessarily push any kind of interaction either in lecture or outside of lecture […] as [SI] leaders, I would say I don't typically interact with them unless they request it – I just leave it as an open door policy.

From one perspective, such an approach can be viewed as fostering an open, autonomy-supportive environment (Black & Deci, 2000), however, due to their entirely passive role in the lectures, multiple student SI Leaders pointed out a missed opportunity to contribute meaningfully by supporting course instructors to evaluate and enhance course curricula and teaching practices. Additionally, this arrangement demonstrates that it is not only possible, but in fact likely, for one kind of process-engagement to occur without another. In this case, for example, students *are* empowered as peer leaders to collaborate with their fellow students in a novel way, however, they are not supported to collaborate directly with the course instructor, a common barrier that often exists between students and relevant educational authorities even when student voices are sought out (Bovill, 2014). As such, both are essentially "on their own", operating separately rather than as a teaching team – a concept which has shown potential to enhance engagement with students as pedagogical co-designers (Bovill, et al., 2011; 2016; Cook-Sather, 2016; Healey, et al., 2014).

6.3 Emergent Theme #2: Engagement as a Process of Democratization

The second major sub-theme identified through this analysis can be understood as co-creation of the educational process; It is a process of reorganizing pedagogical roles through the diversification of educational value sources and the transferral of ownership over teaching and learning processes. In short, it involves shifting the norms around what and who is viewed as educationally valuable.

Through the analysis of student and educator voices, it became clear that this democratization process involves ongoing efforts of multiple parties, but especially educators and educational leaders, to (1) diversify sources of educational value, (2) reduce the traditional hierarchical educational structures, (3) reorganize traditional roles and values, and (4) transfer ownership of the teaching and learning process to students. Indeed, according to the SI Program Manager, engagement is a continual process of contributing and then intentionally "stepping back" in ways that make space for new leaders, and new leadership structures, to emerge.

6.3.1 Diversifying Sources of Educational Value

Beyond the practical use of SI sessions as a time-effective study tool, students in this sample (as well as others – e.g., Gardner et al., 2016; Kane & Chimwayange, 2014; McFarlane et al., 2017) called for a movement towards diversifying sources of educational value. That is, students spoke of not only preferring, but requiring more than one knowledge-holder, as well as greater interaction between several sources of educational support. For example, speaking of courses with 200 or more students, one student asserted that "those are the heavy courses. That's why you need a lot of [SI sessions], because the prof can't go answering that many questions".

Part of this diversification process involves the recognition that students have something more to formally offer fellow students in the teaching and learning process and that engaging students in alternative ways (e.g., as peer leaders versus as teaching assistants) offers unique benefits to the student leaders themselves (Malm, et al., 2011; Mcfarlane, et al., 2017; Miles, 2010; Stout & McDaniel, 2006).

Differences in what and who is considered valuable within the teaching and learning process is appreciable from students' perspectives, given their experience moving between various educational spaces. For example, the SI student *participant* interviewed (who was not in any kind of leadership position) identified a difference in the kind of contribution he could make between lectures and the SI sessions. In the lectures, he saw his role as exclusively "expanding my own knowledge", whereas in the SI sessions he felt he could contribute his own "theories and expertise" to enhance the whole group's experience, and to learn from the other students' "own styles" of studying. Further, according to one SI leader, a peer-based support model offers a way for students of all skill and knowledge levels to receive something valuable from the process:

> I had one student in my [SI session] who comes and she knows what to do every time. […] So I asked her one day: 'I'm happy to have you here, of course, and you're very helpful, but I just want to make sure you're getting something out of this', and she's like, 'yeah' [because] this is the time she books off every week to do studying for CHEM and then that's it, she's done.

In this way, the SI model does not seek to abolish traditional modes of education, but rather expands our view of what we consider valid forms of teaching and learning, inviting students to offer their own kind of expertise to enhance the process. Thus, it actually supports students to become better learners within the traditional educational system, as well as opens them up to different ways of teaching, learning and working collectively (Black & Deci, 2000).

The SI Program Manager reinforces this expansion by also holding space for multiple kinds of educational environments, rather than advocating for a new, but singular replacement:

> I think the [SI] approach aligns with contemporary pedagogy […] that learning is co-created and that the experience of learning is made more valuable by the opportunity for reflection as well. […] I think that people need to be resilient and be able to learn in different environments. […]. To engage with the materials and to really understand, not just learn to the standards that are required for the test, but to become competent in those skills, really understand and take in the information and apply that to future studies and in your career.

It is, therefore, critical to recognize the impact of the educational environment's structure as it relates to setting and cementing educational norms and values (Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018). For example, while the SI Course Professor expressed a desire for each of her students to be "an active learner rather than a passive learner", built into the concept of proactivity in this case is a necessary belief in oneself that what you have to offer is actually valuable on some level. Indeed**,** regardless of individual educators' efforts to implement alternative engagement techniques, when the educational authority, and therefore value, is consistently concentrated in a singular educator figure, it serves to dismiss, rather than identify and utilize, the inherent value of what students have to offer (Bovill, 2011). Thus, in order for students to recognize their own value and act upon this recognition, current educational leaders must reform educational structures in order to support the development of a sense of value, competency and ownership for their students within the teaching and learning process.

6.3.2 Reducing Educational Hierarchical Authority Structure

Given the presence of an educational authority in traditional learning environments, such as lectures, many students may refrain from engaging proactively for several reasons (e.g., anxiety, fear of embarrassment in front of their peers). The SI Course Professor acknowledged the inherent power dynamic between educators (and even Teaching Assistants) and their students, given that they have some level of influence over their futures:

> I think [the SI sessions] may be less intimidating than going to my office hours or going in and talking to the TAs […] It's another student who did well in the course and is helping them get through it […] I think that we try not to be intimidating as the professors and the TAs, but I also get it.

In the form of ensuring that students have other non-authority figures to go to for support, both educators in this sample agreed that reducing this power dynamic (where feasible) can aid in helping students step forward into formal and informal leadership roles. For example, by

employing students as educational leaders and following specific student leadership development models (e.g., the SI Program Manager mentioned following Kouzes & Posner's, 2008 student leadership challenge), the SI model manages to maintain structure while not imposing the unilateral control of traditional educational hierarchies. Indeed, in this more horizontal structure, students at all levels (i.e., whether they are struggling or not) are valued for what they can bring to the process of engagement (Dawson et al., 2014).

As previously stated, when courses have a singular educational authority figure that both shapes the structure of the learning space and the expectations of how all students should interact within that space, it also reinforces narrow and prescriptive notions of engagement and inevitably misses opportunities to support varied learning styles by leveraging unique student contributions (Bovill & Bulley, 2011). One SI leader suggested that in order to meet a wider variety of needs and to get the most benefit out of the learning environment, multiple actors (both students and educators) must be empowered to input their own styles, experiences, knowledge, and expertise:

> I really like the Psych 3000 course […] There are two lectures all semester and the rest is group discussion, so it's led in a way that […] it's up to our group and our engagement levels to self-teach those topics. Obviously, the professor is there to help us if we need help, so I find that course really great because […] every teacher is going to teach the same course differently, right? So […] instead of one professor trying to teach the course one way, you're going to get a variety.

This insight references again the concept of teaching teams, linking the democratization facet of engagement-as-process to the collaboration facet, as when collaboration exists, so too can a more equitable distribution of power within the educational process (Bates, 2006; Fielding, 2011; Lanskey & Rudduck, 2010). This relationship is also born out through research at much higher levels, such as within transnational educational advocacy movements, where the collaborative process also inevitably involves a process of power redistribution. Indeed, MacPherson (2016) asserts that "spaces for participation are not neutral but are shaped by power relations. Thus, 'those who create it are likely to have more power within it' (PPSC 2011, 17)" (p. 404). Both students and educators in this sample clearly recognized the limitations of the current educational system and advocated for a reorganization of pedagogical roles and values (i.e., student leaders valued as co-creators) with a view to flattening the traditional educational hierarchy.

6.3.3 Reorganizing Pedagogical Roles and Values

During this project, it was identified that many students, even those exposed to the SI model, misunderstand or are hesitant regarding a shift from the traditional model of education to one of collaborative participation[4]. The SI Manager attributed these preconceived notions to the fact that the majority of students are not exposed to alternative forms of engagement through their mainstream educational experience: "people still come [to SI sessions] with misconceptions around the [SI] model because they haven't experienced it before". Indeed, unless one is introduced to, and immersed in, a culture of collaboration, peer leadership and experiential learning, any alternative engagement approach may be out of the scope of the imagination, even including for educators.

This reality highlights the role that exposure plays in implementing a sustainable co-creation process, given that a critical mass of informed and open-minded educators and students is a necessity to facilitate large-scale change in this direction (Bovill et al., 2011; Fielding, 2011; Lillard, 2005; Stout & McDaniel, 2006). This is often the difficulty when trying to engage students in radically alternative ways. That is, especially without the appropriate infrastructure nor a frame of reference for what a co-created learning process would look like, or really entail, it takes extensive time, experience, patience, exploration and reorientation for all involved to even begin to implement (Kane & Chimwayange, 2014).

In this vein, the SI Manger described the SI model's engagement approach as facilitating more of a journey rather than guaranteeing a destination:

> There is some kind of disorientation and reorientation because some people come expecting content review and that's not what they get - and they stay anyway. […] It's an orientation on how to learn in university that they wouldn't have had otherwise – they wouldn't have had just from attending classes and from other academic supports.

Critically, the SI Manager pinpoints the essence of the democratization engagement facet in his description of a "disorientation and reorientation" process. When students do not get what they expect, but decide to participate anyway, they are introduced to a novel set of experiences where they are directly involved in negotiating their fellow participating member's personalities, experiences, backgrounds, preconceived notions about, and motivations for, engaging in this alternative process.

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[4] As previously noted (see Chapter 5), when students were asked about engagement, their initial responses tended to align most with the traditional approach to engagement and education.

Practicing alternative forms of engagement, therefore, necessitates continuously challenging and reorienting the values and expectations that students (and many educators) have learned to normalize as the natural and correct approach (Fullan, 2013). Indeed, some may push back against it as the co-created learning process does require forms of participation from them that they may be unfamiliar with, and for some, may not see the value in. For example, SI Leaders noted that some students choose not to return to SI sessions after learning they may not get the answers they were specifically looking for, as working through a collaborative learning process with fellow students for collective gain goes against what has been expected of them in their role as a student up until that point (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Gasiewski et al., 2012). In these ways, SI introduces students to different ways to learn and interact with others. Only through this reorientation process can students be empowered to share ownership over the educational process and take on alternative pedagogical roles.

6.3.4 Transferal of Ownership over Educational Process

A number of SI leaders described engagement for them as an ongoing process of striving for a balance between independence and interdependence. That is, students described their experiences of slowly developing ownership over their teaching and learning journey as they began to take on leadership roles and to work through unexpected challenges with the aid of a diverse support system (e.g., classmates, TAs, online resources, etc.,). One student described this experience as finding one's own path, but doing so alongside others involved in a similar process of learning and self-discovery:

> For me [the feeling of engagement] really came in when, in like in the lab setting, after you get to a certain point they basically just put you in a lab and tell you 'this is what you have to do by end of semester. Do it'. And the TA is there if you need them, but you're in the [expletive] of it, and you're planning, and it's so cool. […] It kind of a little bit forces you to be engaged, but once you actually do start to - it's *your* products and *your* mistakes, and it's super, super cool. *(italics added for emphasis)*

In this case, the autonomy-supportive approach to student learning described here is a powerful way to encourage the emergence of new engagement practices, as it allows the progression of students into unconventional leadership roles without the loss of their student identity. Scanlon and colleagues (2007) highlight the development of an identity that is congruent with one's academic and social communities as a basic element of student wellness, particularly in higher education. Further, in terms of direct benefits to students, Deeley and Bovill (2017) identify

greater motivation and overall satisfaction when students have more ownership over teaching, learning, assessment, and feedback processes.

Further, democratization refers to a student empowerment piece of the engagement phenomenon which, when done effectively, gradually transfers control of the teaching and learning process to students in progressive, scaffolded ways (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Fielding, 2011). It is a gradual shift that occurs from a leader-structured learning space to a fluid, participant-led structure that is more reactive to the needs of or greater range of participants. For example, the SI Program Manager explained:

> I hear [SI] leaders say often that their best sessions are the ones where they take a backseat and their attendees start running their own session, so to me, that's the ultimate of engagement - when people feel like they don't need the [SI] leader anymore. They understand how to engage with other students.

The SI Manager went on to speak to the high level of intention and dedication required to facilitate a sustainable transferral of ownership over the teaching and learning process. It takes a recognition of the inherently unbalanced power dynamic between educators and students and a willingness, particularly on the part of the educator, to break through the traditional expectations of student-educator relationships by ceding some control in order to work *with*, rather than above, students (Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felton, 2011). Indeed, the SI Manager expresses the intention to guide the process alongside students, rather than lead from the front, explicitly stating that "we really want [SI] leaders to be the face of the program […] I want the [SI] leader to be the person who's taking the lead".

In this way, the SI model does not practice or produce engagement by starting at the top of Bovill and Bulley's (2011) Active Student Participation (ASP) ladder (i.e., "students in control"). Rather, it begins from a more traditional starting place and slowly facilitates a movement upward through the rungs towards a co-created space through collaboration and partnership-building. In the SI model, this movement may be intentional on the part of the facilitator, but it takes open negotiation between the leader and their fellow students to establish and continuously build upon and, thus, cannot be expected to simply exist on its own once a certain intervention has been implemented.

While not explicitly stated as such, a recognition of engagement as a continuous transferral and redistribution of power within educational relations and spaces is slowly building momentum (Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018). Indeed, as Bovill and colleagues (2015) trace the

trajectory of recent co-creation and student voice research, they identify more explicit linkages being established between the adoption of co-created learning practices and greater democratization of the educational process overall. Through ongoing collaboration efforts, and a paradigm shift wherein traditional roles and expectations of educational leaders and participants are both blurred and expanded, a transformative process of the nature and purpose(s) of education itself is also possible.

6.4 Emergent Theme #3: Engagement as a Process of Emancipation

The third major sub-theme that emerged from this analysis is termed *emancipation* as it can be understood as a fundamental expansion of the current purposes and bounds of education as a societal institution. Specifically, the emancipation facet of engagement-as-process refers to an ongoing pursuit to broaden the practical, social and moral implications of the education system.

This facet drives a kind of meaning-making process that interrogates the "why" of education, and ultimately, connects the traditionally individually focused learning process with its collective purposes and implications. Thus, this final portion of the analysis explores student and educator insights on engagement as it pertains to expanding the various purposes of education. Specifically, it expands the (1) practical purpose of education (i.e., integrating learning and application), (2) the social purpose of education (i.e., building strong, effective and supportive communities both within and beyond the post-secondary context), and (3) the moral purpose of education (i.e., improving society *through* educational pursuits).

6.4.1: Expanding the Practical Purpose: Integration of Learning and Application

In addition to developing student-educator partnerships and supporting greater student empowerment within the teaching and learning process, the SI leaders also broadened the scope of engagement from within the classroom (e.g., asking questions to a prof or TA) to the realm outside of education. For instance, one SI Leader described the experience of engagement as students asking themselves the question: "what's going on in the world or what does this mean to me?". Indeed, beyond simply finding reasons to feel intrinsically motivated towards their own studies, several students described engagement as a holistic process of cultivating a strong and meaningful connection between their learning activities and a wide array of greater purposes for the educational project of which they are a part.

Another SI leader described engagement as a process of "realizing, yes, we're learning in a class context, but we're learning because it applies to the real world and because it matters". This conception of engagement anchors learning in such a way that students do not just *feel* engaged (as with the psychological understanding of engagement) but actually *are* engaged in something larger than themselves and their own personal learning pursuits (Akhilesh, 2017; Lawson & Lawson, 2013).

From a more outcomes-driven perspective, it is becoming increasingly important to directly link the learning students are doing in the classroom to its purpose in "real-world" contexts (Healey, et al., 2014; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018). Through experiential learning opportunities like cooperative education, practicums and field placements within community organizations or private businesses, for example, students are connected and can contribute to something bigger than themselves and their own internal learning experience (Cantor, 1997). Further, this exchange of skills and knowledge for a real purpose can be the most helpful from a practical learning perspective (i.e., learning through doing), as students' input and efforts lead to tangible outcomes.

Importantly, however, this pursuit still remains at odds with the reality in many post-secondary contexts wherein the subject matter students are expected to engage with is, more often than not, entirely separated from its purpose and potential usage. For example, while the SI Course Professor interviewed for the present study explained her efforts to make such a connection (e.g., sharing news articles with her students highlighting the value and use of the subject matter outside of the classroom), the links between learning and practice still remain only theoretical as the program and institution simply lack the infrastructure and resources necessary for effective integration of knowledge acquisition and application. Indeed, Kerr (2011) notes large class sizes as particularly problematic here due to a range of challenges outside the educator's control, including "insufficient funding, human resources, and/or time, availability of appropriate physical spaces, union issues, institutional support and culture" (p. 9). Despite attending a considerably progressive HEI with a strong history of experiential learning, students in the present sample also called attention to this unfortunate reality.

Both the SI Student Leaders and the SI Program Manager advocated for transforming education from a system that trains students for potential future contribution, to one that generates meaningful contributions from all members of the educational community, regardless

of their level of education, experience, etc. Emphasizing this need for more than just engagement of students as consultants, Lanskey and Rudduck (2010) highlight the importance of "students' learning from experience what is entailed in being members of the school as a democratic working community, where they know that that they can contribute to decision making" (p. 804).

Critically, while not reaching all levels and fields of study, the SI Manager explained that his HEI takes a progressive approach to engagement (as compared to others) which intentionally involves empowering students with increased experiential learning and governance opportunities, thereby embedding a culture of peer leadership in the broader organizational structure (i.e., actually trusting students and viewing their contributions as valuable):

> [Institution Name] is really strong in this area. I think that there's a general understanding and buy-in to the idea that experience of being a teacher is not just information, but experience and reflection on that experience. […] In the last year, a new office […] has opened up to support the rollout of an experiential learning framework.

Like the SI model, experiential learning frameworks can also support the adoption and integration of an engagement-as-process model as they are inherently more immersive. Some frameworks, such as Warren's (1995) model, have even used the co-creation of the teaching and learning process with student teachers as a means of training future educators on how to implement experiential learning projects. More recently, educators in the UK have utilized an experimental learning framework in order to make the transition from student to pedagogical co-designer more accessible for a wider range of students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds (Speirs et al., 2017). By investing in such alternative engagement initiatives, HEIs can slowly shift desired outcomes of higher education from individual success following graduation to ongoing collective achievement both within and beyond the institution.

In the SI program, in particular, theory and practice is combined at all levels by intentionally *not* removing the learning from its application. For example, the SI Leader training is co-created with students (both mentors and trainees) as they are given materials and some guidance and then encouraged to work together to negotiate the educational space and process among themselves. This training approach of allowing educators (or, in this case, student leaders) to learn *through* a particular pedagogical technique or activity that they can then use themselves with their students in the classroom is known *as "*congruent teaching" and has been proven to be one of the most effective methods for developing teacher skills (OECD, 2009; Swennen, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008). The SI Leader training model uses this congruent

teaching technique (also known as "mirroring") as it teaches the lesson by applying the tenets of the lesson itself (i.e., utilizing a co-created educational model to train leaders, encouraging them to mirror this approach within their own SI sessions). For one SI Leader training, the SI Manager explained:

> We use Kouzes & Posner's student leadership challenge [to train SI] Leaders on the concept of leadership and how to lead from a peer level rather than a boss/manager kind of level. [This approach] allowed us to really step back and watch and give them materials and really facilitating and not having to provide any content at all. […] those leaders who were here at that time, they still refer back to that model and frame their leadership experience around the model. […] It allowed them to adopt that model as a framework that they will always use, and always understand.

Thus, while still drawing on educational content from recognized academic authorities (e.g., Kouzes & Posner, 2008), this approach works to reorient the teaching and learning process to regard students as the active parties who ultimately shape and drive the process forward themselves. This, in turn, increases trust and solidifies confidence in the collaborative partnership between students and educators, as well as highlights the importance of developing accessible and useful theoretical frameworks with a view to integrating them directly into the teaching and learning process. Promoting and proliferating these in-practice instances is important as Guthrie (2014) recognizes in reviewing Kouzes and Posner's (2008) student leadership challenge that "finding a language in which students are able to expand their knowledge of leadership and then apply it to their own reality is challenging" (p. 332).

In these ways, the co-created engagement approach provides benefits to the teaching and learning process that are self-perpetuating and spur further kinds of engagement (Krouzes & Posner, 2008). In this case, the process of integrating learning and application leads not only to better educational outcomes for students (Bovill et al., 2011), but also demonstrates education's critical importance and capacity to improve our individual and collective lives in more than one way (Zepke, 2015).

6.4.2: Expanding the Social Purpose: Community-building

Engagement as an emancipatory process also relates to the integration of traditionally separate domains (i.e., academic, social, political, personal, health, etc.,) within educational contexts. The SI Program Manager noted directly: "there's a bigger sense of [engagement] beyond the course as well […] of just being engaged on campus". As he explained, creating educational communities that transcend the classroom and that also follow a progressive,

alternative approach to engagement, are self-reinforcing in that they engage students in non-traditional and (often) non-academic ways, which in turn, prompts them to engage further in the traditional academic process (Bovill et al., 2011; Deeley & Bovill, 2017).

While not typically explored for its deeper implications, the link between community involvement and student engagement is even born out in research supporting the traditional education approaches (e.g., Krause & Coates, 2008). Indeed, as the SI Course Professor phrased it,

> being engaged in just the university as a whole helps with sort of realizing [that] the whole university experience is about participating and getting the most out of it, and you'll get out of things what you put into it.

The primary purpose of education may not explicitly be to build community, but by virtue of the myriad clubs, fellowships, support services, etc., that have sprung up around the main pursuit for academic achievement, HEIs are a natural hub for community to be built and sustained. The educators in the present sample described the development of (and participation in) community as a primary element of the engagement process, for both SI Leaders and regular students alike. For example, the SI Manger explains that SI Leaders are intentionally "building community in [various] way[s]", such as: taking interest in their attendees' activities on campus, in their lives, and even inviting them to participate in additional opportunities, with the intention of encouraging the expansion and maintenance of the HEI's community.

Echoing this intentionality, the student SI Leaders also tended to relate engagement to their opportunity to play an important role in supporting their fellow students to connect with other areas of their institution's community (e.g., academic, health and wellness, social, etc.,). For example, one SI Leader expressed how fulfilling it was to be able to contribute to the SI community by offering valuable help to other students; she explained,

> The [SI] program is part of the peer program and as a peer helper you get a lot of training on mental health and just helping people. Understanding the way people think and being able to identify how they're feeling and direct them to resources that help them – it's extremely engaging and rewarding for me.

Because the SI model both puts students in leadership positions and expands its scope of purpose beyond the academic domain, it therefore also changes *how* it pursues its various objectives. For instance, when we build community in the service of working towards shared collective purposes, we inevitably discover new and fulfilling ways of interacting and relating to one another (Maxwell & Huisman, 2018; Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018). Indeed, real

community belonging and investment in collective successes offers a pathway to what Akhilesh (2017) terms a "collaborative culture" (p. 45) and what Healey and colleagues (2014) term as "partnership learning communities" (p. 26). Consequently, these pathways also lead to a greater sense of purpose in the long-term, compared to the outcomes of focusing solely on one's own individual academic standing and journey (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

This purposeful approach to community building employed by the present SI model representatives in this study fosters a transformative expansion of what the educational community does and what we can accomplish as interdependent individuals. In this way, engagement as an emancipatory process speaks to the mission of building and living in community as an integral part of our needs as individuals and as a functioning society, where community members assume various formal and informal roles to support the collective needs.

Understanding the community-building process as an integral part of co-created engagement, the SI Program Manager explained that their SI leader trainings all intentionally involve "some community-building, some check-in and some skill-development." Rather than holding a meeting or training for a single predefined purpose and following a single predefined method or structure, SI managers practice alternative engagement by holding space for a range of different purposes, different needs, and different ways for members to contribute and shape the experience for all involved. In this way, SI managers recognize that both how *and why* we gather, learn and work matters in terms of the emancipatory potential of the process.

Importantly, both students and educators in this study identified ways in which this alternative, process-based approach to engagement could help to address other issues, such as feelings of isolation and disconnection from communities outside the HEI (i.e., families, friend groups, neighbourhoods, faith-based groups, etc.,). For example, engagement as a process of community-building fosters commitment to the group and the work, which in turn, forms important social identities for students, essentially, creating something new of value and consequence for students care about and invest in (Kahu, 2013; Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018; Zepke, 2015).

A major part of this pursuit is the intentional creation and integration of opportunities for interaction in multiple domains beyond the classroom. Integration in this sense refers to bringing together the educational process and other parts of student and educator lives to make engagement in both realms (i.e., the academic/professional and the personal) more meaningful

and connected. The SI Manager described how community building in this sense is encouraged at his HEI through the intentional planning and use of physical spaces:

> A big part of [engagement] is being really super available, so my office door is almost always open […] and it's right beside the peer workers, and we provide the space for them to get together and create their session plans. […] People are also welcome to use that room as a space to study [… it's] a guaranteed study space.

Beyond this provision of shared student-staff space that is available for multiple purposes, the SI Manager went on to explain their efforts to foster a real sense of belonging within their community, recognizing that care and connection help combat isolation and disengagement (Kerr, 2011; Scanlon, et al., 2007):

> We're keeping in touch with them [student SI Leaders] really regularly. […] That attitude of being invested in other people's success, I think, carries through from program staff into [SI] leaders and from [SI] leaders into their attendees. Some [SI] leaders have called us the [SI] family, so it's got that feel about it that there are people on campus who care about you.

Based on high return on investment seen in such sites with well-established SI programs with dedicated space, staff, and support, HEIs would do well to prioritize infrastructure and programming that supports community-building as, even from a more traditional perspective, logic evinces that more interaction inevitably leads to more connection and collaboration.

The emancipatory aspects of the SI model's engagement approach build community within and beyond the educational sphere upon a foundation of core values, such as a genuine care for the well-being and success of each community member as well as an egalitarian structure, which ingrains in those involved at all levels a willingness to learn from anyone and everyone.

6.4.3 Expanding the Moral Purpose: The Higher Purpose of Higher Education

The SI Program Manager further explained engagement from an SI model perspective as a process of:

> making connections between what [students] learned last unit and what they're learning now and predicting what's going to come in the future; how that connects with their degree program; how that connects to careers and the work that their faculty has done in the past, their research and what they're doing now as well, so, as opposed to seeing a course as a bunch of facts to learn, to me, engagement is much more around understanding of the field and the mentorship that [SI] leaders provide I think is a key part of that process.

Exemplified here is an understanding of engagement as an ongoing process of connection and meaning-making that extends beyond each singular piece of a student's learning journey, and beyond the classroom entirely. While other engagement scholars have recognized the downstream impacts of engagement on students beyond the classroom, such as predicting greater success and resilience for more highly engaged students later in life (Covell, 2010), approaching engagement as an ongoing moral process broadens the focus from success at the individual student level to pursuing collective achievement and momentum

From this broader, socio-political standpoint, engagement can be understood and further advanced as "a means to develop young people's citizenry [… with] the power to enable learners and teachers to become co-conspirators in the meaning-making process that is democratic education" (Czerniawski & Kidd, 2011, p. 3). Further supporting this expanded conceptualization, students expressed their view of engagement as the process of *becoming* empowered through their learning to actually contribute to the betterment of society in meaningful ways. For example, one student SI Leader explained the impact that developing actual solutions to real-world problems as a part of the learning process has had on her:

> I feel most engaged when it's something that you can connect to the real world, and then also when […] you feel you're contributing to the world in some way by using that knowledge. I did a project in one of my English courses last semester where we had to write a blog post about the history of [the region] and we made this walking tour […] that people might actually use. That was really fun because we were taking information we used in the course to actually maybe improve something in the city.

Thus, the transformative properties of engagement as emancipation do not end with greater student retention or higher graduation rates, but contribute to the production of critically thinking, socio-politically conscious leaders, who can also engage *others* in confronting complex world issues. This is an aim that HEIs are highly committed to, at least rhetorically (Kuh, 2001; Merry, 2018; Sears, 2014). In Canada, this mandate is spelled out at the provincial level, in this case by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (2013):

> The government sees this [high quality educational experience] as a key priority and is committed to ensuring that postsecondary education in Ontario provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their personal and career aspirations, and as *engaged* citizens. (p. 7, italics added for emphasis).

This points to the inherently liberating objective of educational pursuits, given that an integral element of a functioning democracy is an informed and critically thinking electorate where civic engagement can have real influence (Aarts & Hees, 2003; Turcotte, 2015).

6.4.3.1 Practicing Democracy through Education. While similar to the first (i.e., practical) sub-facet of the emancipation process with regard to integrating learning and application, advancing the *moral* purpose of education transcends the direct and immediate outcomes of using experiential learning models (e.g., greater psychological and behavioural engagement, enhancing the teaching and learning process). Lubicz-Nawrocka (2018) articulates the importance of this realization, asserting that "educational practices like co-creation of the curriculum help students become active members of their learning community and also model and teach students how to become active citizens in democratic society outside of the classroom" (p. 59). As such, this sub-facet particularly links up with, and represents the spirit of, the democratic education (Fielding, 2011) and youth engagement (Hart, 1992) movements, with students in this sample echoing the call: "nothing about us without us" which has spurred social and political action by various marginalized groups.

From this perspective, engagement can also be seen as "fundamentally bound-up with social justice and democracy" (Czerniawski & Kidd, 2011, p. 2). Indeed, looking beyond the educational realm, Fielding (2011) advocates for engagement as an empowerment process as it contributes to "participatory rather than representative traditions of democracy" (p. 4). Pinpointing both the complexity and importance of this participatory process from the student lens, one SI leader suggested:

> It's like taking responsibility for your own contributions to whatever you're engaged with and then also making the broad connections outside of that little community […] to real life.

Thus, giving students both a voice and a real stake in things that matter to them, both inside higher education (e.g., involving students in formative course assessment) and outside (e.g., making educational activities relevant and impactful for broader society) is a key element in this empowerment process and in engendering the wider ripple effects it may bring about (Lanskey & Rudduck, 2010; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018).

6.4.3.2 Improving Society through the Pursuit of Knowledge and Truth. Engagement as an emancipation process also relates to the structures in place and not only the individual

actors (i.e., students, educators, etc.,) operating within them (Apple, 2003). In Bates's (2006) conception, social justice in education relates to the way in which educational institutions (and their administration, in particular) are configured to re-support the injustices and inequality found in broader society. Given the tension between the pursuit of truth and the production of new knowledge as one fundamental purpose for education, and the immense power that educational systems have to shape future generations and the make-up of our society, education must be understood as inherently political in nature (Apple, 2003; Bates, 2006; Merry, 2018).

With this in mind, one student SI Leader expressed his view that traditional primary and secondary education only exposes students to a small glimpse of the "real world outside of school". In his experience, the further one goes and the more engaged one becomes in post-secondary education, the more "truth" is revealed. As a more senior SI Leader, the student explained this as a progressive moral shift, discussing in a somewhat tongue-and-cheek way that part of this emancipatory engagement process is developing an understanding of the *actual* reality of the world and developing the knowledge and skills necessary to effect change in this reality:

> I can go in there [because] it's something I care about and I can say […] 'a lot of [this introductory course], it's like brushing stuff under the rug'. That's what I tell my students: 'university is just – we just stop lying to you very gradually' *[laughs]* […] I can tell them, if they want to know, 'this is what it *actually* is' […] other than 'you just have to sit here and learn this thing about thermodynamics […] and you should learn it and not fail the midterm'. *(italics added for emphasis)*

Engagement in this sense, therefore, means ingraining in students a higher purpose of education with the end goal being to improve society through the pursuit of knowledge and truth. This radical expansion of the concept of student engagement builds on the vision Zepke (2014) set forth of "learners being able to engage with reproductive knowledge, to take constructive action in their communities as active citizens and to take radical critical action in the pursuit of social justice" (p. 1312). As the student SI Leader alluded to, this objective necessitates an increase in the level of "truth" or "reality" we trust students to be able to handle.

6.4.3.3 Pursuing Social Justice through Higher Education. In this way, this moral sub-facet of the co-created engagement process also relates to the proliferation of knowledge that has traditionally been exclusively held by elite groups and mostly inaccessible to the general public (Apple, 2003). Following an emancipatory engagement approach at the post-secondary level would, therefore, help to mobilize knowledge, skills and resources in such a way that

marginalized communities can be empowered to lead social and political change in willing partnership with educational and other institutions. Indeed, Zepke (2011) discusses a drive specific to students from marginalized ethnic communities who are inspired to engage in education based on the desire to enrich their communities.

Running through the responses of most participants in the present study was a call for social system integration. Specifically, both student SI Leaders and the SI Program Manager called for the integration of education with other societal institutions (e.g., business, social enterprise, healthcare, etc.,) so that they could work *with* one another to achieve much greater outcomes that move beyond improvements to the teaching and learning process within the confines of the classroom. Further, young leaders emerging from post-secondary education would be much more successful in their efforts to enrich their communities and make a meaningful impact on society at large if they had strong partnerships with those with greater experience and clout (e.g., faculty, educational leaders, researchers, etc.,). This is especially true if such partnerships were sanctioned and supported by established institutions (Healey et al., 2014).

HEIs are the appropriate sites for this transformation to occur as much of the infrastructure and resources necessary for sustainable integration, as well as a diversity of individuals and groups (e.g., mixture of generations, backgrounds, levels of expertise, etc.,) already exists and operates within one large community. Regardless of the specific groups or actors involved, however, different determinations of whose knowledge, experience and contributions are considered valuable vary greatly between HEIs and, thus, continue to serve as obstacles to achieving societal improvement as a whole (Healey, et al., 2014). Indeed, Mercer-Mapstone and colleagues (2018) call attention to the barriers still faced in this co-creation process as "even in partnership, our perceptions of equity between students and staff are not as equal as perhaps we espouse, again underlining the power of traditional norms" (p. 24).

Finally, according to the SI Program Manager, when a culture of peer leadership is "really well embedded [… and] students have a really powerful voice" within the institution, as is the case with the present research site, it naturally positions students as societal change-makers. This, in turn, fosters a community of learning *and* practice through which students, educators, educational leaders, researchers, and policymakers can collectively begin to challenge and reconfigure longstanding institutional structures and move towards a more equitable world.

6.5 Findings Summary

As the participants in this case study expressed in various ways, fostering an alternative, co-created, process-based approach to engagement in order to form positive, sustainable, and socially enterprising communities through education does more than just a service to the institution. Indeed, engagement-as-process (1) increases student-to-student collaboration and student-educator partnerships, (2) increases the diversity of voices that are allowed a platform within the institution and broader community, and (3) gives students the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to their field(s) of interest/study and increases our ability to identify and strive towards a shared, collective purpose that is greater than our own individual pursuits.

The following chapter integrates the insights presented from student and educator experiences and perspectives into the preliminary conceptual framework (see Chapter 3: Preliminary Conceptual Framework) developed from the engagement literature. The result is a novel conceptual model of engagement which encompasses engagement as outcome, state *and* process, and which demonstrates the transformative potential of engagement in education when approached from a radically alternative and co-created learning lens.

Chapter 7: Conceptual Modeling: Reconceptualizing Engagement as a Process of Co-Creation

7.1 Rationale for Novel Conceptual Model of Engagement

Through the analysis of student and educator perspectives on engagement and the consideration of previous conceptual modeling (e.g., Kahu, 2013; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Payne, 2017), I present in this section a novel conceptual framework elucidating engagement as a complex, meta-construct with facets operating on multiple levels or domains (e.g., individual, interpersonal, institutional).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are deeply invested in the phenomenon of engagement as it is used as a proxy for so many other education-based constructs and, thus, already boasts a strong and widespread infrastructure (Kahu, 2013; Maxwell-Stuart & Huisman, 2018; Payne, 2017; Zepke, 2014). With a view to making incremental change, it is advantageous to develop a conceptual model of engagement that presents a radically alternative approach, but that can also be implemented within traditional educational frameworks. The rationale of developing an alternative model in this case, therefore, is three-fold.

Firstly, each theme explored in the previous chapter (i.e., collaboration, democratization, and emancipation) encapsulates a specific and essential element of engagement as a complex, process-based construct, or meta-construct. While engagement has been labeled a meta-construct before, the facets that constitute it have predominantly only been considered at the individual level (e.g., student cultural backgrounds, economic situations, or personal experiences which may impact their level of engagement in education) (Fredrick, 2004; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Zepke, 2014; 2015). Thus, the value of developing an alternative model is partially in shifting the conceptualization of engagement from an individual, student-level construct (i.e., an attribute that a student possesses, experiences or demonstrates) to a collective, multi-dimensional construct (i.e., a process that multiple actors participate in, contribute to, and benefit from).

Secondly, this reconceptualization allows for the incorporation of the student voice literature, providing various stakeholders (i.e., students, educators, educational leaders, policy makers, etc.,) with a new vantage point from which to explore and expand their theoretical understanding of engagement, including around: what it is, how it works and what factors promote versus hinder it (Fullan, 2013). A crucial part of bringing alternative models into the mainstream consciousness is language (Guthrie, 2014). By intentionally connecting some of the terminology used in traditional engagement research and practice, which is rooted in primarily neoliberal, outcome-oriented language, to a broader conceptualization of engagement as a transformative process, this reconceptualization may be better received and, ultimately, more likely to be adopted as, or incorporated into, a new mainstream approach within higher education. For example, while "students becoming involved with, and having greater control over, the learning process" (Brooman et al., 2015, p. 664) has been acknowledged as a valuable objective by many (Akhilesh, 2017; Bovill et al., 2011; Lanskey & Rudduck, 2010), its conscious rebranding and acceptance *as* engagement itself would support a critical shift in priorities within mainstream engagement research, policy and practice in higher education.

Finally, developing novel conceptual models that reflect and communicate the transformative potential of engagement-as-process, and that are also accessible and of practical use, is of critical importance. Indeed, through in-depth study of higher education reform in the contemporary period (i.e., since the end of the Second World War), from an international perspective, Zgaga and colleagues (2015) strongly emphasize that "change in higher education is an extremely complex process" (p. 15). Thus, accessible alternative conceptual frameworks can

aid in shifting how educational leaders and policymakers practically approach the research, development, implementation and evaluation of engagement interventions with a view to making an impact on a larger scale, even if they do not commit to radical system change. For example, if already established programs, such as the Supplemental Instruction model, can make explicit their use of the co-created engagement approach and utilize it at multiple levels (i.e., alongside students, in the structure of their programming, training, etc.,) as they do with other leadership models, this would further legitimize the empirical basis of the student voice and co-created learning literature, encouraging further proliferation.

7.2 The Co-Creation Model of Engagement: An Overview

The novel conceptual model, here named the Co-Creation Model of Engagement, is depicted visually in three figures with a view to elucidating the multifaceted nature of the engagement-as-process construct.

Figure 3 presents the overarching reconceptualization of engagement advanced in this paper. In this figure, engagement is depicted along a spectrum (i.e., from "disengagement" on one end to "engagement" on the other) with these terms referring not to the extent to which *students* are (dis)engaged, as with other previous models, but the extent to which an engagement process is occurring, as well as the depth or quality of that process.

The main, distinguishing features of the Co-Creation Model include: (1) a movement from a single, linear process to a network of ongoing (or cyclical) processes, and (2) a movement from a one-dimensional process that occurs at the individual level, to a multi-dimensional process that occurs on the individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels. As such, this model does not seek to prescribe exact measures or interventions that must be implemented in order to "reach" or "produce" a state or outcome of engagement. Rather, it seeks to reveal various alternative paths for an engagement process to occur and reoccur in a sustainable cycle.

7.2.1 From a One-Dimensional to Multi-Dimensional Process

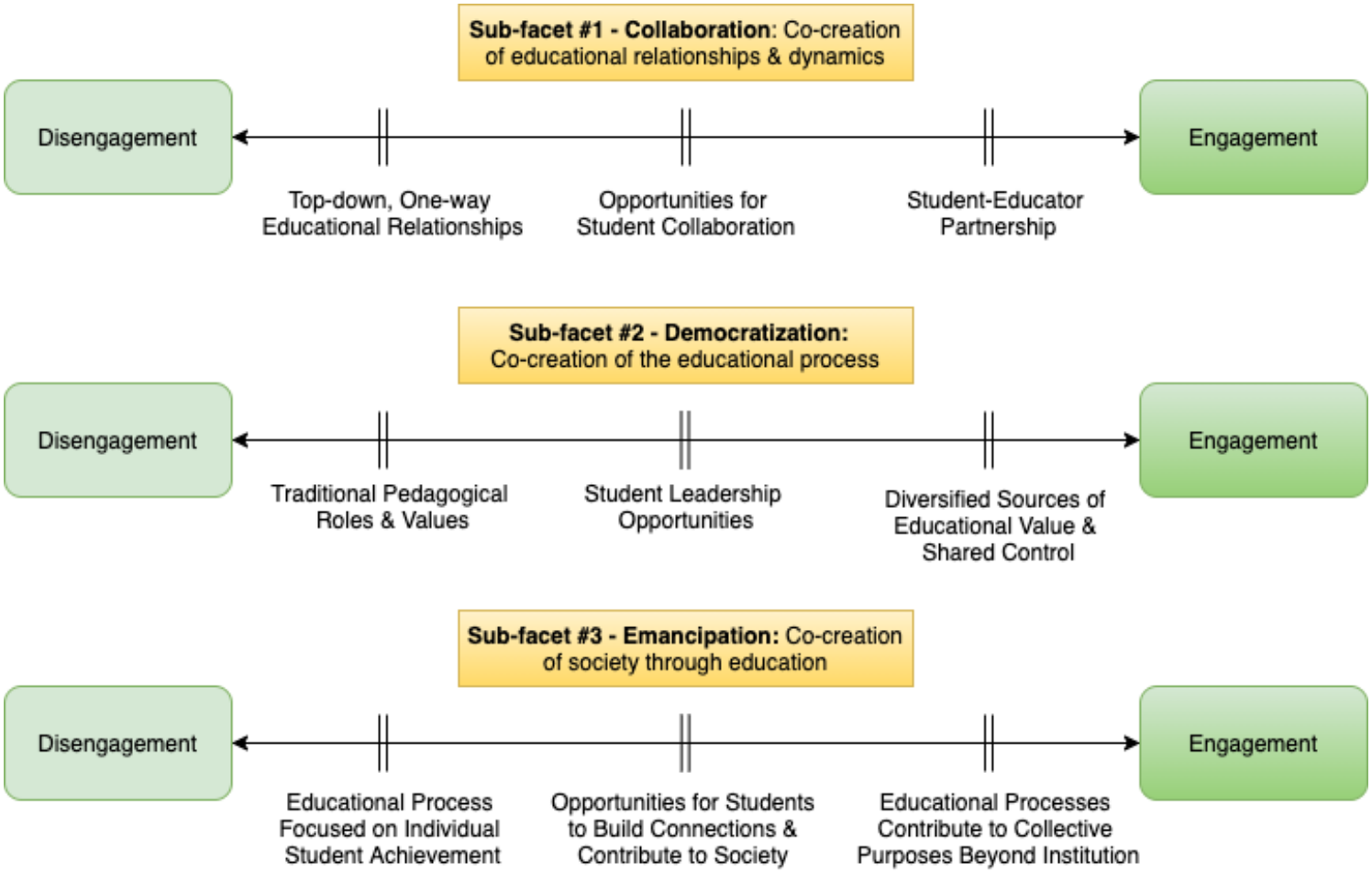
As a subtle but salient critique of traditional approaches to enhancing engagement in education, the SI Course Professor expressed the following concern:

> there is always a subset of the class that's going to refuse to engage no matter what you do. […] I always sort of think of 3 groups: the students who will always engage no matter what, the students who, if you put in the effort and put in the resources, you can get them to engage, and then there's the group that will never engage. […] it's always a challenge to figure out: can you even engage them?

It is a reality that scholars within the realm of teacher education have been thinking more expansively about engagement for decades and, therefore, alternative conceptualizations of engagement are not new per se. Indeed, many scholars advancing the student voice and co-created learning movement (e.g., Bovill, Cook-Sather, Kane, etc.,) operate within the teacher education realm. Critically, however, this SI-supported Course Professor's expression of concern exemplifies the counterproductive position that educators tend to continually be placed in. That is, most educators in mainstream educational settings are expected to personally implement new and engaging teaching techniques to elicit different psychological states and behavioural outcomes from their students (Early, et al., 2016; Fredricks, 2014; Maxwell & Huisman, 2018). Given the interdependent relationship between behavioural and psychological engagement, and the complex, ever-in-flux nature of motivation, this is an impossible objective, as educators will never be able to engage all students in the desired way.

Figure 3

Co-Creation Model of Engagement



Note. Overview of the co-creation model, depicting engagement existing along a spectrum (i.e., disengaged in pale green to engaged in dynamic green) as a process of collaboration, democratization, and emancipation (i.e., sub-facets connected in yellow) in education.

As such, conceptualizing engagement as an individual attribute (attainable for some and not others) reinforces the traditional notion (or even misconception) that engagement is a student-specific problem rather than a systemic problem that requires the reformation of an inherently disengaging educational structure (Fredricks, 2014; Gasiewski et al., 2012; Merry, 2018).

In response to the still-mainstream understanding of engagement as an individual-level construct, the present research advocates for an alternative and inherently holistic approach. This more progressive lens shifts away from the essentialist view that only some will ever engage and promotes a view of students as whole and autonomous educational actors with multiple dimensions and greater value beyond the singular student role and identity they have been assigned (Bovill, et al., 2015; Mercer-Mapstone, 2018).

Consequently, this shift also changes the focus of engagement interventions from perpetual attempts at controlling individuals' feelings and behaviours to fit narrowly prescribed norms, to building an engagement process which offers students and educators a wider variety of ways in which to shape the teaching and learning process while contributing to real-world advancements in broader society (Healey, et al., 2014). In shifting from a traditional to an alternative approach, the central question for educators also shifts from "Can *I* engage *them*?" to "How can *we practice* engagement?".

7.3 From Themes to Facets: Unpacking the Engagement-As-Process Construct

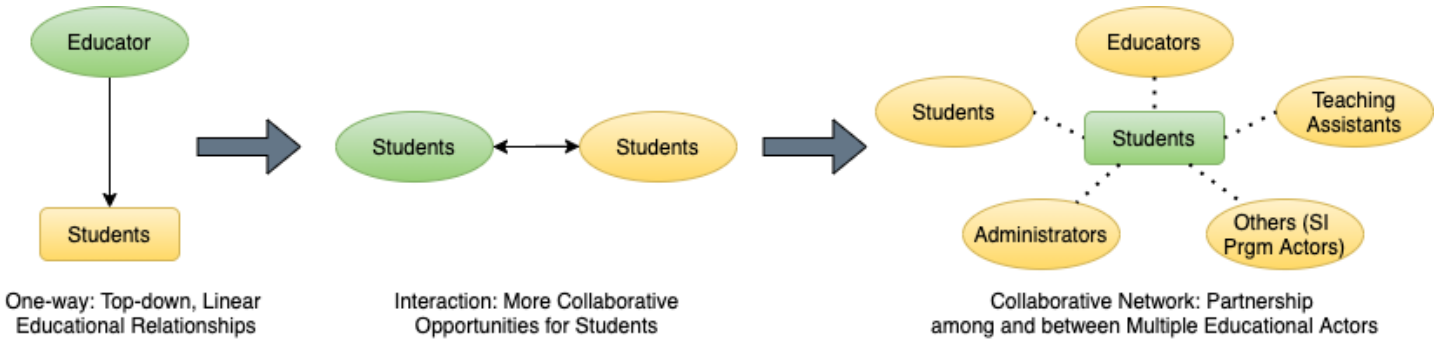
In understanding this co-creation model of engagement, it is important to differentiate the facets (collaboration, democratization, and emancipation) as conceptually distinct from one another, while also explicating the linkages between them. With a view to brining this model into the mainstream consciousness, it is also important to separate antecedents and consequences from the construct itself. As the facets are explained in general in Table 2 (see the end of Chapter 5), this section provides a review of each with accompanying figures to develop a fuller conceptual understanding of how they operate theoretically.

The Collaboration facet can be described as the co-creation of educational relationships and dynamics. Figure 4 depicts this process of partnership-building as a transition from a top-down linear exchange between educators and students, to a complex network of connections among and between various educational actors. It is important to include the traditional educator-student relationship and power dynamic. That is, the collaborative engagement process is characterized by give-and-take between multiple educational parties which exist *within* the

ongoing movement from this normalized state to an alternative approach. While the student is still a central element, student voice scholars have recently identified the pursuit of educator engagement as just as important as student engagement (Maxwell & Huisman, 2018), lending further support for this collaborative network approach.

Figure 4

Facet of Co-Creation Engagement: Collaboration Process



Note. Figure depicting the co-creation of educational relationships and dynamics – a transition from top-down linear exchange, to a complex network approach to engagement in education.

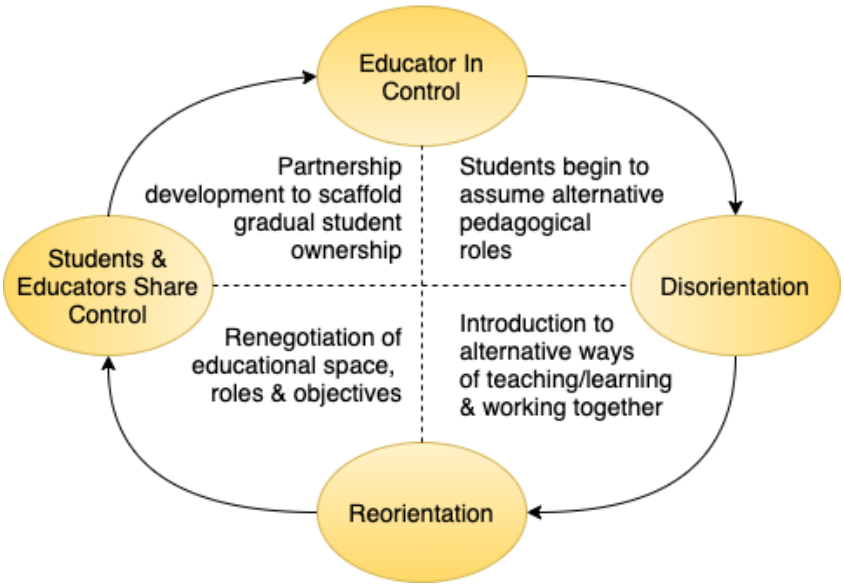
The second facet, Democratization, can be understood as the co-creation of the educational process. Figure 5 depicts the development of student ownership over the teaching and learning process. Similar to the Active Student Participation (ASP) Ladder Model offered by Bovill and Bulley (2011), it lays out the stages of an ongoing process of reorganizing pedagogical roles and values. However, this process is deliberately depicted as a cyclical one in recognition that the process of gradually transferring ownership of the teaching and learning process to students (or to a fully shared partnership state) inevitably restarts with each new student cohort. That is, the process cannot be gone through a single time with a single group and then expected to be maintained as such for future groups. Thus, the state of educational leadership and sources of value must be continuously reintroduced and renegotiated as new individuals, interpersonal dynamics, institutional infrastructures enter the process.

While the elements of the democratization facet are similar to the partnership-building involved in the collaboration facet, the distinction here is not necessarily who is involved in the process, but rather, how the process is carried out. All parties involved in this process (i.e., both students and educators) move through the stages from a traditional hierarchical educational

process (educator in-control), to an exposure to alternative engagement methods (disorientation), to a period of renegotiating the educational space, roles and objectives (reorientation), to transferring ownership from the one to the many (students and educators share control), and back again. As such, while it may be ideal, democratization can also occur *without* the formation of student-educator partnership (e.g., as is the case with most typical SI programs), as it pertains primarily to the process of shifting traditional roles to allow students to emerge as leaders and to be considered legitimate sources of educational value.

Figure 5

Facet of Co-Creation Engagement: Democratization Process



Note. Figure depicting the co-creation of the educational process – a cyclical process of reorganization of pedagogical roles and values.

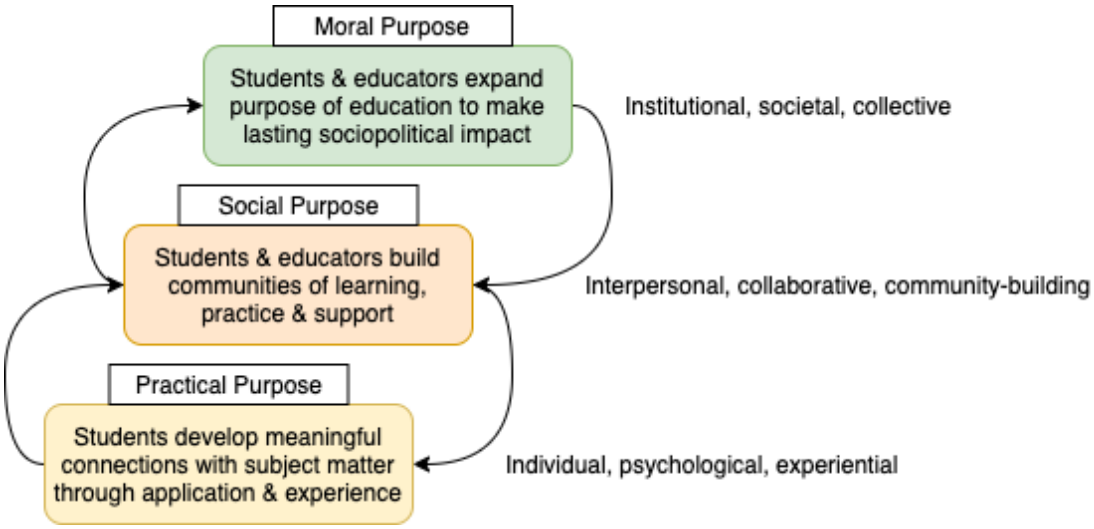
Third, the Emancipation facet refers to the co-creation of society through education. This term was chosen in response to some SI scholars' usage of Critical Emancipatory Research frameworks (Moleko, et al., 2014) given the focus on power redistribution, and specifically, Zepke's (2015) call for movement towards emancipatory paradigms that encompass a more "holistic sociocultural ecological perspective of engagement" (p. 1316). In this case, emancipation is defined as an ongoing process of transforming the relationship between education and broader society by making meaningful connections and contributions to the "real world" *through* educational processes.

Figure 6 depicts the progressive expansion of educational purposes (practical, social, moral), and how each step feeds into one another in a kind of self-reinforcing pattern. For instance, providing students with opportunities to connect on a deeper level with the subject matter through experiential learning activities (practical) can lead to the development of strong communities of learning and practice (social), and, in turn, can also lead to a broadening of the objectives and impacts of the education system as a whole (moral).

Importantly, it is not necessary that each lower element be fulfilled prior to the achievement of the next, however, it is depicted in this semi-hierarchical way as it is simply more likely within the current mainstream educational framework for change to occur in this order. Indeed, with the infrastructure that already exists to support students' experiential learning and the development of communities on many HEI campuses, these elements can be viewed as steppingstones towards the transformation of higher education's moral purpose.

Figure 6

Facet of Co-Created Engagement: Emancipation Process



Note. Figure depicting co-creation of society through the expansion of educational purposes – an ongoing process of transforming the relationship between education and broader society.

While distinct in terms of their scope of impact and implications, each facet is brought together through the common thread of *co-creation*. The conceptual crux of this model is that engagement necessitates co-creation in some way or another regardless of the level upon which it may be operating.

The internal elements of this conceptualization of engagement are connected by the fluid influence of each part on the other. Each facet of engagement as a meta-construct can occur simultaneously or feed into one another. For example, when students and educators collaborate in the form of partnership, this inevitably empowers students to take some higher level of ownership over the teaching and learning process through alternative pedagogical roles, therefore propelling the democratization process. In turn, expanding ownership from the few to the many simultaneously expands the bounds of education's purpose through a redistribution of power, thus advancing the emancipation process. Further, when students are given opportunities to meaningfully contribute to the betterment of society through their educational activities, this emancipatory process inevitably leads to the development of collaborative communities of practice which are formed around the contributions being made.

7.3.1 Antecedents and Consequences

In tracing the shift from the three facets identified in the preliminary conceptual framework (outcome, state, and process) presented in Chapter 3 to the novel model presented here, it must be understood that elements of both the psychological state (i.e., feeling) and the behavioural outcome (i.e., acting) of engagement were not lost, but rather, were incorporated in various ways. In particular, Figure 7 outlines the ways in which these more traditional notions of engagement practically factor into the co-creation engagement model.

While the initial model placed psychological and behavioural engagement as essential parts of the individual-level understanding of the phenomenon (alongside process-based), students in the present sample suggested that the feeling of engagement, and the demonstration of that feeling through active participation, may actually be *indicators* of engagement as a process that transforms the way one sees and interacts with the world. This insight is particularly important in light of critiques of current holistic conceptualizations of engagement voiced by recent theorists, such as Kahu (2013) arguing, for example, that there has been a failure to "clearly differentiate [engagement] from its antecedents and consequences" (p. 759).

As Zepke (2014) contends, student engagement research still focuses too rigidly on an "engaged generic learner" (p. 697) rather than focusing on the specific contexts within which learners operate. In line with this view, I argue that some of the contexts around what has traditionally been considered engagement are actually part of a complex, multi-faceted

engagement process that should be understood and approached as such, rather than an outcome or a state tied to one set of individuals (i.e., students).

Antecedents refer to factors that *promote* the engagement process, while consequences refer to elements that may occur *because* of the engagement process (Creswell, 2012). In this case, students have actually flipped the traditional conceptualization of engagement on its ear by viewing the process of engagement as the main construct, and viewing the feelings (e.g., interest in a course) and behaviours (e.g., being prepared for class) commonly measured to determine the extent to which a student is engaged, as antecedents or consequences (respectively) of a process-based phenomenon that we should be striving towards.

The recognition that behavioural and psychological engagement can be understood as an antecedent and/or consequence also holds practical significance as it demonstrates how process-based engagement fits into the mainstream engagement models that are widely applied today. For example, according to the students and educators in the present sample, as well as those surveyed by the NSSE (Trowler, 2010), behaviourally engaged students tend to seek out more interactions with their professors. While this may not in itself result in a process of partnership development, this initiative on the part of the student, and willingness to connect on the part of the educator, forms the solid basis of a an engagement process to occur. Thus, to some extent, the engagement process necessitates the buy-in (i.e., psychological engagement) and active participation (i.e., behavioural engagement) of some students as a crucial ingredient of the process. In this way, traditional state- and outcome-based engagement can be seen as *factors* that promote the co-created engagement process.

On the other end, student psychological and behavioural engagement can also be viewed as consequences of the engagement process. While this linkage may seem more obvious, it is important to solidify this correlation in the mainstream educational consciousness by drawing on student voice and supplemental instruction research. Indeed, these bodies of literature clearly demonstrate that engaging students in co-creation processes (e.g., whether as co-designers, co-educators, representatives, etc.,) tends to motivate students to exhibit behaviours that align with greater academic achievement (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Bovill et al., 2016; Brooman et al., 2015; Cook-Sather et al., 2015; Dawson, 2014; Healey, et al., 2014; Fielding, 2011).

Understanding these factors as separate from, but inextricably linked to, engagement as a process-based construct further aids in identifying and addressing the primary barriers to

engagement. For example, as process-based engagement does not require each and every participant to be behaviourally or psychologically engaged in order for it to occur or to be successful, using a co-creation engagement approach may aid in shifting interventions from student-focused to system-focused. This flexibility within the foundation of the model means that there is a built-in recognition that engagement (like motivation) ebbs and flows naturally across different interests, times, spaces, groups, etc., Thus, it is an interpersonal process of co-creation that allows individuals to step forward and step back on their own time and term**s**, benefiting from and promoting traditional engagement of students, while not necessarily requiring or guaranteeing it.

7.4 Operationalizing Engagement-As-Process

This understanding of antecedents and consequences naturally leads into the question of how the Co-Created Engagement Model may practically operate in relation to traditional engagement models. As expressed by students in this sample based on their experience with the SI model, co-created engagement can be understood as an interactive process of students making connections – with internal states of being and ideas, with their own behaviour, and with other individuals and entities (e.g., other students, a course, the SI program, an educational institution, one's future self, etc.,). Thus, from a student-centered perspective, this alternative approach to engagement may be realized (1) when students feel stimulated by and connected to the educational environment or task (individual-level engagement), (2) when their behaviours reflect this participatory process (interpersonal-level engagement), and (3) when students are actively involved in shaping the structure, content and purpose of the teaching and learning process (institutional-level engagement).

In this way, the phenomenon of engagement can be practically viewed as a partially cognitive-behavioural process tied to the individual, as well as an inherently social process that cannot fully occur without the interaction, integration and reformulation of various roles and values in multiple domains. In the individual domain, for instance, an educator making changes to their teaching style and course organization to intentionally foster an autonomy-supportive learning environment is an example of the engagement process in practice.

At the interpersonal and institutional levels, Supplemental Instruction (SI) offers an autonomy-supportive learning structure in that it reduces the need for traditional authoritative figures to enforce accountability (Dawson, et al., 2014; Stout & McDaniel, 2006). Rather, it

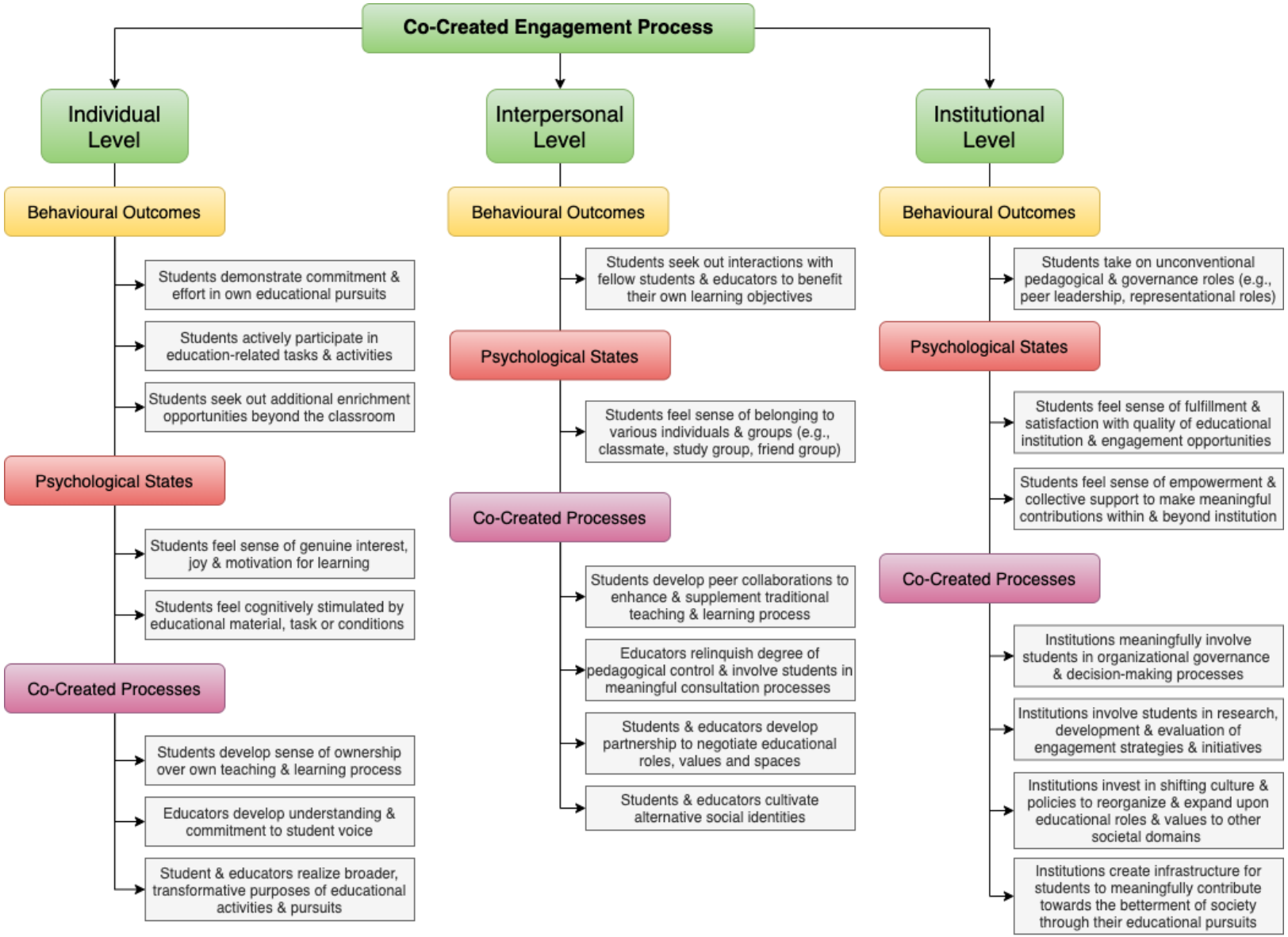
produces a more horizontal accountability structure that values peer-to-peer experience and feedback just as much as it values the educator. What is needed for this horizontal accountability and learning structure to operate effectively and sustainably is the development of student-educator partnerships (i.e., co-creation) upon which the structure is built and maintained. That is, there must be trust developed between these parties to allow for collaborative functioning. Thus, as opposed to measuring engagement with individual measures regarding the extent to which students feel or act a certain way, engagement, as a multi-dimensional process-based construct is here measured by the extent to which a co-created engagement process is occurring at individual, interpersonal and institutional levels.

In order to understand the theoretical and practical application of the Co-Creation Model of Engagement, Figure 7 provides a framework for understanding how engagement-as-process operates across various educational domains. Specifically, it lays out in detail how different facets of engagement as a meta-construct (both traditional and alternative) may be manifested within individual, interpersonal and institutional domains. As previously stated, the majority of the mainstream engagement research and practical advancement in higher education focuses on engagement as it relates to the individual domain. This focus promotes an avoidance or lack of recognition regarding how engagement operates at the interpersonal and institutional levels, which severely limits its potential. Thus, pursuing engagement as a co-creation process would allow HEIs to advance greater collective objectives as an integrated part of the teaching and learning process.

This framework for integrating the co-crated engagement process builds off of Lawson and Lawson's (2013) expansive review which highlights studies that "frame student engagement as a complex interplay between students' activity involvement, competencies, dispositions, and expectancies and their surrounding social environment" (p. 442). By incorporating underrepresented student voice work and grounding this research in the perspectives and first-hand experiences of students and educators, this model fleshes out such burgeoning process-oriented frameworks by explicitly mapping out underlying linkages between different "forms" of engagement and their operation across multiple educational domains.

Figure 7

Framework for Integrating the Co-Created Engagement Process



Note. Framework detailing how engagement as a co-created process may operate across various educational domains.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 Benefits of a Co-Created Approach to Engagement

While approaches to engagement research and practice are expanding in some cases (e.g., Healey, et al., 2014; Kahu, 2013; Lawson & Lawson, 2013; Zepke, 2014), research and practice utilizing traditional conceptualizations of engagement remains common (Maxwell & Huisman, 2018). This mainstream approach continues to reinforce the prescriptive notion that engagement must look a certain way and must apply dichotomously to a single individual (i.e., the disengaged/engaged student).

Shifting our understanding of engagement to a co-created learning perspective begins to address this fundamental problem. Indeed, when we shift the emphasis from whether students appear or feel engaged, to whether, and to what extent, the engagement *process* is occurring in education, our investigation can open up to encompass a more diverse set of behaviours, experiences, backgrounds, identities and relationships. Critically, such a shift can aid in severing the dogmatic ties between engagement as a student-focused construct and individual academic success as the main driving force for further engagement research and practical action.

8.1.2 Integrating the Co-Created Engagement Approach

Based on the present study's findings, it is my conviction that an alternative, co-created learning approach to engagement has transformative potential for higher education. Nonetheless, the pressures on HEIs today necessitate that real investment in new research, development and evaluation directions must be congruent with neoliberal values and objectives. Indeed, while governments rhetorically endorse the fulfillment of democratic values and objectives through higher education, the requisite resources and support are steadily decreasing, forcing HEIs to adopt leaner business models in order to remain operational (Sears, 2014; Zgaga, et al., 2015). As such, it is important to identify ways in which pursuing the co-created approach to engagement also contributes to the aims that HEIs already strive toward (e.g., higher academic achievement, higher retention and graduation rates, enhanced marketable skills, etc.,).

The present study's findings indicate that the alternative approach to engagement advanced in this paper has the dual benefit of helping students succeed *within* the current education system while simultaneously prompting gradual system reformation. One example of this congruency comes from an SI student leader who expressed how having the opportunity to

develop a real connection between her learning activities and their real-world purpose (i.e., part of the emancipation process) fostered both psychological and behavioural engagement, resulting in greater self-efficacy and academic success in that area:

> When I was in high school, I used to hate math. What is the point of this? […] I didn't really try or anything, and then taking math courses in university, like I remember last semester, I took ECON math and once it was related to something, I was the most engaged – like, really loved it! I was like, 'wow, this is my favourite course and I hated math before like so much'.

In contrast, when students cannot identify possible purposes or roles for themselves beyond their own individual pursuit of knowledge or academic success, this missing piece can also have a negative impact on overall engagement from a traditional perspective. As such, involving students as more than just end-users of practices intended to increase engagement (i.e., as part of the democratization process) inevitably leads to greater psychological and behavioural engagement (Bovill, et al., 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

It is a clear benefit for HEIs to invest in a model that has already been accepted into the neoliberal paradigm within the higher education context through programs such as Supplemental Instruction (SI), as this investment does not present the kind of large-scale risk that a fuller departure from traditional teaching, learning and accountability measures would bring. For example, if a teacher decided to do away with traditional summative evaluations (i.e., grading students) in favour of practicing meaningful engagement and developing a genuine partnership with her students, this might benefit them in some ways (e.g., deeper learning, greater motivation, sense of personal autonomy, competency, belonging, etc.,); However, outside of that particular classroom, these benefits would not be accepted as relevant or valuable in the eyes of the surrounding program nor institution, given that a system of grading and credit accumulation was put into place as a means to verify knowledge, merit and skill (Merry, 2018). Indeed, without some form of standardized, evaluative accountability structure, how *can* a student's knowledge and skills be verified?

Further, if an HEI wanted to radically reform its teaching, learning and governance structure, the broader educational and economic system in which all HEIs are embedded would have neither the capacity nor willingness to recognize such a drastic shift as credible or legitimate (Zgaga, et al., 2015). Thus, at its heart, engagement is a systemic problem fixed within a broader neoliberal educational framework that cannot be remedied by one educator, program or

institution alone. Rather, it would take a larger paradigm shift, or the combination of many smaller shifts within the system (e.g., such as implementing more and expanding existing SI-type programs) to demonstrate the positive outcomes of the co-created engagement approach as measured by normative benchmarks of educational success.

Primary benefits of the co-created model of engagement include the provision of a more expansive theoretical lens along with the capacity to practically implement its elements within the current educational system. Essentially, this approach allows engagement theorizing to finally move beyond the individual, while also bringing together the behavioural and psychological elements of engagement into a cohesive whole to slowly transform the culture and structure of education.

8.2 Recommendations: Enhancing Engagement Research and Practice

This section offers recommendations for theoretical and practical advancements in the area of student engagement, drawing from direct suggestions of students and educators involved with the SI model, as well as my own interpretations of this study's findings, supported by the scholarly literature. First, I review specific recommendations resulting from the study's main findings, namely, the benefits of expanding the use and boundaries of the SI model. Secondly, I offer general recommendations around investing resources in other models and interventions that help shift our approach to engagement and education as a whole.

8.2.1 Specific Recommendations: Expansion of the Supplemental Instruction Model.

Despite its proven effectiveness both in terms of cost and student benefits, the official SI model has only been implemented in under thirty post-secondary institutions in Canada (Canadian Centre for Supplemental Instruction, 2019). In terms of SI-related engagement practices, all participants who lent their voices to the present study called for an expansion of SI-type programming as one impactful way of enhancing engagement. Thus, the following sections offer in-depth explanations regarding recommendations around the expansion of SI-type programming. Section 8.2.2 offers an overview of more general recommendations in Table 3, which also provides an overview of these SI-specific recommendations.

8.2.1.1 Autonomy-Supportive Educational Conditions. First, the students (SI Student Leaders and one SI Program Participant) were not necessarily interested in having more time with or support from professors. Rather, they were drawn towards more self-sought learning

opportunities outside of the traditional classroom context with additional support from teaching assistants and peer leaders. In advocating for this open, autonomy-supportive learning space where students can follow their own learning paths and choose when/how to access available resources, students exposed to the SI model aligned themselves with the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) approach to engagement.

SDT theorists have designed and implemented engaging educational structures with great success in the primary and secondary education contexts, such as the Montessori school system, which takes a more alternative approach to engagement (Lillard, 2005). Thus, the efficacy of SI-type programming is supported both by the findings of the present research (i.e., in terms of introducing and advancing a co-created engagement model within the post-secondary context), as well as by a wealth of research demonstrating a causal link between autonomy-supportive learning environments and psychological engagement (Black & Deci, 2000; Cavanagh, 2015; Jeno, 2015).

Second, the educators (one SI Course Professor and one SI Program Manager) made the same recommendation on the basis that SI-type programs offer varied learning opportunities to a wide range of students (in contrast to targeted interventions aimed specifically towards struggling students) that also align with and complement the course instructor's efforts (Moleko et al., 2014). For example, educators noted as particularly valuable the teaching practice identified in the SI model as "scaffolding", wherein more support and structure is provided at the outset and then slowly removed as the educational process progresses (Mask & Mazur, 2014). While it is often not feasible for course instructors to implement such approaches given a lack of resources to provide additional support to classes with hundreds of students, this *is* both possible and quite effectively done through the SI model (Dawson, et al., 2014). SI leaders are trained to employ scaffolding in their sessions by gauging with the students how much structure and support is needed as they progress together, which also avoids creating an overly controlled learning environment (again, aligned with the tenets of SDT's autonomy-supportive learning conditions).

8.2.1.2 Peer-to-peer Support versus Enhancing of Educator Practices. Collecting and expressing such endorsements of peer-to-peer support models directly from students and educators is important insofar as it makes clear that effective engagement practices need not always relate to improvements that official educators must make within their own pedagogical

practice. For example, one student expressed that for courses with highly specialized and complex content (e.g., climatology, meteorology), it is difficult for students to remain engaged on their own as it is harder to access relevant information or helpful support outside of the materials the course instructor specifically makes available. To address this issue, the student suggested expanding the SI program at his institution to more courses in order to offer the appropriate support that a single course instructor simply could not provide.

This call for SI program expansion further makes clear the need to move away from our education system's firm reliance on a single educational figure. Indeed, as if reading straight from Bovill and Bulley's (2011) work on co-created learning, the SI Program Manager recognized the inevitable disengagement that results from this traditional teaching model that is still used in most mainstream schools today and is especially prevalent in post-secondary education. Specifically, he emphasized that:

> The typical classroom model […] leads to this passivity that's self-reinforcing. So, because the experts are promoting this methodology of learning, then people make the assumption that this is *the* methodology of learning, or the preferred methodology of learning. When people have experiences where they are engaged, they show up differently. *(italics added for emphasis)*

In this way, SI-type programming introduces both students and educators to the often-hidden reality that students have a larger role to play, thereby challenging conventional wisdom that can hinder progress towards new teaching and learning configurations.

8.2.1.3 Embedding Peer Leadership for Collective Engagement. Finally, educators in particular also identified that the SI model embodies an engagement process that does more than just engage the individual – it offers a pathway to collective engagement. Based on the study site used in the present research, it can be observed that HEIs with strong, well-established SI programs also tend to have a more engaged and proactive student body, as students have real leadership opportunities with meaningful (rather than tokenized) roles to play. For example, the SI Manager in the present study expressed that the culture of peer leadership at his HEI is "really well embedded" and that "students have a really powerful voice on this campus". This embedding of peer leadership values is crucial because co-created engagement is not a neutral approach, rather, it is an inherently values-based and democratic approach to education. Indeed, through Healey and Colleagues' (2014) research on the implications of student-educator partnerships, they discuss:

> how the development of partnership learning communities may guide and sustain practice, and […] [suggest] that critical engagement with the important issues which this approach to partnership brings to the fore–such as inclusivity, power relationships, and staff and student identities–has the potential to lead to transformative learning. (p. 55)

Thus, in order for students to have a powerful voice, and to ensure that deep and sustainable shifts can occur, HEIs must embed the student voice into the education system at various levels through new, sustainable policies and practices. SI-type programming is helpful in supporting this aim as it prepares individual students to get involved in a process of co-creation, moving from individual to collective, from passive to active, from outcome-focused to process-focused. As the SI Program Manager explained, exposing students to an alternative engagement approach is necessary for effective process-based engagement interventions, as they require students to develop a sense of their own value as more than just a receiver of knowledge within the teaching and learning exchange (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Brooman et al., 2015).

As some researchers have already suggested (e.g., Drake, 2011; McFarlane, Spes-Skrbis, & Taib, 2017; Stout & McDaniel, 2006), expanding the bounds of SI programming would also allow more student-educator collaboration which would have untold benefits for both parties. For instance, since SI student leaders attend all of the lectures, as well as interact with students currently taking the course on a closer level than the instructor, they are already well-positioned to act as pedagogical co-evaluators and co-designers to help actively reform teaching, learning and assessment processes (Bovill, et al., 2011; Cook-Sather, 2016; Deeley & Bovill, 2017; Healey, et al., 2014; Speirs, et al., 2017). Specifically, SI Leaders' roles could be expanded to provide valuable insights (e.g., on the efficacy of teaching methods, the materials provided to students, student experiences and learning preferences, etc.,) to enhance course evaluation and improvement processes.

While it has not necessarily come to fruition through the SI model as it is currently implemented in most HEIs, Cook-Sather (2016) shared recent accounts of such student-faculty partnerships, one of which involved a "new faculty member [who] assembled a team of students who had taken one of her courses during her first semester to help her revise course content, assignments, and methods of assessment" (p. 156). Through the expansion of SI-type programming and stronger promotion about its potential impacts, both within and beyond the classroom, the broader benefits and ease of implementation of a co-creation engagement model can be demonstrated to educational policymakers and administrators.

Given the endorsement of all students and educators surveyed in the present study, as well as the extensive literature on the benefits of SI programs to student participants *and* leaders (e.g., Dawson et al., 2014; Malm et al., 2011; McFarlane et al., 2017; Miles, 2010; Moleko et al., 2014; Peterfreund et al., 2008; Stout & McDaniel, 2006), it is recommended that this cost-effective academic support model be expanded within HEIs that already use it and introduced to others that are currently employing more traditional academic support methods.

8.2.2. General Recommendations: Practical Approaches Towards Alternative Engagement

It is also important to recognize that while the institutional adoption of progressive educational models such as SI may move the needle slightly towards a co-created approach to engagement, the capacity for a single program to shift hierarchical relationships and norms entrenched within traditional educational institutions is limited (Zgaga et al., 2015). As Mercer-Mapstone and colleagues (2018) suggest in their study of the formation of social identities through student-educator partnerships, "re-negotiation[s] of well-ingrained hierarchies may mean that those involved face challenges to equally well-ingrained identities. Such challenges are potentially confronting or uncomfortable experiences as well as an opportunity for transformation" (p. 13). A myriad of challenges to sustained student-educator partnerships, active student participation, and co-created engagement within HEIs are covered extensively through the works of Bovill and colleagues (2011; 2016), Cook-Sather and colleagues (2014), Healey and colleagues (2014), and, specifically for the SI model, Moleko and colleagues (2014).

The existence and slow proliferation of such in-depth investigations into the barriers and possible pathways through these challenges indicate the importance of bringing student voice and co-created learning theorists to the forefront of mainstream conversations around engagement in higher education. In order to reach this overarching objective, however, HEIs must shift their approach at multiple levels in order to create engaging spaces and program structures. While the present research program focused on SI, given its proven efficacy and potential for introducing a co-created approach, this is just one program that utilizes elements of alternative engagement (i.e., collaboration, democratization, emancipation) among many others that should be further explored in this context. Included in Table 3 are some general recommendations (some of which are provided directly by study participants) for HEIs to practically enhance engagement and advance an alternative, co-created engagement approach, as well as an overview of the specific recommendations offered in section 8.2.1.

Table 3

Practical Recommendations: Moving towards Alternative Engagement

Category	Recommendation	Further Details/Examples
SI-type programming	Expand the bounds and purposes of SI-type programming at institutions that already have it implemented and introduce SI as a cost-effective engagement model in institutions currently employing more traditional academic support methods.	Expand SI-type programming in order to: → Increase autonomy-supportive learning environments → Increase peer-to-peer supports and learning opportunities versus enhancing educator-led engagement practices → Embed peer leadership within the institution to give students a stronger voice and increase collective engagement
Other existing models	Invest in the adoption and expansion of existing models and programs that have already demonstrated efficacy in improving positive educational outcomes *and* that advance a co-created learning model of engagement.	Models focused on: → Collaborative peer- and group-based learning models (Moleko et al., 2014) → Experiential learning frameworks (Cantor, 1997 & Speirs et al., 2017) → Congruent teaching approaches (OECD, 2009; Swennen et al., 2008)
Teaching teams	Develop teaching teams which could play various strategic roles in order to shift the dynamic from a top-down, linear exchange of knowledge, to a more horizontal network of reciprocal teaching and learning.	Made up of: → Educators (e.g., professors) → Student leaders (e.g., Tas, SI Leaders) → See also Bovill et al., 2011; 2016; and Cook-Sather et al., 2014
Guiding framework for group work	Develop regulations and guiding frameworks for educators to build clear structure when conducting group and collaborative work in courses.	Aims of framework are to: → Ensure that students learn how to work effectively in teams → Increase motivation to collaborate with others in future
Participatory action in course design	Reform course design methods to take participatory action and evaluation approaches in order to integrate the student voice into this process throughout.	Examples of and tips for this approach: → Bovill et al., 2016 → Kane & Chimwayange, 2014 → Moreau, 2017

Table 3 Continued

Category	Recommendation	Further Details/Examples
Culture of peer leadership	Invest in building infrastructure that would support the development of a sustainable culture of peer leadership. This could include building and organizing educational spaces intentionally for the purpose of promoting collaboration, both among and between students and educators.	Examples: → Provide dedicated spaces and resources for student leaders to gather, collaborate, host their own meetings, connect with other students, etc., → Arrange educator offices within/near student leader work areas → Create multi-purposed spaces to aid in building community through combining professional, academic, and social gathering purposes
Integration of external partners	At the program and institutional level, HEIs should seek out and cultivate strong, sustainable partnerships with both private and public sector actors and organizations.	Aims of these partnerships: → Integrating application directly into the learning process → Providing students with real opportunities to contribute through their learning activities
Engagement enhancement committees	Establish and empower engagement enhancement committees to engineer innovative and progressive initiatives that involve various representatives including any actors *not* in traditional positions of authority in the development and organizational governance process.	Examples of actors to include: → Students: regular students, student leaders, teaching assistants → Educators: course instructors, research professors → Educational administrators: program leaders, student support staff → Others: educational researchers, policymakers, community members
Other student-led initiatives	Invest in additional student-led organizations, initiatives and activities in order to build a genuine and sustainable educational community, one that encourages students to reach out, get involved and become engaged regardless of whether they are struggling (academically or otherwise).	Could include establishing peer teams for various purposes, such as: → Integrating and supporting international students → Advancing environmental sustainability → Advocating for mental health and wellness → Supporting student-run businesses and services

While radical educational reform advocated for in this paper may seem to necessitate a sudden or extreme shift in approaches at all levels of the education system, it is both more practical and more likely for change to occur incrementally through building on existing infrastructure[5]. Thus, keeping in mind the recommendations provided here, engagement research and practice should work in tandem to propel educational reform by identifying and scaling up what is *already* working in terms of integrating student voice and co-created learning theories.

8.3 Lessons Learned from the Field

Through the experience of planning and carrying out this research program, I have been fortunate to develop a deeper understanding of the complex process of designing and executing a comprehensive research plan, to identify the crucial elements that are required to carry out this kind of educational research, as well as gain insight into my own guiding values as a researcher. In this section I present some of the main lessons learned through conducting this study.

The first lesson I learned, which will from here on inform how I go about designing and conducting any future research study, came from the myriad unexpected challenges I faced when collecting data. In general, I learned that simpler is often better in terms of a researcher's aims to collect a certain kind and amount of data. Specifically, I realized partway through the study that my original design necessitated far too much data, which I had not predicted would be as difficult to collect or analyze as it was. Despite a very detailed and well-intentioned plan, one never knows what unexpected barriers will arise to impact that plan. One of these barriers was related to a lack of experience. That is, not having had previous experience with collecting and analyzing qualitative data in particular, I was surprised to find this process taking an inordinate amount of time that I had not factored into my project timeline. Originally, I had planned to collect and analyze a large set of both qualitative data (through two interviews and three focus groups) and quantitative data (through a three-part longitudinal survey disseminated across one school semester – see Appendix F for the measures included in the online survey). Unfortunately, I faced logistical issues with my research site, which led to timeline delays for data collection as well as a lack of participant engagement. In the end, I managed to conduct one

[5] See Healey and colleagues (2014), Chapter 5 "Conclusions and Ways Forward", for an in-depth discussion of the "Tensions and Challenges" (p. 56) associated with developing and sustaining partnership learning communities.

survey (the first of the three planned surveys), one focus group (with SI student leaders), and three interviews (with the SI Course Professor, SI Program Manager and SI student participant).

While I was at first disappointed that I had not been able to meet my objective in terms of data collection, I further realized that I had still collected much more data than I was capable of analyzing and including within a single study. In this sense, these delays were a blessing in disguise as I also shifted from a more complex mixed-methods study to a purely qualitative study which allowed a more in-depth development of the alternative engagement model. The additional data I collected can also now be used in future research endeavours to further develop an empirical base for this model. Thus, through this experience, I realized how essential it is to have flexibility in one's plan, as well as to engage in an intentional process of consulting and re-consulting with relevant stakeholders (i.e., in this case, my thesis supervisor, the research site partnership contact, and an advisory team of students) in order to rethink data analysis plans.

The second lesson relates to developing a better understanding of the vital elements needed to do impactful work in this particular area of student engagement, and in the education field more broadly. While this was only a master's level thesis, I realized that when conducting research on this particular topic (i.e., investigating student engagement from an alternative, co-created learning approach), it is essential to immerse oneself in the subject matter through experience and not only through second-hand accounts (e.g., literature reviews). I was incredibly fortunate to find a post-secondary site with a Supplemental Instruction program that was interested in partnering with me to carry out this research. Through this partnership, I was invited to attend and participate in their SI Student Leader training sessions and mentorship development planning meetings, which allowed me to gain first-hand knowledge of the program and its inner workings. Further, because this research area is focused on co-creation and participation, I was also fortunate to be able to consult with the program mentors and staff at different points throughout the course of this project, and I also made myself available for them to consult with me to form a mutually beneficial partnership. While it did not constitute a full participatory action research approach, this partnership did allow for some mutual learning opportunities that are directly in line with the aim of my research (i.e., for the research process and findings to be of practical use for multiple educational stakeholders – in this case, students, educators and researchers).

Finally, the most important takeaway from this experience for me relates to adjusting expectations as a researcher by continually refocusing on what matters most. Not only despite, but because of, all the unexpected setbacks (both research-related and personal) that I encountered in the process of completing this MA thesis, I have become more deeply grounded in my own guiding values as a researcher, an educator, and a student. I began this degree with an undergraduate background in human rights and psychology, and a firmly entrenched belief that education sits at the intersection of these two areas of study, as well as being a major catalyst for sustainable social change in both.

The connections I have found between this thesis topic and my ongoing work within the youth mental health sector continually reinforce the collaborative values that I hope to promote through this kind of research. Indeed, through this experience, I recognize now more than ever before the need for a co-created approach, not only to improve education, but in order to face a variety of broader challenges including striving for racial, gender, and economic justice. Thus, this experience demonstrated clearly to me that the purpose of research is not only the pursuit of new knowledge and understanding of our world, but to facilitate the betterment of our fundamental societal institutions. I, therefore, hope for this work to act as one of many steppingstones for other researchers, educators and students to build upon in order to make a difference in the education field and beyond.

8.4 Next Steps and Future Directions in Engagement Research

8.4.1 Further Develop Empirical Basis for the Co-Creation Model of Engagement

Through this research study, I identified the SI program as well as other models that have shown promise in terms of advancing collaboration, democratization and emancipation processes. Future research should continue this exploration of the co-created model of engagement developed here and how peer-led educational programs may further advance our understanding and application of it. Specifically, analysis and integration of additional data collected through this research program (e.g., quantitative measures of co-created engagement) could provide a stronger empirical basis upon which to build more progressive engagement interventions. See Appendix F for the study materials used for the online survey for which some data was collected.

Further, when conducting engagement research and planning future engagement initiatives, these efforts should strive to *follow* a co-created approach (i.e., ideally using

participatory action methodology), with the explicit intention of challenging the neoliberal frameworks that currently surround and restrict current engagement approaches. Indeed, according to Czerniawski and Kidd (2011),

> student voice that is authentic and inclusive has the potential to subvert, undermine and transform. […] However, all too often educational practice is invisible – hidden away with academic and policy-makers' voices taking priority over the stories of teachers and learners themselves (p. 2).

From this co-created engagement perspective, attempts to enhance engagement that do not involve student voice as an integral part of the development and implementation process are counterproductive. With support from such scholars, as well as the findings of the present study, I contend that the expansion of the engagement construct to encompass and, in fact, be predicated upon, the key tenets of the student voice and co-created learning movement would unleash its potential to subvert and transform educational systems and their relationship to broader society.

8.4.2 Integrate Research through Knowledge Mobilization

While the phenomenon of engagement currently holds a prominent position in higher education today, there still remains a critical disconnect between what engagement *is* and *how* we can sustainably cultivate it. Thus, although future research should not abandon the pursuit of the mainstream adoption of more holistic and integrated theoretical models of engagement, educational scholars must work simultaneously towards *practical* transformation through institutional partnerships. This involves not just the production, but the mobilization of a strong evidence base that demonstrates both the academic and financial benefits for HEIs to invest in a broad shift towards co-created engagement models.

Efforts by HEIs to identify, develop, and implement better engagement practices without seeking the participation or input of students themselves remains commonplace. For example, Angera and colleagues' (2018) approach to developing a deep, interdisciplinary understanding of engagement and to implement an effective student engagement strategy hit many of the marks in terms of examining the literature, consulting scholarly resources and inviting subject matter experts to provide ongoing learning opportunities for faculty and engaging opportunities for students. However, this faculty-led and -focused approach, while considerably progressive, still manages to exclude students from the engagement *process* by treating them primarily as end-users of programs and practices intended to engage them.

In order to integrate progressive research more directly, educational researchers must involve students *and* educators directly, both to ground research in first-hand experience and also to encourage the immediate development and implementation of alternative engagement approaches, as has been done within the present research partnership.

8.4.3 Target Educational Policy for Top-Down Incremental Change

In pursuit of engendering long-term change, the approach to engagement must also shift at the policy level to legitimize student voices and solidify their capacity and value to contribute to educational leadership. A dedicated focus on educational policy is, therefore, also important in shifting this paradigm and advancing progressive forms of engagement that have far-reaching implications beyond the education sector. Indeed, the SI Program Managers identified that shifting our approach to education, based on an alternative conceptualization of engagement, cannot be successful completely from the bottom-up. He realized that we need structural change that is endorsed by leading experts within the mainstream, not just a subset of alternatively engaged students and radically progressive educators.

Finally, this research also intends to promote greater knowledge mobilization efforts in terms of researchers clearly communicating to educational policymakers and current leaders the accessible pathways towards an alternative approach to engagement. That is, how we frame and promote engagement as educational researchers is hugely important in challenging the dominance of traditional approaches, because without a clear vision regarding its essential elements, it is difficult to identify and advocate for the implementation of practical actions that move towards it. Furthermore, the challenge of effective knowledge mobilization in a saturated research area is precisely why we need accessible theoretical frameworks that can aid educational leaders directly in initiating and sustaining such a transformation.

8.5 Conclusion

Several scholars, including Kahu (2013), Lawson and Lawson (2013), Payne (2017) and Zepke (2014; 2015), have already stretched mainstream approaches to engagement beyond the singular academic context to advance a more expansive view that considers student ecosystems (e.g., personal, cultural, or other experiences) and additional psychological elements (e.g., motivation, well-being, etc.,). While these enhancements are progressive in comparison to traditional approaches, they still present primarily linear models of engagement (i.e., a spectrum

of engagement upon which a student may be measured from engaged on one end to disengaged on the other). They therefore also do not depart from the dominant view of engagement as inherently attached to, experienced and/or performed by the individual student.

The present research program explored, both theoretically and empirically, an alternative approach to conceptualizing engagement developed through the lens of student voice and co-created learning scholars. However, rather than producing another framework identifying additional student voice typologies (as has been done in other recent works in this area), the unique utility of the present study is the radical expansion of mainstream engagement models to establish the transformative potential of engagement as a process-based, meta-construct. By reconceptualizing engagement as a fundamentally collaborative, democratic, and emancipatory process, this work challenges the roles, norms and boundaries traditionally placed on students and educators. Through this reconceptualization, this work intends to facilitate a movement from our understanding of engagement as a one-dimension occurrence at the individual level, to a multi-dimensional process that occurs on a structural level. Future work must therefore focus on embedding engagement as a co-created process within the mainstream consciousness of student engagement and teacher education theory, policy and practice.

While we have been asking the question: “how can educators get students to learn, grow and transform into leaders that will one day make positive societal change?”, we should be asking: “how can our education system help us collectively learn, grow and transform our society for the better?” Ultimately, the co-created engagement approach calls upon academics, policy-makers, educational leaders, and practitioners to truly see students as a critical part of this pursuit and to commit our collective knowledge, experience, and resources to an ongoing process of transformation.

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Appendix A – Participant and Procedure Overview

Table A1

Participants and Procedure

Method	Participant(s)	Recruitment
Planned: Focus Group (n = 9)	***SI Student Leaders:*** Students in a leadership role who receive training to support difficult courses by leading interactive SI workshops for their peers	***In-person:*** Researcher promoted study to group of SI leaders at pre-service training session ***By email:*** Researcher sent recruitment announcement directly
Planned: Focus Group ***Outcome:*** Interview (n = 1)	***SI Student Participants:*** Students enrolled in an SI-supported course who *have* attended multiple SI workshops	***In-person:*** SI Leaders promoted through in-class announcement ***Online survey:*** Researcher promoted through online pre-survey and request to email
Planned: Focus Group ***Outcome:*** N/A (n = 0)	***Student Non-SI-Participant:*** Students enrolled in an SI-supported course (and eligible to access SI program support), who have *not* attended any SI workshops	***In-person:*** SI Leaders promoted through in-class announcement ***Online survey:*** Researcher promoted through online pre-survey and request to email
Planned: Interview (n = 1)	***SI Program Manager:*** Manager of an SI program at a Canadian university	***In-person****:* Researcher requested focus group with a program core staff member
Planned: Interview (n = 1)	***SI-supported Course Professor:*** Instructor who has led multiple SI-supported courses (including a current SI-supported course)	***By email:*** Researcher reached out directly to request participation based on recommendations from SI Program Manager

Note. While there was much less participation from the second group (SI Student Participant population, n = 1) than expected, this group is at least still represented in the study's findings. As there was no response from the third group (Student Non-SI-Participant population, n = 0), this group is not represented in the present study (see discussion on this in Chapter 5, section 5.1.1). Students also represented experiences in a variety of undergraduate courses, and, to my knowledge, none were associated with the SI-supported course professor's current cohort.

Appendix B – Recruitment Materials

Note. All sensitive identifying information has been removed from the appendix to preserve confidentiality of those involved in the present study.

In-Class Recruitment Announcement (for Students)

The below announcement was shared following SI leaders' introduction to their SI-supported class – their initial speech regarding the SI program is part of their regular speech mandated by the program and thus is not explained here:

"Are you interested in participating in a research project about student engagement?

We are looking for students who are enrolled in SI-supported courses (like this one) to complete a confidential online survey about your experiences in this course and, if you come to the SI workshops which are offered weekly, about your experiences there too. There will also be an opportunity to participate in focus groups about your experiences in January 2019. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and any information you provide will be kept confidential.

Each time you participate in the study (by finishing the online surveys or attending a focus group), you will be entered to win a prize of $50.

If you are interested in participating or want to learn more, you can check out the online announcement on our course's webpage."

(SI leader directed students to where the link was made available).

Online Recruitment Announcement (for Students)

Are you interested in participating in a research project about student engagement?

Researchers from the University of Ottawa have partnered with the Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program here at [institution name removed to maintain confidentiality] to conduct a study about student experiences and perceptions of engagement.

We are looking for students who are enrolled in SI-supported courses (like this one) to complete a confidential online survey about your experiences in this course. If you come to the SI workshops, which are offered weekly, we will also ask you about your experiences there as well. There will also be an opportunity to participate in focus groups about your experiences in

January 2019. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and any information you provide will be kept confidential.

Each time you participate in the study (by finishing the online surveys or attending a focus group), you will be entered to win a prize of $50.

If you are interested in participating you can follow this link [link inserted] to learn more, complete the informed consent and sign up to receive the first online survey.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the research team:

Primary Researcher: Fiona Cooligan (M.A. Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, [Contact details removed to maintain confidentiality])
Partnership Supervisor: *[Identifying details removed to maintain confidentiality]*
Research Supervisor: Dr. Ruth Kane (Graduate Studies Director, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, *[Contact details removed to maintain confidentiality])*

Email Recruitment Letter (for Educators)

The following call for educator participants was sent to multiple educators at the host university.

Good morning *[identifying information removed],*

My name is Fiona Cooligan and I am a graduate student from the University of Ottawa working in partnership with the [host institution's] Supplemental Instruction (SI) program.

We are conducting a study on the phenomenon of student engagement in higher education and are specifically interested in examining the concept from an educator's perspective. As you are an educator involved with the SI program, I would like to request an interview with you to discuss your perspectives on conditions and factors that foster engagement.

If you are interested in participating in a brief interview (20-30 mins), I'd ask that you please let me know if you would be available at any of the following times:

[inserted available times]

We also have an online consent form with more information, which I will pass on to you should you be interested in participating.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Appendix C – Consent Forms

Consent Form *(All Students – Focus Groups)*

Research Team
[Identifying information removed to maintain confidentiality]

Should you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the primary researcher, Fiona Cooligan, by email at [removed for confidentiality] or any other member of the research team. **Please save or print a copy of this consent form for your records.**

Study: Student Engagement and the Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to better understand how undergraduate students experience and perceive engagement in different educational contexts. Specifically, we are interested to know how experiences of engagement may differ depending on the kind of learning environment or on how involved you may be in the teaching and learning process.

Eligibility: You are eligible to participate in this study if you are *either* (1) enrolled in an SI-supported course or (2) supporting one of these courses as a SI student leader.

Participation: We will be holding a focus group wherein we will ask you to share your thoughts and feelings about engagement with respect to your experiences in the student-led SI workshops sessions or the instructor-led course sessions. Focus groups will be scheduled in early January 2019 on the *[institution name removed]* campus and will take approximately 1 hour. They will also be audio recorded.

Compensation: As a thank you for participating in a focus group, you will be given the option to enter your email in a draw to win an amazon gift card (valued at $50). The odds of winning are approximately 1 in 30. Once the focus groups are complete, the winners of the prize draw will be randomly selected and notified by email. If the person cannot be reached within 14 days from the date of the draw, the prize will be awarded to the second name that is randomly selected and so on until the prize has been awarded. The draw is governed by the applicable laws of Canada. Should you decide not to attend a focus group session that you signed up for, you will not be included in the prize draw.

Participant Rights: Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose not to respond to any question or choose to withdraw at any time without penalty. Your email address will be used for the sole purpose of inviting you to participate in the surveys and focus group, as well as contacting you should you win one of the $50 prize draws (should you choose to provide it).
Benefits and Risks: The benefits of this study include contributing to a better understanding of student engagement in higher education and, as a student, having your voice heard, to improve engagement efforts based on what real students experience and need from their educational institutions. You may also learn something new about yourself and what helps you to learn and succeed as a student and beyond. There are no identified risks of participating in this study.

Data Use and Privacy: Your responses will remain confidential (only the research team will have access to the raw data) and pseudonyms will be used in any publications resulting from this project (e.g., if direct quotes are used, no identifying information will be attached). In focus groups, we make every effort to safeguard your confidentiality by setting the group in a time and location that is private and asking all participants to verbally confirm that you will not share what is stated in the focus group elsewhere. You will also have the option of giving a pseudonym at the beginning of the group, but if you choose to give your name instead, this information will not be recorded. Please note that due to the interdependent nature of focus group and interview research, anonymity and complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and data cannot be removed if you choose to withdraw from the study. Once the focus group data is transcribed, all potentially identifying data will be removed effectively anonymizing the data. The anonymized data will be kept indefinitely. The results of the study will be used for the completion of Fiona Cooligan's Master's Thesis, may also be submitted to a peer reviewed journal and used in future studies to answer similar research questions.

This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Boards of both the University of Ottawa (Reference #S-08-18-929) and *[host institution name removed]* (Reference # [removed]) for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants.

If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study, please contact: Director, Research Ethics; *[identifying contact information removed]*. You may also contact the research ethics board at the University of Ottawa should you have any questions or concerns about the ethical conduct of this study (613-562-5387, ethics@uottawa.ca).

Informed Consent

- ☐ Yes. I have read the above informed consent and I agree to participate.
- ☐ No. I have read the above informed consent and I do not agree to participate.

Consent Form *(Educators)*

Research Team
[Identifying information removed to maintain confidentiality]

Should you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the primary researcher, Fiona Cooligan, by email at [removed for confidentiality] or any other member of the research team. **Please save or print a copy of this consent form for your records.**

Study: Student Engagement and the Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to better understand how experiences of engagement may differ depending on the kind of learning environment or on how involved you may be in the teaching and learning process. In line with this aim, it is important to understand the perspectives of educators regarding different kinds of engagement in education.

Eligibility: We are inviting you to participate in this study as you are an educator that works with the Supplemental Instruction program.

Participation: The primary researcher will meet with you to discuss your experiences and ideas related to student engagement and the SI program. The interview should take no more than 20 minutes. Please note that interviews will be audio-recorded.

Compensation: There is no compensation offered for this portion of the study.

Benefits and Risks: The benefits of this study include contributing to a better understanding of student engagement in higher education and, as an educator, providing insight into the benefits and challenges of student-educator partnerships. You may also learn more about your own teaching style and ways to enhance engagement efforts in your course, program or institution. There are no identified risks of participating in this study.

Participant Rights: Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose not to respond to any question or choose to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Data Use and Privacy: Your responses will remain confidential (only the research team will have access to the raw data) and pseudonyms will be used in any publications resulting from this project (e.g., if direct quotes are used, no identifying information will be attached). Data will be stored on the password-protected computer of the primary researcher. We will make every effort to safeguard your confidentiality by giving you the option to set the time and location of an interview. The anonymized data will be kept indefinitely. Should you choose to withdraw from the study after submitting your survey answers or participating in an interview, you will have the option of emailing the researchers to withdraw your data (latest date: Apr. 30th 2019). The results of the study will be used for the completion of Fiona Cooligan's Master's Thesis and may also be submitted to a peer reviewed journal and used in future studies to answer similar research questions.

This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Boards of both the University of Ottawa (Reference #S-08-18-929) and *[host institution name removed]* (Reference # [removed]) for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants.

If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study, please contact: Director, Research Ethics; *[identifying contact information removed]*. You may also contact the research ethics board at the University of Ottawa should you have any questions or concerns about the ethical conduct of this study (613-562-5387, ethics@uottawa.ca).

Informed Consent

- ☐ Yes. I have read the above informed consent and I agree to participate.
- ☐ No. I have read the above informed consent and I do not agree to participate.

Appendix D – Study Materials: Focus Group Guide

Initial Questions (General): (all groups)

- What does the term "engagement" (in education) mean to you? Or, what does it mean to be "engaged" as a student?
- What does it *look like* for a student to be engaged? (behaviours)
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** How could you tell that someone is engaged in class?
- Can you think of and describe a time in which you felt really engaged in school?
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** What about that situation was particularly engaging? E.g., the people, the setting, the content, etc.,? (process)
- What can educators at your institution do to engage you better?
- What role(s) do you feel students *currently* play in the teaching and learning process in university?
    - ***Follow-up prompt***: (In response to whatever role(s) participants identify), can you think of any other roles students could or should play in education?

Specific Questions (Supplemental Instruction)

SNPs:

- Why did you enroll in the SI-supported course?
- What are some reasons you decided not to attend the SI sessions?
- What aspects of the SI-supported course did you find most engaging? Least engaging?
    - ***Follow-up prompts:*** depending on responses, the researcher might ask participants to elaborate on their answers
- If you were "in charge" of the SI-supported course, how would you engage the students***?***
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** What might you do differently (if anything)? What would you keep the same?
- As a student in the SI-supported course, what kind of relationship or interaction do you have with the course instructor?
- As a student, what do you bring to the teaching and learning process in the SI-supported course?

SPs:

- Why did you enroll in the SI-supported course?
- What are some reasons you decided to attend the SI sessions?
- Why did you continue attending the SI sessions?
- What aspects of the SI workshop sessions did you find most engaging? Least engaging?
    - ***Follow-up prompts:*** depending on responses, the researcher might ask participants to elaborate on their answers
- If you were "in charge" of the SI-supported course, how would you engage the students?
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** What might you do differently (if anything)? What would you keep the same?
- As a student in the SI-supported course and an SI participant, what kind of relationship or interaction do you have with the course instructor?
- As a student, what do you bring to the teaching and learning process in the SI workshop sessions?

SLs:

- Why did you enroll in the SI-supported course when you took it the first time?

- What are some reasons you decided to get involved in the SI program?
- (For returning facilitators) Why did you continue facilitating for the SI program?
- What aspects of the SI program do you find most engaging? Least engaging?
    - ***Follow-up prompts:*** depending on responses, the researcher might ask participants to elaborate on their answers
- If you were "in charge" of the SI-supported course, how would you engage the students?
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** What might you do differently (if anything)? What would you keep the same?
- What does it mean to you to be a student leader (for the SI program)?
- As an SI student leader, what kind of relationship or interaction do you have with the course instructor?
- As an SI student leader, what do you bring to the teaching and learning process in the SI workshop sessions?

Appendix E – Study Materials: Interview Guide

Participants

- Faculty Member (FM)
- SI Program Staff (PS)

General Interview Questions

- What does the term "engagement" (in education) mean to you? Or, what does it mean for a student to be "engaged"?
- What does it *look like* for a student to be engaged? (behaviours)
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** How could you tell that a student is engaged in class?
- Can you think of and describe a time in which you felt your students were particularly engaged?
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** What about that situation was particularly engaging?
- From your perspective as an educator, what factors and practices contribute to greater student engagement?
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** What do you think you or your institution in general can do to engage students more?
- What role(s) do you feel students *currently* play in the teaching and learning process in university?
    - ***Follow-up prompt***: (In response to whatever role(s) participants identify), can you think of any other roles students could or should play in education?

Specific Questions (Supplemental Instruction)

FM:

- As the instructor of an SI-supported course, what kind of relationship or interaction do you tend to have with:
    - Students in the course?
    - The student SI leaders for the course?
- Do you find that the SI program engages students in a different way then other learning environments (e.g., lectures, tutorials, other academic support services)?
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** If so, what about the program is different? If not, why not?

PS:

- As the coordinator/manager of the SI program, what kind of relationship or interaction do you tend to have with:
    - Students participating in the SI program?
    - Student SI leaders?
- Do you find that the SI program engages students in a different way then other learning environments (e.g., lectures, tutorials, other academic support services)?
    - ***Follow-up prompt:*** If so, what about the program is different? If not, why not?

Appendix F – Additional Study Materials: Online Survey

Study Participant Legend

- Student Non-participants (SNPs)
- Student Participants (SPs)
- Student Leaders (SLs)
- Faculty Member (FM)
- Program Staff (PS)

Online Survey

(All measures will appear on both T1 & T2 unless otherwise specified)

Eligibility

SNPs and SPs: Are you enrolled in a Supplemental Instruction (SI) course?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

SLs: Are you a Supplemental Instruction (SI) facilitator?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**If participant responds "no" to both questions, they will be directed to an ineligibility notice.*

Demographics (Online T1)

All Groups: SNPs, SPs and SLs:

- Age ____
- Gender
  - Man
  - Woman
  - Other: _____
  - Prefer not to specify
- Current year
  - 1st year
  - 2nd year
  - 3rd year
  - 4th year
  - 5th or more
- Program of study _____
- Current Estimated CGPA _____
- High School Grade Point Average
- Race/ethnicity _____
- Annual household income *(SES)*_____

Level of SI involvement

SNPs and SPs: How many Supplemental Instruction (SI) sessions have you attended? *(# of choices will be modified based on how many sessions were held for students to attend since the beginning of the term)*

- 0-1 *(non-participants)*
- 2-6 *(participants)*

SLs: How long have you been a Supplemental Instruction (SI) leader?

- This is my 1st term as a facilitator
- I am a returning facilitator (2 or more terms)
- I am an SI mentor

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – Behaviour demonstrating effort items

Please respond to the following questions using the scale below.

1 Very often	2 Often	3 Sometimes	4 Never

During the current school year, how often have you *(behaviour demonstrating effort items):*

1. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective
2. Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge
3. Reviewed your notes after class
4. Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials
5. Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)
6. Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information
7. Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students
8. Worked with other students on course projects or assignments
9. Had discussions with people from a race or ethnicity other than your own
10. Had discussions with people with political views other than your own
11. Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)
12. Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – Perception of educational quality items

Using the scale below, how would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?

1 Poor	2 Fair	3 Good	4 Excellent

Using the scale below, how would you rate the quality of the interactions that you have had with others at your institution?

1 Poor	2	3	4	5	6	7 Excellent

1. Fellow students in your SI supported course
2. SPs: The student SI leader / SLs: Fellow SI leaders
3. The instructor of your SI supported course
4. Student services staff

Academic Motivation Scale (AMS)

Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent each of the following items presently corresponds to one of the reasons why you
SNPs: are enrolled in your SI-supported course
SPs: attend the weekly SI sessions
SLs: participate in the SI program

1 Does not correspond at all	2 Corresponds a little	3 Corresponds moderately	4 Corresponds a lot	5 Corresponds exactly

1. Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things. *(intrinsic motivation – to know)*
2. Because it allows me to continue to learn about many things that interest me. *(intrinsic motivation – to know)*
3. For the pleasure I experience while surpassing myself in my studies. *(Intrinsic motivation - toward accomplishment)*
4. For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities. *(Intrinsic motivation - toward accomplishment)*

5. For the intense feelings I experience when I am communicating my own ideas to others. *(Intrinsic motivation - to experience stimulation)*
6. For the "high" feeling that I experience while reading about various interesting subjects. *(Intrinsic motivation - to experience stimulation)*
7. Because I think that it will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen. *(Extrinsic motivation – identified)*
8. Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like. *(Extrinsic motivation – identified)*
9. To prove to myself that I am capable of reaching my educational goals. *(Extrinsic motivation – introjected)*
10. To show myself that I am an intelligent person. *(Extrinsic motivation – introjected)*
11. In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on. *(Extrinsic motivation - external regulation)*
12. Because I want to have "the good life" later on. *(Extrinsic motivation - external regulation)*
13. I once had good reasons for it; however, now I wonder whether I should continue. *(Amotivation)*
14. Honestly, I don't know why I do it and/or I really couldn't care less. *(Combined items #5 and #19 – Amotivation)*

Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ)

This questionnaire contains items that are related to your experience with
SNPs: the instructor of your SI supported course
SPs: the student leader of your SI sessions
SLs: your own facilitation of the SI sessions

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Disagree slightly	4 Neutral	5 Agree slightly	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree

1. I feel that my instructor/student leader provides me with choices and options. / I feel that I provide my fellow students with choices and options.
2. I feel understood by my instructor/student leader. / I feel that I understand my fellow students.
3. My instructor/student leader conveys confidence in my ability to do well in the course / I convey confidence in my fellow students' abilities to do well in this course.
4. My instructor/student leader encourages me to ask questions / I encourage my fellow students to ask questions.
5. My instructor/student leader listens to how I would like to do things / I listen to how my fellow students would like to do things.
6. My instructor/student leader tries to understand how I see things before suggesting a new way to do things. / I try to understand how my fellow students see things before suggesting a new way to do things.

The Flow in Education Scale (EduFlow)

Please use the scale below to rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about your experience in your last
SNPs: SI-supported course session
SPs: SI workshop session
SLs: SI workshop session

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Disagree slightly	4 Neutral	5 Agree slightly	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree

How did you feel in your last SI course/workshop session?

1. I felt that what I was doing was under my control. *(cognitive absorption)*
2. I felt like time flew by quickly. *(time transformation)*
3. I was not worrying about what others might think about me. *(loss of self-consciousness)*
4. I am excited when I talk about the SI course/workshop sessions and want to share my excitement with others. (autotelic experience)

Co-Created Learning Questionnaire (self-developed)

Please use the scale below to indicate how frequently you have experienced the following:
SNPs: SI course instructor
SPs: SI student leader
SLs: Fellow SI students

1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always

1. My instructor/student leader asks me for feedback on the course curriculum. / I ask my fellow students for feedback on the course curriculum.
2. I am consulted when there is a change to the course content or structure
3. I provide feedback to my instructor/student leader to improve the educational environment. / My fellow students provide feedback to me to improve the educational environment.
4. I make a point of getting involved in student leadership opportunities.
5. I take on a leadership role in supporting my fellow students in the teaching and learning process. (all groups)

Please use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following:

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly

6. I think students need more say in how our courses are designed and taught.
7. I am an active partner in a vibrant learning community.
8. I feel that my input is important to the instructor/student leader/my fellow students.
9. I enjoy collaborating with my fellow students.
10. I enjoy collaborating with educators.
11. I have an important role to play in the teaching and learning process for myself and others.
12. I have a partnership with my instructor/student leader/student participants.

Survey Compensation and Follow-up

All Groups: Thank you for completing this survey!

Would you like to be entered into a random prize draw for $50 for completing this survey?

- Yes
- No

Would you consent to being contacted by email at the end of the fall 2018 academic term with the opportunity to complete a second survey? By participating in the second survey, you can be entered into another $50 prize draw. If you choose "yes", you can still withdraw or decline to complete the second survey when it is sent to you.

- Yes
- No

Would you consent to being contacted again to take part in an in-person focus group to share more on your experiences regarding the Supplemental Instruction program and engagement in higher education? By participating in a focus group session you can be entered into another $50 prize draw. If you choose "yes", you will be invited to the focus group, but you can still decline to take part at any point.

- Yes
- No

If you've answered "Yes" to any of the above questions, please provide your email below. Please note that your email and responses will both remain confidential.
Email address: _____

Appendix G – Supplemental Instruction Training Material Example

SI SESSION OBSERVATION PACKAGE

Leader Being Observed: _____ Course: _____

Observer: _____ Date Observed: _____
Duration of the observation: _____

Session observations are an opportunity to learn, connect with other SI leaders, and provide & receive feedback.

Here's what to do:

Part	To be completed by...	When?
A	The leader being observed	Before the session
B	The observer	During the session
C	The observer	After the session, before you meet
D	Both of you	Post-observation meeting, ideally within a week of the session observed

Observer Guidelines:

- We encourage you to attend sessions in other subjects / disciplines.
- Observe about an hour of the session
- Finally, have fun with it!

PART A – PRE-SESSION QUESTIONS
(Leader being observed completes this)

1. How many students do you anticipate will be in session? Is this your typical group of core attendees? If you expect something different than usual, why?

2. What content are you going over in this session? What study strategy are you implementing (Matrix, Incomplete Outline, Concept Map, Informal Quiz, etc.)?

3. What collaborative learning strategies are you intending on using (Think/Pair/Share, Poster Groups, Turn to your Partner, etc.)? How will your session change depending on an increase or decrease in the number of attendees?

4. What challenges might you expect from this session and how will you handle these challenges?

PART B – SESSION OBSERVATION
(Observer completes this)

5. Circle a number from 0 – 7 to indicate how engaged students were with the session. Comment on reasons why they are engaged and ways to increase engagement, if applicable.

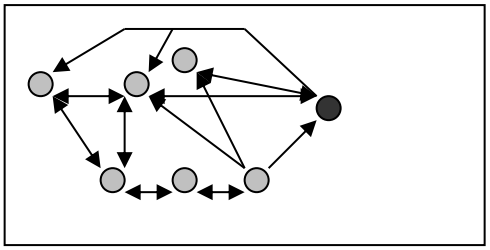
1 Completely disengaged	2 Disengaged	3 Somewhat disengaged	4 Unsure	5 Somewhat engaged	6 Engaged	7 Completely engaged

6. How has the leader's use of Study Strategies and Collaborative Learning Strategies affected the session dynamic? Was this the most appropriate collaborative learning strategies?

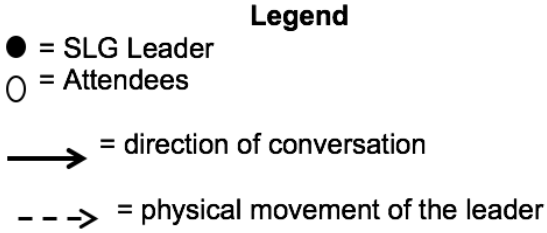
Study Strategies: How did these affect session dynamics? (e.g., Concept Mapping, Materials, etc.,	**Collabroative Learning Strategies: How did these affect session dynamics? (e.g., Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, etc.,**

7. What activity did you map out? _____

Example:



This activity involves drawing a diagram that tracks the movement of conversation and the physical movement of the leader during the activity of your choice.



Describe:_____

8. How did the leader utilize waiting times and redirection?

PART C – POST-OBSERVATION REFLECTION
(Observer completes this)

9. Write down the session leader's strengths, suggestions of how they could improve, and ways you, the observer, can improve your own SIs based on what you observed.

PART D – POST-OBSERVATION MEETING
(Both of you complete this!)

11. How does the session leader feel the session went and why? If they could go back, is there anything they would have done differently? Is there anything that went extra well for their session?

Together go over Part B and C and discuss what you wrote. Then come back to finish question 12 & 13.

12. Based on the conversation you just had, summarize one area of the leader's facilitation skills that they wish to continue to develop.

13. Did the leader accomplish the goals set for this session? How do you know? Write one goal they have for next session that incorporates the feedback from this package.