

Learning from Training New Faculty
in Outcomes-based Learning

Capstone Project

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Submitted by Susan Heximer

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Dr. David Lloyd

Abstract

This phenomenological study investigated the extent to which mandatory training in Outcomes-based Learning (OBL), completed by new faculty at a large urban community college in Ontario, promotes, supports, and sustains a shift towards learner-centred practice. One-on-one interviews with post-probationary faculty, up to two and a half years after the completion of OBL training, shed light on their lived experiences. Study participants' responses confirmed that OBL provides a guiding framework which is of particular value to new faculty without a background in education, and that faculty direct significant energy and effort towards ongoing improvements in their practice according to OBL and learner-centred criteria. Study results indicated that faculty want further training and support in the area of authentic assessment to advance their practice, and that they find a surfeit of content presents challenges to the full adoption of a learner-centred approach, as does learner preference for passive learning. The study recommends the continued practice of training in OBL for new faculty, noting its value as an organizing framework for teaching and learning, and the establishment of institutional resources and supports to sustain learner-centred practices. The study suggests areas for further research, including how to support continued and advanced practice of OBL post-probation, and a longitudinal study more than five years post-probation concerning the sustainability of OBL and learner-centred practices.

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Chapter 1: The Problem Defined

Background Statement

Community Colleges in Ontario prepare learners of diverse educational, social and cultural backgrounds to become career-ready graduates. At a large urban community college in the Greater Toronto Area, 514 fulltime and 858 part-time teaching faculty face the challenge of preparing diverse groups of learners, numbering close to 24, 000 fulltime students, to achieve provincially approved program outcomes, discipline-specific knowledge, and vocational skills, as well as mandated Essential Employability Skills (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities [MTCU], 2012). This presents a greater challenge in regulated professions, such as Practical Nursing (Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Examination, 2012) and Denturism (College of Denturists Ontario, 2012), for which students are required to complete a rigorous professional or licensing examination. Although a hoped-for result of a college education is the creation of lifelong learners, preparing a wide range of learners to pass their examinations, cross the finish line, and graduate can take precedence, yet remain an elusive and difficult to achieve goal. A growing number of underprepared, ESL, and international learners and the infusion of Second Career funded students (Colleges Ontario, 2009) increase the complexity of delivering college-level courses. In conversations and workshops, new faculty anxiously ask how they can possibly cover all of the content in their course. The chapters of their text often outnumber the weeks of course delivery, or, in cases where a textbook is not framing the content, the faculty's much broader discipline-specific knowledge informs their thinking of what to teach.

College faculty as dual-professionals bring a wealth of expertise from their primary profession, however they are rarely trained as teachers. A scan of the fulltime program calendar at this college reflects a wide variety of courses, programs, trades, and professions. Architects, pastry chefs, nurses, event planners, and HVAC technicians all comprised one group of recently hired faculty at this college. A faculty member's considerable knowledge and professional experience in their first profession inform their approach to teaching to the extent that they may teach as they were taught, but this may not prepare them adequately to assume the role of an educator (Evers, et al., 2009;

Knapper, 2010; Pajares, 1992; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008). Industry experience and discipline-informed practices often give rise to an approach to teaching that relies on the transmission of knowledge and content rather than a focus on learning, practice of skills, and application. (Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Knapper, 2010; Weimer, 2002) Reliance on a content-driven approach perpetuates a transmission of knowledge teaching paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Weimer, 2002), reduces time for skill acquisition and a focus on future application, and limits the emphasis on learning to learn and developing critical thinking (Weimer, 2010). Barr and Tagg capture the limitations of the teaching paradigm emphatically: “to say that the purpose of Colleges is to provide instruction is like saying that General Motors’ business is to operate assembly lines” (1995, p. 13). The main output of post-secondary institutions is not instruction, but learning. Adopting an approach to teaching that places learning at the centre will result in greater transferability of knowledge and skills to the workplace and support lifelong learning (Battersby, 1999; Bouslama, Lansari, Al-Rawi, & Abonamah, 2003; King, 1999; Landry, Saulnier, Wagner, & Longenecker, 2008; Lui & Shum, 2010; Saulnier, Landry, Longenecker, & Wagner, 2008).

The mass retirements of faculty present a challenge to Human Resources at this college. The Manager of Employment Services identified the challenges of recruitment and selection of the “right candidate, at the right time for the right job”, indicating that the new workforce will have gaps and challenges (R. Lapworth, personal communication, Sept 21, 2010). Decisions will need to be made about how much teaching and learning experience is enough, and how much training and support can be provided to support success. It will be necessary to strike a balance between discipline-specific expertise and pedagogy. A generic profile for faculty recruitment and selection does not exist as there are different tolerances and requirements for specific fields. Faculty require a breadth of skills specific to their field plus a range of teaching skills; they need to be dual-professionals, i.e. a pastry chef as well as a teacher. In view of this college’s vision and strategic direction, faculty need to understand students as well as employment in their specific field (R. Lapworth, personal communication September 21, 2010).

This college is conferring a growing number of applied degrees (to date, six) and engaging in applied research, which, in turn, has shifted recruitment and hiring practices to employ new faculty with PhDs. Faculty scholars who have committed considerable years to their own academic achievement enrich the learning community, yet face transitional tensions in their move from academia to applied learning environments. At the diploma level, self-employed carpenters and corporate marketing professionals bring invaluable knowledge, up-to-date practices, and established industry networks, but lack experience in developing a lesson plan or, indeed, a course outline.

Growing enrolment and a lack of adequate classroom space to accommodate the growth give rise to large classes, often exceeding 100 students. Many faculty at this college default to lecture-based instruction rather than active and collaborative learning, choose efficient assessment methods, such as multiple choice tests rather than authentic assessments, and report that workload and time constraints limit their ability to provide formative and regular feedback to promote learner development towards successful course completion.

Quality Assurance conducted through program review by the Office of Academic Excellence at this college flags concerns about teaching and delivery methods, assessment methods, and types and frequency of feedback to students to promote their learning, achievement of program outcomes, and academic success. Teaching and assessment methods do not always address student learning needs, increasing the risk of poor attainment rates, attrition, and lower rates of graduation. The college's five-year pilot to support student success has practiced early-alert, an intervention system to identify at-risk learners within the first six weeks of their program, and provided academic supports through a team of Student Success Strategists to advance a learning-to-learn approach, however this pilot is moving to its final year. The temporary nature of this funding points to a need for a deeper, sustainable, structural solution that places learning at the centre of teaching.

Learner-centred practice has gained traction and is a growing focus in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning; it offers a helpful framework for adoption of methods that enhance teaching, learning, and assessment (Kember, 2008; Knapper, 2010;

Landry et al., 2008; Saulnier et al., 2008; Shipley, 1995; Weimer, 2002). Outcomes-based learning (OBL) is embedded in a learner-centred approach, reflecting a paradigm shift from content-driven instruction to learner-centred development of knowledge, skills and attitudes for application in future contexts. Rather than preparing learners to cross the finish line of course completion, OBL facilitates the development of deeper learning, higher order thinking, and reflection on their learning, preparing them to transfer their skills to a variety of future contexts to solve complex real-world problems. Use of teaching and learning methods and authentic assessments that mirror the skills learners will apply in their future roles, and in their lives, supports achievement of clearly stated course outcomes (Battersby, 1999; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Landry et al., 2008; Saulnier et al., 2008; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008). This aligns well with the anticipated skill set needed to adapt to a knowledge and information-age economy (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Miner, 2010).

Shipley (1995) championed the adoption of OBL:

OBL contributes to new understandings about teaching and learning. No longer can Colleges provide structured, preset programs which require that learners fit the boxes we have created and then instruct learners using traditional delivery methods, conventional teaching techniques and similar content for all (p. 5).

Organizational and Staff Development was the department of this college that was the focus of this study; it offers a comprehensive orientation and training program for new faculty, the New Faculty Academy, which was commended in the 2011 Program Quality Assurance Process Audit (PQAPA, 2011). In addition to participation in the New Faculty Academy, probationary faculty complete a rigorous set of learning requirements over a twenty-four month period from their date of hire (Appendix A). The particular area of focus of this study was training in OBL, one of the components of the probationary learning requirements. Since 2006, 123 new faculty, and approximately 60 full-time and contract faculty have completed the OBL training. The outcomes of the training are: apply an outcomes-based approach to writing course outcomes, developing assessments, and creating lesson plans (Appendix B). The OBL training consists of four two-hour modules, the first of which is included in the New Faculty Academy in August, before the start of the academic year. Three subsequent workshops occur at two-week

intervals during the fall semester. The full series is repeated in the winter semester and later in the spring to ensure that faculty hired after the fall start-up, or at different points throughout the academic year, can fulfill this critical probationary learning requirement.

Feedback, both informal and formal, from conversations with new fulltime faculty and through evaluations completed by previous groups at the end of each of the four OBL training sessions, indicates that the training is useful, practical, relevant, and helpful. Responses to questions about how these concepts will be used after completion of each module indicate faculty's intention to incorporate them into their teaching, lesson planning, and evaluation methods. In post-training feedback, completed by a mix of probationary, part-time and fulltime faculty in winter 2010, 100 per cent of the twelve participants surveyed indicated that they had already or will be implementing knowledge gained regarding assessment, course outlines, and lesson plans. OBL training is open to all faculty, full-time non-probationary and contract faculty, on a catch-as-catch-can basis.

The Office of Academic Excellence also promotes an OBL approach, and through its program review process invests resources in program-mapping and the overhaul of course outcomes to align with an OBL framework. In a recent Program Quality Assurance Process Audit (PQAPA), the college was commended for the standardization of course outlines across the college and its course outline handbook tool (Ontario College Quality Assurance Service, 2011). Adoption of OBL clearly has an impact at a college level as it complies with a desired standard, and also at the classroom level. Curriculum Specialists from the Office of Academic Excellence work closely with program faculty across the college to develop and promote the use of rubrics for transparency in assessment methods aligned with learning outcomes. Despite the investment, it is not possible to reach all constituents at once; the time-intensive review process means that between 11-15 programs are reviewed annually (J. Wattam, personal communication, April 29, 2011). Completing reviews of 148 programs (George Brown College, 2011) will take more than ten years. The PQAPA panel recommended that the college ensure that all programs are reviewed every five to seven years (Ontario College Quality Assurance Service, 2011) which will require an increased investment of resources. While the quality assurance processes are sound, the implementation of

recommendations from internal program review has been variable, dependent upon sustained commitment, leadership, and the degree of interest and willingness to modify existing methods, unless serious problems are identified.

Although praised for its comprehensive orientation for new faculty, the college cannot ensure that all new full-time faculty attend the New Faculty Academy before they begin teaching as new faculty are hired at various points throughout the academic year. Those who attend the week-long session in August and complete OBL training in the subsequent ten weeks, usually comment on the extraordinary demands of preparing lectures and materials for classes, grading, and getting their bearings as they hit the ground running. Faculty hired after the week-long session in August are not able to attend the New Faculty Academy until the following August, after they have completed a couple of semesters of teaching. They may not complete OBL workshops until they have taught for a full academic year due to scheduling conflicts. Without a framework for teaching and learning, their default approach to their new teaching role is often ruled by transmission of content and discipline-specific knowledge (Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001) as well as insider knowledge of their own field or discipline (Pajares, 1992) which promotes reliance on teaching as they have been taught, most often within the teaching paradigm.

Problem Statement

Organizational and Staff Development, the department that was the focus of this study, has promoted the adoption of an OBL approach over the past six years, but dissemination on a college-wide level has not been achieved. OBL training is open to all faculty, full-time post-probationary and contract, on a self-directed basis, however a greater number of faculty have not completed OBL training than those who have. All new hires since 2006 to 2011 constitute close to 24 per cent of the current fulltime faculty, although the addition of part-time faculty raises the number of teaching faculty to 1,372 which alters the snapshot of those who have completed OBL training to about 13 percent. In a climate of growing class size, with the continuing practice of hiring part-time rather than full-time faculty, the majority's inclination to rely on the teaching paradigm creates dissonance for those who have been encouraged to use learner-centred

practices. It is difficult to nurture a shift to learner-centred practice when the teaching paradigm persists. Despite an institutional commitment to OBL, new faculty's willingness and enthusiasm to adopt OBL may wane and not be sustainable. Growing enrolment and space constraints give rise to class sizes of more than 100 students in some programs, conditions that promote reliance on content-driven instruction, multiple choice tests, and limited formative feedback, further compromising the paradigm shift.

The anticipated high volume of retirements and subsequent hiring of new faculty may result in an increased number of new faculty who lack a pedagogical framework and teaching experience. Their lack of a framework for teaching and learning may dispose them to eager adoption of an OBL approach, although the enduring nature of their personal and professional beliefs, mental models, and values (Knapper, 2010; Pajares, 1992) may limit their adoption of OBL and a learner-centred paradigm.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the extent to which mandatory training in Outcomes-based Learning completed by new faculty during their probation, promotes, supports, and sustains a paradigm shift from content-driven instruction to learner-centred practices. Results of the study will be useful to inform future orientation of new faculty and to support them in their teaching practice and ongoing learning beyond probation.

Research Questions

This qualitative study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. How does OBL training influence new faculty perceptions of teaching and learning?
2. What changes do new faculty make in lesson planning and classroom delivery as a result of OBL training?
3. What changes do new faculty make to assessments of learning as a result of OBL training?
4. What changes to new faculty orientation and training would support a stronger adoption of OBL in their practice?

Definition of Terms**Classroom delivery**

For the purpose of this study, classroom delivery refers to the methods of instruction, what and how the teacher teaches, in any given class.

Content-driven instruction

For the purpose of this study, content-driven instruction describes an approach to teaching that relies on the transmission of content and is frequently associated with passive learning rather than active learning.

Learner-centred practices

For the purpose of this study, learner-centred practices are those that focus on “how much and how well” learners learn and “the kinds of instructional strategies that support their efforts to learn” (Weimer, in press, p. iv).

Mandatory training

Mandatory training is determined by the Human Resources department at the college where the study took place. A list of the probationary learning requirements (Appendix A) indicates the range and type of activities that new faculty complete during their probation. Probation is defined later in this section.

New Faculty

For the purpose of this study, new faculty were those hired in the previous three years before the study took place, who had completed OBL training at some point during their first two years of employment as fulltime faculty, and had completed their probation.

Orientation

At the site of this study, orientation refers to both a program, in particular the New Faculty Academy, and a process, to support newly hired faculty to understand their jobs and the resources available to them to achieve job success.

Outcomes-based learning

Outcomes-based learning (OBL) is a learner-centred approach to education. Curriculum development, course and lesson planning, assessment and delivery all focus on learner-centred outcomes. These learning outcomes emphasize the application of the skills, knowledge and attitudes learned and recognize the importance of such skills as research, problem solving, critical thinking, and reflection.

Probation

Article 27.02.A of the Collective Agreement between OPSEU academic employees and the College Employer Council indicates that fulltime employees will be on probation until the completion of the probationary period which is “two years’ continuous employment” (OPSEU, 2009). Exceptions to two years are noted and include a reduction in the length of probation to one year for those with a Bachelor of Education degree, a Masters of Education degree, or a valid Ontario Teacher’s Certificate.

Limitations of Study

Inviting new faculty who completed the New Faculty Academy in August 2011 would have provided a freshness of perspective on the influence of OBL on teaching practices, however new faculty who had not yet completed their probation may have construed the invitation to participate in a study an onerous additional demand, or may have felt compelled to participate, despite the voluntary nature of participation, as they were still completing probation. Consequently, the participants of this research were post-probationary faculty who completed OBL training over the past three academic years. Although further removed chronologically from the training in OBL, this group had the benefit of additional time to incorporate changes and reflect on their practice. Some of the changes in practice may have been the result of becoming a more experienced teacher and engaging in reflective practice, an overarching theme of probationary learning, rather than the influence of training in OBL. Harkening back to the time of training to determine direct links between training and subsequent changes was subject to memory and perception of the influence of training that occurred as long ago as three years for one of the participants. The researcher probed to encourage examples of changes that arose from training in OBL.

The researcher facilitated both the New Faculty Academy and the OBL workshops, and provided support to new faculty during their probation. This historical connection had potential to influence study participants in at least two ways; participants may have felt obliged to participate based on support they received during probation, and/or they may have exaggerated the impact of OBL on their practice to please the

researcher, knowing the researcher's positive bias towards OBL as a framework for teaching and learning. A third limitation was the possibility of faculty feeling evaluated on their successful uptake and implementation of an OBL approach. To overcome these limitations, the researcher emphasized that faculty participation or non-participation was fully voluntary without consequences of evaluation or implied obligation based on previous connection, and made every effort to explore faculty's candid perceptions through open-ended questions in a spirit of enquiry to mitigate bias. The researcher underscored that interview questions were exploring the influence of training in OBL on teaching practice, rather than evaluating the faculty member's effectiveness as a teacher or the researcher's effectiveness as a facilitator.

The researcher sought six study participants. The number of faculty who completed OBL training over the past three years was 77, however 24 were deemed eligible to participate in the study. To be eligible to participate, faculty needed to have completed the OBL workshop series, be post-probationary, and be a professor in a faculty teaching position. Five of the faculty met the first two criteria but had non-teaching faculty roles such as Curriculum Specialist, Student Success Strategist, or Counsellor. Two of the faculty would have met all criteria, however their lengths of probation were adjusted due to having taken maternity leaves. All of the remaining 46 faculty who completed OBL training over the past three academic years were still probationary; four of them are Instructors, and three are Counsellors; even if they had been post-probationary, they would not have met the criterion of being professors, faculty who teach.

The researcher sought a rich range of perspectives from a variety of disciplines. The participants came from six distinctly different programs, however there were two areas of divisional overlap; two participants worked in the same broader social services cluster of programs and two in the hospitality area.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The shift towards a learning-paradigm is not a new concept. King wrote about the change in faculty's role from 'sage on the stage to guide on the side' in the early 1990s (1993). Barr and Tagg (1995) illustrated the merits of a learning-paradigm, in vivid language that approximates an exhortation for change. So why has there not been a more pervasive use of methods that place learning at the centre of teaching? Despite ample evidence to support the adoption of a paradigm shift, teaching-centred practice remains dominant. A survey of university teachers indicated that more than 60 per cent of them relied on lecture as their main method of classroom delivery and that their conception of good teaching equated with the transmission of knowledge (Kember & Kwan, 2000). Adherence to content-driven methods persists despite ongoing efforts on the part of faculty developers and centres for teaching and learning at colleges and other post-secondary institutions. An abundance of research and scholarly writing underscores the value of learner-centred practice and accompanying benefits of an outcomes-based approach (Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Evers, et al., 2009; Landry et al., 2008 ; Shipley, 1995; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008). The following literature review will synthesize distinguishing features of a learner-centred approach that are embedded in OBL, and highlight their benefits to learners, faculty, and the college, creating a win-win-win scenario. The contextual imperative to adopt an OBL approach, why now makes more sense than ever before, will be articulated. Barriers, both attitudinal and structural, will be included to acknowledge continued reluctance and obstacles to implementation with a view towards mitigating their impacts upon completion of the research, and to advance modifications to OBL training, its adoption, and continued use.

Characteristics of OBL and Learner-Centred Practice

Landry et al. (2008) use learner-centred and outcomes based interchangeably as they are both part of the same approach; learner-centred is used when emphasis is on the student, while outcomes-based is used when the emphasis is on the learning outcomes and their assessment.

The terms learner-centred and learning-centred are used interchangeably by some, and with an emphatic difference by others. O'Banion pioneered the model of a "learning-college" (O'Banion, 1997) that "places learning first and provides educational experiences for learners anyway, anyplace, anytime"(p.47). The learning college underscores the principle function of a college in service to its students rather than the institution and its staff. According to O'Bannon, a "learner-centered college" places learners at the centre of all decisions. An accompanying feature is a "learning-centered model" in which faculty attune to learner needs and tune into the needs of local industry to develop relevant and applied learning experiences for their students (Morrison & O'Banion, 1998). This usage of learning-centred is similar to learner-centred to the extent that it aims to provide relevant learning with a focus on future application.

Weimer offers a clarification of terms in the preface to the second edition of her book on learner-centred teaching, to be published later this year, which she shared electronically with the researcher. She distinguishes between learner-centred and learning-centred, as well as several other terms that have come to be used interchangeably, including "student-centered, student-centered teaching or just plain student-centered" (p. iv, in press). All of these terms contrast with the traditional content-driven approach which is teacher-centred or instruction-centred. Weimer proposes the use of the term learner-centred to underscore the changed paradigm in which the focus is on the "learners and the kinds of instructional strategies that support their efforts to learn" (p. iv). Weimer adds that learner-centred is preferable to student-centred as it sidesteps the connotation of a consumer framework in which the student is customer. Weimer prefers learner-centred to learning-centred for its concreteness, indicating that learning is an abstraction about which academics could engage in ample theorizing while the term learner-centred may be more helpful to policies and practices that concern "how much and how well students learn" (p. iv).

An outcomes-based approach is consistent with a learning paradigm as it shifts the focus to what and how the learners learn, rather than what is being taught, as in the instruction paradigm (Warren, 2003). Rather than a traditional instruction-driven and content delivery model, OBL is a more engaging, application-oriented model that

includes varied methods of teaching and active learning. It is learner-centred, and as such, promotes transparency of learning outcomes, relevance of skills, and ultimately the application of skills in future contexts and settings (Landry et al., 2008; Saulnier et al., 2008; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008). The emphasis is not on cramming concepts and information into learners' heads, but in preparing learners to develop and apply higher thinking skills in their future careers and in their lives. Learning about learning is central to this model, giving students opportunities for reflection and deeper learning as a result (Weimer, 2002, 2010). This approach promotes agile learners who transfer their learning to future practice and application (Dillon, 2005; Kozar & Marcketti, 2008; Shipley, 1995; Weimer, 2010). Producing learning is the goal rather than producing instruction (Barr & Tagg, 1995; McDaniel, Felder, Gordon, Hrutka, & Quinn, 2000).

At a curricular level, OBL presumes backward planning and teaching forward towards the achievement of understandable and meaningful outcomes, which, in turn, inform the selection of assessments, followed by the development of learning activities and lesson plans. Warren (2003) credits Wiggins and McTighe as authors of this reverse pedagogy. Instead of selecting content for transmittal and measuring the uptake of said input, faculty use content to fuel learners' development of skills and achievement of outcomes that are assessable, measurable, and attainable (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Hubball & Burt, 2004; King, 1993; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008; Weimer, 2002).

OBL can be understood as both a model and a process, as Driscoll and Wood indicate: "An educational model in which curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are all focused on student learning outcomes. It's an educational process that fosters continuous attention to student learning and promotes institutional accountability based on student learning" (2007, p.4). An outcomes focus provides a common framework within and across programs, and student learning is central, subsequently promoting institutional accountability. This aligns with Warren's distillation of distinguishing features of an outcomes-based approach: "accountability, assessment, and outcomes" (Warren, 2003, pp. 723-725).

Benefits of Learner-Centred Practice and OBL

Benefits to learners. OBL builds on a constructivist view of learning that supports our twenty-first century context and student success (King, 1993; Shipley, 1994). Information abounds, is available and accessible around the clock, however, information in itself is not knowledge. Knowledge results from the transformative process of learners working with concepts, applying them, making them their own, and being able to apply resulting skills in future contexts. Referring to the work of Kember and Gow, Weimer emphasizes links between teachers' delivery of content and learners' reliance on memorization as a learning approach (2010). Knapper (2010) echoes this, when he writes that traditional content-driven teaching fails to address both "life-long and life-wide learning" needed to prepare graduates to resolve unanticipated problems they will face in the rapidly changing world of work. Weimer (2010) points out that covering the ever-increasing volume of content reduces time for skill acquisition and practice, and, therefore, suggests a changed role of content to inform skill development. This change supports lifelong learning and the development of thinking skills needed to assess the validity, usefulness, and relevance of information.

Within the OBL approach, active learning supports the view of the learner as agent in the learning process (Dillon, 2005; Kember, 2008; King, 1993; Landry et al., 2008; Shipley, 1995). Deeper learning results, and learning that lasts, rather than surface-level learning associated with memorization of facts for tests (Weimer, 2002). Active learning and authentic assessments, aligned with learning outcomes, rather than surface assessments of memorized facts, reflect skills required in respective fields of practice, helping learners make linkages between concepts and application (Dillon, 2005; Knapper, 2010; Kozar & Marcketti, 2008; Wingfield & Black, 2005). Students engage in assessment of their own learning towards achievement of clearly stated outcomes linked to the assessments (Bouslama et al., 2003; Driscoll & Wood, 2007). Ongoing formative feedback helps learners modify their strategies and learning approaches to improve their results (Dillon, 2005; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Weimer, 2002). Teaching students to be better thinkers improves their cognitive development and promotes more interest in learning and intrinsic motivation (Knapper, 2010).

An OBL approach supports achievement of discipline-specific knowledge and skills, thus aligning with professional and licensing certification requirements (Hubball & Burt, 2004; Landry et al., 2008). The use of an OBL learner-centred approach results in a more cohesive learning experience rather than segmented, siloed learning. The relevance and transparency of both learning activities and assessments help students articulate what they have learned and its value to future application with employers (Dillon, 2005).

Meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing labour market sets a formidable task for students and graduates. Preparing them to apply what they have learned and embrace lifelong learning as a practical reality will be best achieved through a learner-centred approach that embodies learning about learning. Hofman (2008, in Abstract) echoes this necessity: “Learning to learn is important and increasingly vital for people trying to deal with a rapidly changing world!”

A benefit to students that they might not be aware of is the extent to which faculty assume a learner role within the OBL approach and the learning paradigm. Faculty engage in ongoing reflection about what is working and what needs to be retooled in their curriculum – a built in quality assurance mechanism. Learner achievement in assessments is critical feedback to the teacher to modify approaches to promote attainment of stated learning outcomes (Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008). The priority of maintaining currency within discipline-specific practice, and aligning learning to promote employability requires continuous review and modification of materials and approaches used to help learners develop appropriate knowledge and skills (Utschig, Elger, & Beyerlein, 2005).

Benefits to faculty. Community College faculty are hired for their industry knowledge, experience, expertise, and networks that they offer the learners and institution. At this GTA College, strategic priorities for 2020 place innovation in teaching and learning alongside partnerships and field education. A growing research agenda and the addition of applied degree programs have seen an increase in the number of faculty with PhDs. Without formal training as educators or a framework to approach teaching and learning, the likelihood of faculty teaching as they have been taught is high (Kember, 2008; Knapper, 2010; Pajares, 1992; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001). The volume

of knowledge they offer is considerable and gives way to a content-driven approach. The majority of faculty learn on the job by teaching (Evers et al., 2009). Without discussion and analysis of teaching that promotes learning, traditional methods of instruction are likely to dominate (Kember, 2008; Knapper, 2010). OBL offers a unifying pedagogy to faculty, a framework for teaching and learning, that can promote faculty success in their roles and address student learning (Evers, et al., 2009).

Teaching in the Third Millennium presents growing challenges due to the rapid changes of information types and sources. It behooves faculty to adapt, and in some cases radically change, their pedagogy. They cannot cover all of the content due to the rate of change and ubiquitous nature of information (Bitter & Legacy, 2008). In technology dependent fields, the content that students learn will be outmoded by the time they graduate (Landry et al., 2008; Saulnier et al., 2008). The way faculty teach affects the quality of learning and students' approaches to learning (Kember, 2008; Kember & Kwan, 2000; Knapper, 2010). Reliance on the instruction paradigm does not produce the kind of learning required by modern society (Knapper, 2010; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008; Weimer, 2002). The OBL framework addresses these challenges; it provides a clear map to inform both curriculum and instructional methods, the what and the how of teaching and learning, and relies on authentic assessment methods that require learners to use and develop skills that are meaningful and relevant to future application. Authentic assessments produce deeper learning, promote ownership of learning through transparency and relevance, and higher levels of engagement. More engaged learners are more satisfied learners; consequently, faculty see a reduction in the number of power struggles, fewer grade appeals as a result of increased transparency in assessment, and, ultimately, less attrition. The use of assessment tools that promote transparency, e.g. rubrics, help learners to set goals for their learning and select and modify strategies towards goal attainment (Dillon, 2005; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008).

The role of faculty changes from that of expert and holder of truths to facilitator of learning and designer of learning environments (Warren, 2003). Sharing power in the classroom is made possible (Weimer, 2002). Students understand what is required of

them to achieve success. Faculty provide frequent feedback to support achievement of well-developed learning outcomes that anchor the learning experience. Biggs (1999) acknowledged the centrality of assessment to student learning: “What and how students learn depends to a major extent on how they think they will be assessed” (p.141).

Ideally, alignment of outcomes permeates from course level to program level, thereby reducing redundancies and avoiding gaps in learning. In professional programs, such as Nursing and Dental Hygiene, a set of regulated professional learning outcomes further informs the skills that are deemed essential for professional practice. Vertical integration of learning outcomes from first year to final year ensures incremental mastery, while horizontal integration reinforces concepts across courses (Hubball & Burt, 2004), features that benefit both learners and faculty, and the college in its broader goal of quality assurance.

The systematic integration of program and learning outcomes is a daunting undertaking that requires strategic enrolment of faculty in the endeavour. Stiehl and Lewchuk (2008) suggest that faculty may view an offer of training as an implied criticism, whereas an invitation to work together on curriculum may generate more interest. A crisis of negative external feedback can serve to accelerate change to place learner needs at the centre of teaching (Kember, 2008; Knapper, 2010). Once achieved, the alignment that arises from the curriculum makeover clarifies priorities for faculty, helps them rethink the role of content, and makes assessment more purposeful as both an enabler and measurement of learning (Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008).

Faculty challenges due to enrolment growth, and the ever-growing range of learners within their courses, require faculty to rethink their approaches to teaching and learning. The Office of Disability Services at this GTA College has seen an increase in the number of students seeking accommodation from 988 in 2006 to 1352 in 2009 (J. Jollymore, personal communication, May 17, 2011). Second Career students bring life experience and maturity, but may have challenges in language, numeracy and technical literacy. The province’s intention to increase access for all learners, including Aboriginal and non-traditional, international and ESL, further widens the range of learners (Colleges Ontario, 2009). If faculty continue to rely on a teaching-paradigm it will be difficult to

know if learners are learning until they write their final examination, at which point proactive learner-centred approaches are too late. Faculty need to know if their learners are learning. Warren (2003) underscores that teacher-centred assessment monitors learning, whereas learner-centred assessment promotes learning. The use of formative assessments in OBL will help both faculty and students to flag difficulties and develop corrective strategies (Bousslama et al., 2003; Dillon, 2005; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Hubball & Burt, 2004; Landry et al., 2008; Salter, Pang, & Sharma, 2009).

Benefits to the college. OBL offers promising practices for improved learning, and the ripple effect of this is considerable, from increased learner satisfaction, to better retention, higher rates of graduation, improved rates of employment and, ultimately, improvements in employer satisfaction. In effect, an investment in teaching and learning is also the best marketing tool. The college that was the site of this study commits to “excellence in teaching, applied learning and innovation” in its strategic plan and vision as articulated in its Annual Report 2010-11 stating that the role of professor will change “from that of sage to knowledge curator”. It is hard to imagine achieving and sustaining these goals without a full commitment to learner-centred practice and the orientation and training of faculty required to realize it. Students will make other choices if the learning experience is not responsive to their needs (Utschig et al., 2005).

Colleges are accountable to a number of stakeholders and performance measurement. The Colleges Ontario *Environmental Scan* (2009) underscores the increasing need for graduates who can participate adaptably and competitively in Ontario’s workforce. OBL benefits a number of stakeholders, for a variety of reasons: government and funders, as it produces greater accountability to their mandated program standards; employers, as it ensures responsiveness to their specific needs for trained employees and adherence to professional standards; faculty, as it provides a clear map for teaching and learning; and, ultimately, students, as they become key stakeholders in their own learning (Warren, 2003). In addition to outcomes aligned with learning at a course level, the alignment extends to the program level and beyond to the professional learning requirements to fulfill accreditation and licensing standards (Hubball & Burt, 2004; Landry et al., 2008; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008).

Students are key stakeholders and the rising cost of tuition makes them expect a significant return on investment. The corporatization of education and a consumer-oriented mindset brings customer-service language to our hallowed halls. If the teaching paradigm continues to dominate, enrolment may suffer. Barr and Tagg (1995) encouraged a different accounting system; rather than enrolment figures, a census of well-prepared graduates.

The college in this study benefits from the adoption of a systematic method of curriculum development embedded in OBL to address quality assurance. There is a growing disconnect between how disciplines are taught in post-secondary institutions and how they are practised in the outside world. An OBL approach provides a dual benefit of addressing the cocoon effect, the disconnect between how students are taught and how they will need to perform, as well as improvements to teaching and learning to retain students who might otherwise leave (Utschig et al. 2005).

The Contextual Imperative: Why Now?

Ontario Colleges face a significant challenge in view of forecasted deficits of highly skilled workers, shaped by socio-economic and demographic factors. Rick Miner's report *People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People: Ontario's Labour Market Future* (2010) is alarming. He describes a "crisis" which "arises from the intersection of two mega-trends: an aging population and an emerging knowledge economy" (p. 1). He cites both US and Canadian data that indicate that by 2031 we will need 77% of our workers to have completed some form of post-secondary education to assume skilled occupations. Currently 60% in the age group of 25 to 34 years of age meet this requirement. A decline in workforce numbers and a lag are inevitable with an impending tidal wave of retirements and slower population growth; strategic action is required (Miner, 2010).

This GTA college has committed to Vision 2020, comprised of six strategic imperatives, one of which is "preparing diverse learners for job success" (Annual Report, 2011). A stated ongoing commitment to academic excellence enables the achievement of this goal, articulating the need for learning models that will change the "role of professor from that of sage to one of knowledge curator" (Annual Report, 2011, p. 16). The learner-centred practice embedded in OBL aligns strongly with the proposed altered

model. Instead of covering content, which promotes rote learning and memorization of facts to prepare for test-taking, uncovering content fuels practice in classroom learning and assessments to prepare learners for future application in the world of work. Content is not an end in itself (Saulnier, 2009). OBL's clear focus on outcomes and use of authentic assessments help students take ownership of their learning and develop analytical and critical thinking skills that they can transfer to real-world settings in their future professions and careers (Bousslama et al., 2003; Dillon, 2005; Landry et al., 2008; Saulnier, 2009; Shipley, 1994).

Miner points out liabilities to the creation of a well, or even adequately, prepared workforce: current participation rates in post-secondary education and the workforce by under-represented populations, the view held by some that post-secondary education is not a requirement for employment, and a disjointed educational system (2010, p. 1). Education and economics are inextricably linked. In their 2009 report, *New Vision for Higher Education*, the presidents of Ontario's 24 public colleges recommended an alignment of post-secondary education with the needs of the transforming economy (Colleges Ontario, 2009). Impacts on the types and range of programs at this GTA college and their accompanying pedagogies are inevitable. The possible corporatization of education from such an alignment could create perilous circumstances for learners and teachers, placing too much emphasis on inputs (enrolment and content) and outputs (career-ready graduates). Past criticisms of the College system as a factory model become an even greater concern if the pressure to address the rapidly changing needs of the economy informs enrolment, retention and graduation. Could the push to produce career-ready graduates cause Colleges in Ontario in general, and this GTA college in particular, to crank out under-prepared graduates to circumvent the dire foreshadowed skills deficit? If so, will graduates possess the skills that make them agile and adaptable learners? A committed use of OBL across this college would support both learners and faculty in learner-centred practices to support learning about learning (Saulnier, 2009) and ongoing formative assessment of measurable, required competencies aligned with the needs of the transforming economy and employer expectations (Hubbal & Burt, 2004; Landry et al., 2008; Warren, 2003).

Changes to both existing programs and the development of new ones will occur. New faculty will be hired because the baby boom bulge will affect the college sector also. Most of the new faculty, in fact nearly all of them, will be content experts in their fields; a good number will have PhDs to build capacity for the growth of applied degree programs, however, few will be trained teachers. They will likely understand their job as transmitting their considerable knowledge and experience (Kember & Kwan, 2000). The way faculty teach has an impact on the quality of student learning (Knapper, 2010) and their approaches to learning (Kember & Kwan, 2000; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001). Amidst these changes to programs and staffing, escalated by external factors, a unifying pedagogy is critical. While not a panacea, an OBL approach will promote alignment with required learning outcomes and embed twenty-first century skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning (King, 1993; Warren, 2003). Rather than addressing rapid changes to their fields by ramping up content, faculty can design learning that helps students practise skills that will prepare them to assess, problem-solve and integrate changes into their future practice (Landry et al., 2008).

The growth of e-learning, including blended courses, online courses, and programs that are delivered wholly through distance education, increases the imperative to ensure sound pedagogy in the design of virtual learning environments. Faculty accustomed to face-to-face teaching will require significant training, time and support to incorporate active learning into their course design and to overcome the temptation to deliver content (Salter et al., 2009) or simply migrate all existing lecture materials to a course management system, a practice known as “shovelware” (Morrison & Anglin, 2006). An OBL approach to e-learning curriculum design overcomes the pitfalls of shovelware as it ensures alignment of course learning outcomes with a range of assessments and learner-centred activities to enhance student learning.

Barriers to Implementation of OBL

A review of the literature indicates that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, based on their own experience as learners, are enduring and difficult to change. Teacher beliefs about teaching and learning, formed and informed by their own experiences as learners, have an indelible effect (Pajares, 1992). Faculty's insider

knowledge and beliefs as learners become a reference point for teaching. The influence of their first profession offers perceived rigor, and standards and practices that may be at odds with the paradigm shift. Knapper (2010) indicates that teaching in higher education is ruled by tradition rather than current research in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. He underscores the practice of teaching as we were taught; the lack of analysis and interest in learning about effective practices means that methods remain unchanged for the most part. Convincing faculty of the merits of a learner-centred practice is difficult due to strongly held beliefs about content-driven instruction (Kember, 2008).

Kember (2008) cautions that faculty are unlikely to be open to direct efforts to alter their beliefs about teaching. Faculty may perceive training as a correction of their approach. Utschig, Elger, and Beyerlein (2005) note Guskey's belief that most faculty see faculty development programs as a waste of time that do not promote changes to practice. Stiehl and Lewchuk (2008) recommend that the shift to an OBL approach and adoption of a learner-centred orientation be worded carefully; instead of training faculty, they propose the term working with faculty be used when engaging with faculty in curriculum and instructional redesign.

Saulnier (2009) expands on reasons for faculty resistance to learner-centred practice including loss of control in not being the content expert, discomfort in teaching less content, and the changed scope of teaching due to the inclusion of learning skills and strategies, which some think dilutes the rigor of their discipline. Faculty think that students should know how to think critically, resent it when they do not, and do not wish to teach them how, while employers complain about graduates' lack of critical thinking skills. Saulnier highlights students' lack of readiness to accept increased responsibility for their learning in the learning paradigm as a further challenge. Students dislike changes to traditional teaching methods that require them to change from a passive learner to an active participant; learning by lecture does not require the same degree of preparation as participation in an active-learning classroom (Delpier, 2006).

Faculty and students may need compelling evidence to convince them of the value of the paradigm shift, such as improved grades or increased satisfaction. Wingfield and Black (2005) concluded that use of active learning helped students make stronger

linkages in their learning as it pertained to their field, however it did not change grade achievement. An undergraduate nursing education program concluded that the use of case studies supported the development of thinking and interpersonal skills which are integral to nursing practice, including critical thinking and collaboration, however grade attainment was not improved by use of case study over lecture. Learner and teacher preference for lecture and its covering-content-orientation was noted (Lauver, West, Campbell, Herrold, & Wood, 2009). As noted earlier, changes in practice may arise more readily when faculty are sufficiently motivated or compelled to resolve a problem (Kember, 2008; Knapper, 2010).

The time that it takes to revise, plan, and incorporate new methods is daunting (Bousslama et al., 2003; Kozar & Marcketti, 2008; Utschig et al., 2005) and may not bring as much recognition as contributing to research (Utschig et al., 2005). The investment to support the adoption and sustainability of changes to teaching is considerable. Faculty require ongoing training and support to modify traditional assessment and teaching practices; strong institutional commitment is needed to establish robust centres, and the establishment of learning communities is recommended (Bousslama et al., 2003). The vulnerability of faculty development programs is a concern. They are sometimes subject to reductions at times of fiscal restraint, and are typically resourced through secondments rather than full-time positions (Eddy, 2005).

Cynicism endures as to whether OBL is economically driven or pedagogically motivated. Sceptics wonder if OBL is part of an agenda to do more with less (Shipley, 1994). Cynics are more convinced that OBL is part of the corporatization of higher education, and some faculty may view OBL as a constraint to their academic freedom that places limits on learning for learning's sake due to the strong alignment with measurable learning outcomes.

Summary

This literature review has considered a range of Canadian, American and international sources representing several disciplines, including research into the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, to highlight the benefits of OBL and a learner-centred approach to students, faculty, and the college. The review also reflects the

considerable challenges involved in the promotion of learner-centred practice. There is ample evidence from research and other scholarly work to acknowledge the benefits to all three stakeholder groups discussed: students, faculty, and the college.

Conclusion

It is clear that a paradigm shift from teaching to learning requires thoughtful planning and concerted effort to put learning at the centre of teaching. Addressing beliefs about teaching may hinder efforts to engage faculty's interest. Offering new faculty a unifying pedagogy to help them cope more effectively with the haphazard phase of learning to teach on the job may support the adoption of OBL and a learner-centred approach. The literature sheds light on the value of gaining strong institutional support, promoting faculty engagement, and providing ongoing support to promote and sustain a paradigm shift from teaching to learning.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Methodology

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (as cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 15). The meaning that people bring to an experience was at the heart of this study as it sought to uncover rich descriptions of participants’ completion of OBL training and their subsequent practice. Welman and Kruger (1999) indicate that “phenomenologists are concerned with understanding social and psychological phenomena from the perspectives of people involved” (as cited in Groenwald, 2004, p.5). A phenomenological approach was adopted for this study given its alignment with learning from participants about their subjective experiences and conscious perceptions of the central phenomenon, adoption of OBL and a learner-centred approach.

Phenomenology dates back to the German philosopher Husserl (1859-1938); its central purpose is to return to the concrete by getting “back to the things themselves” (Groenwald, 2004, p. 4), reflected by scholars and practitioners of phenomenology by such terms as ‘Dasein’ or being there, “Lebenswelt” or lived-world, and “the lived experiences of the people” (Groenwald, 2004, p. 5). A focus on the lived experience of a phenomenon and the meanings derived from descriptions of it help to create an understanding which leads to developing an “essence” (Creswell, 1998, p. 52) of the phenomenon. It builds upon the notion that people who share an experience can describe it, based on their conscious perceptions, and in the process of describing it the “structure and essence” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 104) will become apparent. Phenomenology is commonly used in the field of psychology but has been used in other disciplines including nursing (Riemen, 1986) and education (Groenwald, 2004; Van der Mescht, 2004).

A number of characteristics of phenomenology aligned well with this study: the participants’ lived experience of the central phenomenon (completion of OBL during their probation and the extent to which it promoted a paradigm shift to learner-centred practice) with a focus on their descriptions of their conscious perceptions; an

acknowledgement of the researcher's role as an active learner in the process of collecting data in order to develop a narrative from the participants' viewpoints (Creswell, 1998, p. 18); and, the absence of a hypothesis at the outset in favour of description that will lead to explanation (Lester, 1999). In keeping with the tradition of phenomenology, the researcher bracketed assumptions to set aside preconceptions about the phenomenon, referred to as *epoche* by Husserl (Creswell, 1998; Hycner, 1985; Lester, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Bracketing assumptions was of particular importance due to the researcher's positive orientation towards OBL and learner-centred practice.

Some of the challenges of a phenomenological approach include: the researcher's need to have a solid grasp of its philosophy which is difficult for a novice researcher; the careful selection of participants to ensure they have experienced the central phenomenon; and, the requirement that the researcher bracket assumptions and personal experiences (Creswell, 1998). The researcher endeavoured to overcome these concerns by reading about the philosophical principles, selecting participants thoughtfully, and setting aside preconceptions to mitigate their role in the process of collecting and analyzing data. The researcher's earlier career experience as a counsellor for many years was an asset to finding meaning in people's words, encouraging elaboration, and gaining insight into their experiences.

Data Collection

Research Participants

The intention of this study was to learn from training new faculty by exploring their thoughts, feelings, and actions as they reflected on a process to extract meanings and insights from their responses about their lived experience. Individual interviews were chosen as the most effective tool to collect data as it would facilitate dialogue with participants to obtain a deeper understanding (Creswell, 1998; Lester, 2009). The interviews were audio-recorded to support a detailed subsequent transcription of the interview.

A purposeful selection strategy (Creswell, 2008, p. 214) of criterion sampling (Creswell, 1998, p. 118) was used for this phenomenological study to ensure that all

participants had completed training in OBL, were teaching faculty hired within the past three years, rather than counsellors or librarians, and had completed their probation by the time they participated in the study which set a parameter on the definition of *new* faculty. Inviting post-probationary faculty to participate rather than those currently completing probation was an intentional decision to address two concerns: to alleviate additional demands for probationary faculty who are already engaged in a significant volume of training, learning, and transition; and, to decrease undue pressure or any suggestion of coercion to participate. The advantages of having post-probationary faculty participate included their ability to make a free and unencumbered choice to participate, and in their time for both reflection and use of OBL in their practice. Hycner highlights a benefit of a retrospective viewpoint, to the extent that it “may allow a much fuller verbal description because the participant has had an opportunity to reflect back on the experience and to integrate it consciously and verbally” (1985, p. 295).

The researcher, who works in Organizational and Staff Development at the college where the study took place, customarily maintains a list of all new faculty, their dates of hire and end of probation, and a list of those who had completed OBL training. Using that list and the established criteria, the researcher sent an email to 24 faculty with the goal of obtaining six participants. Conducting six interviews was in the mid-range of Dukes’ recommendation of three to ten (as cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 122). Creswell (1998) notes that participants can range from as few as one to ten with a focus on depth of even a small number of participants to create a narrative of what is being studied. The email (Appendix C) asked recipients if they were interested in sharing their perspectives on OBL, described the study in brief, and included two attachments: an information letter that outlined the purpose of the study in more detail; and, the interview questions (Appendix D) to help faculty determine their level of interest and willingness to participate.

Five faculty from a range of programs replied within a week of receiving the email. One of the first responses came from a faculty member who acknowledged previous training in OBL when completing a Bachelor of Education. In discussion it was determined that adoption of the approach was a predisposition, which became an agreed

upon exclusion to participation. Seven other faculty indicated their willingness to participate from which a sixth participant was selected. The researcher chose as diverse a mix of disciplines as possible and avoided duplication of representation from the same program to obtain a breadth of perspectives with a focus on selection of participants perceived capable of providing rich and descriptive information (Creswell, 2008). According to Hycner “the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the selection and type of participants” (1985, p. 294).

Interviews with the study participants were confirmed and conducted over a four week period. The teaching faculty who were selected to participate in the study were from a range of programs and disciplines: Baking and Pastry Arts; Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure; Building Renovation and Construction; American Sign Language Interpreter; Social Service Worker; and, Bachelor of Applied Business/Financial Services. Participants’ dates of hire ranged from March 2009 to August 2010, and their completion of training in OBL ranged from the fall of 2009 to the spring of 2011. Four women and two men comprised the study participants.

Research Procedure

The researcher conducted individual audio taped interviews with participants that were subsequently transcribed to gather deep information (Lester, 1999) to support the aims and intention of a phenomenological approach. Interviews enabled the researcher to make use of both verbal and non-verbal information (Hycner, 1985) and to encourage elaboration and reflection through dialogue. The interviews took place in the researcher’s private office at one of the campuses of the college that was the site of the study. To create conditions conducive to active listening and audio taping, the researcher took steps to minimize interruptions and ambient noise (Creswell, 1998; Groenwald, 2004) by posting a do not disturb sign on the office door, turning the ringers off on both office and cellular phones, and turning off the computer.

Before the start of each interview, the researcher asked each participant to sign an informed consent form and offered a copy for their records. The researcher pointed out to participants that they were not required to answer every question if they did not wish to, could withdraw from the study at any time, could contact the chair of the REB if they had

any questions or concerns, and would receive a summary of the study's findings as per the requirements of the REB at the college where the study took place.

It is important to clarify that both the researcher and the participants are members of the same collective bargaining unit, making the relationship collegial rather than supervisory in nature. The research participants' voluntary participation and informed consent guided this process and the researcher assured participants' anonymity indicating that no names would be used in the reporting of data.

The researcher's professional relationship with the participants facilitated the establishment of comfort and rapport. The researcher encouraged an atmosphere of open enquiry to elicit frank responses, clarifying that neither the interview nor the study were an evaluation of the faculty member's performance in the adoption of OBL or the researcher's skills as a facilitator of OBL training. An awareness of the potential for participants to reply in a manner that pleased the researcher, based on a prior professional connection that was likely deemed as supportive, prompted the researcher to encourage candid responses that would be more helpful to the purpose of the study.

Seeking descriptive responses is central to the use of a phenomenological approach. While a set of open-ended questions guided the interview (Appendix D), they were a departure point; probes and sub-questions helped solicit examples and clarifications that enriched participants' responses, so that each interview resembled a dialogue (Groenwald, 2004). Interviews were scheduled for 60 minutes; on average, the interviews were 56 minutes long. The researcher asked participants if they had anything additional to share before the interview concluded; they indicated that they had nothing further to add, appearing to have provided a full reflection. It was important to honour the agreed upon time commitment of a maximum of 60 minutes, and the interviews came to a natural conclusion once the participants' had shared sufficiently.

Data Analysis

Keen stated that "phenomenology cannot be reduced to a cookbook set of instructions. It is more an approach, an attitude, an investigative posture with a certain set of goals (as cited in Hycner, 1985, p. 279). The researcher adapted a method of data

analysis that incorporated aspects of an approach proposed by Hycner (1985) and another by Creswell (1985) that is based on Moustakas' approach, a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method, (Creswell, 1998, p. 147).

The first step of data analysis started at the interview stage with the use of an interview template which the researcher used to record observations, including noteworthy language and significant examples. The subsequent transcriptions of the audio-taped interviews created a detailed, accurate text of the interviews which the researcher merged with the interview template notes to use for further notation in the margins of the transcripts. Participants were given an alpha code to attribute quotations accurately and for sorting and tracking purposes

The second step, essential in a phenomenological analysis, was the bracketing of assumptions and the phenomenological reduction which required the researcher to listen to the audiotapes and read the transcriptions with "an openness to whatever meanings emerged" (Hycner, 1985, p. 280) by setting aside preconceptions in order to hear the meaning in the participants' experiences (Creswell, 1998).

In the next step, the researcher listened to the interviews and read the transcripts several times, separately then concurrently, made notes, and highlighted every statement of relevance using the text highlight feature of MS Word. The researcher used the track changes feature of MS Word while listening to interviews and reading the transcripts to insert comments or statements in support of tentative categories, and selected quotations for subsequent collation in a master spreadsheet. The researcher assigned equal value to each of the statements, a practice known as horizontalization of the data (Creswell, 1998, p. 147). The researcher then created categories to group the statements into clusters or units of general meaning (Hycner, 1985, p. 282) on an Excel spreadsheet, using direct quotations within clusters to retain the language of the participants. In the process, repetitive statements became apparent, which supported a synthesis of clusters into tentative categories.

The researcher identified the units of meaning to achieve a "textural description" of what the participants had experienced (Creswell, 1998, p. 150), incorporating words

and phrases from the interviews, and a “structural description” (Creswell, 1998, p. 150) of how the phenomenon had been experienced by the participants. Using a process of “imaginative variation” (Creswell, 1998, p. 150) the researcher sought all possible meanings and differing perspectives. This process was necessarily time consuming, and ultimately the research questions helped guide the analysis given the high volume of data.

In the final step, the researcher synthesized the descriptions to determine aspects of the experience that were common to all participants, indicative of the “essence of the experience” (Creswell, 1998, p. 150), as well as individual differences that stood out as unique themes.

Ethical Review

As the study involved the use of human subjects, research approval was required by both CMU and the college that was the site of the study. The researcher’s completion of CITI (Collaborative Institution Training Initiative) training a year earlier fulfilled one of the requirements of both institutions to conduct research with human subjects.

The researcher submitted a Research Review Application with all required documentation to the capstone monitor, which was forwarded to the IRB at CMU for approval. The application to the REB at the study site could not be approved until CMU approval was received.

Once both approvals were received, the researcher took steps to commence data collection by emailing potential participants. The researcher attached the participation letter that provided a detailed explanation of the purpose of the study, indicated that there were no known risks to participation, that participation was fully voluntary, and that they could withdraw at any time. A copy of the interview questions was also attached to support participants in making an informed and voluntary choice. Participants signed a letter of informed consent before being interviewed to assure them that their rights are protected (Creswell, 2008) and the researcher reminded them that they could refuse to answer any of the questions that they wished in accordance with the instructions from the REB of the study site.

The researcher was conscientious to ensure the confidentiality of the participants and to maintain data resulting from interviews securely. Alpha codes were used rather than participants' actual names. Interview data, both written and digitally recorded, were kept in a locked drawer to which only the researcher has access in a secure office.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

This qualitative study investigated the extent to which mandatory training in Outcomes-based Learning (OBL), completed by new faculty at a community college during their probationary period, promotes, supports, and sustains a paradigm shift from content-driven instruction to student-centered learning. Six study participants participated in audio-taped one-on-one interviews for approximately one hour each. Participants provided rich examples of the influence of OBL on their practice, commented on some of the challenges, and suggested ways to support the sustained practice of OBL. Half of the participants were new to teaching, while three of them had taught before completing the OBL training at the college level. None of the participants had an educational background in education, which was not a selection criterion for participation in the study, but is representative of the population of community college faculty at this college.

Participants' responses to interview questions shed light on their practice and lived experiences as a result of OBL training. Notes made during the interviews and summaries produced after each interview supported initial impressions and beginning analysis. Repeated listening to the interviews helped in the development of tentative categories. Deeper analysis of transcriptions was an iterative process that included: a mix of annotation of transcripts while listening to the interviews again to support clustering; production of a spreadsheet to capture volume, repetition, and uniqueness and emphasis within and across interviews; and, returning to the recorded and transcribed versions of the interviews to clarify and capture affective features of participants' responses. Over time, this back and forth process revealed the "structure and essence" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 104) of the participants' lived experiences, represented by outstanding themes. Themes are presented and elaborated upon, along with sub-headings within themes, according to the four research questions of the study.

The six study participants were alpha coded from A to F, and references to particular courses, subject matter, and programs were removed for anonymity. Verbatim quotations are attributed to the speakers by alpha codes. Data is synthesized according to

each of the four research questions and organized by major themes and sub-themes. Participants' comments are used to reflect their lived experience of OBL training and its influence on subsequent practice, in keeping with a phenomenological approach. Challenges in the use or adoption of OBL that participants identified are included as they relate to the themes presented within each of the research questions.

Results of the Study

Research question one: How does OBL training influence new faculty perceptions of teaching and learning?

Theme: a lens for professional practice. Study participants' responses indicated that OBL training influences their perceptions of teaching, learning, and their role significantly, particularly those without a teaching background. OBL training provides an organizing structure and a common language that appears to help participants to: conceptualize teaching with a focus on learning; reflect on their practice; consider the relationships and connections between teaching and learning, and teacher and learner, with the goal of facilitating and supporting learning; and conceptualize teaching and learning in alignment with clearly stated outcomes. It appears that OBL provides a lens for new faculty to reflect on and develop their teaching practice. As Participant B said, "coming from a non-teaching background...it gave parameters to the work", a perception echoed in the following comment from participant A:

I took OBL very early on in my teaching, so it had a great influence in my teaching. It was the initial bit of information that I had about how to teach and how to look at learning. The whole concept of teaching and learning was quite new and I am grateful that OBL was at the front-end. It has allowed me to focus on how the students experience the classroom, and the classroom teaching; how they are viewing it, how they are feeling it.

A shared framework. All of the participants indicated that OBL was helpful to them in new course design and in the redevelopment of courses, and one participant incorporated OBL into writing grant proposals. The shared language of OBL was found particularly valuable in the program review process, experienced by two of the participants, one of whom highlighted that knowledge about the role of outcomes and

experience in writing effective outcomes supported greater alignment at a program level. Five participants spoke of the value of a shared framework to support consistent practice within programs. Participant D said: "...if the standards are different in different programs, different departments, it's not fair to the student... it's an equality thing too" and then added "...so I think it's good in the sense of it kind of gets people speaking the same language - not this teacher teaches this way, this teacher teaches another way." The same participant indicated that OBL provides structure for accountability for the department as the outcomes convey what the chair expects of faculty.

One participant spoke emphatically about the foundational nature of OBL as a framework, expressing the opinion that it would benefit all faculty, not just newly hired fulltime faculty:

...not only for the fact that it makes better teachers but it's kind of the system that we're working in right now. All of our course outlines, all our courses, all our programs are built around these objectives and outcomes and really if you're even going to understand how that's relevant, then you have to take it back to all those other levels of assessment and developing courses, developing the outcomes in the first place. (Participant C)

Participants' enthusiasm and relief were both palpable as they described the organizing influence of OBL on their practice, as reflected in the following comment from participant A: "...needed a model; hungry and desperate for that model for lack of any other direction." Participants used metaphors and analogies indicative of direction and destination, such as road map, path, and staircase. The training provided tools and concepts that can be incorporated incrementally and a set of criteria for assessment of one's practice with the goal of improvement over time. Teaching as an iterative process became apparent, supported by participants' openness to reflect on teaching effectiveness and to ask themselves the extent to which learners are learning. All participants provided examples of ongoing tinkering and modifications to practice; one example follows:

It made me feel particularly incompetent when I realized what I *wasn't* [emphasis original] doing. I guess when I first started [OBL training] was when I was just starting teaching so it was a bit daunting. It was like wow, this is [pause] I can

see why this is a good thing and I can see how this could work and I really have no idea how this works. And I have so much to learn and then...so it was a bit overwhelming at first but it's also the kind of thing I can revisit. I could take all I could handle out of my first round of learning and put it in to my first class which was that, and then at the end of the semester or the next time around I would reassess how things went based on how I thought they should have gone according to my OBL criteria. And they never quite measured up but they did better and better, every time. So I figure that's a movement in the right direction. (Participant C)

Backwards planning. The notion of backwards planning, working backward from relevant and clear learning outcomes to design classes and assessments with a focus on application emerged consistently. Notably, participants commented on what they wanted their students to be able to do, demonstrate, and apply rather than what they wanted to them memorize, recall, or understand: "So for me, that's a really important one, that it's applied, that it's demonstrated, that they're going to use [the skills] when they graduate"(Participant D).

Alignment.

Some of the feedback we got before in the course was "I'm not going to use this stuff" so focusing on those things that they need to know when they're in the industry made it more engaging for them and more relevant. (Participant D)

OBL's strong focus on learners' achievement of demonstrable outcomes influences what teachers teach and what learners learn. Participants described their teaching as aligned with industry and field requirements, as well as a desire to maximize relevance to prepare their students for success in their courses and their future roles. They demonstrated big picture thinking by taking industry needs into account as well as attention to detail in their practice by determining ways to ensure relevance and opportunities for their students to use concepts and practice in support of future application. Participants' expert understanding of their fields informs what they emphasize in their teaching; they try to encourage the habits of mind of their profession in their learners.

Theme: a lens for learning.

Parallel learning. The OBL approach provides a lens that helps the new faculty who participated in the study to focus on learning and the learners' experiences. They see themselves as parallel learners who reflect on the effectiveness of what they do and the extent to which it supports their learners' progress towards achievement of outcomes. Incorporating an OBL approach is developmental; participants describe efforts to improve, innovate, and make use of feedback, underpinned by reflection on practice which is a significant component of the probationary learning requirements. This ongoing process of revision, learning by doing, and seeking to improve was described as tinkering by one participant and echoed by all others, as reflected in this comment: "I make my little baby steps, I don't go and try to change the whole course all at once. I do little bits at a time. If it works, I'll go from there" (Participant C).

Responses also indicate a commitment to maintain reciprocal learning relationships, be empathic and responsive to learner experiences, and show concern about learners getting what they need to be successful. In the words of one participant: "I'm always trying to find ways to find out where the students are coming from..." (Participant E).

The preceding statement respects another key element of OBL training and learner-centred practice: determining prior knowledge and experiences of learners. Another participant spoke of the importance of scaffolding learning to help them move from one step of the staircase to the next, recognizing that not all learners move at the same time or the same pace. Reinforcing skills and concepts to support everyone getting to the same stair-step was needed for achievement of outcomes.

Outcomes viewed through the learner lens support the learning process, providing a guide for students to reflect on their learning:

...we could talk about the outcomes and that's something...like every class I go over with the students, okay at the beginning of the class, "okay these are the three outcomes" and then half way through I might say "okay, which outcome do you think we've covered?" ... and then they'd be able to say "oh, we learned logic model, oh, we learned this" and it's like "good, so this is what we're going

to do next”...and that really helps, that really helps because then it reminds them that this is a learning process and you’ve actually learned something. (Participant E)

Engagement and empowerment. Participants’ comments acknowledged the paradigm shift from transmission-oriented delivery and passive learning to a learner-centred approach with a focus on active learning, learner engagement, and application supported by opportunities for practice. Participants indicated that their role in the classroom was that of facilitator, requiring them to engage with their students to support their learning. Frequent examples of discussion driven by students and supported by faculty knowledge and expertise arose.

The following responses are noteworthy; they reflect a desire to engage and empower learners, and the participants indicated that they take a very responsible view of their role in supporting learning. The first one sums up the paradigm shift from content-driven instruction to learner-centred practice, and also reflects the participant’s commitment to learner success by empowering them to achieve challenging technical learning outcomes. The second concerns motivating students to take responsibility for their learning. Both responses align with one of the key principles advanced in OBL training, that of faculty ensuring that learners are learning:

..as any faculty you are told you have to deliver this, here’s your textbook, here’s what the students need to know, you have to teach this and that all implies that you’re imparting information onto the student. The outcomes-based learning really influenced me to help me keep in my mind it’s not about telling them what they need to know, it’s about empowering them to perform, to complete certain outcomes and really to help them find ways that they’re able to meet those outcomes You know, sort of break it down into easier methods and things along those lines and certainly this wouldn’t be the textbook description of it but that is sort of how I think about it in some of the courses I teach, they’re very technical.... (Participant F)

I find that the activities in the class tend to be a lot less about me delivering content and more about the students, stimulating conversation. There’s a great

quote from Forbes, I believe, that I use at the beginning of one of my courses. It's a theory class. Effectively "the purpose of education is to turn an empty mind into an open mind" or something to that effect. And to me that's what learner-centred teaching is all about. It's about inspiring the students too, and having them feel energized to go and learn on their own. Content is so widely available now that more information than I could ever possibly give the students in a three hour class is available to them online. So unless I give them the tools and resources, and the *desire* [emphasis original] to capture that knowledge, I've not really done anything. (Participant A)

Learning curve. It is important to acknowledge that participants may be more eager adopters of a lens for learning than their students. The majority of respondents noted a significant preference amongst their learners for the traditional paradigm of transmission and passive learning. The following comment contrasts an OBL, learner-centred classroom with one that is more traditional in its reliance on content-driven instruction:

...it's very foreign to them. It's been a long time since I have been in a classroom myself, but it's not the way that a traditional classroom is set up. In particular, if I am getting students in the second or third semester, many of our college courses still are not really fitting that model so the students are coming to me, a little bit in shock as to what's happening. (Participant A)

There is a learning curve for students in a learner-centred classroom. Another participant commented that students' discomfort with a shift to an application-oriented approach is a hurdle to overcome, a perception shared by members of the professional organization that sets the licensing examination for that field.

...it's the students sometimes that prevent you from adopting it because they don't [get it, but] ... when they write those tests that are all competency based, they get it, they get where they've been, but they're very uncomfortable at the beginning when you start talking about this... and all they want to know, especially in that advanced class where I have these open ended discussions and stuff, like some of them are just sitting there going... and then they don't know if they have to write

it or not write it because is it on the test? And so that whole mentality and students' obsession with marks and content and what's on the test... that prevents some of this. (Participant F)

Participants indicated that mutual satisfaction results from persisting with the OBL approach, and that students "come around" and appreciate the difference that a learner-centred approach makes, reflected in a participant's comment: "...in the feedback that I get from the students in the SFQ [Student Feedback Questionnaire] even just informal feedback, thank-you notes and various other methods, it's clearly what the group wants now and what they need and they definitely seem satisfied" (Participant A).

In summary, responses from study participants suggest that OBL training influences their perceptions of both teaching and learning. OBL training provides a framework that promotes alignment, a lens for learning, and a focus on engagement and empowerment reflective of learner-centred practices. In addition, participants show evidence of ongoing consideration of practice in light of the criteria put forth in OBL.

Research question two: What changes do new faculty make in lesson planning and classroom delivery as a result of OBL training?

Again, I think that my start into lesson planning was very much impacted by OBL. I wouldn't have even known how to draw up a lesson plan before that...what I would have thought before OBL as to what lesson planning was is definitely night and day. Again, it's OBL allowing for that open discussion between student and faculty and the sharing of ideas. I think that's the biggest piece and when I think OBL, that's the biggest thing I think of, that everyone has a voice. Ensuring that those voices are all empowered and even the students that are less active want to speak, then we do things on the board. (Participant A)

Study participants' responses indicate considerable thought in lesson-planning, aligned with outcomes and assessment. For those without a teaching background, the mechanics and details of lesson planning within an OBL framework appear to have been particularly helpful. Participants' descriptions of their classes and classroom evoke images of active and collaborative learning spaces in which learners have a voice. The

paradigm shift from content-driven instruction to learner centred-practice was central in participants' answers. The examples that they shared beg a reconsideration of the terms "lesson planning and delivery" in favour of "learning plan and engagement". Efforts to make learning relevant, real, and reinforced through opportunities to use skills were evident. A focus on supporting learning was abundantly clear through the intentional strategies employed in the classroom.

One of the takeaways from OBL training seems to be that learners are active participants, which makes reliance on lecture alone at odds with the model. Some participants acknowledged a continued need for a transmission-oriented approach for a few reasons: a high volume of content coupled with time constraints; and, students' need for foundational concepts before they could engage in practice and/or problem-solving. When time is at a premium, lecturing to convey information may be more efficient:

...there is just so much information to give, in a very limited time, in a very limited time, [repetition original] that it feels like doing things well in an OBL way takes up too much time. So I've got time to give you this information, but we have to do something else for the next hour. I can't let you sit around in a group and chat or work on a group project in class. So it would, I think, require demanding more outside-of- the-class work from them which I haven't done a lot of, but I'm thinking maybe that's wrong... (Participant C)

All participants agreed with the challenge of too much content and too little time. This was a particular challenge for one participant whose course was compressed to a seven-week delivery format. More than half of the participants employed strategies to overcome this challenge. One participant shifted the focus from content to concepts, ensured ample time for discussion, and assigned additional reading or research pieces for learners to post comments on Blackboard, effectively extending the learning beyond the classroom. The same participant had students critique peer project submissions on Blackboard, effectively adding to their knowledge of resources outside of class time. In another instance, a participant indicated that "content is secondary to the skills to be learned. So it's something to map the skills on to, if you will" (Participant B). Two others prioritized and pared down content intentionally by thinking about which concepts

will be required by the field. One participant used a film-making analogy to determine that “less is more”:

...so how do you edit it, edit it, edit it, down to the most salient points? In particular, you're also trying to figure out well what does the field want, what does the industry want, right? There's so much that they need to have when they go out there, but what are the one or two key things that you could share with them that they will have, right? (Participant E)

Theme: engagement through active learning.

The questions that they [students] ask and the conversations that they drive and direct with materials that they have brought in, their own research, on their own time ...you have to throw it into the ring for everybody to see and hear. (Participant A)

All participants equate adoption of OBL with active learning, discussion, and group work rather than traditional lecture. There is a sense that in a learner-centred classroom there is room for the learners to own and contribute to the learning. Participants direct significant effort and energy towards lesson planning and creating learning experiences in the classroom and/or lab environment, showing a high level of commitment to learner engagement and opportunities for practice. Classrooms are busy places of learning where students are doing things to support the development of their thinking and their skills.

The most frequent examples of active learning were group or pairs work or interactive discussion. Changes to a traditional lecture were also noted, incorporating time for discussion, activities, and problem-solving to reinforce or practise the concepts related to a learning outcome. One participant acknowledged changing his practice from lecture to active learning strategies to promote engagement:

Yeah, I guess it's just the population as well; they can't sit still for long. Especially, the [name of program] students, they need to be moving, they need to be doing things. Yeah, and so I initially did try it [lecturing], to be honest with

you, and it didn't work and now that it is more engaging, the classes seem to be going better. For me, that's important, I think, for this population. (Participant D)

The same participant indicated that the use of class time changes to a focus on developing the skills related to course aims and outcomes as theory alone was not enough, in the following comment: "you can give them the theory, you know, but they need to practise it too. And so, consequently, we do case studies" (Participant D).

Theme: conditions for learning. Descriptions of classroom experiences indicated thoughtful consideration of conditions for learning, as reflected in a comment from Participant A: "...to actually pause and consider what the best way is to facilitate a student to reach that outcome." The learning space, the physical environment, and the learning climate, which is fostered through intentional strategies, both play a role in creating conditions for learning.

One participant overcame the constraints of fixed seating in a class that was scheduled in an off-campus cinema, due to on-campus space constraints, by using the hallways and lobby spaces for group work, adding a further example of the importance of advance set-up in classrooms where furniture was moveable:

Yeah, I mean so the first one is creating conditions for learning so it would actually be everything from making actual spaces as comfortable as possible, so when I come into the classroom I try and get all the blinds open, I try and make the desks conducive so that if they're doing group work, it's there. (Participant D)

Strategies to support learning. Conditions for learning extend beyond the physical space of the classroom and require consideration of the strength, skills, and learning needs of students. Participants described a range of strategies and techniques employed in their classrooms to support learning. A simple yet effective method was using outcomes in each class, talking about them, and displaying them prominently as a reference point, so that "(s)tudents know why they're there today (Participant A). A focus on learning about learning is threaded through some of these examples and is consistent with a learner-centred approach.

The following comment provides some context for a change that a participant made to support learning:

I realized that my philosophy really was that teaching and learning is a collaborative thing and that really most of the work has to be done by the student and I'm there to facilitate that in whatever way. So the learner really has to take a lot of responsibility but I also realized that I wasn't really giving them very much responsibility, so my practice wasn't really matching up with my philosophy and I had to think about why that was. Well, I think it's because I don't trust them. I don't trust them and that's not right. I have to change that somehow. (Participant C)

Getting students to read is a challenge, as is trusting that they will read. One of the participants cited first year students' low motivation to read material before class and developed a homework sheet for each chapter comprised of knowledge and fact based questions which students were required to hand in, effectively giving them responsibility. Although the questions were not assessing at a very high level and did not count towards their grades, students handed in the homework and appeared to be reading more before class. This strategy, while not elaborate, addressed students' need for some coaching and guidance about learning and how to get the most out of class. The participant wondered about using other tools, such as learning style assessments, to support learning about learning.

Adopting a learner lens, attuning to learner needs and learning conditions, empathizing with the experience of not knowing, and recognizing the gap between faculty's and learners' knowledge and skills informs the approach to lesson planning.

...you have to close that gap. I have to put myself more in their shoes and say "how can I make this meaningful for them so that they can apply?" And so I think that that whole concept, you know I always try think about again, and[in] the [subject area] courses I can do a lot more creative things and, you know, allow them to sort of learn from each other and, you know, explore and take more risks. I think it's really influenced me in the sense that I can't say each and every class

is different, like totally different, but it's made me cognizant of what they need to succeed. (Participant F)

Using professional knowledge and expertise to support learning, making tacit knowledge explicit, was reflected in a number of examples, as Participant F indicated: "part of my job is helping them to see the trick to get it and it's only then that they have the ability to perform." In this case, use of advanced organizers, such as flow charts and steps to support learning, constituted part of helping learners grasp concepts, in addition to promoting the use of thinking skills required for the profession. These skills often become integrated and automatic for professionals in their fields of practice, but as teachers they need to make them more overt to help learners see the thinking skills in action so that they can make linkages. Promoting the habits of mind of respective fields with a focus on higher order thinking skills is a strategy employed by participants to support learning. This is achieved through reflection on approaches used to solve problems, asking for a rationale, and use of critical thinking.

Frequent examples depict the role of teacher as no longer sage on the stage but as coach, mentor, consultant, and facilitator of learning or guide on the side. A participant described giving students what they need, an echo of a transmission-oriented approach, however this was offset by a time for practice and application in each class: "I think my focus on the application of the skill set, so always trying to find a way to kind of like teach the theory, give the tools, and see how they apply it to different situations" (Participant E). The participant described taking a project consultant role in classes, a practice that mirrors what happens in that field, to support learning:

...what I do is try to structure the class in a way that they get exposed to the theory and the knowledge and then, so that's the first half of the class, and the second half they get to consult with me. They go into their groups and they hire me as a consultant to work with them, right? So I would go from group to group, and this is how [names colleague] does it, we go from group to group and we say "okay, let's see your logic model"...(Participant E)

Relevant and real. One of the study participants wondered "...how do I get them to really apply it and make it as real as possible?" (Participant E). Conditions for learning are enhanced by working with meaningful real-life problems and completing authentic learning tasks. In courses where the learning is clearly demonstrated, such as culinary and renovation, ensuring that students actually apply skills constitutes part of the assessment. In these disciplines, as well as others in the study, providing opportunities to practise the skills before they are assessed summatively emerged frequently and appears to constitute one of the changes to lesson planning and classroom delivery.

The following comment highlights the effort that a participant made subsequent to OBL training that reflects both relevance and transparency, features of a learner-centred approach:

...even now when we teach knowledge or teach the rules, there's always, and I tend to incorporate it in and I think I wouldn't have done this before [OBL], almost sort of a why do you need to know this, when will you use it. (Participant F)

Formative assessment. Practice, coupled with opportunities to provide feedback to learners, and get feedback from them on their experience of the learning is another feature of conditions for learning. Formative assessment tools such as Stop, Start, and Continue, which faculty use to invite feedback from learners about their in-class learning experiences were mentioned by half of the participants. Although the other half of the participants did not comment on their use of this particular formative assessment tool, it was clear that they were gathering feedback informally and open to hearing and responding to learner needs and experiences.

The thought, care, and time required to develop lesson plans using OBL was clear from the examples that participants shared. Participant A's comment indicates that the effort produces satisfying results: "in the feedback that I get from the students in the SFQ [Student Feedback Questionnaire], even just informal feedback, thank-you notes and various other methods, it's clearly what the group wants now and what they need and they definitely seem satisfied". When asked what the value was in sticking with a time-

consuming approach, Participant D indicated that the time for practice of skills in class produced better results in assessments: “it works in terms of learning”.

Research question three: What changes do new faculty make to assessments of learning as a result of OBL training?

Study participants’ responses showed a commitment to aligning assessments with course outcomes with a view towards industry expectations and requirements of the fields they will enter. All participants viewed assessments as a valuable part of the learning, not just a measurement of it. Rubrics, spoken of by more than half the participants, communicate clear expectations of learners. Use of frequent informal and formal assessments support learning, as does the systematic gathering of student feedback through formative assessments to find out what is working and what needs to change.

Theme: assessment as learning.

... when I first started the courses, what was given to me, what little was given to me, and on my SWF [standard workload formula] was multiple choice so I started out, that was how I evaluated, two multiple choice tests. It didn’t take long to realize how futile that was. Also, the idea of needing more feedback sooner so you can use the feedback from the assessment as a learning tool. So it’s not just meant to assess what they got but you can use the results of the assessment to learn more. ... so at first I realized that I needed the feedback, but then I realized that *they* [emphasis original] actually need the feedback, as well... they need the feedback sooner. So I started putting more evaluations, not mark wise necessarily just more things in earlier... greater frequency and in a way that I could feel that would give me an idea of whether they as a group were getting what was going on or if I was missing the point. Now my major grading tools are still the two big multiple choice tests but they are better multiple choice tests than they used to be. (Participant C)

One particular example stood out as an example of assessment as learning for both the learners and the study participant. The problem of lost classroom hours due to two holiday Mondays gave rise to a unique and effective solution. The participant was not confident that her students had sufficiently grasped all of the concepts and skills

required to do a major case study on their own, so decided to modify the assessment into an in-class test with a twist; it was a collaborative assignment that required interdependence between groups to arrive at a well-developed, final analysis. A relatively small class size of 16 made this solution manageable, but when asked if this approach was worth repeating, the participant agreed unequivocally. Despite criticism from departmental colleagues for altering the assessment into a “giveaway”, the participant was confident that the learning that resulted from this approach promoted a greater integration of thinking and skills. In the participant’s words, “rather than setting them up to fail, I’m going to try and set them up to succeed” and “I don’t believe I sacrificed any of the outcomes; it’s the way that we achieve them” (Participant F).

The enthusiasm that participants showed about changes to assessment that promote learning is noteworthy. Another example was the use of simulation in which students practised their skills with students and staff from another department as part of Inter-professional Education (IPE). Due to the applied nature of the skills, the simulation produced immediate “a-ha” moments for the learners which participant B found both “thrilling” and “exciting”. Consistent with an OBL approach, it was an authentic assessment of skills; the scenario they were put in was realistic and one that they will likely encounter in their future professional practice. The simulation provided immediate feedback, and promoted reflection and significant learning. The professor debriefed with the students immediately following the simulation to seize the learning moment. In the words of Participant B: “It’s almost like they have a mirror in front of them for the very first time, I’d say.”

The quest for high quality assessment practices. Assessment appears to be a significant area of challenge for the study participants and they express high expectations of themselves, as evidenced by changes they have made and changes they would like to make to improve assessment. One participant indicated that the assessments became “much fairer” (Participant C) after OBL training due to increased alignment between outcomes and assessments. As a consequence, outcomes and assessment drive what is taught, learned, and practised in class.

In the words of Participant A: “every outcome and every piece has to have some sort of evaluation attached to it, so it’s heavy.” This statement resonates with a key takeaway from WIDS instructional design software training, another probationary learning requirement: if it is an outcome it must be assessed, and if it is assessed, it must be an outcome. This participant described the evaluation piece of a course designed after OBL and WIDS training as “very heavy” by virtue of “frequency and volume” but added that building in group assignments and peer evaluation alleviates some of work generated by evaluation and students “get more of that learner-centred teach and learn sort of feel going” (Participant A). Participant A acknowledged the demands of meaningful assessment, adding, “but at the same time, students get so much more out of it, so how do you cheat them of that experience...?”

Participants appear motivated to develop high quality assessments in support of high quality learning, and they acknowledge challenges related to assessment. They aspire to assess a range of skills and outcomes: collaboration, creativity, thinking, professionalism and critical thinking. One participant relies on rubrics and includes reflection as part of the grade, but acknowledged that not all learning is quantifiable despite students’ desire for their learning to be reflected in “that sheer number value” (Participant A). Another participant registered concern about assessing intangibles in the following comment:

It’s just the lingering question is how to measure the stuff that we can’t measure, right? And sometimes I think that’s a really important part but, but you know, I imagine there’s a way that we can break that down into course outcomes, it just takes a little more work, I think. (Participant D)

Two of the participants, who work in an area that has promoted the use of rubrics, have integrated peer-assessment where appropriate. The results of peer-assessment guided by a rubric on a practice assignment produced improved grades in the final assessment. The participant indicated that taking more time to focus on practice in class and transparent expectations reduced the time required to grade assignments. Another participant uses rubrics with major projects and invites students to pre-submit to receive feedback and address gaps before final submission.

A desire for more integrated and holistic assessments emerged in the majority of interviews. Many indicated their hopes to assess soft skills, such as collaboration, as well as higher order thinking skills, such as analysis and critical thinking. One participant indicated a desire for more integrated assessments through a comprehensive project that would help students achieve a holistic learning experience, drawing on more than one course. A similar example arose in another interview in which the participant underscored that a final semester course required the students to draw upon a culmination of skills, not just the skills developed in one course. Two of the participants aspire to adopt the learner-centred practice of providing a range of assessment options as outlined by Weimer (2002). While acknowledging that the front-end planning required is daunting, they are drawn to a practice that enables learners to maximize their strengths and learning preferences in demonstrating their achievement of outcomes.

Three participants linked assessment to encouraging learners to grasp their professional role and identity. In one case, preparing learners to succeed in a professional licensing exam was a major organizing influence in course assessment practices, causing the faculty member to provide ample practice on the types of questions the students will encounter and ensure that they develop qualitative assessment skills through in-class activities and assessments. The participant indicated that these types of questions go “beyond the textbook” (Participant F) requiring learners to develop comfort and confidence to succeed in a competency-based examination.

Study participants see complexity in designing effective assessments and opportunities for learning and integration. Participants’ high expectations of themselves and their learners stood out consistently in their responses.

Research question four: What changes to new faculty orientation and training would support a stronger adoption of OBL in their practice?

Participants’ responses to interview questions are filled with examples that indicate that OBL training influences practice and there is evidence of adoption.

...the whole orientation was really helpful and I felt like I was getting the tools to apply and understanding how the tools could be applied as well an understanding that I could be creative with those tools and expand... (Participant E)

Theme: a desire to deepen practice. In the course of the interviews, it became clear that minimal changes to orientation and training were required during the 24 month probationary period, but some other type of support or learning is needed post-probation to help maintain connection and to prioritize professional development once mandatory learning requirements are met. In the words of two participants:

I found that OBL was incredible and I had a fabulous probationary experience, but once probation is done, the umbilical cord is cut, and the onus is on me to come back when I want more and that's fine, but as with anything, when it's not a requirement it's hard to prioritize and to make it a priority. I think for myself I find it challenging to stay on track. (Participant A)

It's post that period, absolutely. I think having OBL in the probationary period is great. It's great a) because everybody should learn this and it's hard to *make* [original emphasis] people learn it... but when you've got them on probation you can make them do all kinds of things so, a) it's good to do it for that reason; and, b) it's a time when you're first starting out and you really need this. You can't do it, you can't incorporate it all the first time around but at least you're aware of some basic things and you can move on with it. But really, to make it happen, there has to be, for me, like a follow up session. It's like I've learned enough to get started and now I need to take it to a whole other level. (Participant C)

For one participant who was completely new to teaching, having a bit of teaching experience before OBL training would have provided some context and made it possible to relate to prior experience. A participant who had some previous teaching experience concurred that it was easier to make use of concepts and techniques in view of previous experience: "for me taking OBL after I had experience, it made me more conscious; I wasn't, you know, just trying to survive, I was you know... had the ability to stand back

and say okay, how can I change it”; and added that the OBL training may have been too much, too soon when asked about changes to support adoption:

...your probation program is excellent - in many ways it could be too much, too quick. Like again, you sort of have to... you don't really have the time to breathe until you get your feet wet and all that kind of thing. (Participant F)

All participants suggested some sort of re-engagement with OBL, such as a fifth and sixth workshop in the two years following probation, or within the first five years of teaching, for renewal and refreshed thinking, and “even just periodic updates as to best practices coming up in different areas that are really reflective of OBL would be interesting to stay fresh and stay current on different things that are happening” (Participant A). This notion was echoed by a participant who voiced an interest in “OBL 2.0” (Participant C), a sequel to reinforce concepts and help develop greater sophistication in techniques and tools, especially with respect to assessment, a need expressed by the majority of the participants. In fact, this participant wondered about retaking the OBL workshop series after nearly three years of teaching.

The suggestion of convening interdisciplinary discussions to learn from others' assessment practices, a suggestion made in the initial interview, was well received in subsequent interviews.

A similar desire for connection with colleagues, to share ideas, debrief, and learn more was noted across all the participants' responses. The ongoing nature of learning for faculty was clear as they strive to improve their practice. One participant emphasized a wish for time to connect with a Chair to discuss practice, but acknowledged “they're so busy” and “it's really hard to get five or ten minutes with the chair” (Participant D), as well as a hope to learn from others whose practice was at an advanced level, perhaps by sitting in on classes taught by the highest ranked teachers. The idea of observing others arose in another interview, coupled with the desire to debrief observations to discuss effective practice.

A suggestion that stood out in its singularity pointed to the need to include something about navigating the bureaucracy of the college in the new faculty orientation.

The comment seemed out of scope of the question initially, but aligned with an earlier example that the participant provided about a barrier in sourcing an uncommon supply for a student project in which creativity and innovation were being assessed. Beneath the comment was a desire for a lived commitment at the leadership level of the department to support innovative practice and authentic learning and assessment as part of OBL.

The use of rubrics to support assessment and student learning appeared in most of the responses. Although currently not mandatory, the Designing Rubrics workshop was recommended as an essential companion to use of an OBL approach. The participant added that elaborate rubrics developed by curriculum specialists outside of the department were too cumbersome for use in lab situations. After completing the rubrics workshop the participant was able to modify the rubrics to make them more useful as feedback tools to support student learning efficiently.

In some faculty areas a greater saturation of OBL has been achieved, establishing a shared language for colleagues to discuss program and course outcomes. Where this does not exist, participants voiced their hope that colleagues in their areas would complete the training so that they could engage in discussion about practice. One participant suggested mandated training, but recognized that beyond the probationary period it is not possible to require faculty to complete training. Another participant voiced the concern that OBL has become a “buzz word” (Participant B) that is used by some who do not have a strong grasp of the concepts behind it.

In the absence of mandated training beyond probation, one participant proposed that those who have been trained in OBL could redevelop courses for those who have not been trained in their areas to promote a broader adoption. More than half of the respondents indicated inconsistent practices arise from those without OBL training relying on the traditional paradigm while others are working towards learner-centred practice and expressed a hope of increased dissemination and adoption.

When asked how teaching might have been without OBL training: “I think probably I would have adopted what I perceive to be the university model and stand in front of a room and bark” (Participant A).

Overall, the responses point to a desire for ongoing learning and time to deepen practice, as well as a wish for expanded practice within the college.

Summary

Study participants demonstrated passion, energy, and commitment for their work and communicated a desire to make their teaching as effective as possible. A strong link between OBL and reflective practice appeared frequently, as the following comment indicates:

..it's neat that all the stuff we've been talking about has come from, things that I've developed, have come from very constant reflection about what don't I like, why didn't that work, what did work and what can I change to make it work. It's very OBL, I would say. It's a very reflective piece. (Participant C)

Reflective practice to support continuous learning and improvement appears to be supported by both OBL and the probationary learning requirement of writing reflective papers four times throughout the 24 month probation. Reflection on what works and giving time to learners to think and reflect arise in a number of examples. It is important to clarify that "what did work" was in reference to the extent to which learners learned. The study participants' investment in learners learning and their openness to learning both stand out throughout this study.

It appears that OBL training set the stage for consideration of practice, focused attention on learner experiences, and shaped perceptions of both teaching and learning. Faculty have incorporated strategies and ways of thinking in support of a learner-centred approach, including authentic learning and authentic assessment. They engage in reflection on practice, tinker with their lesson plans, modify assessments, and are responsive to learner feedback and experience with the goal of improved practice. The study participants' openness to learning and their investment in their learners both stand out in the data. These words sum up it up well, spoken by Participant E upon leaving the interview, an insightful post-script: "what's coming clear to me is that as professors we're constantly learning."

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate new faculty perceptions of mandatory training in Outcomes-based Learning completed during their probation and the extent to which it promoted a shift towards a learner-centred paradigm. In the spirit of phenomenology, uncovering the lived experiences of the study participants was central to both the data collection and analysis; consequently, data collection occurred through individual, audio-taped interviews of approximately one hour in length. Study participants were post-probationary faculty members, hired within the previous three years who had completed OBL training.

Permission to conduct research was granted at the site of the study once CMU provided capstone approval, after which the researcher contacted 24 potential participants by email to explain the purpose of the study and invite them to participate voluntarily. A favourable response rate, nearly half of the potential participants indicated a willingness to participate, made it possible to select six participants from a range of disciplines to enrich the data.

The study participants had completed OBL training at different times; some as recently as one year before they participated in the study, and others as long ago two and half years. Despite the passage of time, the participants were able to comment on the impact of the training on their practice and provide examples of how they incorporated concepts and features of OBL into their teaching. In fact, more time to develop practice and reflect upon it appears to have been an asset to the study as participants provided examples of changes to their practice that occurred incrementally in some cases, and certainly over a period of time, consistent with Hycner's belief that a retrospective viewpoint may be a more integrated one that is easier to verbalize (1985).

Efforts were taken in each interview to establish comfort and rapport, and to make it clear that participants were not being evaluated for adoption or non-adoption of OBL in their practice. This was of particular importance as the participants knew the researcher as a faculty colleague who had facilitated their OBL training and other probationary learning sessions. While a previous connection was an asset to conducting interviews, the

apparent nervousness of one participant made it necessary to engage in more prompting and paraphrasing, without guiding or leading, to elicit answers and examples, to mitigate the impact of the participant's nervousness on the data collection.

Individual interviews were chosen as the most effective tool to collect data as it would facilitate dialogue with participants to obtain a deeper understanding (Creswell, 1998; Lester, 2009). Six semi-structured interviews of nearly one hour each produced a significant volume of data. The interviews were transcribed to support a detailed analysis; the researcher relied on both audio and transcribed versions of the interviews to analyze data, moving back and forth to cluster and develop themes. Repeated listening to interviews helped confirm affective elements of the data such as happiness, frustration, pride, and enthusiasm. Collecting and analyzing the data with a phenomenological approach helped the researcher to bracket assumptions, uncover the lived experiences of the participants, and give prominence to their voices and descriptions of how OBL training influenced their subsequent practice (Hycner, 1985).

Conclusions

Four research questions underpinned the investigation of faculty perceptions of OBL training and the extent to which it supports, promotes, and sustains a paradigm shift to learner-centred practice. In this section, findings are related to the research questions and to some of the literature on learner-centred practice and OBL outlined in Chapter 2. Implications for practice are noted.

Research question one: How does OBL training influence new faculty perceptions of teaching and learning?

The findings of this study indicate that OBL training promotes and supports a shift to learner-centred practice. OBL training influences new faculty perceptions of both teaching and learning. It provides a framework that promotes alignment between outcomes and what is taught, learned, and assessed, consistent with the view of OBL as a model that directs attention to learning outcomes, curriculum, approaches, and assessments that support learner attainment (Driscoll & Wood, 2007). Driscoll and Wood indicate that OBL is also a “process that fosters continuous attention to student learning and promotes institutional accountability based on student learning” (2007, p. 4).

The institution stands to benefit from a continued investment in OBL; faculty see value in a strong focus on transparency, relevance, and application given an institutional strategic commitment to career-ready graduates.

Research question two: What changes do new faculty make in lesson planning and classroom delivery as a result of OBL training?

Faculty describe their use of active learning, a focus on application, and authentic assessment which effectively displaces the traditional paradigm of content-driven instruction, reflecting a shift to what and how the learners learn, rather than what is being taught (Warren, 2003). According to the study, active and collaborative learning appear nearly synonymous with a learner-centred approach, however, faculty acknowledge at least two tensions that persist concerning content in their courses: considerable content knowledge is foundational to the development of skills in most of the learners' respective fields; and, reliance on content gives way to transmission, which is not learner-centred but a mode that many learners prefer. While content-free teaching is not possible, both Weimer (2010) and Knapper (2010) caution against content-driven teaching that encourages memorization and passive learning. Instead, Weimer proposes a changed role of content to inform skill development. Some faculty have developed strategies to reconceptualize the role of content in their courses, including: use of outcomes to select the most salient content that can be linked to skill development; a focus on concepts rather than content; and, mapping content onto the skills all surfaced as strategies. These approaches resonate with a changed view of content and backwards planning, attributed to Wiggins and McTighe by Warren (2003), whereby faculty use content to fuel learners' skill development and achievement of assessable and attainable outcomes (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Hubball & Burt, 2004; King, 1993; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008; Weimer, 2002). While both backwards planning and a changed role of content are understood and applied to some extent after OBL training, faculty may benefit from some follow-up support to address the dual challenge that arises from a surfeit of content and learner preference for passive learning. The findings of Saulnier (2009) may offer guidance on ways to shift from covering content to uncovering content to prepare learners for future application in the world of work.

The findings of the study indicate that OBL affords a lens for learning, and a focus on engagement and empowerment reflective of learner-centred practices. Faculty see themselves as parallel learners who reflect upon their practice in light of the criteria set out by OBL, and as facilitators, mentors, and coaches, consistent with the guide on the side analogy (King, 1993). Faculty engage in ongoing tinkering to improve their courses and ensure alignment with industry or field expectations, which affords quality assurance (Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008) and currency to promote employability (Utshig, Elger, & Beyerlein, 2005).

Faculty encourage and promote reflection in their learners, too, to help them develop critical thinking skills and the habits of mind of their future professions. Faculty aspire to instill ownership of the learning in their learners but note the persistence of learner preference for the traditional paradigm and passive learning, consistent with the findings of previous research (Delpier, 2006; Saulnier, 2009). Faculty may need to incorporate intentional strategies to support learners to adapt to active learning and a learner-centred approach. Knapper (2010) advises that teaching students to be better thinkers supports cognitive development and increases their interest in learning and intrinsic motivation, which could inform the development and implementation of additional strategies.

Examples reveal a commitment to making learning relevant, real, and reinforced through practice and formative assessment in preparation for summative assessment and application in future contexts and settings (Landry et al., 2008; Saulnier et al., 2008; Stiehl & Lewchuk, 2008). Faculty think not only of what they will be doing in class, but of what their students will be doing in class to practise and develop the skills that build towards course outcomes. Faculty use intentional strategies to support learning about learning, which Weimer (2002, 2010) indicates is central to lifelong learning. Hofman (2008) agrees that a focus on learning to learn equips people to respond to the demands of fast-paced change in our modern context.

Research question three: What changes do new faculty make to assessments of learning as a result of OBL training?

Faculty view assessment as a valuable part of learning, not just a measurement of it, echoing Warren (2003) who underscores that teacher-centred assessment monitors learning, whereas learner-centred assessment promotes learning. Faculty align assessments with course outcomes with a clear focus on industry and field expectations, including professional licensing examinations, consistent with the findings of Hubball and Burt (2004). Frequent informal and formal assessments support learning and provide essential feedback about what is working and the extent to which learners are learning, Faculty are concerned about their learners' success; formative assessment helps both faculty and students flag areas of concern and develop corrective strategies, consistent with the findings of previous studies (Bousslama et al., 2003; Dillon, 2005; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Hubball & Burt, 2004; Landry et al., 2008; Slater, Pang, & Sharma, 2009).

Assessment is also an area of challenge. Faculty have high expectations of themselves and their learners. They work towards improved assessment practices, aspiring to develop authentic assessments that are more integrative and/or aimed at higher level skills. Consequently, surface learning and lower level assessments are dissonant. It is not clear whether course outcomes are articulated at a higher level, or if it is merely the desire of the faculty to encourage higher level outcomes. Faculty indicate that course outcomes provide a clear road map for teaching, learning, and assessment, while program outcomes do so to a lesser extent. A question arises from this study about whether the higher level skills are practised and assessed elsewhere in the program. To achieve greater integration of teaching, learning, and assessment, faculty may need to take a broader view of learning that occurs within the program. Such curriculum-mapping occurs in the program review process, however the cycle and rate of program review is approximately ten programs annually. As there are more than 145 full-time programs, another mechanism may be needed to help faculty achieve alignment and integration so that they will not have to wait until their program is under review.

Research question four: What changes to new faculty orientation and training would support a stronger adoption of OBL in their practice?

It appears that changes to new faculty orientation and training are not needed to support adoption of OBL, but changes may be indicated to sustain the paradigm shift

from content-driven instruction to learner-centred practice. The faculty who participated in the study were uniformly positive about their experience and provided ample evidence of their willingness to incorporate OBL in their practice, expressing relief that a model for practice was provided. The results of this study echo the finding that OBL offers a unifying pedagogy that clarifies faculty roles and addresses student learning (Evers, et al., 2009). Some feedback about the volume of learning and its timing suggests that OBL training may be more relevant once new faculty have some teaching experience, however it was very clear that OBL provides a much needed, guiding framework to those who lack an educational background in teaching and/or any teaching experience.

The study participants' consensus was that changes are needed post-probation to sustain engagement in learning. In particular, faculty indicated their desire to expand and advance their skills and the conundrum of competing demands and role expansion which make learning post-probation a lower priority. Being expected, required, and supported (teaching loads are generally reduced during probation) to learn during probation appears to be the difference. They suggested sequel workshops, such as OBL 2.0, to build upon their foundational learning, discussions about OBL in practice now that they can relate the concepts to a few years of teaching, and observing or being mentored by others whose practice is at an advanced level. It is not impossible, but difficult, to require post-probationary faculty to engage in learning. Stiehl and Lewchuk (2008) indicate that training may be experienced as an implied criticism, whereas "working with faculty" is a more appealing and engaging strategy for centres of teaching and learning to adopt. The interests and need expressed by faculty in this study can inform the development of relevant and timely learning opportunities for faculty post-probation.

Faculty also expressed a wish for a wider adoption and expanded practice within the college, particularly if absent in their own disciplines, to support discussion of teaching, learning, and assessment practices that are learner-centred. Training in OBL cannot be mandated, however helping faculty who have not completed the training to see its relevance may increase participation rates. It will be important for Organizational and Staff Development at this college to determine ways to engage the interest of both seasoned and new contract faculty, who are not required to complete OBL training, in learner-centred practices in order to promote adoption. If OBL training helps resolve a

problem it may provide motivation for others to complete it (Kember, 2008; Knapper, 2010).

A lack of wider adoption could compromise a sustained shift to learner-centred practices; both faculty practitioners and the learners stand to benefit from greater consistency of practice. Continued inconsistent practice combined with learner preference for passive learning (Delpier, 2006) could cause faculty to default to content-driven instruction. The findings of this study indicate faculty's satisfaction with a learner-centred approach, and also note that the time to plan, revise, reflect, and tinker is daunting. It is likely that faculty will require support to sustain adoption. Simply having opportunities to debrief and discuss practice may help faculty sustain learner-centred approaches. Bouslama et al. (2003) recommend communities of practice to support and sustain the integration of OBL. Establishing communities of practice may need to be cross-disciplinary until saturation of OBL practitioners in program and discipline-specific areas is achieved. Determining ways to prime and support learners to adopt active learning may also be needed.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations arise from the findings of this study. At the outset, the researcher sought to learn from training new faculty in OBL to inform the training and support of future groups of new faculty at the site of the study. The following recommendations emerge from the findings of this study:

1. Continue to provide OBL training to new faculty during their probation to promote and support a shift to learner-centred practice.
2. Determine ways to help faculty address the challenges that arise from the role and treatment of content in their courses.
3. Identify resources to support faculty in curriculum-mapping to ensure alignment of outcomes and assessments.
4. Determine ways to support continued and advanced practice of OBL post-probation in the area of authentic assessment in particular.

5. As the participants of this study provided examples of face-to-face learning, more research is needed to explore ways to support learner-centred practice in online learning.
6. The focus of this study was limited to the perspectives and lived experiences of new faculty. A longitudinal approach, a study that would investigate the impact of OBL more than five years post-training could afford insight into the sustainability of OBL and learner-centred practices.
7. Adding student voices to the research on learner-centred practice is recommended to develop strategies to support them to become active learners.
8. More research and institutional support are needed to find ways to engage seasoned and contract faculty in an outcomes-based learning approach to promote and sustain learner-centred practices on an institutional basis.

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Appendices

Appendix A Probationary Requirements

Below are the full-time Faculty Probationary Requirements to be completed over your two-year probation period. **Please keep a record of your progress** as you will be required to comment on your professional development in a one-page reflection paper submitted each semester.

Register for all workshops at <http://www.georgebrown.ca/staffdevelopment> where you will find workshop dates and times listed.

Event	Timing
New Faculty Academy	One week - the fourth week of August
New Staff College-wide Orientation	<p>1 day – to be completed during the New Faculty Academy or within 6 months of hire</p> <p>WHMIS – 2 hours - offered throughout the year</p> <p>AODA – 30 minutes online before start date on INSITE, the college’s intranet</p>
<p>New Faculty Seminars</p> <p><i>Year 1 Probationary Faculty Seminar</i> This seminar is designed for faculty in the first year of their probationary period. In this session we take the opportunity to share experiences as new faculty members, practise reflective thinking, and apply problem-solving strategies to common challenges in teaching and learning.</p> <p><i>Year 2 Probationary Faculty Seminar</i> This seminar is designed for faculty in the final year of their probationary period. In this session we will focus on the development of the initial portfolio, which includes a revised statement of teaching philosophy, documentation of teaching effectiveness, and a professional development plan. There are continued opportunities for practicing reflective thinking and sharing common experiences as new faculty members.</p>	Two 2-hour seminars each semester for four semesters (fall and winter semesters only)
<p>Learning Squares</p> <p>Every individual has the opportunity to observe 3 of their colleagues in action each semester for four semesters. At the end of the observations the group meets to reflect on their experience and their own</p>	Participation in Learning Squares for 4 semesters (fall and winter semesters only)

teaching. This process builds connections, increases awareness of other areas of the college, encourages conversations about teaching and learning and promotes reflective practice.	
Workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes-based Learning 	4 two-hour workshops (the first workshop will be held during the New Faculty Academy). This series is offered throughout the academic year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIDS 	3-day workshop (OBL sessions should be completed first)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboard (introduction or advanced) 	1 workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Space workshop 	1 workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two additional workshops 	Select two additional workshops from the staff development calendar; they should be related to your professional development goals
Classroom Observations The Chair is invited to visit one of your classes each semester and participate in a follow-up meeting to review their observations, questions and feedback.	One visit per semester
Reflection Paper Each person takes the time to document their reflection on the semester, noting their observations, strengths and areas for further development. These can be used to initiate a conversation with the Chair that connects to the probationary review of competencies.	One 1.5-page reflection paper each semester outlining your professional development, noting strengths and setting goals for continued learning. Submit them to your Chair, with a copy to the Director of Organizational and Staff Development.
Teaching Portfolio	Presented to your Chair towards the end of probation.
Geneva Park Retreat	A 3-day retreat in early June

Appendix B**Outcomes-based Learning Workshop Series Outcome:**

Apply an OBL approach to writing effective course outcomes, planning assessments and writing lesson plans.

Workshop #1 Introduction to OBL

- Objectives:**
- Define outcomes-based learning
 - Contrast OBL with traditional teaching methods
 - Assess impact of OBL on content, assessment, and classroom climate

Workshop #2 Writing Effective Course Outcomes

- Objectives:**
- Discuss components of course outcomes
 - Arrange course outcomes according to level of difficulty
 - Develop effective course outcomes

Workshop #3 Outcomes-based Assessment

- Objectives:**
- Illustrate the relationship between learning outcomes, learning objectives and assessment measures.
 - Explore components of authentic assessment measures
 - Practise writing authentic assessments

Workshop #4 Developing Effective Lesson Plans

- Objectives:**
- Identify key elements of a lesson plan
 - Critique a lesson plan
 - Create a sample lesson plan

Appendix C
Email to Participants

Hello colleague,

I know this is a busy time in the academic year with end of semester at hand.

Over the next few weeks, I will be conducting interviews for a research study that I am completing as part of my Masters of Arts in Education through Central Michigan University. I am investigating faculty perceptions of Outcomes-based Learning as a framework for teaching and learning, and the extent to which OBL training promotes, supports, and sustains learner-centred practices.

I have attached a detailed information letter that describes the study and your role as a potential participant. I would appreciate your perspectives as a post-probationary faculty member who completed the workshops in OBL during the past three years.

My hope is to interview you for one hour, scheduled at your convenience, in late April or May.

Please review the letter and the interview questions to help you decide if you would like to participate voluntarily in this study.

Best wishes,

Susan

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1. Has OBL training influenced your thinking about teaching and learning? If so, how?
2. Has OBL training promoted a shift to a learner-centred approach? In what ways?
3. What changes, if any, have you made to the way you assess student learning as a result of OBL training?
4. Describe the role of course outcomes and program outcomes in your teaching and assessment?
5. Describe the role of content in your teaching.
6. What changes, if any, have you made to lesson planning and delivery as a result of OBL training?
7. What could help you to adopt OBL and a learner-centred approach more fully?
8. What changes to orientation and probationary learning requirements would you suggest to support new faculty in the adoption of OBL?