LEARNING OUTCOMES APPROACH
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

by

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the suitability of adopting a learning outcomes approach as a strategy for educational reform in British Columbia's colleges and university colleges. It focused on the views of institutional and department administrators during the initial implementation phase through a questionnaire (n=313), interviews (n=58) and the analysis of provincial documents.

Study participants had varied reactions to a learning outcomes approach ranging from strong support to overt resistance. Proponents viewed it as a philosophical shift from teaching to learning involving themes such as transparency, integrated curricula, holistic curricula, and a learner-centered focus. However, many viewed learning outcomes as being similar to their current approach. Opponents viewed the approach as being too simplistic, too limiting and unsupported by evidence. Its central position in the reform agenda was questioned.

The barriers to its implementation included competing priorities, lack of resources, faculty workload, organizational culture, pedagogical issues, concerns about the vocationalization of postsecondary education and its perceived relationship to the provincial government's accountability movement.

Approximately one third of respondents who had made changes identified them as valuable to their programs and courses. However, respondents from academic areas had less involvement, less interest in integration and perceived it as less valuable than respondents from applied areas. The value of the approach resonated at the theoretical level, but often disappeared in the practice context particularly at the course level. It was viewed as being particularly valuable in applied areas, but was most often described as a refinement.

The learning outcomes approach was too abstract to provide a vision for reform. While there have been changes in specific courses and programs, the policy did not have a provincial impact from a pedagogical or accountability perspective. The term has been integrated into many organizational documents, but it is unclear if these changes translated into more relevant learning experiences or more valid assessment approaches. The discussions generated about best practices have been the greatest impact of the

policy. It forced faculty members to challenge and defend their educational practices. This may be the ultimate legacy of the learning outcomes policy in British Columbia.

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Acronyms

BTAA	Budget Transparency and Accountability Act
C2T2	Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (also referred to as "the Centre")
CCPD	Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development (reorganized into C2T2)
CSAC	College Standards and Accreditation Council (Ontario)
DPRC	Degree Program Review Committee
LON	Learning Outcomes Network
LOC	Learning Outcomes Coordinator
MoAE	Ministry of Advanced Education
MoAETT	Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (created in 1996)
MoSTL	Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (1993 to 1996)
PLARC	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinator
SCOEA	Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability
UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

A learning outcomes initiative was introduced into the college, institute and agency system of British Columbia by the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training (BC MoEST) in 1996. The Centre for Curriculum, Training and Technology (C2T2), a non-profit, independent society, was directed to promote a learning outcomes approach within this educational sector. Such an approach was described as important in furthering a learner-focused education system and in promoting the overall goal of educational reform.

This study addresses the suitability of a learning outcomes approach as a strategy for educational reform in the BC College and university college sector. In this chapter, I address the key issues of accountability and performance measures in post-secondary education, and investigate their role in the emergence of the learning outcomes initiative. The study focuses on the period following the release of the Ministry's 1996 Strategic Plan for the College, Institute and Agency System, and examines the role of educators and administrators in the college and university college sector as they attempted to implement the policy. Then, I describe the research problem, outline the purpose of the study and present the research questions. Finally, I introduce the research design and methods of data collection, followed by the structure of the thesis.

Background

Education has long been seen as a vehicle to promote the development of human capital (Schultze, 1961; Marginson, 1997a). The forces of globalization and the evolution of a knowledge society increased the need and demand for higher education (Kenny-Wallace, 1988). However, higher education did not fulfill the expectations for sustained economic growth as many had expected (Levin & Kelly, 1997; Avis, 2000). As national economies entered periods of decline, questions arose about the accountability of public sectors in general and the educational sector in particular. The influences for change predominantly rose from the following: the state of national economies, the

demand for more opportunities for higher education, and concerns about the credibility of higher education (Coate, 1995).

While evaluation had always been part of higher education, the emergence of the evaluative state not only entailed a shift to outcomes, it also altered the focus of evaluation from system maintenance to evaluation for strategic change (Neave, 1988). The pressure for increased accountability was evident in many western nations and developing nations as well (Bruneau & Savage, 2002).

The pressure for accountability was often couched in corporate language with a focus on efficiencies, effectiveness and cost analysis. The previous forms of evaluation that often included reputational models and self-assessment were questioned. Government ministries and funding organizations came under increased pressure to justify their decisions, to develop criteria for measuring the value accrued from resource allocations (Cave, Hanney, & Kogan, 1991). In the United Kingdom the concept of accountability was operationalized through the development of performance indictors to promote greater quality and efficiency in higher education. Australia and New Zealand pursued a similar route (Marginson, 1997a; Bruneau & Savage, 2002). Credentialing functions became a high priority in many countries, but particularly so in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia (Department of Education, 1993; Curtain & Hayton, 1993; Fitzsimons, 1999; Yorke, 2000).

In the United States the conversations focused on similar themes but they were operationalized through the notion of assessment that was furthered by the accreditation system (Derlin, Solis, Aragon-Campos, & Nidella, 1986). The assessment movement was driven by the recognition that the needs of our society and our learners were changing with the shift from an industrial age to an information age. A knowledge-based economy required workers who were more highly skilled and adaptable (Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993). Pressure for changes came from external sources and from within educational organizations (Mentkowski, 1998). The discussions surrounding educational reform focused on the quality of programs, particularly undergraduate education, and the quality of teaching (Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993; Gardiner, 1994).

Similar conversations about accountability and quality also occurred in the Canadian context (Smith, 1991; Benjamin, McGovern, & Bourgeault, 1993; Dennison, 1995). In British Columbia the changing needs of the labour sector and their implications for skill development were highlighted in *Training for What?* (British Columbia Labour Force Development Board, 1995). This report focused on the "skills gap," "relevance gap" and "accountability gap" between the economic and educational sectors. The employability skills profile developed by the Conference Board of Canada (1992) was suggested as a means to address the need for a more highly skilled workforce to sustain the economy of British Columbia. The proposed policy directions revolved around student outcomes, employer outcomes and outcome-based accountability frameworks.

The learning outcomes initiative in British Columbia emerged from these conversations as one piece of a larger public policy puzzle. In the texts of the BC strategic plan, *Charting a New Course: A Strategic Plan for the Future of British Columbia's College, Institute and Agency System*[1] (BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training[2], 1996) learning outcomes appeared to be an important piece. In the literature from C2T2[3] it was presented as the key element in the design of an educational system that would promote a flexible, seamless, and cost-effective educational system. Learning outcomes were deemed to be central to educational reform in British Columbia and C2T2 allocated funding to promote their implementation within higher education in BC.

The concept of learning outcomes evolved from two areas, although the two conversations often merge in practice. Firstly, the concept was linked to political discussions about accountability and the assessment of the outcomes of learning. Secondly, it was also based in concerns about pedagogy. From this perspective it was described as a strategy to promote coherence (Mentkowski, 1998), clarity and transparency (Avis, 2000). This aspect originated in part with the literature on Outcomes Based Education (OBE) that emerged in response to the mandate of secondary education to create "good citizens" and "good employees" (Spady, 1994; McGhan, 1994). The OBE movement grew out of concerns that American high school graduates did not posses

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[1] This document will be referred to as *Charting a New Course*, the name commonly used in BC.
[2] This Ministry will be abbreviated to MoEST in future citations.
[3] Through this strategic plan this organization was directed to promote a learning outcomes approach within this educational sector.

the skills and knowledge to integrate into economic and community life. Graduate learning outcomes were described as "high-quality, culminating demonstrations of significant learning in context" (Spady, 1994, p.18). Learning outcomes were defined in broad, general terms so as to reflect cumulative learning upon graduation from an educational program. This learning was intended to be reflective of "real world" life.

It seems logical to define what you expect students to learn, and then to design the instructional activities and the evaluation structure around those defined learner outcomes. Tyler (1949) addressed these ideas many years ago; they are hardly new or innovative. Educators have been discussing outcomes for many years in relationship to course goals, instructional objectives, behavioural objectives and competencies. We have a plethora of terms and definitions that are all basically related to the purpose or aims of education. Allan (1996) notes that educators moved from the general education objectives described by Tyler to more discrete objectives such as "instructional objectives" and "behavioural objectives." The pendulum is now swinging back to general statements. The current focus on "learning outcomes" reflects a shift along a continuum, from specific to general outcome statements. A shift towards more general outcome statements may have been warranted, particularly in the applied programs, but such a shift did not appear to warrant its central location within the reform vision for BC higher education.

It was challenging to determine what was meant by a learning outcomes approach in British Columbia. At the C2T2 retreat on Bowen Island, (January 30, 1998) Ruth Stiehl from Oregon State University spoke about the unique, holistic, integrated characteristics of a learning outcomes approach. However, there was no consensus achieved at the meeting regarding the notion of learning outcomes. Some participants viewed it as a specific model, others as a philosophical approach to learning. There appeared to be considerable confusion about the notion of a learning outcomes approach. This signaled the need for further investigation. We appeared to be on a journey to promote a learning outcomes approach in college, institute and agency sector in BC, but without a clear understanding of what it was. The proposed destination was unclear.

The ensuing dialogues focused on the "how" aspects of learning outcomes. For example, proponents discussed how to develop learning outcomes, and how to evaluate them. The "why" question was only superficially addressed in C2T2's documents and

articles of the day. Rhetoric abounded regarding the value and relevance of the learning outcomes approach. It was described by some (Shipley, 1994a, 199b; Battersby, 1997; Bauslaugh, 1997a, 1997b) as dynamic and innovative. In a letter to Education Councils, Battersby and Malnarich presented the initiative in the following way: "For a coherent and effective post-secondary system, learning outcomes must provide the concept that links funding initiatives, technological innovation, flexible assessment and pedagogic change" (personal communication, October 30, 1997). There appeared to be many assumptions behind the decision to direct resources towards a learning outcomes approach. These assumptions needed to be analyzed and questioned more thoroughly. It was not clear how a learning outcomes approach would lead to the changes described in C2T2's literature.

The Research Problem

In 1994 I was involved in a national workshop held in Winnipeg that focused on the development of national education standards for dental hygienists. Two federal government representatives attended our meeting as observers; they were interested in our discussions from a labour mobility perspective. During the course of the discussions, a representative from Ontario suggested that we shift from our competency framework to a learning outcomes approach. That was my introduction to the term 'learning outcomes'.

I had been involved in post-secondary education for over twenty-two years as a faculty member, department administrator, consultant, and as the Health Sciences representative to Education Council during its formative years. I had also actively participated in provincial and national policy decisions pertaining to dental and dental hygiene education, examination, regulation, and accreditation. Given this background, I was intrigued by the notion of a different approach to curriculum and assessment.

At the Winnipeg meeting we struggled to understand the concept. It seemed so similar to what we already had. My interest was further peaked when I was invited to participate in the validation process for learning outcomes for diploma dental hygiene programs through the Ontario College Standards and Accreditation Council. The documentation suggested that these outcome statements represented the results of

extensive investigations but they appeared simplistic and self-evident to me. I could not grasp their innovative characteristic.

Subsequently I received contracts for two other projects that integrated learning outcomes. The first involved the development of the licensure mechanism for a new BC Residential Care License for dental hygienists; the other involved the articulation of outcomes for BC diploma dental hygiene programs. In both cases the learning outcomes approach was used as an instrumental strategy to facilitate communication among diverse interest groups in the first case, and to gain funding for a provincial dialogue in the second case. While the approach proved useful for instrumental reasons, I was still perplexed by its relationship to educational reform.

In October 1997, C2T2 sent an invitation to BC public post-secondary education institutions requesting their participation in a Ministry funded learning outcomes program, a Learning Outcomes Network that was to promote a learning outcomes approach in order to achieve the following goal from *Charting a New Course*: "To provide British Columbians with post-secondary education and training to improve the quality of life and citizenship experienced in the province and to enhance current and future job opportunities" (MoEST, 1996, p. 31). The Learning Outcomes Network was seen as vehicle for "implementing a systems wide exploration of learning outcomes" with one of the network's projects being "the development and articulation of general education outcomes" (personal communication, Battersby & Malnarich, October, 30, 1997).

The invitation was accompanied by an offer of partial funding to establish a coordinator position within each participating organization. The funding provided one-quarter release time for a Learning Outcomes Coordinator for a six-month period with the possibility of future funding in the subsequent fiscal year. The Learning Outcomes Coordinators were to be supported in several ways including a variety of support services, conferences, workshops, on-line discussion group and a web site. This provincial network of coordinators was viewed as a group to facilitate the collaborative development of a learning outcomes approach, which would be the central reform element in the creation of a seamless, flexible, and learner-centered post-secondary education system (Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996).

The administrators and educators at my college[4] had mixed views about the invitation. Some were intrigued and some were skeptical; others were simply offended. Some saw the initiative as a strategic policy shift; others perceived it as an operational strategy for flexible assessment or the latest trend in a long line of ministry generated panaceas. Many were confused, perplexed and bewildered about the initiative; they wondered why funds were being directed to this initiative during times of fiscal restraint. They also questioned the need for faculty to devote time to this issue given the many other competing priorities they faced. The rationale for the initiative and its relationship to educational reform was not readily evident to many within the college and university college sector.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the issues surrounding the learning outcomes initiative in BC colleges and university colleges. In particular, the study is designed to increase understanding of the policy during the implementation phase, as educators and administrators in the college and university college sector attempted to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan. As a practitioner affected by this policy I was interested in gaining a better understanding of the learning outcomes approach. I felt it was important to go beyond the rhetoric, and determine how educators and administrators understood the policy and how they approached it in their practice environments.

The results of this study will allow faculty members in the college and university college sector to better understand the learning outcomes initiative and the nature of provincial policies in British Columbia. Faculty members are so involved in the daily activities associated with teaching and learning that it can be challenging for them to gain a perspective on the larger provincial context. They are often isolated within their program or discipline areas. The results of this study may help them gain a better understanding of their working world and its relationship with other areas both within their own organizations and within their provincial communities. The results will also provide administrators with insights into key issues in the development and implementation of policy directions for BC colleges and university colleges. The perspectives and understandings arising from this study may also be helpful to future

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[4] I was the Health Sciences representative to the Vancouver Community College Education Council when this policy was introduced.

researchers interested in analyzing the ongoing metamorphosis of post-secondary education in British Columbia.

Research Questions

This study investigates the suitability of adopting a learning outcomes approach as a strategy for educational reform in the BC colleges and university college sector. I wished to explore the learning outcomes initiative from its apparent inception in *Charting a New Course* to its implementation in BC colleges and university colleges. The study focuses on the 9 to 12 month period after the funding of the Learning Outcomes Coordinators in 1997. The study is guided by three broad questions: (1) How was the concept of learning outcomes being defined in the colleges and university colleges? (2) How did the people in this sector view this policy direction? (3) Was the learning outcomes initiative helpful in promoting the vision described in the strategic plan of the BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training? A critical analysis of this policy was warranted given that public funds were directed towards its promotion at a time of fiscal restraint in higher education.

Design and Methods

The study participants were drawn from the organizations that opted to participate in the Learning Outcomes Network. Of the 21 educational institutions participating in this network, 20 represented the college[5], institute and agency sector. From this group of 20 organizations, I selected the 16 colleges and university colleges as my target group since they shared a common mandate.

The study consisted of several phases. The initial phase included a survey of organizational and department administrators, Learning Outcomes Coordinators (LOCs) and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators (PLARCs). The survey data were augmented by interviews with the survey respondents as well as students and

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[5] The term "college" refers to community colleges and university-colleges in the language of the strategic plan.

other key players from organizations linked to postsecondary education. Organizational documents, minutes of meetings and email discussions on the Learning Outcomes Network were also analyzed to gain additional insights into the discussions within the colleges and university colleges about curricula and educational reform issues.

General Outline

My goal in conducting this study and communicating the results was to engage practitioners in a dialogue about a learning outcomes approach specifically and the broader educational change process in general. This chapter has provided an introduction to the study. Chapters II and III provide background for understanding the issues from a general and provincial perspective. Chapter IV presents the research design, and methods of data collection and analysis. This is followed by the presentation of the interview and survey data in Chapters V. Chapter VI includes the discussion and Chapter VII presents the conclusions and recommendations arising from the study. My aim was to link theory with practice to facilitate a broader discussion of learning outcomes in the BC college and university college sector.

CHAPTER TWO
GENERAL LITERATURE REVIEW

The learning outcomes initiative in British Columbia was designed to promote a seamless, student-centered educational system (Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996). To understand this initiative, we must also understand the influences on its development. At the heart of these influences were discussions about the relationship between education, and the economy and the role of government in the educational system (Rae, 1988). Economic renewal and intellectual development were deemed to be inextricably linked (Kenny-Wallace, 1988). Therefore, managing the forces of globalization and adapting to the needs of a knowledge-based society became key challenges in maintaining a competitive edge in international markets (Kenny-Wallace, 1988; Watts, 1988). Post-secondary education was perceived as an essential element in furthering this competitive edge and thus promoting economic renewal and prosperity (OECD, 1997a; Marginson, 1997a; Ainley, 1998).

Debates about the need for educational change revolved around the development of human capital and social capital with education seen as a vehicle for economic prosperity, social mobility and equity. Some perceived a tension between education for economic development and education for social justice (Rae, 1988; Soucek, 1993); others suggested that these two could be complementary (Paquet, 1988; Morse, 1988). However, both influences affected the demand for education. The state of the economy and the increased demand for education focused attention on the productivity and accountability of higher education. Governments demanded that educators be more accountable for the use of public funds (Cave et al., 1991). This led to a search for indicators of performance that would allow governments to evaluate and measure the outcomes of learning.

I begin this chapter by looking at the influences that surround the call for reform in higher education and the key concepts commonly discussed in relationship to such reform. I then analyze the literature on learning outcomes in general, and review the relationship between learning outcomes and educational reform. The chapter concludes with a discussion of policy, the policy process and the framework that will support my analysis of the learning outcomes initiative. This chapter complements the Canadian and BC literature that will be the focus of Chapter Three; the two literature chapters are designed to provide a context for understanding my study.

Influences for Change

Changes in advanced education are largely driven by economic factors including the forces of globalization and human capital theory (Marginson, 1997a). These changes were strongly influenced by advances in technology, which enabled the shift from an industrial to a knowledge economy (Zemsky, 1996; Puyear, 1997). In this section I describe the developments that helped shaped the demand for increased accountability and quality in higher education. The discussion will focus on the development of a knowledge economy and society, the forces of globalization and how these forces effect change in the governance of education.

The Knowledge Economy and Society

We have experienced a rapid growth in the use of information technology and other forms of communication in recent years (Rubenson & Schuetze, 2000). This facilitated the growth of a global market exchange and has transformed many aspects of our world (Marginson, 1997b). The key elements of this shift from an industrial age to an information age are described by Aronowitz and De Fazio (1997).

> Scientific and technological innovation is, for the most part, no longer episodic. Not only has abstract knowledge come to the center of the world's political economy, but there is also a tendency to produce and trade in symbolic significations rather than concrete products. Today, knowledge rather than traditional skill is the main productive force. (p. 194)

As a commodity that can move freely across national boundaries, knowledge has become an important source of power and wealth (Brown & Lauder, 1997). Lipsey (2000) contends that we need to fully recognize the non-rivalrous characteristic of knowledge as this characteristic makes it unlike other types of commodities that have supported economic growth; its consumption does not preclude the consumption by others as do may products such as apples and chocolate for example.

The educational needs of individuals in the knowledge age are different from those of an industrial age (Drake, 1997; Candy, 2000). Science and technology have changed the forms of work and employment (Rubenson & Schuetze, 2000). Technology is changing the way we work, live and learn (Zemsky, 1996; Puyear, 1997). The rapid development and diffusion of information and communication technologies have influenced the growth of post-secondary education, resulting in a shift from elite to mass higher education (Alexander, 2000). The time between compulsory education and entry into the labour market has

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expanded (Williams, 1999) and learning is no longer seen solely as the function of institutions of higher education; it permeates our lives. Usher, Bryant and Johnston (1997) argue that this shift to a learning society is one of the biggest challenges facing our educational organizations today.

Forces of Globalization

Through television and other media we are reminded of the ubiquitous effects of globalization. Marginson (1997b) argues that globalization is not just about the internationalization of goods, services, money, people and ideas, but encompasses a wide range of relationships and inter-connections between states involving both bi-lateral and multi-lateral connections.

> Globalization is about *world systems* which have a life of their own that is distinct from local and national life, even while these world systems tend to determine the local and national. ... Globalization is complex and multiple, embracing practices which are conventionally described as 'economic', 'political', 'sociological', 'cultural', 'linguistic, 'semiotic' and so on. (p. 20)

This definition highlights the complex nature of the phenomenon. Globalization is not necessarily a homogenizing force; it also provides opportunities for diverse cultures to co-exist (Henry, Lingard, Rivi, & Taylor, 1999). It promotes increased Anglo-Americanization while also promoting diversity through multilingualism and multiculturalism (Marginson, 1997b). However, globalization with its adoption of market liberalism has also widened the gap between socio-economic groups within nations (Ball, 1994). Globalization has increased the power of capital in public policy (Howlett, & Ramesh, 1995). Financially poorer states are particularly susceptible to the influences of international capital and its movement across national borders.

Marginson (1997b) argues that there is a "lack of fit" between global markets and global culture, and national politics. There is often a disparity between the political and ideological stances taken by governments. Governments oscillate between blaming external factors and refusing to acknowledge them. It is often easier for governments to support deregulation as national policies may be at odds with the global market economy. By freeing up the market forces they hope to gain an advantage in the global economy. However, this presumed advantage comes at a cost for some members of society; it widens the gap between those with power, resources and privilege (Ball, 1994). Market liberalism systematically

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disadvantages marginalized groups and communities. It has influenced the erosion of welfare services and increased the income disparity among segments of society (Ainley, 1998).

The effects of globalization are mediated through national patterns and structures which Dale (1999) labels *societal* and *cultural* effects. He points out that nations adopt one of two common approaches to globalization. One is a competition form where the nation attempts to increase its competitive advantage, and the other a governance without government form as described by Rosenau (1992). The latter form refers to the establishment of a framework of international organizations that are involved in performing functions for keeping systems viable. While the work of these organizations is diverse, consensus has been achieved for a common ideological approach to issues. These include, but are not limited to, the concepts of financial liberalization, trade liberalization and deregulation (Dale, 1999). Both the competitive and the governance approach have implications for educational policy. Dale notes that the competitive approach has brought economic policy and initiatives to the foreground while discussions about equity have become marginalized or encompassed in other agendas (Henry et al., 1999).

Politicians tend to ignore the influence of globalization in some circumstances, and then blame the failure of their policies on it in others (Marginson, 1997b). We appear to have an uneasy relationship with globalization at best. Dudley (1998) in fact questions the validity of the claim that national economies are being subsumed by the global economy and its attendant international markets. She argues that "globalization is a discursively constructed master discourse of uncontrollable global market forces that valorizes the economic rationality of neo-classical economics and the minimalist politics of neo-liberalism" (p. 30). Howlett and Ramesh (1995) also suggest that the influences of globalization are exaggerated and are often more prominent at the macro than the micro area. However, they also contend that the degree of influence is dependent on nations' economic strength and the public policy of poor countries is, therefore, more influenced by international money markets.

While the influences of globalization are ubiquitous, Marginson (1997b) identifies other factors that are also at play. The first of these is the trend to "civic universality," the trend to support the involvement of individuals in citizenship, learning, labour markets and consumption. "The key figure in late modern systems of government is the self-regulating, choice-making, self-reliant individual" (p. 25). However, Furlong and Cartmel (1997) suggest that risks for marginalization still continue to be distributed on the basis of social class (as expressed through educational performance) and gender. A second factor identified by

Marginson is the increased trend for governments to promote change from a distance. This trend is a reflection of a market liberal orientation but is also supported in social democratic regimes.

Karmel (1996) discusses these issues from the perspective of a change in the economic paradigm over the last 20 years. The role of the public sector in economic development has been de-emphasized and greater weight is being placed on individualism, entrepreneurship and market forces. "We have moved from a protected, inward looking, much regulated economy towards a much more competitive one with a global outlook" (p. 25).

These influences in combination with the influences of globalization have forced governments to change the way they operate. The work of the nation-state today has become embedded in a web of international relationships; the state is but one player among many often overlapping and competing organizations with an influence and an interest in economic, social and political spheres (Dale, 1999). Economic relationships have changed but the state must still provide the legal and social parameters for the operation of the national economic market (Marginson, 1997b). The parameters have changed, but the nation-state still has an important role to play in the social and economic support of its citizens (Ainley, 1998; Henry et al., 1999), and in the relationship between education and the economy (Rubenson, 1987).

Governance of Education

Globalization has transformed the relationship between the state and education leading to the rise of the evaluative state (Neave, 1988). This involves a shift from routine evaluation to strategic evaluation, and a reorientation from the more classic input, process, and output model to a model that emphasizes the evaluation of outcomes. Neave suggests that the emergence of the evaluative state brings into question the dichotomy between centralization and decentralization. "In systems based on decentralisation, the Evaluative State appears as a step towards greater central control and, in those based on a higher degree of centralism, it is perceived as giving rise to greater flexibility and hence greater decentralization" (p. 11). This suggests that by shifting the focus to measuring outcomes, institutions may in fact acquire a greater degree of freedom, but clear lines of accountability are required to ensure a focus on national goals.

Harden, Lewis and Graham (1992) propose the concept of a contracting state. From this perspective states are viewed as contracting out their services to a combination of private,

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semi-private and public providers. However, the state still holds the power to contract and thus controls the services provided. The state's financial control is increased, but the arm's length relationship results in less control over details. Ainley (1998) suggests that such contracting relationships in education are highly unstable due to the complexity of organizations in higher education and national goals involved in this policy area.

Karlsen (2000) raises the distinction between decentralization as delegation versus devolution, where devolution implies a shift in power and authority. In Karlsen's distinction of delegation the central authority still defines the priorities; only the tasks and responsibilities are shifted to the periphery. Ball (1994) raises a similar issue. He contends that the discourse on self-management is legitimized through a discourse on autonomy. However, this autonomy may be the autonomy of managers and may be a constraint on faculty members. Kells (1992) supports this position and suggests that the power in an educational system may have shifted from government ministries to institutions, but the power may have only shifted to the organizational leaders and not the faculty members. Policy makers may suggest the liberating effects of this evaluative approach, but educators may only experience increased accountability and reporting mechanisms. While the current application of decentralization may not reflect a shift in power, there may still be opportunities for increased autonomy as it is challenging to exert total central control. Karlsen suggests the term "decentralized centralism" to more accurately convey the reality of this type of government approach.

Dale (1997) notes that the most common response of states to the difficulties encountered in education has been to withdraw. Public organizations are expected to raise funds through corporate involvement and through consumers of education. The discussions are couched in corporate language; educators become producers, and educational administrators become managers and entrepreneurs (Marginson, 1997b; Avis, 2000). Government texts focus on the themes of privatization and decentralization (Karlsen, 2000).

Dale (1997) argues that this withdrawal is a matter of expediency to promote reduced public funding, and to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of education. States have basically rejected their commitment to guarantee education as a public good. Providing citizens with opportunities to participate in advanced education is no longer seen as the responsibility of governments. Instead governments have attempted to insert a competitive ethic as the main driving force for the development of higher education (Neave, 1988). Education has become a market steered by government interventions (Marginson, 1997a).

Dale attributes this marketization of education to a shift towards a neo-liberal ideology, and a response by governments to their perceived capacity or incapacity to effect change in the present social and economic context. Supporting deregulation is often an easy route for governments to avoid having national policies in conflict with the global market economy.

These various discussions reflect the argument by Karlsen (2000) related to decentralization as delegation or devolution. Governments suggest that an evaluative approach allows for increased opportunities and autonomy by higher education, but this approach at the same time increases the accountability and reporting function that are then often linked with funding.

Development of Human Capital

The 1960s and 1970s saw a trend toward the democratization of education (Marginson, 1997b). National education became a vehicle to develop a more just and fair society while also supporting the development of individuals' knowledge and abilities for economic gain (Fisher, Rubenson, & Schuetze, 1994; Brown & Lauder, 1997; Levin & Kelly, 1997). This is often referred to as the human capital approach. Such an approach makes a distinction between education as consumption and investment (Schultz, 1961). As a long-term investment, education is perceived as an instrumental tool for economic well-being (Woodhall, 1997). Raising the quality and productivity of human capital is regarded as a competitive advantage (Brown & Lauder, 1997; Ainley, 1998). While Schultz acknowledged the challenges with this approach, it has been used for many years to categorize education based on its purpose or outcome. Applied education is often couched in investment terms while liberal education is seen as consumption – the benefits of a good general education – despite the fact that it can also be viewed in investment terms (Nordhaug, 1987). The human capital approach supports increased investments in post-secondary education, and applied education in particular.

Education policy became linked with economic policy (Ainley, 1998; Dudley, 1998; Karmel, 1996). Providing access to post-secondary education was high on the agendas of many nations. In an attempt to sustain and support the growth of their economies during times of increasing global competition, many nations began to provide increased opportunities for access to post-secondary education (OECD, 1998b). But the increased investments in education did not always produce the anticipated economic growth (Ainley, 1998). Participation rates in education increased, but graduates were confronted by decreased

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opportunities in middle range occupations (Dwyer & Wyn, 1999). Economies stagnated and unemployment figures rose, even when economic indicators suggested economic recovery (Aronowitz & De Fazio, 1997). Amid this economic decline came increasing demands from the private sector, governments and educators for change in higher education (Paquet, 1998; Cutt & Dobell, 1988).

In the 1980s and 1990s the project for socio-economic equalization began to wane amid pressures from liberal fiscal policy and the influences of globalization, and it was replaced by the notion of regulated educational systems to support merit-based selection of future leaders. Education had long been viewed as the factor that would break the link between social origin and social destination. However, the belief that government interventions could neutralize the social aspects of educational competition was questioned; concerns were expressed that the trend towards meritocracy would exclude currently marginalized groups (Marginson, 1997b; Dwyer & Wyn, 1998). Henry et al. (1999) emphasize the need to put social capital back on educational agendas.

The second wave of the human capital approach emerged in the 1980s with a focus on lifelong learning. Ainley (1998) suggests that it has become almost obligatory to include the notion of a learning society in discussions about economic prosperity. In this form of human capital, building the capacities of individuals for learning and self-reliance is seen as promoting their ability to adapt to changing market and labour trends (Watts, 1988; Marginson, 1997a). Education evolved from a strict career preparation focus for the privileged and the young, to a lifelong learning orientation for all segments of society. This focus on lifelong learning expanded the boundaries of the discussion about the benefits of education.

Dyke (2000) suggests that lifelong learning has become a mantra for policy makers. He questions the rhetoric of empowerment and suggests that it is narrowly defined in policy to the point that it should more aptly be called lifelong training; Jarvis (2000) uses the term worklife learning. Adult learning is increasingly linked with training, and in many cases is used for the acquisition of specific abilities deemed important to economic development (Usher et al., 1997). Rather than creating lifelong learners, the policy agenda in education may be to create a lifelong learning market (Jarvis, 2000).

Regardless of the language used, the concepts of human capital development remains central to public policy (Dudley, 1998). As Skolnik (2000) notes, instrumental economic objectives have been present for many years; post-secondary education has navigated

"between developing people and developing workers, between advancing knowledge and advancing industry" (p. 3). Many countries are investing more in education, particularly postsecondary education (OECD, 2000) even though the relationship between educational expenditures and outcomes was not found to be linear in the OECD analysis (1997a). This non-linear relationship raised questions of cost-effectiveness. Fisher and Rubenson (2000) detect a shift in the OECD conversations about human capital, from a macro to a micro perspective. As the skepticism about post-secondary education persisted, it led to conversations about the accountability and quality of higher education.

Calls for Accountability and Quality

In times of increased fiscal pressures, governments continue to look toward educational reform as a solution to economic problems. However, governments also want to know what they are getting for their investment in higher education (Cutt & Dobell, 1988; Brennan, 1997; Jones, 1997; Skolnik, 1997). The return on educational investment for individuals is more obvious; the returns for societies are more elusive (OECD, 1997a). In their American study Haveman and Wolfe (1994) found that parental levels of educational attainment was associated with children's increased success and attainment. The probability for graduation from high school increases with increased parental schooling. This was more evident for children who had experienced poverty and for those who had lived in "bad neighborhoods." Their research supports the value of education for societies as well.

With the increased needs and demands for education, governments and educators call for increased accountability within higher education. Many also call for change in the way higher education is delivered (Shugars, O'Neil, & Bader, 1991; Smith, 1991; Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993; Gardiner, 1994; BC MoEST, 1996; Bauslaugh, 1997). These arguments focus on certain themes: meeting learners' needs, attending to student learning, realigning structural elements, increasing the quantity and quality of educational research, and addressing the organization and relevance of curriculum. However, others question the arguments presented by the advocates of change (Cutt & Dobell, 1988; Gingras, Massé, & Roy, 2000; Birnbaum & Shushok, 2001). These diverse perspectives are summarized in the following section beginning with the arguments for change, and then followed by a discussion of the contested issues.

Meeting Learners' Needs

Meeting the needs of learners is one of the central issues raised in discussions about educational change (Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993; Barr & Tagg, 1995). The characteristics of learners in postsecondary education have changed with the shift towards universal access in higher education.

Learners today have more diverse backgrounds; many come to post-secondary education with years of experience in the workforce. While these learners are possibly more representative of a pluralistic society, they appear less prepared for higher education when compared to their more affluent peers; they bring different needs to educational institutions than previous students (Schroeder, 1993; Gardiner, 1994; Dunne, Bennett, & Carré, 1997; Kuh, 2001). These diverse learners are also more discriminating in the selection of educational opportunities; they raise more questions related to flexibility and access, (Rowley, Lujan, & Doence, 1998; Bridges, 2000) and thereby influence the argument for change in the current system.

Focusing on Learning

The need to focus on learning is a key element in discussions about educational reform (Lazerson, Wagener, & Shumanis, 2000). In Canada, the Smith report (1991) criticized universities for directing their resources to issues other than learners' needs. Smith argued that there were few innovations directed to teaching and that the pedagogical training of faculty members was not a priority. He concluded that teaching is seriously undervalued in universities. "Generally, the opinion in the university community seems to be that research technique takes years to learn but teaching simply comes naturally" (p. 60). While the focus of the report was directed to university education, the points regarding faculty members' knowledge and approaches to learning are equally applicable to the college and university college sector. Skolnik (2000) contends that the "sage on a stage" approach still represents our most frequent approach to intentional educational experiences.

Nelson (1999) contends that American college faculty members have little understanding of the theory and practice of pedagogy, and have made minimal effort to remedy this situation. Dunne et al. (1997) conclude that the educators in their British study (n = 32) were not familiar with theories of learning. From a British Columbia perspective Gallagher (1995) points out that in the BC college and university college sector, "excellence in teaching has not been given the attention and support that was originally anticipated" (p.

260). A similar view is expressed by Grubb (1999) who notes the lack of institutional support for teaching within American community colleges.

Grubb (1999) argues that the claims of community colleges as teaching institutions are more rhetoric than reality. His research suggests that college administrators know little about what happens in the classroom and much of our knowledge about teaching in community colleges is based on learner satisfaction surveys. Based on extensive observations and interviews in colleges, his research group concluded that the quality of teaching was dependent on the individual instructor. "The quality of teaching is individual and idiosyncratic, rather than the institutional responsibility of a teaching college" (p. 137). While there were examples of innovation, the instruction was often assessed as mediocre.

Gardiner (1994) expresses concerns about teaching and assessment in higher education, calling for a clearer definition of intended outcomes with more focus on the interaction of curricula with student learning. This position is supported by others (Cross, 1997a, 1997b, 1998; O'Banion, 1997, 1999; Wilson, Miles, Backer, & Schoenberger 2000) indicating a need for better information about students' developmental needs and their achievements as they progress through the curricula.

Realigning Structural Elements

Barr and Tagg (1995) call for a shift in focus from teaching to learning. Although their argument is weakened by the use of a dichotomous framework for the relationship between teaching and learning, they raise valid points. Many of our current organizational structures and processes focus on educators' and organizational needs, rather than learners' needs. Courses and schedules are organized around specific disciplines and associated faculty needs. Access is often restricted by on-site delivery methods commonly implemented between the hours of eight to five. Learners are often forced to maneuver around various policies and procedures to have previous learning recognized in order to gain access to relevant courses. Skolnik (2000) supports the claim that many of our postsecondary organizations in Canada are designed for the people who administer and work in them. Grubb (1999) argues that our organizational structures are places where those who have been traditionally served by higher education do well. The ones who need more support are often blamed for their inability to cope within our structures; the responsibility is shifted from our educational organizations to the learners.

Cross (1999b) argues that educational structures are grounded in assembly line procedures, but our future lies in our ability to individualize educational experiences. Reform initiatives have been piecemeal and inadequate; therefore delivery tends to be fragmented rather than integrated and holistic. According to Gardiner (1994) important organizational changes can only come about through changes in the culture of post-secondary organizations. These perspectives about organizational influences and focus suggest the need to realign the structural elements of educational organizations to deliver learning that is appropriate for today's diverse groups of learners.

Educational Research

Researchers suggest that change is challenging in post-secondary education when educational research receives little attention in the general university culture and context. For example, Smith (1991) is critical of the quality and paucity of research on the topic of higher education in Canada; Gallagher (1995) points to the lack of evidence about the quality of teaching in BC colleges and university colleges from a quantitative perspective. Papadopoulos (1998) and Kuh (2001) also stress the need for more educational research, and Gardiner (1994) argues that we tend to collect information about the intentions of curriculum in higher education but not the outcomes. Based on a study of British educators, Dunne et al. (1997) contend that educators know little about how students learn, although there is a sense that people learn in different ways. Donaldson (1999) argues that we base our teaching on research conducted on younger adults in transition from public school and that we have little understanding of variables that affect adult learning.

This perceived lack of quality research may be related to the status of teaching and learning within organizations of higher education. Smith (1991) suggests that university faculty members tend to get more recognition for research in disciplines other than education. Wright (2000) expresses the same concern about assessment. "It has to be recognized as a legitimate contribution to scholarship and become a normal part of promotion and tenure consideration" (p. 56).

The paucity of research is exacerbated within colleges, as research is not commonly a mandate. Dennison (1992) contends that the heavy student contact time in colleges presents a challenge for scholarly activity. He also suggests that the college environment breeds "intellectual fatigue" as faculty members teach the same introductory courses year after year, and often do not have the stimulation provided by association with colleagues teaching in

more advanced courses and graduate programs. Grubb (1999) notes that many colleges have offices of institutional research, but these offices are largely devoted to the generation of compliance reports and public relations efforts. When combined with the lack of institutional support for teaching, college faculty members are often left to fend for themselves in isolation.

Curriculum in Higher Education

The organization and relevance of curriculum in higher education is also called into question (Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993; Dunne et al., 1997; Whitston, 1998; Bridges, 2000). The general education component is criticized for its lack of coherence and structure. "To express its perceived incoherent, hodgepodge character, this distribution system [certification based on credit accumulation] has been variously and irrelevantly dubbed a supermarket, cafeteria, grab bag, or green-stamp endeavor" (Gardiner, 1994, p. 34). Students accumulate credits towards credentials but the underlying educational experiences are often disjointed and fragmented (Kuh, 2001). Canning (1998) suggested that there is a need to bring coherence and structure to education through enhancement of the general education component of the curriculum.

Relevance of the curriculum is another area of concern. Learners, employers, and the public look for abilities that will allow individuals to manage change more effectively in a competitive global community (Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993). Candy and Crebert (1991) analyzed the incontinuities between post-secondary education and the world of work and found that graduates were "often ill-equipped to deal with aspects of the workplace such as problem solving, decision making, working in a team, or learning for themselves" (p. 572). In their study of Canadian university students and graduates, Evers, Rush and Berdrow (1998) found that the skills in most demand by employers, visioning, creativity, risk taking and leadership, are also the areas in which students and graduates expressed the least confidence.

Drake (1997) indicates that the demand for change in curriculum is mainly focused on the higher order thinking skills and the ability to interact with people. Gardiner (1994) argues along the same lines. We are not helping our learners to acquire the knowledge and abilities they will need to develop their careers or to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens.

Martin (1985) supports the argument for integration, but from a slightly different perspective. She makes a distinction between *productive* and *reproductive* forces in defining

curriculum. She argues that our concept of being educated has focused solely on productive processes that relate to political, social, and economic aspects, but that we have failed to incorporate the reproductive aspects that relate to processes surrounding the nurturing of the family, thus leading to alienation of learners rather than their integration. These discussions about the nature and relevance of curricula are embedded in the ongoing debate about the aims and outcomes of education.

Within the BC context Bauslaugh (1992) directs his critique towards general education and undergraduate programs. He suggests that our programs are "generally strong, but limited in their scope" (p. 5). They are strong in the sense that they provide the traditional discipline-based preparation for graduate school, specific careers and entry into professional schools, but limited in scope because they do not address the needs of learners who are not interested in pursuing graduate studies or entrance requirements into specific career programs. According to Bauslaugh the emphasis on general intellectual abilities, and an understanding of the ideas underlying our current global society are generally missing.

This is not to suggest that the current experiences of learners in post-secondary education are not valuable both from economic and personal perspectives. The argument is that we are not meeting our potential in higher education. Many researchers contend that we need to support learners in developing their ability "to learn to learn" so that they can be prepared to adapt to a world we have yet to imagine (Candy & Crebert, 1991; Ministry of Employment and Immigration & Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology,1991; Shugars et al., 1991; O'Neil, 1993; Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993; Gardiner, 1994; Evers et al., 1998). In the BC context, Gallagher (1995) suggests that the current structure and faculty approach in colleges focus on a role of dependency not independency. In summary, the calls for change are directed to student learning and the multiple elements that support that learning.

The need for increased accountability and quality permeates the calls for change in higher education in Canada (Cutt & Dobell, 1998). However, this is not to suggest that there is agreement among educators and politicians about these issues. The literature suggests education has been in crisis for more than a century, and there is no general agreement as to the nature of the crisis or the issues that need to be addressed (Birnbaum & Shushok, 2001). Eisner (1994) suggests that the depth of analysis by the crisis advocates is shallow. Among the controversial and contested areas in my discussion are the issues of learner satisfaction

with higher education, the quality and quantity of research in education, and the relationship between education and work.

Learner Satisfaction

Based on data from the National Graduates Survey, Gingras et al. (2000) argue that student satisfaction levels have not changed over the past 20 years, and may in fact have increased with 82% of the 1990 Canadian university cohort reporting satisfaction with their education and job match compared to 71% of the 1982 cohort. They indicate that the data for vocational programs and career technical programs are similar. The authors of the BC strategic plan also state that their research indicates "that the public perceives the system as having provided a generally effective educational service to British Columbians over the years," and "approximately 70 percent of learners, employers and the general public support the system on the basis of the job it is doing" (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 14). The call for change is not necessarily based solely on the learners' or public's perceptions of higher education as often suggested by politicians.

Type of Research

When discussing educational research Cross (1999b) notes, "we know a lot about student learning. We know it through research and scholarship; we know it through our own experiences as learners; and we know it through the lessons our students teach us everyday" (p. 269). Cross proposes that we look for the gold nuggets found in previous research and melt them down into gold bullion. We have to integrate the insights that we have gained from practice in interpreting research results and we need to focus on more useful research that will shed more light on our practice worlds. This supports the earlier findings of Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) whose analysis of nearly 2600 studies of student learning indicates that research in education is substantial, and that we have considerable knowledge about the outcomes and value of post-secondary education. They found that college attendance was generally associated with significant gains in factual knowledge, and many abilities including critical thinking, analytical skills, and both verbal and written communication skills. Students also change with respect to self-esteem, values, attitudes and moral reasoning. The authors also argue that college attendance may generally have an effect in stabilizing abilities and preventing regression that may occur when abilities are not used. Rather than more research, we may just need different kinds of research to better understand learning.

Link Between Education and Work

The utilitarian link between education and work is also challenged in current educational debates. While the OECD (1997a) suggests that the return on educational investment for individuals is more obvious than the return for societies, Haveman and Wolfe (1994) found parental education to be an important positive factor in children's lives including an increased completion rate of high school, a decrease in nonmarital teenage pregnancies and a decrease in economic inactivity. However, Marginson (1997a) argues that the return on individual educational investment may also vary depending on the nature of the studies completed.

Based on his analysis of British Columbian labour force data, Allen (1996) argues that university graduates have lower unemployment rates and higher earnings when compared to graduates of short-term or 2-year technical and vocational programs. Allen attributes this to the general employability skills that are woven throughout university programs. Gingras, Massé and Roy (2000) also suggest that occupations requiring high levels of communication and reasoning abilities have increased compared to other occupations; however, their overall numbers are small when compared to overall employment opportunities. These authors also did not find "any significant deterioration in the labour market situation of low-skilled workers relative to that of high-skilled workers" (p. 254). Avis (2000) questions the strength of the relationship between education and economic well-being beyond basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, projection of skill needs is a challenging venture given that employers may use education as a screening device (Rubenson, 1987) and given the anticipated skill shortages resulting in part from the aging of the current workforce (Gallagher & Lamoureux, 2001).

Experiences in Canada and elsewhere indicated that the relationship between education and the economy was complex. An educational focus on employability does not necessarily translate into employment (Brown & Lauder, 1997). "Education cannot in itself generate capital movements or create wealth, except to the extent that it becomes a fully-fledged market commodity in its own right" (Marginson (1997, p. 29). Ainley (1998) and Avis (2000) go so far as to suggest that the relationship between the economy and education may be the reverse of what we currently perceive. The economy may stimulate further education, but education is only one of many factors in a complex array of variables that influence productivity and economic competitiveness; the importance of other complementary inputs and conditions should not be minimized (Levin & Kelly, 1997; Ainley,

1998). For example, Lipsey (2000) suggests that technological change is the "main engine of long term economic growth" (p. 47).

While the focus on education is deemed to be important for a sustainable economy, its role may be exaggerated (Brown & Lauder, 1997; Woodhall, 1997; Levin & Kelley, 1997). Much of the rhetoric rests on an assumption of the relationship between competitiveness and the global economy; this is also the basis for much of the rhetoric about learning societies (Avis, 2000). Despite these arguments, human capital theory still appears to dominate the policy discourse surrounding higher education in British Columbia and elsewhere.

Governments are interested in the degree of benefit to societies from the investment in human capital (OECD, 1997a). Amid increased fiscal pressures, governments continue to look towards educational reform as a solution to economic problems. However, governments also want to know what they are getting for their investment in higher education (Brennan, 1997). Cutt and Dobell (1988) indicate that Canadian taxpayers deserve a better explanation about the use of funds in post-secondary education.

The state of the economy, the demand for more opportunities for higher education and concerns about the current status of higher education influence policy makers to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education. "Meeting the costs of learning-thirsty societies will, in fact, be the question for the future. Given continuing constraints on public budgets and sluggish economic growth, there are no easy solutions" (Papadopoulos, 1998, p. 44). In the context of globalization and economic decline, issues of accountability and quality have become central themes for educational reform (Dunne, et al., 1997).

Key Words in Educational Reform

Discussions about accountability, institutional management and cost-effectiveness permeate many public services, not just higher education. Neave (1988) suggests that these concerns and the movement to mass higher education led to the consolidation of previous evaluative initiatives and their reorientation to outcomes. This represents a shift in the traditional input-process-output and outcome model used in both public and private sectors. Such a shift aligns higher education more closely with national priorities. Fisher and Rubenson (1998) suggest that the accountability movement in Canada was influenced by a general suspicion of public institutions and a faith in the free market. The following section presents an overview of the accountability movement that was at the heart of an evaluative

state, and the other key aspects associated with its implementation. The discussion revolves around the definition of accountability and its operationalization. Key words such as performance indicators, performance funding, efficiency and quality frame this discussion.

Accountability

A key theme in educational reform is accountability. Most educators would probably agree that accountability is an important and relevant discussion in higher education; it is an integral element of professionalism. Controversies about government accountability and organizational autonomy are not new, but Alexander (2000) suggests that the difference in current discussions of accountability is that they are based on the perception that "traditional measures of institutional performance and effectiveness such as peer review and market choice are not sufficient indicators of institutional value" (p. 414). The shift in the discussions implies a change in the acceptance of peer review but this has not been explicitly stated (Cave et al., 1991).

Current discussions about accountability in higher education are directed to market accountability and political accountability (Ball, Vincent, & Radnor, 1997). Policy makers are interested in assessing the efficiency and quality of higher education in an attempt to make higher education more responsive to societal and economic demands. "Downsizing, retrenchment and doing more with less have become themes, if not necessities, for most institutions" (Rush, 1995, p. 109). Educators are required "to do more with less," with the "more" adjective being directed to increased access and increased quality.

In many jurisdictions accountability is operationalized in the form of performance indicators, which may then be linked to performance funding. Performance indicators have a long history (Kells, 1990; Bruneau & Savage, 2002), but they became prominent in the United Kingdom during the Thatcher years when they were first applied to assess university research in Britain. This focus then shifted to teaching and learning as well. It was suggested that performance indicators would promote greater efficiency and quality in higher education (Cave et al., 1991).

In the United States an emphasis on outcomes began in the mid-1980s driven by governments both at the national and state level. The National Governors Association was particularly influential in promoting the outcomes agenda (Manno, 1994). Themes were similar to those in the United Kingdom but were operationalized through the notion of assessment that was furthered by the accreditation system (Derlin et al., 1986). Accreditation

reviews shifted from a process focused on organizational improvement to one more directed towards monitoring external guidelines. Salvador (1996) suggests this represented a real change in the focus of accreditation and raised the fear that outcomes assessment would become the new orthodoxy of accreditation. However, Wright (2000) presents a different perspective. She contends that, "With prodding from the US Department of Education and the savvy cooperation of accreditors, assessment has proven to be an extraordinarily useful tool" (p. 54). She suggests that the assessment movement revitalized accreditation, and that the accreditation process in turn has kept the assessment movement alive. Whatever the relationship between accreditation and the assessment movement, there was an interaction between them.

This dialogue about outcomes assessment in the United States is very similar to discussions in other parts of the world about performance indicators (Cuttance, Harman, Reynold, Macpherson, & Smart, 1998; Dale, 1999; Bruneau & Savage, 2002), but it was conducted in the context of self-regulation. Regardless of how the conversations were framed, the ultimate focus was directed to learner achievement, the outcomes of learning (Derlin et al., 1986).

Productivity and efficiency were seen as the aims of accountability (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). However, as Bruneau and Savage (2002) argue "efficiency is not an end it itself – one must ask, efficiency in aid of what goals?" (p. 11). Discussions about efficiency stimulated conversations about quality and equity (Creemers, 1997), and while both efficiency and quality are elusive and highly contested constructs, performance indicators have been constructed to measure them.

Performance Indicators

Performance indicators are by no means a new phenomenon. Bruneau and Savage (2002) trace the history of performance indicators to the nineteenth and twentieth century although they suggest that traces of such measurements are evident as far back as the renaissance period. They identify five phases beginning in 1850: the origins phase, the efficiency phase, the behaviourist and accountancy phase[1], the systems theory and management phase, and lastly the performance indicator phase that came into vogue with the election of more conservative governments in the United Kingdom and the United States in the 1980s.

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[1] This phase also included the influences from the electronic sciences and industry production systems.

The OECD was influential in developing indicators to support public accountability in education (OECD, 1998a). The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) directed its attention to educational indicators in 1988 (OECD, 1995a). These indicators were designed to provide input to national policy makers about monitoring systems and educational systems in general. They developed a framework that included demographic and social characteristics of the population (context and inputs), educational programs and processes (process) and outcomes (outputs). However they cautioned against interpreting the relationship between elements of the framework as causal relationships, describing it instead as a conceptual map, not a model.

As suggested by the OECD approach, indicators are frequently based on some combination of inputs, processes and outputs or outcomes (Graney & Kellaghan, 1996). However the current shift towards an evaluative state places increasing emphasis on outcomes, and the relationship between inputs and outcomes or outputs[2]. While the development of performance indicators involves some rocky terrain, there are common approaches used to define the outcomes of teaching and learning (Derlin et al., 1986; Cave et al., 1991; Cave, Hanney, Henkel, & Kogan, 1997). These include the following: cost-benefit approach, cost-effectiveness approach, and valued-added approach. These approaches are embedded in the constructs of efficiency and quality. Performance indicators are used to measure the efficiency and quality of higher education and through this measurement process is postulated to support the overall accountability of higher education.

Supporters and opponents of performance indicators agree that the landscape of indicators is a challenging terrain. Strathern (2000) points to issues surrounding validity and reliability of the data and raises the concern that "visibility as a conduit for knowledge is elided with visibility as an instrument for control" (p. 311).

Politicians and administrators are frequently influenced by cost-effectiveness so there is a tendency to use data at hand and data that can be easily gathered (Cave et al., 1991; Bruneau & Savage, 2002). In their study of institutional assessment practices, Peterson and Einarson (2001) found that organizations tended to focus on data that could be easily quantified such as employment outcomes and further education. More complex measures such as cognitive development were not used as frequently. Yorke (2000) uses the analogy of a coconut to describe the risks associated with performance indicators.

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[2] The terms "outcomes" and "outputs" are used synonymously by some and are differentiated by others. Those that differentiate view outcomes as being related to quality issues, and outputs as attrition and graduation data (Cave et al., 1991).

The information available about institutional performance has the characteristics of a coconut – a hard shell surrounding a softer center. The danger is that attention will focus upon hard data that can be measured with reasonable accuracy and that less weight will be given to the softer kinds of judgment about what is important. (p. 2)

Measurements tend to become more difficult and less reliable as complexity of the unit to be assessed increases (Karmel, 1996). Often the indicators we wish to measure may be too impractical and costly to implement. However, using a smorgasbord of data from previous studies is also problematic. There is a general concern about the adequacy of the information systems needed to sustain performance indicators and their management (Kells, 1990; Bruneau & Savage, 2002). This concern is heightened in times of fiscal restraint, and indicators are often criticized for being "highly constructed and artificial means of measuring real output" (Strathern, 2000, p. 311). In attempting to meet the demands for public accountability, policy makers and administrators may be confounding the construct of quality through the introduction of unrelated measures. This is particularly relevant to postsecondary education whose aims are more complex when compared to the business sector that commonly has more clearly defined and simple goals such as maximizing returns on investment (Karmel, 1996).

As well as the measurement issue, there are also interpretation challenges. "Because of their partial nature, individual performance indicators often provide potentially misleading impressions even of average productivity" (Cave et al., 1991, p. 34). Writing from a BC perspective in K-12 context, Sullivan (1988) indicated that many variables needed to be measured to gain an understanding of learner outcomes. He suggested it would be "perverse to establish and act on the basis of performance measures which failed to capture the primary objectives of the activity measured" (p. 181). In the case of subject assessment Bruneau and Savage (2002) suggest that interpretation of performance indicators is at least as challenging as facilitating the learning itself.

The issue of interpretation is closely linked with concerns about the use of performance indicators. "Whilst information may be innocent, the use to which it is put may not be" (Kells, 1990, p. 7). Initially the drive was to find performance indicators that could be used to compare the outcomes of organizations within systems (Cave et al., 1991). There were concerns that a comparative approach would lead to organizational ranking (Kells, 1990); this of course would disadvantage organizations with less resources. Yorke (2000)

identified the potentially punitive aspects of performance indicators, arguing that we need to anticipate their possible effects and their side effects.

Indicators should also to be within the control of educators. Concern is expressed that post-secondary organizations will be held accountable for economic and social variables over which they have no control (Featherman,1993; Bruneau & Savage, 2002). Some researchers claim that governments and the public have unrealistic expectations of postsecondary education (Kenny-Wallace, 1988) fueled by a desire to see change within one election period (Webber & Townsend, 1998). The relationship between the performance indicators and the responsibilities of higher education need to be clarified.

Educators are also concerned about the relationship between performance indicators and funding. This discussion is sometimes euphemistically couched in terms of "incentives for performance" (Seppanen, 1998) or "funding mechanisms to reward performance" (Hildebrand, 1998). This is a particular concern in British Columbia as two of its neighbours, the state of Washington and the province of Alberta have initiated links between performance indicators and funding. Ultimately the discussions about outcomes and performance indicators often become linked to performance funding (Kells, 1990; Bruneau & Savage, 2002).

Despite the enormous costs and challenges associated with the implementation of performance indicators in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, advocates of reform continue to promote their implementation (Collins, 1993; Beevers, 1993; Ecclestone, 1994; Bruneau & Savage, 2002). The audit culture is ubiquitous in the public sector, and particularly so in higher education (Jackson, 1993; Foley, 1999).

Efficiency and Quality

Discussions about accountability often focus on the measurement of efficiency and quality. Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) discuss the challenges of this narrowly focused dialogue. Efficiency is not a concept that can be easily observed or measured; it is a complex construct. Agreement has not been achieved on the actual concepts to be included within it. The same applies to quality; it is an elusive and highly contested construct. It is a frequently used but often ill-defined term (Karmel, 1996). Historically the concept of quality was associated with ideas of excellence or outstanding performance. Now it is more closely linked to the ideas of efficiency and effectiveness. The construct of efficiency has been subsumed by the broader construct of quality (Cave et al., 1997).

The construct of educational quality has become embedded in the language of business management. It often reflects cost cutting and increased competition (Brennan, 1997). The assessment of quality came into vogue through quality assurance, quality audits, and total quality management approaches, and this theme continues to evolve (Joss & Kogan, 1995). The most recent version is the idea of continuous quality improvement. These approaches to quality have created tensions within higher education. The academic perspectives on quality focus on standards, coherence and understanding (Brennan, 1997), and are often at odds with efficiency models drawn from the private sector.

Many authors agree that quality is an elusive, complex and multi-faceted concept (Derlin et al., 1986; Nadeau 1992; Dennison, 1995; Woodhouse, 1999). Attempts to define quality have ranged from philosophical approaches to operational definitions based on many different variables such as faculty credentials, number of hours, course work, grades, and employment. Quality is often approached from several perspectives including reputational, resources, outcomes and value-added perspectives (Derlin et al., 1986; Dennison, 1995).

Gaining general consensus on quality indicators or attributes may be a manageable task. Nadeau (1995) developed a list of indicators reflecting the classic inputs, process, context, and outputs / outcomes model. He conducted a study using a modified FOCUS-DELPHI technique to determine the perceptions of major stakeholders in education regarding the indicators and criteria related to the concept of quality and excellence. During the final validation phase, 1,113 (77%) of the 1,447 indicators of quality and excellence were rated as 3.5 or above on a five-point scale related to their importance. Except in criteria related to research, no differences were found by region, by language spoken, or by type of organization (i.e., colleges and universities). However, Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) note the limitations of using multivariate analysis in defining the construct of quality. The outcome is ultimately dependent on the initial task of selecting the measures; regardless of the approach used in the development of the measures there are inherent risks of bias embedded in their selection. If nothing else, Nadeau's analysis supports the notion that the evaluation of quality is a complex venture. However, a list of indicators may not bring us closer to the issue of educational quality in the absence of specific measurements and it may not be possible to measure quality independently.

While focusing on process may be limiting, the same argument could be made for the focus on outcomes. Afshar (1990) suggests that a more comprehensive approach to quality may be reached through applying the *Attributive Theory of Quality*, which he defines as "the

interactive sum of all the necessary and sufficient properties that comprise a phenomenon" (p. 12). Others also suggest a broader perspective, a systems approach to measuring quality (Dahllöf, 1991; Cavanaugh, 1993; Lewis & Smith, 1994). The process of evaluation becomes a tool for continuous improvement in education.

The approach of building quality elements into the system and constantly monitoring the system is attributed to the work of W. Edwards Deming and other authors of total quality management in business (Lewis & Smith, 1994). The actual terms used in such systems models may vary slightly but the underlying concept is the same. They acknowledge the complexity of assessing quality, and the need to look at the relationship between elements within the system to gain a more meaningful understanding of the quality phenomenon. Cave et al. (1997) suggest that performance indicators may have a role to play in overall quality management. They may provide a context for decision-making, and may help to determine certain key issues or questions to address.

This change to a systems approach reflects a further change in the concept of quality, one that suggests a negotiation between excellence and efficiency. The most commonly accepted definition appears to be "fitness for purpose" (Woodhouse, 1990; Stephenson, 1998). Institutions are evaluated to determine how well they meet their defined mission and purpose. This allows for organizational diversity while still meeting the needs for accountability. But as Stephenson stresses, this approach often takes the purpose of education as a given.

This fitness for purpose is the focus on quality that is currently applied by the commissions on accreditation in the United States. Wright (2000) suggests that the increased focus by the American accreditation commissions on the assessment movement has changed the definition of quality from a reputational and resources perspective to one focused on learning outcomes, development / improvement, or value-added approaches. She suggests that this shift has made educational quality "more inclusive, more democratic, more egalitarian" (p. 55). This echoes the views of Dennison (1995) who suggests that the concept of talent development may provide opportunities for organizations that work more closely with marginalized groups to demonstrate their contribution to the social and economic benefits of its learners.

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) has adopted this type of broad definition of quality. "First and foremost, quality is directly linked to, and can mostly be measured by, the extent to which each institution realizes its mission" (MPHEC,

1997a, p. 1). The BC institutional evaluation process is based on a similar approach to measuring quality (AECBC, 1991). This approach integrates the new emphasis on outcomes with more historical approaches to quality.

Assessing the effectiveness and quality of an organization or a system ultimately involves the question of values. Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) identify this as one of the major problems in this area. The pertinent values have never been clearly articulated. This is a reflection of the ongoing debate about the aims of education, an issue we have been grappling with for over 2000 years.

Dennison (1995) has labeled the quest for accountability in higher education as a mission impossible. "Accountability is in the eye of the stakeholder, each of which may demand different services, performances, and outcomes. While there may be superficial agreement upon performance indicators, they are usually so impractical that they cannot be measured" (Dennison, 1995, p. 241). Accountability appears to be a term understood by many, yet its definition and measurement is disputed and controversial. The same applies to the construct of efficiency and quality; the highly abstract nature of these constructs and the lack of agreement regarding their analysis may account for some of the confusion and ambiguity in the literature.

Brennan (1997) suggests that the controversies surrounding quality are based in language and power issues. The dialogue is couched in the market language of targets and performance indicators, but they are suffused with ideas of social inclusion, co-operation and partnerships (Avis, 2000). Governments tend to defined quality from a consumer perspective (Cave et al., 1997). Competition and teamwork are intermixed in the rhetoric. However, the imposition of corporate language threatens the autonomy of higher education (Brennan, 1997). This analysis of the accountability movement and its associated performance indicator measurements sets the stage for the discussions surrounding learning and the outcomes of learning.

Learning Outcomes Approach

The relationship between education and the economy is at the core of educational reform initiatives, and the development of learning outcomes are described as an important aspect of this relationship (BC MoEST, 1996). A learning outcomes approach is viewed as a way to promote enhanced learning and increased accountability (Drake, 1997). In particular, discussions about learning outcomes focus on the relationship between education and work (Brennan, Kogan, & Teichler, 1996; Betcherman, McMullen, & Davidman, 1998; Fisher & Rubenson, 1998). Learning outcomes are directed towards the abilities that graduates need to assume roles in society and the economy in particular. Through the strategic plan (MoEST, 1996), C2T2 was directed to promote a learning outcomes approach. This initiative was introduced amidst discussions of quality, efficiency and accountability that were also embedded in the strategic plan.

One challenging aspect of the learning outcomes initiative in British Columbia was to define it. What exactly was a learning outcomes approach? What if anything was new or different about this approach? At first glance, these appeared to be simple questions but they formed the basis of lengthy debates in British Columbia. In this section I analyze the origins of the learning outcomes debates, define a learning outcomes approach, discuss its relationship to educational reform, and review the evidence to support its position as a reform initiative.

Origins of Learning Outcomes

Discussions about learning outcomes originate from several sources, although the influences ultimately blend in conversations about curriculum reform. The previous sections identified the political origins of the conversations about the "outcomes of learning" defined in multiple ways. From this perspective, performance indicators would be developed to measure the outcomes of learning. Certain outcomes measures would be directed to the abilities that learners possess as a result of their educational experiences. Defining and measuring "learning outcomes" would thus support accountability, efficiency and quality in higher education.

Discussions about learning outcomes also arise from a pedagogical perspective. Lazerson et al. (2000) identify the development of a movement to take teaching and learning seriously. They suggest this movement runs parallel to the assessment movement. From this perspective learning outcomes are linked to notions of coherence (Mentkowski, 1998), and

clarity and transparency (Avis, 2000). They also focus on issues of relevance (Candy & Crebert, 1991; Battersby, 1999), a term that is often connected to the construct of quality (Derlin et al., 1986; Newman, 1999). Many of these discussions are linked by a concept called "integrated education," a term described by Jennings (1997) in the following way: "integrative education is defined as education that promotes learning and teaching in nonfragmented ways that embrace notions of holism, complexity, and interconnection. Integrative education rejects the common emphasis on transmitted knowledge" (p. 2). Such an approach is described as embracing the links rather than the differences between disciplines.

Discussions about curriculum reform are often couched in outcomes language and focus on the abilities that would support graduates in a post-industrial labour market (Carmichael, 1993; Betcherman et al., 1998). An increased emphasis on assessment of learning brought the economic and pedagogical elements together. Models were built around common outcomes for student performance (Haworth & Browne, 1992; Drake, 1997; McDaniel, Felder, Gordon, Hrutka, & Quinn, 2000), and performances were assessed to determine student learning. Performance auditing was accepted as a new type of professional conduct (Barzelay, 1997), and assessment of learning became a focus for promoting learning as well as demonstrating accountability (Schmitz, 1994).

The previous sections focused on the political discussions surrounding the outcomes of learning. In the next sections I focus primarily on the pedagogical discussions that shaped the concept of learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes Defined

The conversations in British Columbia revolve around the outcomes of learning and learning outcomes. Some use the terms interchangeably while others discuss the idea of learning outcomes as one aspect of the larger conversation about the outcomes of learning. The terms also merge with conversations about competency based education (CBE), outcome based education (OBE), skills and abilities. This multiplicity of terms is not unusual in policy texts (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992). It is an example of how concepts are shaped in practice by educators and politicians.

It seems logical to define what you expect students to learn, and then to design the instructional activities and the evaluation structure around those defined learner outcomes. Educators have been discussing outcomes for many years in relationship to course goals,

behavioural objectives, instructional objectives and competencies. The literature is replete with approaches to defining educational intention including the following: educational objectives (Tyler, 1949), instructional objectives (Mager, 1975), behavioural and non behavioural objectives (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 1996), and expressive objectives (Eisner, 1979).

Taxonomies of educational intentions were part of the movement to bring clarity to curriculum and evaluation. Bloom's taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956) was the most influential of these, and it linked well with the work of Mager (1975) related to instructional objectives. While Bloom's taxonomy was very influential (Anderson & Sosniak, 1994), it was also criticized for its simplistic and hierarchical approach (Marzano, 2001). The 1980s saw a shift in emphasis towards higher order thinking and reasoning abilities. New taxonomies emerged. The Structure of the Observed Learning Outcomes (SOLO) Taxonomy (Biggs & Collis, 1982) focused on the quality of learning by analyzing the structure of an individual's response. Mezirow (1998) developed a Taxonomy of Critical Reflection Assumptions to assist educators in facilitating self-assessment. Jans and Leclercq (1997) argue along a similar vein in proposing the need for a taxonomy of metacognitive realism to assist learners in the development of self-assessment abilities. Ultimately these taxonomies were designed to provide ways of understanding learning and the evaluation of learning.

As is evident from the previous discussions, we have a plethora of terms and definitions related to the purpose or aims of education. Allan (1996) suggests that our situation "arises from the liberal use of a number of labels to connote statements of purpose which operate at different levels of specificity, with the result that the literature of educational intention has become a minefield of terminological confusion" (p. 93). This is not necessarily a recent phenomenon but it may have been accentuated by the introduction of yet another way of describing our educational intentions and outcomes.

The concept of learning outcomes is generally defined in very broad terms. The following list provides examples of definitions from a Canadian context:

> Learning outcomes represent the integration of knowledge, concepts, skills and dispositions in complex role performances. (Shipley, 1995, p. 13)

> The learning outcomes approach means **basing program and curriculum design, content and delivery on an identification of the knowledge skills and values needed by both students and society. ... Learning outcomes are thus the knowledge, skills and values acquired by students as a result of their educational experiences**[3]. (Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996, p. E2-E3)

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[3] The bolded text reflects the authors' emphasis.

Learning outcomes are statements of the results of the learning process. They identify what the learner is able to do or perform as a result of their learning experience. They may include statements about the learner's knowledge, skills, abilities and values. (Stanley & Mason, 1997, p. 5)

Learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statement of knowledge and comprehension. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant learning has been verified and achieved by graduates of the program. (College Standards and Accreditation Council, 1995, p. 2)

These policy texts highlight a variety of themes connected to the concept of learning outcomes. Outcomes based education falls within the area of "knowing how" as opposed to "knowing that" (Hutmacher, 1997). Advocates of reform use the term learning outcome to refer to a specific approach for documenting the purpose of education from a learners' perspective. The definitions place an emphasis on the proof of outcomes, on demonstrations of learning, and suggest that these demonstrations focus on significant outcomes reflecting an authentic environment. Learning outcomes are defined in broad, general terms so as to reflect cumulative learning and include the notion of knowledge, skills and attitudes, language that is reminiscent of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). They are described as being non-disciplinary and transferable (Dunne et al., 1997). Learning is also intended to be reflective of the "real world" but this characteristic is often slanted towards an economic and employment focus (Curtain & Hayton, 1993; Ecclestone, 1994).

Much of the literature addresses the notion of graduate outcomes, but in the BC literature there is also discussion about the outcomes being adapted to reflect the outcomes of specific courses (Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996; Battersby, 1999). This is evident in the approach taken by the faculty members at Alverno College; their abilities are translated into course outcomes. The broader outcomes are threaded throughout the curriculum permeating each course. This is often described as designing down the curriculum (Spady, 1994; Schmitz, 1994; Drake, 1997).

Proponents attempt to distinguish between learning outcomes and other ways of expressing the outcomes of learning. Shipley (1995) presents a dichotomous approach in which the competency and behavioural approach is indicated as being narrow in focus, employment oriented, and content driven. In contrast learning outcomes are described as learner-centered, integrated, transferable, and related to adult life and work (see Table 1). Others present the difference by degree of emphasis. Learning outcomes are proposed to be

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more integrated and more holistic (Battersby, 1999). Learning outcomes are described as being a product of systems theory and education is regarded as a learning system[4] (Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996).

The concept of systems theory is attributed to the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1960s (Laszlo, 1972a). He emphasized the organization of elements and their interdependence. A system was defined as an organized whole with boundaries that were open and through which energy was exchanged (Potts & Hagan, 2000). The concept was originally applied to sciences but developed interdisciplinary acceptance as it was shaped into the concept of 'systems approach' and 'systems thinking' (Laszlo, 1994). However, the acceptance of this concept was not universal. Opponents viewed it as simplistic, mechanistic and the imposition of a worldview based on positivism and behaviourism (Lilienfeld, 1978). Despite its opponents the concept continues to be discussed as a way of focusing on holism and integration (Skyttner, 2001). Its application to learning outcomes appears to be focused towards the integration of elements surrounding learning thus supporting holistic learning experiences and outcomes.

The distinctions made by the advocates of a learning outcomes approach are not as obvious as they wish them to be. In British Columbia the DACUM (Develop a Curriculum) process has been popular in applied areas. This approach is used to define exit competencies described in terms of the skills, knowledge and attitudes graduates require to integrate into their respective practice environments. Joyner (1995) suggests that the DACUM approach and CBE are often considered as one concept or process. However, he distinguishes between the two, suggesting that the focus of competencies is on 'how' students learn while the DACUM approach addresses 'what' they should learn. This may have been true of the original competency format which had an underlying assumption that following the process guidelines in sequential order would lead to the defined outcome (Sunell, 1998). However it may no longer be valid given the evolution of competency frameworks in recent years.

As educators worked with the competency framework, it evolved from descriptions of discrete technical tasks to explanations of complex exit skills. Reynolds and Salters (1995) suggest that several competency models have emerged, with the first ones focusing on behaviour at the cost of knowledge and understanding. Further models adopted a more holistic approach to include additional elements affecting performance such as understanding, knowledge and values. Competencies are described in terms of a "general capability based on

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[4] Ruth Steihl from the University of Oregon also used this language during her workshops in BC.

Table 1.   How are Learning Outcomes Different from Behavioral Objectives / Competencies

Learning Outcomes	NOT	Behavioral Objectives / Competencies
performance specifications which describe performances demonstrated in authentic contexts.	not	design specifications which describe inputs such as topics to be covered or discrete skills to be mastered during the course.
adult life / work role expectations	not	job-specific skills / tasks / knowledge
essential outcomes which represent exit standards for a program / course / unit of learning	not	preferred outputs which are demonstrated in sequence and measured at specific intervals throughout the course.
the results of integrated learning (knowledge / concepts / skills / dispositions) expressed as role performances.	not	intentions that drive curriculum design
transferable abilities based on integrated learning applicable in many contexts	not	directly observable behaviors that are specific to context, content, conditions and time
learner-centered and performance-based	not	discipline / subject-centered or content based.

From Shipley, 1995, p. 17

knowledge, experience, values, dispositions which a person has developed through involvement with educational practices" (Hutmacher, 1997, p. 45).

In Australia professional and paraprofessional programs use a broad and holistic approach in defining their competencies (Curtain & Hayton, 1993). The same approach is evident in North America. Chambers and Gerrow (1994) point out that in dentistry the term competency is most often used to "describe the skills, understanding and professional values of an individual ready for beginning independent dental or allied oral health care practice" (p.361). This definition suggests that the distinction between current competency frameworks and learning outcomes is minimal. In Australia the term "key competencies" is used to define broad statements of ability (Haworth, & Browne, 1992); in the United States the term "necessary skills" and "core competencies" are used to describe similar abilities (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992; Wilson et al., 2000). The competency

based education movement represented a shift away from a disciplines oriented education model, to an outcomes approach, a movement that is still evolving. Drake (1997) describes this evolution as a movement from the behaviourist approach of the 1960s to a constructivist approach in which "being able to do" suggests that learners have really learned something.

Faculty members at Alverno College use the term abilities, which they describe as "multidimensional, as complex combinations of skills, self-perceptions, attitudes, values, knowledge, and behaviors" (Mentkowski, 1990, p. 3). The Alverno faculty base their curriculum and assessment on eight abilities that are threaded throughout their diploma, degree and post-graduate programs. These abilities are similar to the "key competencies" developed in Australia (Haworth & Browne, 1992), and the "necessary skills" developed by the American Department of Labor (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992). While these terms appear to encompass similar notions, skills and competencies have historically been associated with occupations and the trades in particular; they are not widely associated with non-vocational undergraduate studies[5] (Hodgson, Spours, & Savouy, 2001). The difficulty in classifying the abilities developed in non-vocational programs may have influenced the development of additional terms relating to outcomes of learning.

Allan (1996) refers to "personal outcomes" that are subdivided into "personal transferable skills" and "generic academic outcomes." These are deemed to typify graduates abilities but are thought to transcend specific disciplinary boundaries. Stephenson (1998) frames similar discussions in terms of "capability."

> Capability embraces competence but is also forward-looking, concerned with the realization of potential. A capability approach focuses on the capacity of individuals to participate in the formulation of their own developmental needs and those of the context in which they work and live. A capability approach is developmental and is driven essentially by all the participants based on their capacity to manage their own learning, and their proven ability to bring about change in both. (Stephenson, 1998, p.3)

This term is similar to the idea of transferable personal skills. Allan (1996) argues that the notion of transferability is not specifically embedded in the concept of capability, but the language used by Stephenson seems to suggest its inclusion.

The concept of learning outcomes is not new, but rather a re-shaping of an old concept. As Howlett and Ramesh (1995) suggest, most policies do not "have a definite life cycle - moving from birth to death - but rather seem to recur, in slightly different guises" (p. 10). Educators moved from the more general educational objective to more discrete

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[5] The health professions in North America and the professions in Australia are an exception to this.

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objectives such as instructional objectives and behavioural objectives. The pendulum is now swinging back. From this perspective the current focus on learning outcomes reflects a shift along a continuum, from narrow and specific to general and holistic outcome statements. However, she does point out one new twist. She suggests that with the learning outcomes approach there is no assumption that the outcomes are related to the teaching and the course itself. This acknowledges the role of the learner and the fact that learning can occur in many places. From this perspective the term has the potential for wider application and includes educational and credentialing elements. However, the literature from Australia and the United Kingdom suggests that current competency frameworks are also based on this assumption (Curtain & Hayton, 1993; Fitzsimons, 1999; Yorke, 2000).

Regardless of the term applied, discussions about the outcomes of learning focus on what learners "know," "value" and are "able to do." The outcomes are described in terms of complex abilities that are multidimensional as opposed to simple, unitary constructs (Mentkowski, Astin, Ewell, & Moran, 1991). In the conversations between these authors in the previously cited reference, Mentkowski describes the nuances of this current approach to abilities:

> But those abilities are more than multidimensional; they're holistic. They include qualities of the person. They include not just knowledge or skills but attitudes, behaviors, even dispositions. We're beginning to understand that something like critical thinking has cognitive, affective, social, even kinesthetic dimensions. Moreover, we define those abilities as transferable and we expect them to last a lifetime, to transfer across multiple aspects of work, family and civic life long after college. (p. 13)

Spady (1994) suggests outcomes that are called transformative. As Drake (1997) identifies, these approaches take us beyond the notion of "doing," to the concept of "being." It shifts the discussions to the development of the whole person. While educators may shape the concept of learning outcomes along these personal development themes, policy makers tend to focus more narrowly along employability themes. There are often confusions and tensions created by these different approaches (Manno, 1994).

Researchers may attempt to differentiate between ways of expressing the outcomes of learning but the various concepts are often blended in the world of practice. A recent study of members of the League for Innovation in the Community College (Wilson et al., 2000) looked at this issue of language by asking administrators to identify the terms most often used by faculty to refer to so-called *21st Century Skills*. The most commonly selected term was

general education core (34%) and *core competencies* (26%) (see Table 2). The term, *21ˢᵗ Century Skills*, coined by the authors for these learning outcomes was used by only 3% of the respondents. The terms that respondents recorded in the 'other' category included *core abilities*, and *general education* and *workplace competencies*. The term learning outcomes was not included in the list of responses, but the authors use the

term as an overarching construct for the plethora of terms that have been coined to describe the outcomes of education. Dunne et al., (1997) found similar results in their study of British educators. Regardless of the influences affecting the choice of term, the process by which terms are adopted is an example of how policy texts are shaped in the world of practice.

Table 2.   Terms Used to Refer to the 21ˢᵗ Century Skills*

Terms	Number	Percent
21ˢᵗ Century Skills	8	3%
Basic Skills	21	9%
Core Competencies	62	26%
Core Skills	10	4%
General Education Core	81	34%
Generic Skills	8	3%
Life or Critical Life Skills	8	3%
Work Skills	14	6%
Other	30	12%
Total	242	-

* the respondents were requested to check one item "that faculty and staff used most often when referring to 21ˢᵗ Century Skills" (Wilson et al., 2000, p. 19).

Although consensus has not been achieved regarding the specific terminology to be used, analysis of literature indicates there is some agreement about the general abilities required to live and work in a world of constant change. In Canada the Conference Board of Canada (1992) was influential in articulating the perceived needs associated with the employment sector (see Appendix A). It developed the *Employability Skills Profile* that includes academic skills, personal management skills and teamwork skills. A similar skill set was identified in the report *Learning Well ... Living Well*, a consultation paper through the Ministry of Employment and Immigration & Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology (1991). The following are described as the basic skills required:

- the ability to learn, the most basic skill of all;
- reading, writing and computation skills;

- oral communication and listening skills;
- problem solving and creative thinking;
- skills and values needed to achieve high self-esteem, motivation and goal setting;
- employability and career development skills;
- interpersonal, teamwork and negotiation skills, and skills related to understanding organizational culture and the sharing of leadership. (1991, p.14)

In a more recent study of Canadian university students and graduates, Evers et al. (1998) identified four competencies required in today's work place: managing self, communicating, managing people and tasks, and mobilizing innovation and change.

The abilities reported in the Canadian literature are similar to ones recorded in international documents from the United Kingdom (Hodgson et al., 2001), Australia (Queensland Department of Education, & Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, 1994), New Zealand (New Zealand Qualifications Authority,1994) the United States (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992; Schmitz, 1994; Wilson et al., 2000) and Europe (Hutmacher, 1997). An analysis of these documents (see Appendix B) suggests that all have the following abilities in common:

- communication (oral, written, technology);

- interpersonal abilities (working with others);

- thinking and problem solving;

- managing self (responsibility, ethical approach, flexibility, adaptability); and

- ability to learn independently (accessing information, numeric literacy, computer use, reading and writing).

These abilities reflect the focus on the development of human capital to support economic prosperity.

Others focused on the need to educate for citizenship (Atwell, 1993; Spady, 1994; Usher et al., 1997). Atwell (1993) makes a distinction between what society *wants* from higher education, and what society *needs*. Society's wants tend to be more instrumental in nature, often associated with economic considerations and the world of work. However, he believes what society needs from higher education is "a set of interrelated roles and functions: the teaching of citizenship and values; the academy as an independent critic of society; and higher education as an agent of social change" (p. 51). He suggests these are essential for society to manage complex economic, political and social questions in an effective and humane manner. "The job of the colleges and universities, then, is to prepare

students to be citizens who can make wise choices and exercise leadership in all spheres of society" (p. 51). This notion of participatory citizenship is sometimes labeled as community service, service and social responsibility.

Such a direction is the basis of the approach to education described in the UNESCO document *Learning, The Treasure Within* (Delors, 1996). Four pillars are described as the foundations for education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. The first three pillars are seen as supports for the fourth pillar, learning to live together. The UNESCO focus draws the economic and social issues together. A similar theme was expressed earlier by Bosworth (1993). "We should not concentrate so exclusively on teaching young Americans how to work in an increasingly complex, technologically driven world, that we neglect to teach them how to live in such a world" (p. 57-58).

The discussions about learning outcomes were, however, primarily stimulated by arguments that a skill gap existed between the abilities of learners and the needs of employers. This gap was perceived to be affecting economic prosperity (Reynolds & Salters, 1995; Greaney & Kellaghan, 1996; Ainley, 1998). In the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand this led to the development of national standards or qualification frameworks. The frameworks were designed to integrate general and vocational education, but in practice the focus was largely directed to vocational education (Curtain & Hayton, 1993). The discussions in the United States and Canada tended to be more generic and eclectic. In the United States the focus was largely directed to the implementation of the SCANS competencies and foundation skills (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992). In Canada the dialogue centered around the development of national standards for labour mobility (Human Resources Development Canada, 1994). Despite these differences, the debate about the value of a learning outcomes approach remains a contested issue among educators in these jurisdictions.

Benefits and Limitations of a Learning Outcomes Approach

Both the proponents and the opponents of a learning outcomes approach are passionate in their discussions of the benefits and limitations of such an approach. In this section, I will review these perspectives. The benefits of a learning outcomes approach are described in terms of supporting learning as well as providing instrumental use that allows for the recognition of prior learning, for increased communication among those with an interest in education, and for the demonstration of accountability to policy makers and the

public (Mentkowski, 1998; Canning, 1998; Candy & Crebert, 1991; Kuh, 2002). The opponents of learning outcomes question the ability of this approach to deliver these benefits (Collins, 1993, Jackson, 1993; Ryan, 1998; Avis, 2000; Strathern, 2000). In fact they argue that it makes education the handmaiden of capitalism and addresses managerial needs, rather than learning needs.

Perceived Benefits

A major aspect of the discussion surrounding the benefit of a learning outcomes approach rests on its ability to support learning relevant to global societies. The arguments are frequently grounded in concerns about a mismatch between what learners are gaining from education and the abilities they will need for work and citizenship (Reynolds & Salters, 1995; Greaney & Kallaghan, 1996; Dunne et al., 1997).

A main theme in the debate is the idea of bringing coherence and structure to education (Jennings, 1997; Mentkowski, 1998; Canning, 1998; Kuh, 2002). This argument rests on the premise that traditional disciplinary approaches have tended to fragment curricula in ways that may no longer be relevant in our knowledge society. The search for coherence arises from the charge that we have not articulated our core values and goals (Drake, 1997), and that the relationship between the goals of liberal arts education and our teaching and assessment methods are not symbiotic (Mentkowski, 1998; Papadopoulos, 1998). Knowledge has become separated from its implementation; experiential learning needs to be acknowledged along side cognitive learning. Candy (2000) suggests that abilities are one way of promoting vertical integration of the curriculum and helping educators manage the "information overdose" that is a reflection of the exponential increase in knowledge.

A key element of coherence in education as discussed in the United States, is connecting assessment with learning (Loacker & Mentkowski, 1994). Abilities-based education challenges educators to reassess existing assessment strategies (Ecclestone, 1994). Current approaches to assessment may not be meaningful when the aims of education are intellectual, moral and personal development (Mentkowski, 1990). From this perspective an outcomes approach promotes a realignment of the curriculum, implementation and assessment strategies to harmonize these elements.

As well as coherence, learning outcomes are also perceived as promoting clarity and transparency (Ecclestone, 1994; Wilde & Hardaker, 1997). From this perspective a learning outcomes approach reflects a shift in power and language. Learning becomes a public,

explicit and shared experience (McDaniel et al., 2000). "The concern is to render transparent the 'secret garden' of curricula and assessment" (Avis, 2000, p. 41). This transparency is expected to assist non-traditional learners to better understand what is expected of them. From this perspective learning outcomes promote access and success (Ecclestone, 1994; McDaniel et al., 2000).

Learning outcomes are also viewed as a way of promoting relevance of the curriculum and its associated learning experiences. Discussions revolve around the idea of bridging the gap between general and vocational education (Collins, 1993; Ecclestone, 1994). A focus on abilities allows educators to meet the needs of employers and society as "the kinds of complex thinking, communication, and problem solving skills learned in college are in great demand in the workplace as well as one's personal life" (Mentkowski, 1991, p. 2). Threading outcomes throughout learning is seen as important for the relevance of learning experiences. Schroeder (1993) argues that learners prefer learning in context; they prefer practical and concrete experiences. An outcomes approach is seen as being an impetus for such learning because it suggests the need for contextual types of activities and assessments (Mentkowski et al., 1991).

Learning outcomes are also described as beneficial from an instrumental perspective. The language of "competency" and "skill" is often used to articulate the needs of business and industry, and the imperative for education to lead economic recovery (Meadmore, 1995). When combined with the historic link of competencies and trades education, it is difficult for some educators to acknowledge the existence of competencies reflecting complex cognitive skills. Dunne et al. (1997) discuss the language shifts that have occurred in the United Kingdom because of the range of interpretation and the connotations associated with terms. The concepts of core skills and transferable skills have been shaped into the idea of key skills. Language can present a barrier to communication, particularly when working towards integrated learning involving educators from several disciplines (Wilde & Hardaker, 1997). The focus on abilities and learning outcomes could serve an instrumental function to promote communication among educators from diverse program areas and organizational contexts.

An outcomes based approach is viewed as an impetus to shift the purpose of educational institutions from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning (McDaniel et al., 2000). It challenges the foundations of our educational institutions that have traditionally been focused on educators (Hutmacher, 1997). This is perceived to make faculty more "learner-centered" (Davis & Felknor, 1994).

The notion of learning outcomes has shifted the focus in education circles from teaching to learning. Implicit in the discussion of a 'learning system' based on explicit statements of outcomes is the belief that decisions concerning curriculum design, instructional design, content and delivery are based on assisting students to achieve the [desired] outcomes. (Stanley & Mason, 1997, p. 5)

Such an approach encourages consensus building around collective outcomes (McDaniel et al., 2000). Faculty members relate their courses more directly to collective abilities articulated by their departments, organizations and / or national policy frameworks. Mentkowski (1983) presents a similar perspective; she argues that an abilities-based approach provides faculty with a basis for a vision that can bring about organizational cohesion and change.

Learning outcomes models can also be designed to support prior learning assessment and recognition initiatives. They can help to reduce traditional entry barriers (Burrow, 1993; Ecclestone, 1994; Matthews, 1997; Simosko, 1997). From this perspective learning outcomes facilitate credentialing processes and also support the demonstration of accountability (Wilde & Hardaker, 1997; McDaniel et al., 2000).

Issues of accountability are threaded throughout the discussions about the benefits of learning outcomes. Linking assessment to learning provides evidence about the learning within higher education as discussed by Mentkowski et al. (1991). The consensus building process around the articulation of learning outcomes also supports accountability of individual educators. Transparency becomes evident when "faculty members no longer teach and test behind closed doors" (McDaniel et al., 2000, p. 146). The accountability discussion can thus be framed within the context of abilities and their assessment. Overall the literature suggests many positive aspects about a learning outcomes approach from pedagogical as well as instrumental perspectives.

Perceived Limitations

The idea of assessing the outcomes of learning seems reasonable and logical. Why is it that this idea has been the focus of such debate and controversy? Manno (1994) suggests that the "devil is in the details." In this section I explore the details in the literature and review the controversies surrounding the concept of a learning outcomes approach.

The most aggressive critiques are found in the literature from the United Kingdom and reflect the debates surrounding the system of national vocational qualifications. However, similar themes are found in the New Zealand and Australian literature. While these

discussions revolve around the idea of competencies, the outcomes language blends in the world of practice and this literature is, therefore, relevant to my study.

While the proponents of outcomes approaches see it as a vehicle for bridging the gap between liberal and vocational education (Holland, 1993; Carmichael, 1993; Bauslaugh, 1997b), the opponents view this as a strategy shifting the purpose of education towards an economic focus. "In all sectors, including higher education, 'bridging the gaps' between 'general,' 'vocational' and 'academic' education and training is now assumed to have one purpose: increasing learners' employability" (Ecclestone, 1994, p. 159). There has been a subtle shift in language that reflects more profound changes in higher education (Hutmacher, 1997). Ecclestone argues that words, which have traditionally been associated with liberal education such as personal development and life-long learning, are now being framed in corporate contexts. She suggests that discussions about the aims of higher education have been subsumed by economic aims to the point that discussions about democratic values embedded in broader social and political contexts are criticized for being elitist, exclusive and irrelevant thus silencing debates about their importance. Academic competence is being displaced by the notion of technical competence (Ecclestone, 1994; Dunne et al., 1997). Rather than bridging the gap, the new vocational focus is narrowing the focus of higher education (Soucek, 1993).

The debate revolves around whose outcomes are going to count. Avis (2000) contends that policy makers assume that the needs of the economy and learners are similar. This leads to the domination of education by market perspectives that may not necessarily be valid (Axelrod, 2002). Joyner (1995) and Avis suggest that an outcomes approach may become a form of empiricism reflecting current perceived employer needs that may not necessarily address the abilities required by today's economy. Curtain and Hayton (1993) present a similar concern about the Australian standards framework, which "discourages labour flexibility and creates a career pathway based on outdated hierarchical concepts of work organization" (p. 15).

The market relationship of learning outcomes is a frequently voiced concern (Jackson, 1993; Ecclestone, 1994; Whitston, 1998). One argument is that a structure that has theoretical roots in the work place may be limited in scope, and may not be able to address the emergent skills needed to survive in a knowledge-based economy (Canning, 1998). The employment focus may represent a narrow economic perspective, and shifts attention away from the wider social and political contexts that are critical to democracies. Concern is expressed that current

approaches to outcomes based education may "irrevocably narrow education's wider social values and purposes" (Ecclestone, 1994, p. 163).

Jarvis (2000) expresses a similar concern about the scope of learning. He identifies the risk that only learning that "is recognized by some form of award becomes defined as 'real' learning, while all the other human learning that helps make people what they are will be neglected and regarded as unreal – and even unnecessary – and lifelong learning will become equated with worklife learning" (p. 63). Ainley (1998) raises a similar issue. He suggests that policy directions are focused on credentialism not on learning. We are creating a certified society, not a learning society.

There are concerns that outcomes based education will normalize the educational experience to the lowest common denominator, and produce a mechanistic view of learning that oversimplifies the complex process learning involves (Collins, 1993; Soucek, 1993; Hutmacher, 1997; McDaniel et al., 2000; Avis, 2000). In particular, questions arise regarding the prominence of knowledge within the outcomes frameworks (Ackerman, 1998; Canning, 1988). While the Alverno model clearly articulates the perspective that knowledge and understandings underpin performance (Loacker & Mentkowski, 1994), the fundamental position of knowledge is not as clearly evident in the other approaches (Soucek, 1993; Hutmacher, 1997; Canning, 1998). These concerns about a rigorous theoretical and conceptual base are sometimes expressed through the notion of "dumbing down" the curriculum (Davis & Felknor, 1994).

The notion of transferability of skills is often described as a feature of outcomes based education (Borthwick, 1993; Shipley, 1995; Wilde & Hardaker, 1997). This notion of transferability is based on the assumption that acquisition of abilities in one area has the potential to be applied in other areas and contexts (Allan, 1996). However, Ackerman (1998) argues for the importance of knowledge in both learning and performance. Learners' success at intellectual tasks are influenced more by their knowledge than by their ability in abstract reasoning. This position is supported by others (Gagné, 1977; Stanley, 1993; Balin, Case, Coombs, & Daniels, 1999). Developing expertise is domain specific; it is a process by which individuals adapt to the specialized styles of learning and thinking associated with a domain and become increasingly different from novices in the area but also experts in other areas (Stanley, 1993). Experts have a vast knowledge that supports their abilities; a set of strategies is necessary but not sufficient for critical thinking (Balin et al., 1999). The ability to transfer approaches from one domain to another is dependent on the knowledge base possessed by

learners. Relationships among abilities, teaching approaches and knowledge domains are complex. Stanley suggests that we have not reached the stage in our understanding of learning to suggest that one model should be considered the panacea for our educational approach.

The relationship between performance and competence is another area of contention (Hutmacher, 1997; Soucek, 1993; Stanley, 1993). The proponents of an outcomes approach underestimate the complex relationship between knowledge and action. Central to this issue is the distinction between performance and competence. Competence is inferred from performance and in the cognitive domain this can be problematic. "Observation of performance cannot ignore the issue of meaning, especially the meaning given to situations by subjects, the implications they see in them and the interpretations they give to them" (Hutmacher, 1997, p. 46). One has to be careful in making such inferences, and the inferences become less reliable when moving from simple to more complex tasks (Stanley, 1993).

Performance is not a guarantee of underpinning knowledge (Soucek, 1993). Competence goes beyond performance to knowledge and understanding underpinning the actions. Competence rests on "an integrated deep structure (understanding) and on the general ability to coordinate appropriate internal cognitive, affective and other resources necessary for successful application" (Wood & Power, 1987, p. 414).

Ryan (1998) argues that the competency movement creates a means – end divide that does not incorporate the complexity of teaching and learning. It undermines the values and knowledge that are integral to education, but may not be explicitly evident at first glance. Strathern (2000) expresses a similar concern in her article entitled *The Tyranny of Transparency*. By emphasizing one type of reality, other perspectives are eclipsed. By focusing on immediate assimilation of information, the long-term effects of the learning experiences may be missed. These long-term effects may occur weeks or years after the event, and may present in forms that do not resemble the original focus. Another example relates to the focus on implementation. Hutmacher (1997) argues that an overemphasis on abilities may result in the neglect of important questions surrounding the acquisition of abilities. By focusing on the product we underestimate the complexity of learning and variables that contribute to learning. We "need to recognize how models of teaching and learning are never innocent; that they derive from particular socio-economic contexts and construct teachers and learners in particular ways" (p. 12). Avis (2000) identifies the same concern about the perceived innocence of approaches to learning.

Nordhaug (1997) argues that education is too complex and diverse for the application of one approach. He argues that we need to determine the approaches that would be most suitable for different types of education. Canning (1998) would agree with this approach in that he suggests that learning outcomes may be more relevant in applied areas. These perspectives highlight concerns regarding the use of a learning outcomes approach, and its instrumental and simplistic approach to education.

While the qualification standards in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia were designed to integrate vocational and liberal education, in practice they predominantly focus on narrowly defined tasks (Curtain & Hayton, 1993). This resulted in concerns about the "ghettoisation" of the qualifications in the United Kingdom (Hodgson et al., 2001). They "prepare people for a life of dependence and powerlessness. Far from contributing to the strengthening of the democratic values of fairness, justice and equality, they deny them and replace them with benign exploitation, servitude and coercion" (Hutchinson, 2000, p. 91). Avis (2000) raises a similar concern. "The paradox is that we confront a language of empowerment that operates on a terrain that encourages student passivity with this process being compounded by managerial needs for control and information" (Avis, 2000, p. 10). Ainley (1998) expresses a similar concern through the idea of skill-polarization. The rhetoric of empowerment is not evident in practice.

In the UK and Australia concerns are expressed about outcomes being too narrow, detailed and prescriptive (Collins, 1993; Curtain & Hayton, 1993; Avis, 2000). They are easy to monitor, observe and audit, but they may curtail innovation, flexibility and reduce learners' autonomy to define their own outcomes (Soucek, 1993; Ecclestone, 1994). In the American context, they are described at nebulous and hard to measure (Manno, 1994; Drake, 1997). In discussing the challenges of assessment Bruneau and Savage (2002) address this conundrum. "The more precise benchmarks become, the more they resemble a legislated national curriculum, with all that implies for political orthodoxy; the less precise they are, the more they look like academic hot air" (p. 97). Drake (1997) addresses a further ambiguity. She contends that many of the "transformational" outcomes (Spady, 1994) are value laden and challenging to measure. She concludes that this reality "makes the intended outcomes just so many empty words rather than a focus for learning" (p. 45). Outcomes that are too narrow are restrictive and limiting; outcomes that are too broad become meaningless.

The idea of "writerly" and "readerly" texts (Barthes, 1970; Hawkes, 1977) may help to explain some of the critiques made of a learning outcomes approach. Barthes suggests that

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some texts provide the reader a role, an opportunity to make a contribution (*readerly texts*). Other texts only leave the reader with the option to reject or accept the text (*writerly texts*). The detailed and specific texts related to learning outcomes from the UK, Australia and New Zealand could be viewed as *writerly texts*. There are no opportunities for learners to shape and to contribute to their development. This may account for the ghettoisation, skill-polarization and related critiques made by Hodgson et al. (2001), Avis (2000) and Ainley (1998). The *writerly texts* facilitate auditing but do not empower learners.

Many of the texts from the United States can be viewed as *readerly texts*. They lend themselves to interpretation and shaping. Such texts may be more palatable to educators, but may not meet the needs of policy makers interested in quantifiable outcomes (Manno, 1994). Despite his strong critique of outcomes approaches Avis (2000) also identifies the possibility of a readerly approach; his concern is that a readerly approach is only one of two directions in which the learning outcomes approach may be shaped.

Jackson (1993) and Avis (2000) suggest that the outcomes approach has more to do with managerial control and reporting than with learning. Jackson argues that the competency approach is an ideological practice through which governance takes place. Outcomes approaches provide a "conceptual framework, a vocabulary and set of institutional practices through which local educational activities are subordinated to the dominant political discourse of our time" (p. 156). It promises to provide more clearly defined goals and measures to assess the outcomes of public funds in higher education. Such approaches represent "new forms of bureaucratic surveillance" that also undermine professional autonomy (Ecclestone, 1997).

Bruneau and Savage (2002) raise a similar point in their discussion about performance indicators. They "have next to nothing to do with liberal education, but everything to do with market discipline and control" (p. 217). Learning outcomes are being offered as "a placebo for a coherent economic and industrial strategy" (Jackson, 1993, p. 159); they represent one of many forms of performance indicators. While the BC context may differ, one can see the potential application and implications of an outcomes approach and its potential link to performance funding.

The literature on learning outcomes provides a spectrum of views. These views are grounded in the political and educational context of the authors' work and lives. The plethora of terms related to outcomes of learning, and the shaping of these concepts provide opportunities for policy makers and educators to influence their direction. Mentkowski

(1998) suggests abilities (read learning outcomes) could form the cornerstone for implementing an organizational vision. Conversely they could result in the creation of a marginalized "underclass" through the lack of worthwhile credentials (Ainley, 1998). Given these two potential directions, it is no wonder that the notion of learning outcomes evokes such passion in educators. In the next section, I will go beyond the proponents' and opponents' views and delve into the literature that supports the importance of a learning outcomes approach.

Relationship Between Learning Outcomes and Educational Reform

Although the learning outcome approach is supported through testimonials, there is little research in post-secondary education to substantiate its proposed central position in educational reform. Much of the literature is directed towards outcome assessments in general, but little information is available regarding the value of a learning outcomes approach. This emphasis in the literature may be a result of the pressure exerted by national and state governments (SCANS, 1995; Berman, 1995) and by American regional and specialized accreditation organizations in the late 1980s (Derlin et al., 1986; Manno, 1994; Salvador, 1996). In this section I review the research pertaining to learning outcomes and also explore the research behind and beyond outcomes as it pertains to what we know about learning in postsecondary education.

Research related to learning outcomes. In the United States the requirement for outcomes assessment by accreditation organizations appears to have influenced research in this area. Much of the literature and the studies in postsecondary education are directed towards the evaluation of specific learning outcomes. For example, researchers investigate the evidence to support the claim that graduates have demonstrated identified exit abilities and knowledge. The studies are primarily based on standardized test results (Howard Community College, 1991; Evans & King, 1994; O'Neil, 1994; Marzano, 1994; Berman, 1995). Graduate scores on national examinations are tracked to analyze their relationship to generic learning outcomes. For professional programs, licensing examination results are used to evaluate graduates' knowledge and abilities.

Other evidence used to support an outcomes approach includes data related to student satisfaction, student transfer, student retention, and employer satisfaction (Howard Community College, 1991; Smith, 1992; West, 1994; Berman, 1995). These studies suggests that students and employers are satisfied with the educational outcomes of programs. This

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outcomes evidence is, however, not necessarily related to programs using an outcomes based curriculum approach at the program and course level as suggested in the BC context. As such it does not provide substantive evidence to support a provincial shift towards such a framework.

Alverno College has integrated an abilities approach for over twenty years and has been a major national force in promoting this approach through publications and faculty development workshops. The faculty and administrators at Alverno believe in the need for longitudinal studies to assess the development of their students' abilities (Mentkowski et al., 1991), and have allocated resources to this end. The following information provides some examples of their research in this area.

Hart, Rickards and Mentkowski (1995) conducted a longitudinal study of Alverno students from the 1976 and 1978 freshman class investigating the intellectual and ethical development of learners' abilities during their programs and their career paths upon graduation. The researchers used a variety of theoretical frameworks to measure this development. They found development over a ten-year period in three areas, classroom learning, decision-making and career decision-making. This development applied equally to those who entered directly from secondary school, those who transferred to the College, those who delayed their post-secondary education for a period, and those who had previous careers, although there were some differences among these groups. This study supports the view that learners demonstrate development during their college education and continue to develop after graduation.

Mentkowski, Much and Giencke-Holl (1984) conducted a study of 60 Alverno graduates two years after graduation through a survey instrument with follow-up interviews. They found that interpersonal abilities and reasoning abilities were important in the graduates' work experiences. Based on their analysis of the results, the researchers suggest that "learning to learn" is the link between education and work. Educational abilities provide the foundation, but the ability for independent learning is required to adapt the abilities to new experiences. This may be an important feature of an abilities-based approach. Alumni were found to use the abilities from their education to create an approach to action that was tested and validated in their work environment.

Ben-Ur and Rogers (1994) conducted a study to measure the career advancement of 5-year graduates from Alverno College. This involved a sample of 243 graduates who were predominantly first generation college students from working class backgrounds. Participants

were asked to rank their current positions with regard to abilities that were required in their work. The researchers also assessed the participants salary scale and conducted an interview during which the participants' abilities were explored through a position autonomy scale including "discretion or authority granted, ... level of expressions (oral or written) required, ... initiative and original thinking required, and ... level of judgment required" (p. 8). This study was based on the assumption that education abilities were translated into career abilities. This raises the obvious question regarding workplace experiences and their relationship to the communication and thinking abilities studied. However, the study does support the idea that abilities are important in the workplace and that they can contribute to career development.

Mentkowski (1990) identifies several challenges associated with the measurement of change from an abilities-based approach. Abilities-based education requires assessing complex outcomes for which the unit of measurement is often not a test item, rather the learners' performance. Such a performance requires a qualitative approach based on expert judgments. Further challenges arise if we accept the assumption that change is non-linear as supported by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991). Other variables such as maturation need to be factored into the analysis as well. These challenges account for the longitudinal approach adopted by Alverno in assessing the outcomes of their programs. However, such an approach may not meet the needs of policy makers who are looking for more immediate indicators (Webber & Townsend, 1998).

Loacker and Mentkowski (personal communication, June 1998)[6] addressed the challenges of comparative analysis. Alverno students take many standardized tests during their education but these tests do not necessarily test the abilities that are the basis of the Alverno program. These tests indicate that Alverno students and graduates have comparable scores to those of other colleges and universities. The graduates also have similar patterns of acceptance into graduate programs at other universities when compared to graduates of other organizations even though the Alverno transcripts involve descriptive data rather than quantitative data. Based on the research conducted by Mentkowski and her colleagues it appears that graduates of Alverno succeed in the workplace and they succeed in post-graduate work.

While the previously described Alverno studies (Mentkowski et al., 1984; Ben-Ur & Rogers, 1994; Hart et al., 1995) suggest that abilities-based education supports learner

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[6] These discussions occurred during Alverno workshops on learning and assessment.

development, it is challenging to determine the superiority of abilities-based education in general when compared to other types of curriculum approaches. There may be such a difference but it is difficult to capture through quantitative approaches. Qualitative approaches have other challenges, particularly in the area of comparative conclusions. Yet it is precisely such comparative data that many educators seek in looking at the issue of curriculum change.

A study was conducted in England by Dunne et al. (1997) to identify ways of developing cores skills in higher education. They studied the practice of 32 university educators in 16 departments including a mix of vocational and non-vocational departments. Student perspectives (n = 350) were gained to further study the practices of these educators. Despite the context of core skills in these departments, the researchers found that the educators tended to articulate their goals in more disciplines oriented language, and the students as well focused on discipline oriented outcomes when describing the value of their educational experiences. "In response to a question on 'skills learned from the module,' 52% wrote about content and subject knowledge, not about skills" (p. 516). When looking for the teaching of such skills, the skills were often not evident at the implementation and assessment phase even though they were theoretically incorporated. The researchers argue that the rhetoric related to the development of core skills is not espoused by either the educators or the students. However, 43% of the students described the benefits of a degree in terms of employment opportunities. They suggest that the concept of core skills is an example of an "unfulfilled concept," one that "is not sufficiently coherent in the abstract to be fully 'realized' in practice" (Stalker, 1996, p. 12).

The support for a learning outcomes approach is mainly derived from a deductive reasoning process. However, educators question the inductive evidence to support the integration of a learning outcomes approach. In particular they question the priority given a learning outcomes approach and its potential implications for higher education. "The whole current discourse is dangerous because it shifts the balance of power in the wrong direction and threatens crucial educational purposes in a democratic society" (Collins, 1993, p. 11). It "may ... irrevocably narrow education's wider social values and purposes" (Ecclestone, 1994, p. 163). On the one hand a subtle change in language is perceived as having the potential to be the impetus for fundamental change (Ecclestone, 1994; Hutmacher, 1997), while at the same time changing the vocabulary related to an outcomes approach does not change the conceptual and practical challenges associated with this approach (Dunne et al.,

1997). These challenges lead to questions about the relative importance of curricular organization to student development. The debates surrounding this issue form the basis for the next section.

Behind and beyond learning outcomes. While the importance of the curriculum is largely taken as self-evident, the organization of the curriculum based on outcomes approaches is questioned (Stanley, 1993; Hutmacher, 1997). In fact Collins (1993) suggests that this learning outcomes orientation was essentially a phenomenon in English speaking countries being mainly adopted in the vocational and professional areas. However, the discourse has now been extended to general education sectors as well in Australia, the United States and Canada. The emphasis on learning outcomes as a model for all areas of higher education is the issue being questioned.

Hutchings (1999) contends that the current focus on outcomes is limiting when it comes to making improvements in the learning environment. She suggests that we need to get behind outcomes and broaden our approach to assessment. Researchers such as Mentkowski, Astin, Ewell, and Moran suggest that we need to place more emphasis on assessment as part of learning and question the traditional assumptions we have made about assessment (Mentkowski et al., 1991). These researchers suggest that we need to gain a broader view of learners, learning, and educational experiences if we are to effect positive change in higher education.

The importance of the curriculum on learning is questioned (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Garcia-Diez, 2000). For example, a reform initiative was introduced in Spanish colleges that focused on an increased emphasis on practical content within courses. In her study of first year economics students Garcia-Diez measured cognitive effect (in terms of test scores) and affective effect (in terms of interest) of the new curriculum during its first year of implementation. While Garcia-Diez identifies the limitations of studying the new curriculum during its first implementation year, no significant differences were found in terms of student cognitive achievement; however, there was an effect on learner interest with an increased level of interest with the new, more practical curriculum. It could be argued that the test items may not have captured the learning from a practical perspective. In her analysis of two studies from Australia, Brady (1999) found that the introduction of a learning outcomes approach did not significantly affect classroom pedagogy. Educators were making

their learning explicit, but there seemed to be little change in the classroom as evidenced by data from interviewees and observations.

Hutmacher (1997) addresses the issue of feasibility when discussing the implementation of abilities-based models. He argues for a systemic approach that includes implementation and assessments issues as well as organizational culture. ·

There are a plethora of variables that have an impact on learning and the focus on outcomes of learning creates a means-ends divide that fails to acknowledge the complexity of teaching and learning (Ryan, 1998). By overemphasizing the debate about abilities, questions of implementation may be neglected. Articulating curricula is not enough. The acquisition of abilities requires that learners be actively involved (Hutmacher, 1997).

The importance of other variables is supported in the literature. For example, Astin (1993) found that variables associated with general education curriculum had a weak influence on student development, whereas peer involvement, faculty interaction and participation in out-of-class activities had greater influence on student development. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) found similar results with respect to peer, faculty, and extra-curricular involvement. Garcia-Diez (2000) in her study of first year economic students in a Spanish colleges also found peer group involvement to be important for learner achievement. Social involvement appears to be an important factor in student development.

Astin (1993) argues that students' peer groups are "the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years" (p. 398). He also identifies challenges for colleges in this regard. The combination of the diversity of the student population (particularly with regard to age) and the absence of a residential experience makes it difficult for students to identify with each other and establish supportive relationships. Donaldson (1999) expands on this theme. He contends that adult learners with their complex lives and commitments may use instructional time differently than the more traditional students. They may use this time for enhancing their interactions with peer and faculty members, because they do not have the time to become involved in out-of-class activities.

Hutmacher (1997) also contends that educators' personal commitments are important to learning. Grubb (1999) in his research found that the quality of teaching in colleges depended on the individual educator. Entwistle (2000) supports this position. He argues that assessment strategies have a pervasive influence on learning. He contends that teaching and assessment strategies affect the learners' balance between deep and surface learning, and thus

influence the learning outcomes achieved. The organization of learning experiences is an important variable when assessing student development.

Chickering and Gamson (1991) have also been instrumental in identifying principles of good practice in undergraduate education. Their principles include: encouraging contact between students and faculty, encouraging cooperation among students, encouraging active learning, providing prompt feedback, emphasizing time on task, communicating high expectations, and respecting diversity in learners including learning styles. Sorcinelli (1991) suggests that these principles provide ways of enriching our understanding of teaching and learning, but we still need to explore the relationship between the principles and other variables such as student motivation and development in more depth.

These highlights from the literature on teaching and assessment serve to emphasize the multiplicity of variables that influence the outcomes of higher education. They provide a context for understanding the questions raised by opponents of learning outcomes. As Whitston (1998) so aptly stated, "key skills [learning outcomes] may be a poor substitute for more radical curriculum reform" (p. 308); learning outcomes may also be a poor substitute for educational reform in general. There is an inherent risk associated with the emphasis on outcomes. Learning outcomes place so much emphasis on the product of education that the process of learning may be marginalized. Given the climate of fiscal restraint, there is a potential risk that the needs of learners may be subsumed by financial considerations. The learning outcomes initiative in British Columbia was a policy direction that warranted further investigation. To further the exploration of this learning outcomes policy I review the concept of policy and describe a policy framework that will support my analysis.

The Policy Process Defined

There exist a plethora of definitions for the conception of policy; they focus both on process and product elements (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995; Parsons, 1995; Turner, 1997). Wildavsky (1997) goes so far as to question whether the policy making process can even be defined. Given this complexity, I will use a broad definition of policy, one that focuses on the inherent value aspects of policies. This definition is taken from Ball (1990) as he interprets the work of Kogan. Policies are a matter of "authoritative allocation of values"; they are the "operational statements of values" (p. 3). Given this definition of policy, the notion of policy making involves the assessment, planning, formulation, implementation and evaluation of such operationalized value statements. However, I will not describe this as a linear process,

but rather a cyclical and fluid process as suggested by Bowe et al. (1992). The policy process can be viewed as a dialogue in which relationships are created and changed as the values are explored and defined.

The theoretical framework by Bowe et al. (1992) provides the main conceptual model for my analysis of the BC learning outcomes initiative. This framework suggests that policy can be understood by analyzing three contexts with each context encompassing a number of forums for action (see Figure 1). The *context of influence* is an arena for dialogue; this is the context in which policy is initiated through a negotiated process with interest groups. This arena centers on the legislative process, political parties, and the organizational and social networks supporting the governmental process.

The second context, the *context of policy text production* is the arena in which ideologies and interests are formulated into notions of the public good. Multiple texts are constructed to represent policy. They may consist of a wide range of representations such as legal documents, commentaries, and reports. This multiplicity of texts requires that they be analyzed together as they may include contradictory elements. Coherence and clarity is not a distinguishing feature of policy texts.

Figure 1.   Context of Policy Making*
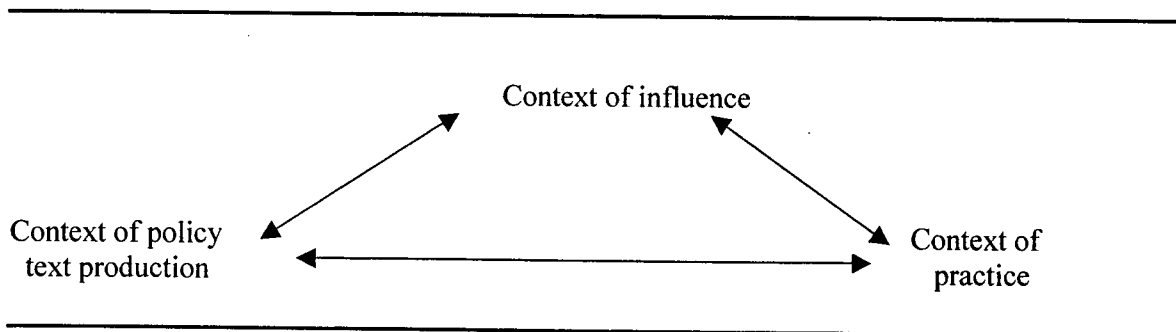
* as presented in Bowe, Ball, & Gold (1992).

The third context is the *context of practice*. This is the context that the policy addresses, the arena in which it is expected to have an influence. However, even in this context, policy is shaped and redefined as aspects are accommodated, contested, changed and / or distorted. The double-ended arrows reflect the ongoing interactions between different contexts as the policy is continually shaped and redefined through dialogue with interest groups in the system.

Bowe et al. (1992) had originally formulated a theory based on the notion of *intended policy, policy-as-text,* and *policy-in-action,* but this framework was refined to integrate the notion of flow. The language of the original conceptual model was deemed to suggest a rigidity that was not reflective of the policy process. Their "context" version describes a more vibrant and turbulent policy process; such a framework is more meaningful when analyzing a process in which values are contested and operationalized.

Ball (1994) argues that the model by Bowe et al. (1992) requires two additional contexts. The first context arises from the need to assess what Ball labels "first order (practice) effects" and "second order effects;" these concepts reflect a focus on short-term and long-effects within the context of public policy goals. Ball labels the second order effects as the *context of outcomes.* "Policies are analyzed in terms of their impact upon and interaction with existing inequalities and forms of injustice" (p. 26). In post-secondary education this would involve an analysis of patterns of access, opportunity and social justice. The *context of outcomes* then leads to a discussion of the *context of political strategy,* the search for political and social activities to more effectively address inequalities.

The model by Bowe et al. (1992) as augmented by Ball (1994) provides a simple but effective tool for analyzing the policy dialogue surrounding the learning outcomes initiative as it is validated, contested and shaped by numerous forces. It focuses attention on the relationship between theory and practice, a theme that is at the heart of this study. This framework will be supplemented by the work of other policy theorists.

While acknowledging the possibility of enlightenment, my study was undertaken with an understanding that policy analysis can also be problematic. It may increase our understanding in some areas, but it can also obscure or distort other features. Any approach no matter how 'holistic' tends to include some phenomenon which excluding others (Marginson, 1997b). As Boyd (1988) suggests, policy analysis may give us a new view, but often a view through tinted glass. We need to be cognizant of both the strength and limitations of policy analysis as we embark on this exploration.

Summary

In this chapter I focused on the review of literature from a national and international perspective, although some threads of the BC literature were also included. In Chapter Three

I provide a more detailed analysis of Canadian literature with a particular emphasis on the policy texts that framed the discussion about learning outcomes in British Columbia.

CHAPTER THREE
CANADIAN LITERATURE AND BC POLICY CONTEXT

As was discussed in the previous chapter, public policy is a value-laden concept. An understanding of the context of a particular policy is, therefore, important to gain insights into its development and implementation. This chapter will provide a comprehensive context for understanding the learning outcomes policy in British Columbia. I present an overview of postsecondary education in Canada with its federal and provincial influences. This will be followed by a brief history of post-secondary education in British Columbia and an analysis of the policy texts and contexts that surround the learning outcomes initiative. The latter sections will focus heavily on the provincial strategic plan, *Charting a New Course: A Strategic Plan for the Future of British Columbia's College, Institute and Agency System*, as the texts of this document are entwined with the texts surrounding the learning outcomes policy. The theory by Bowe et al. (1992) will form the basis for analyzing the influences involved in the generation of the learning outcomes policy and its subsequent shaping in practice as college and university college educators and administrators worked with the initiative.

Many variables affected the development of postsecondary education in Canada. Historically religion played an important role but differences in language and culture were also important (Skolnik, 1997). Geographic, demographic and economic factors have also been particularly influential (Sullivan, 1988; Dennison, 1997). The vast majority of Canadians live within a few hundred kilometers of the American border, and are largely located in urban areas. This creates challenges for access and affordability of educational experiences. The governance structure of Canada places education firmly within provincial jurisdictions, thus making a national system of higher education a challenge as well. Jones (1997) captures the essence of Canada when he refers to it "a nation of intense regionalism and subtle nationalism, of bilingualism and multiculturalism" (p. 1).

Postsecondary Education in Canada

There is essentially no system of higher education in Canada (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986; Jones, 1997). Education is within provincial legislative jurisdiction. Each province and territory has developed its own unique structures and policies related to higher education that

are grounded in regional needs, but this is not to suggest that the federal government is not influential in educational policy. In this section I review the role of the federal government in higher education and then present an overview of the organization of postsecondary education in Canada.

Role of the Federal Government in Canadian Higher Education

Cameron (1997) contends that the federal perspective on higher education has been schizophrenic since Canada was first created. On the one hand the federal government texts acknowledge the authority of the provinces in this area, but they also seek to entrench conditions on federal funding transfer arrangements. The following information provides examples of how the federal government has positioned itself to gain a more prominent presence in higher education.

During the early part of the century, federal influence was mainly directed to technical and vocational training (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). Federal grants were provided to the provinces for agricultural education thus establishing the first shared-cost program and initiating what was to be become known as cooperative federalism. The federal influence was also exerted through its support of research and the establishment of the National Research Council in 1916 (Cameron, 1997).

The post World War II expansion of higher education created opportunities for more federal involvement. The Massey Commission recommendations in 1951 resulted in federal funding to universities and other postsecondary organizations thus also resulting in increased influence on provincial educational priorities (Skolnik, 1997). Through the years these initiatives gradually became unconditional transfers to the provinces (Jones, Skolnik, & Soren, 1998). While the arrangements established were legally unconditional, federal politicians shaped discussions by focusing on their fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of Canada. The conditional or unconditional nature of the federal transfer agreements remains a contested issue (Cameron, 1997).

The federal influence was primarily expressed through its role for managing the national economy and the labour market. Some examples of such influences include the Canada Student Loans Program of 1964, the Adult Occupation Training Act of 1967; the National Training Act of 1982, the Canadian Jobs Strategy of 1985, the Labour Force Development Strategy in 1989 and the Internal Trade Agreement (Human Resources Development Canada, 1994; Cameron, 1997; Gregor, 1997).

The Established Programs Financing Arrangement in 1977 is described by Cameron as the "apotheosis of schizophrenia" (1997, p. 16). Through this strategy the federal government attempted to regain control over its expenditures through a formula that was indexed to the Gross National Product. To gain provincial agreement, conditions for transfer of funds to support higher education were theoretically eliminated. However, in practice it was suggested that this transfer arrangement constituted an invitation for the federal government to participate in educational policy.

The funding formulas and the obligations associated with the transfer arrangements between the federal and provincial governments became more contentious with the decline of provincial and national economies. In the 1980s the federal government imposed limitations on the growth of transfer payments and support for higher education decreased; other policy issues such as health care, social welfare and the environment gained prominence (Dennison, 1997).

Despite the tensions between the federal and provincial governments regarding funding for health care and education, Cameron (1997) notes that federal policies in higher education have achieved some important accomplishments in the areas of research, development of universities and community colleges, and the establishment of a student loan program. Federal funding for the support of provincial postsecondary education has been substantial, but it has also declined and with it the federal leverage to influence higher education (Skolnik, 1997). Despite the efforts of the federal and provincial government to assume a more prominent role in higher education, the provinces and territories are the major players in Canadian higher education policy; the role of the federal government in Canada is weaker than in many other western federal countries (Jones, 1997).

Organization of Postsecondary Education in Canada

Higher education can be viewed as "a collection of different provincial / territorial systems operating in parallel" (Jones, 1997, p. x). Even in this context the notion of system is used broadly to define the loosely coupled structures associated with postsecondary education. It is not meant to suggest the existence of a system wide policy approach for postsecondary education in Canadian jurisdictions.

The period from the 1950s to the 1970s was a time of expansion and innovation in Canadian higher education (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). Governments appointed commissions that shaped the vision for higher education and economic prosperity allowed for

the expansion of postsecondary education. It was during this period of expansion that non-university postsecondary institutions were established in all provinces other than Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, the two provinces in which they were established later (Skolnik, 1997).

It was also during this time that all provinces articulated a vision if not a plan for higher education, but these visions tended to be largely "one-shot" initiatives rather than the basis for continuing development (Skolnik, 1997). Much of the attention during this time was focused on the establishment of structures for higher education (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). The period of expansion was, however, followed by a period of reassessment as difficult economic conditions affected funding for postsecondary education. Dennison and Gallagher content that this period of retrenchment involved the reappraisal of postsecondary education, particularly the role and mission of the colleges that in many jurisdictions served the greatest number of adults.

Jones et al. (1998) identify three categories pertaining to the organization of postsecondary education: institutional, sectoral, and system. The institutional approach involves individual relationships between the organization and the government. In the sectoral approach the government treats components of higher education differently. Organizations are often differentiated by their source of funding (private and public) or other characteristics such as degree granting status. In such approaches the policy activities are sector specific. In a systems approach the key emphasis is on system wide planning and coordination. However, as these authors suggest, these approaches are often combined in a particular jurisdictions; few "pure" versions exist[1].

Prior to the 1960s the institutional form was the most prevalent in Canada, but during the 1960s and 1970s provincial governments initiated reviews of postsecondary education that led to sectoral co-ordination often involving intermediary bodies particularly for the university sector (Jones et al., 1998). The reviews also led to the establishment of non-degree granting organizations that were often referred to as community colleges although their role and missions varied between provinces. While all community colleges are involved in vocational and technical education, many also include academic university-transfer courses (Skolnik & Jones, 1993; Andrews, Holdaway, & Mowat, 1997; Dennison, 1997). However, it is important to emphasize that the role of colleges is more than economic. Colleges have played an important role in personal, social and cultural development often providing opportunities for marginalized groups to participate in higher education (Dennison &

Gallagher, 1986; Skolnik, 2000). The economic orientations of education have always been very strong, but postsecondary education "navigates between developing people and developing workers, between advancing knowledge and advancing industry" (Skolnik, 2000, p. 3); this is true in the case of community colleges as well as universities. However, the community colleges tend to be more reflective of the social, cultural, geographic, and economic development of the provinces (Dennison, 1992).

Viewed as "instruments of government policy" (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986; Jones et al., 1997) non-degree granting organizations were established to address provincial needs and were commonly more tightly regulated by the provincial governments than the universities (Skolnik & Jones, 1993). Despite the emergence of diverse organizations, none of the provinces experimented with the idea of system coordination and planning as is more common in the United States (Skolnik, 1997). However some of the provincial commissions such as those in Québec and New Brunswick produced reports resembling master plans (Jones et al., 1998). The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) was established in 1974 with a regional mandate focused on universities. The inter- sectoral coordinating functions, however, still occur at the provincial level (Brown, 1997; Christie, 1997).

The 1996 study by Jones et al. (1998) indicates that the universities and community colleges in all provinces were administered by one government ministry or department. However, they noted that government respondents emphasized the role of formal and informal structures involving sectoral representatives as being the main mechanisms for co-ordination.

> The role of government tended to be discussed in terms of its capacity to create or encourage the creation of co-ordinating bodies, or to facilitate co-ordinating arrangements, rather than one of explicitly regulating or legislating the existence of specific forms of co-ordination. (p. 21)

The respondents did not appear to view the provincial government as being the central agent for coordination.

There appears to be an increasing trend towards inter-sectoral coordinating structures. The number of provinces with inter-sectoral constituent committees increased from five in 1990 to seven in 1996 (Skolnik & Jones, 1993; Jones et al., 1998). However, Jones et al. suggest that Manitoba is the only province that shows evidence of moving towards a system

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[1] The discussions that follow focus on provincial jurisdictions with both a university and college sector and do not include the territories as they currently do not have a university sector.

approach to postsecondary coordination through the formation of its Council on Postsecondary Education. However, their study is not an evaluative study. It remains to be determined if a system approach is more effective than a sectoral approach. Canadian respondents appeared to be generally satisfied with the current arrangements, although one respondent addressed the need to develop a context for reform to support and sustain the coordination initiatives.

The inter-sectoral committees and councils tend to address two areas: reviewing issues that transcend sectoral boundaries, and facilitating articulation and transfer opportunities (Skolnik & Jones, 1993). Alberta and British Columbia have the greatest diversity of educational institutions with inter-sectoral structures including a broad representation from postsecondary organizations (Andrews et al., 1997; Dennison, 1997; Jones et al., 1997). Articulation and transfer guidelines and process are well established in these two provinces although other jurisdictions are at various stages in the development of similar initiatives (Brown, 1997; Christie, 1997; Gregor, 1997; Jones, 1997). However, it is important to note that these inter-sectoral structures are often transient and highly malleable, and may change with new governments, as is the current case in British Columbia.

Jones et al. (1998) question why "the center of gravity" for the co-ordination of postsecondary in Canadian provinces has changed very little at a time when many national governments were moving towards a systems approach to higher education. They suggest two variables for this situation: the deference of governments to university autonomy, and the prestige differential between the university and college sectors. They suggest that university members would be concerned about being organized under a larger umbrella including the community college sector. The culture of the universities may be a constraint to the development of a system approach in provincial higher education.

At a national level the Council of Ministries of Education Canada (CMEC) is the only instrument for national coordination other than organizations in the voluntary sector (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). CMEC was established in 1966 as a response to the threat of a federal education department (Cameron, 1997). While the federal Secretary of State was interested in being invited to the meeting of this Council, it was not until 1988 that CMEC established a "Ministerial Postsecondary Committee" to consult with federal ministers. The provinces continue to exert their constitutional power in decisions about postsecondary education.

Canadian universities are generally legislated as autonomous institutions (Jones, 1997), but the relationships between other postsecondary organizations and the provincial governments vary across Canada. Many operate independently based on government regulation, but the degree of independence varies as governments often appoint board members and exert their influence through funding mechanisms. The majority of universities and other postsecondary institutions in Canada are publicly funded through provincial operating grants. However in recent years there has been an influx of private postsecondary organizations, an issue that has received little attention from those in the public sector (Dennison, 1997).

Skolnik (1997) suggests that Canadian postsecondary education has often been conceived as a binary system involving degree granting universities and other non-degree granting institutions. He contends that this description may apply to individual provinces but is no longer appropriate for the Canadian context given the complexity and variety of organizations with degree granting status. This is particularly true in the case of British Columbia whose university colleges and institutes also have degree granting status.

There are increasing tensions between provincial accountability and institutional autonomy, which have increased during times of economic difficulties and shrinking educational dollars (Skolnik, 1997). The current focus in higher education is directed to the evaluation of present structures and performance, and the visions that have been created tend to appear as "simply statements of wishes without specific means for making them come true" (p. 337). A major preoccupation appears to be the adjustment of structures to promote increased efficiencies while trying to maintain access and quality (Jones, 1997). Control of budgets appears to be an obsession (Dennison, 1997). Higher education in Canada is being challenged to respond to ever increasing demands from provincial governments for relevance, affordability and access.

Public Postsecondary Education in British Columbia

The province of British Columbia has a highly populated coastal area in the southwestern region with the remaining population scattered throughout smaller cities and towns in the interior and northern area. The economy of British Columbia has traditionally focused on natural resources such as forestry, mining, logging, electricity and more recently tourism. This combination of factors has had an important influence on the development of

educational experiences in the province (Sullivan, 1988). Given its natural wealth of resources the need for a highly skilled workforce was not a dominant feature of its earlier development. However, the increased pressures from international competition gradually brought about concerns for developing its human resources (Dennison, 1997).

Over the past thirty years British Columbia has experienced rapid growth in the public postsecondary sector. Until 1963 the University of British Columbia with a campus in Vancouver and Victoria was basically the only option for degree education within the province. By the late 1960s and early 1970s postsecondary education had grown to include two new universities, several community colleges and a provincial institute of technology. The growth has continued and there are currently fourteen degree granting institutions in British Columbia (BC MoAETT, 2001a).

Vocational education for adults in British Columbia began in the early part of the 19th century within the public school sector, but was expanded through federal funding initiatives in the 1960s. Vocational schools administered by the provincial Department of Education were established in several cities across the province. These schools combined with the public school programs formed the basis for the development of the community college system (Dennison, 1997). Their programming was directed to trades, apprenticeships and academic upgrading courses. However, the BC Institute of Technology established in 1964 provided access to a wider range of two-year technology and health sciences programs; it too was governed through the Department of Education although this was changed to a board governance structure in the mid 1970s (Dennison, 1997).

MacDonald Report

The MacDonald Report (1962) set the stage for the expansion of postsecondary education in British Columbia. MacDonald[2] set the theme of quality as the central guiding principle for the development of a diversified educational system that provided increased opportunities for adults and increased access to these opportunities. Self-regulation of individual organizations was suggested as critical to the development of excellence. While self-regulation and diversification were deemed necessary, they were not considered sufficient for an excellent system. The commitment to excellence had to permeate our way of thinking about education in British Columbia. Geographic decentralization was also considered to be an important factor for cost-effective delivery of educational opportunities.

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[2] MacDonald was President of the University of British Columbia at the time he conducted the study.

Based on the theme of excellence MacDonald (1962) recommended the establishment of four-year and two-year colleges in communities throughout British Columbia. The two-year colleges were to be a vehicle for first and second year academic university transfer courses to provide increased access to degree opportunities.

The public enthusiastically supported the MacDonald report and the provincial government responded by providing opportunities for increased access to postsecondary education (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). The Victoria campus of the University of British Columbia evolved into the autonomous University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University was created. This addressed the issue of the four-year colleges as recommended by MacDonald (1962). A new Universities Act in 1974 established a council to promote the coordinated planning within the university sector (Dennison, 1997).

The provincial government took a more tentative approach to the establishment of community colleges. Complicated guidelines were developed for their establishment including a series of costly public consultation processes and the requirement for local financial support to augment provincial funding. Few colleges were established until these parameters were altered in the 1970s. More supportive guidelines then gave a boost to their development. Several colleges were also merged with local vocational schools that had been established with federal funding. This merging of vocational and academic education was designed to overcome the costs of establishing new organizations and also to narrow the gap between academic and vocation education by placing them within one organizational structure.

By the mid 1970s ten community colleges were in existence (Dennison, 1997). The colleges were to be community oriented and community controlled. Access was an important value of these institutions as evidenced through flexible and open admissions policies. They were established through the school districts with local community support and government funding (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986). The period between 1945 and 1975 was a time of development of higher education in British Columbia; it was a time of "autonomy, diversity, and expansion" (Dennison, 1997, p. 33).

McGeer Period

This developmental phase of postsecondary education was followed by a period that Dennison (1997) labels "controlled development and consolidation" (p. 40) led by the Social Credit party and under the leadership of Dr. Patrick McGeer who initiated several committees

to explore issues in postsecondary education. One of those committees, chaired by Goard (1977), addressed the issue of coordination of vocational education by recommending the creation of a provincial body to coordinate this particular area, and a committee chaired by Carney (1978) recommended the need for distance learning initiatives to provide increased access in more isolated communities of the province. This was later acted upon by the creation of the Open Learning Institute modeled on its British counterpart providing increased access to vocational, technical and degree opportunities in remote areas.

Dennison (1997) contends that the most influential contribution made by McGeer was the creation of the College and Institute Act in 1977 that established corporate status of the non-university institutions under individual governing boards and provided for the creation of three councils to coordinate academic and vocational programs. However, this aspect of the legislation was also perceived as a centralizing influence that increased the control by government departments and reduced the power of local college boards. The influence of McGeer promoted increased access to more diversified educational experiences, but the period of growth had peaked by the early 1980s when measures of restraint and reassessment were introduced in response to federal limitations on transfer payments and the economic recession experienced by the province (Dennison, 1997).

The policies in subsequent years focused on fiscal restraint and increased budgetary controls. Governing board membership was based on provincial appointments and the coordinating councils were dismantled. Funding formulas further increased the control on college programming. The period between 1983 and 1986 was a time of downsizing in postsecondary education (Dennison, 1997).

Provincial Access Committee

Concerns about access became a high priority during the late 1980s. The report to Stan Hagen by the Provincial Access Committee (1988) highlighted the fact that national statistics in 1985 to 1987 indicated that BC ranked seventh among the provinces for participation in postsecondary education, and ninth with respect to the number of degrees awarded. The recommendations by the Access Committee were far reaching. They included increased use of distance learning; the establishment of a "University of the North"; initiatives to increase participation by under-represented groups such as first nations, the disabled and the prison population; the establishment of a coordinating council relate to articulation, admissions, transfer; implementation of Associate Degree programs to

acknowledge two year academic studies; and the establishment of university colleges in the more densely populated regions outside the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island area. Increasing the flexibility and capacity of postsecondary education was an issue supported by the Report of the Skills Development Advisory Committee (Clark, 1989).

Many of the recommendations from the Provincial Access Committee (1988) were implemented during the 1990s including the establishment of a university in northern BC, the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer, and the reforming of several community colleges into university colleges with degree granting status based on an initial transition period that required collaboration with existing public universities (Dennison, 1997). While the government assumed that these collaborations would involve Open Learning Agency and its associated Open University, the university colleges opted for relationships with the more conventional universities (Dennison, 1992). Initially three university colleges were established but this number increased to five with the addition of two in the Lower Mainland area.

Theoretically the characteristics of universities and colleges were to exist within the newly established university-colleges; their geographic locations were designed to provide access to comprehensive programming in areas outside Victoria and the Lower Mainland of Vancouver. Their establishment was well received by educators and the communities they served. However, the new model was not without its challenges. Questions arose over issues of values, mandate, governance and scholarly activity (Dennison, 1992; Owen, 1995). In the early 1990s the university colleges, the British Columbia Institute of Technology and the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design were awarded degree-granting status (Dennison, 1997). This combined with the establishment of the University of the North greatly increased degree completion opportunities for British Columbians.

The 1990s saw the continued thrust for access, but in a slightly different direction. In *Training for What?* the BC Labour Force Development Board (1995) argued the existence of several gaps in postsecondary education. They included a skills gap, relevance gap, funding / capacity gap, and accountability gap. The *Skills Now: Skills for the Real World* initiative (BC MoSTL, 1994) was designed to support access by establishing links with public schools, increasing spaces for learners, providing opportunities "closer to home," and supporting the transition of people on social assistance into the work force. Overall its focus was "to shift the system toward a better balance between academic and vocational programs by placing more emphasis on vocational and technical skills and labour market needs" (BC MoEST,

1996, p. 11). However, this shift also had to be implemented with access and affordability in mind. This initiative again represented more direct government involvement in shaping postsecondary education, a more centralized approach to higher education.

Community Skills Centres (CSCs) were created as part of the Skills Now initiative. The CSCs were designed to fulfill a brokering role by partnering with community organizations to provide responsive and relevant educational services to target populations in both rural and urban communities (Heywood, 1999). They were supported for a five-year period through provincial and federal funding with the intent that they be self-sufficient by the end of this funding period through revenue generated by providing a variety of services for local community groups. These organizations were plagued by challenges associated with governance, funding and their role within postsecondary education. Many were not able to generate sufficient revenue due to local economic conditions. However, when they attempted to generate additional revenues concerns about duplication were raised by postsecondary organizations that served the same community. This also diverted their attention from their original mandate to partner with other organizations in meeting the educational needs of communities and industry. While the CSC were successful in providing responsive and relevant educational experiences to their clients, their demise was based on the need for funding during times of fiscal restraint.

A further exploration of human resources issues was initiated through the BC Human Resources Development Project (1992). The report from this group emphasized the importance of coordination and interdependence of educational and training sectors, and the need to partner with other sectors such as labour, business and industry in the development and implementation of comprehensive and relevant programs. Effective articulation and transfer arrangements were also central themes in the report as well as the work of Andres, Qayyum and Dawson, (1997) who investigated the experiences of learners with transfer. These reports supported the need for continuous coordination and planning among the sectors in postsecondary education.

Governance of Community Colleges

The community colleges were supported in their development by community based program advisory committees and college boards appointed by the provincial government. Historically the governance structure was essentially hierarchical with the college boards making the final decisions regarding programming, budgeting and educational policies.

Despite the fact that shared governance was not a formal characteristic of college governance, many of the BC colleges used a collegial model for their decision making (Owen, 1995). Dennison (1995) suggests that college faculties have historically perceived themselves to be involved in shared governance although this was not formally recognized. The establishment of university-colleges stimulated the dialogue about governance in the college, institute and agency sector. In 1994, the College and Institute Act was amended to include the establishment of Education Councils to support the development of educational policy. This change in the governance structure was promoted through the lobby of faculty members who had long participated in decision-making within their career areas and wished to extend their formal decision-making sphere within their educational practice. As well the Board membership was expanded to include representation from students and faculty members.

This change in governance structure is an example of what Karlsen (2000) labels as decentralization, as a form of delegation as opposed to devolution, which implies a shift in power and authority. While it appears that power may have been shifted to Education Councils, the shift is questionable given the concurrent development of a strategic plan for the college, institute and agency system (BC MoEST, 1996). College administrators and educators were given more responsibilities regarding programming, but the government increased its control through general and also specific directions articulated through the strategic plan. Despite the change in college governance structure the universities are still seen as more autonomous organizations when compared to the other BC public post-secondary institutions; this made the development of a strategic plan for the colleges, institute and agency sector a more realistic endeavour.

The Strategic Plan and the Establishment of C2T2

In 1993, the British Columbia Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour was given the mandate to build on the current strengths of the public postsecondary education system and to strategically position the system to meet the needs of society in the 21st century (BC MoEST, 1996). To fulfil its mandate the Ministry developed a strategic plan entitled *Charting a New Course: A Strategic Plan for the Future of British Columbia's College, Institute and Agency System*. This was the first plan of this nature in British Columbian postsecondary education. The goals of the plan included quality and relevance, access, affordability and accountability.

These goals in the BC plan echoed those articulated in a white paper entitled *New Directions for Adult Learning in Alberta* that focused on accessibility, responsiveness,

affordability and accountability (Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, 1994a, 1994b). Other provinces used similar language in their documents (Brown, 1997; Gregor, 1997; Jones, 1997). The main emphasis in these documents was directed to outcomes assessment and accountability of postsecondary education (Skolnik, 1997); measuring outcomes appeared to be the new mantra in public policy. The Advanced Education Council of British Columbia (AECBC) (2000) contends that the BC strategic plan presents a vision of a highly centralized system with strong accountability links to the provincial government.

The full title of the BC strategic plan does not clearly identify its inclusion of the university colleges. However, the definition of "system" within the document refers "to BC's network of community colleges, university colleges, institutes and the Open Learning Agency" (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 8). The term may have been omitted from the title of the report to make the plan more palatable to the BC universities. Regardless of the title of the document, it was clear to everyone in BC postsecondary education that the strategic plan was to include the university colleges and the Open University component of the Open Learning Agency, but not the traditional BC universities. It clearly represented a sector document, not a system document as the title implies.

Through this strategic plan the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C2T2) was established as a non-profit, independent society in 1996. It was developed through the amalgamation of a number of different initiatives and agencies including the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development. In C2T2's literature and on its web site, it describes itself as providing "support to educators in British Columbia so that learners will have access to high quality, relevant learning opportunities, and flexible delivery methods, designed to meet individual and societal needs" (www.c2t2.ca). This mandate is strongly linked with the language of *Charting a New Course*.

Based on C2T2's 2000/2001 Annual Report, its funding is largely derived through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (77%) but it also receives additional funding from other provincial ministries (4%) and the federal government (7%) for a total of 88% from public funds while the remainder is earned from project work (7%) and interest payments (5%). While the organization may be independent from a legal perspective, the funding and reporting links to the government (BC MoAE, 2002a) suggest that decision-making is highly influenced by the provincial Ministry.

In the strategic plan C2T2 was identified as having the "lead responsibility" in several areas including: "outcomes based, learner centered education," "redefinition of the

classroom," "teacher effectiveness," "professional development," "flexible learning assessment," "credit transfer agreements," "comprehensive articulation," "private training institutions," and "promote educational technology" (BC MoEST, 1996, pp. 68-73). In many cases other organizations were mentioned as having lead responsibility in association with C2T2. In the case of learning outcomes the responsibility rested with C2T2 and the individual institutions. C2T2 was directed to promote a learning outcomes approach within this educational sector; such an approach was described as important in furthering a learner-focused education system and in promoting the overall goal of educational reform (BC MoEST, 1996). *Charting a New Course* is an important document for the colleges and university colleges. Its texts are entwined with the texts surrounding the learning outcomes policy. The concept of "outcomes" is a major theme in provincial educational reform documents and discussions (BC MoEST, 1996; Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996; Bauslaugh, 1997).

Provincial Accountability Framework

Institutional evaluation processes have been in existence in British Columbia since the establishment of the first non-university public postsecondary institutions. Initially this involved annual visits from the Ministry of Education staff (AECBC, 1991). As the colleges became comprehensive institutions the evaluation system evolved but it was mainly directed to one segment of the organizations, the academic university transfer courses.

Such institutional evaluation was strongly influenced by the American accreditation system. Many of the BC college faculty members participated in professional conferences and workshops sponsored in the United States. Several BC college principals also participated as guests in Washington and Oregon accreditation site visits (AECBC, 1991). Borrowing ideas from their American colleagues, a committee of BC principals initiated a similar evaluation process in BC with the support of educators from Alberta. While the structure has been modified over time and the organizations responsible for its implementation have varied, its use has continued since 1976 in some form (AECBC, 1991; Mattia, 1998). The reports from these 5-year reviews are widely distributed to college boards and the ministry.

Since 1985 the 5-year reports have been augmented by annual graduate follow-up surveys (Mattia, 1998). Although they were initially limited in numbers, these surveys have

now been expanded to include all programs and the reports generated from the results are available to the public and the ministry.

In 1994, the Auditor General criticized the provincial government for failing to account for public funds (Mattia, 1998). This led to the establishment of key performance indicators in higher education, a development that was happening in many other Canadian jurisdictions (Beaton, 1999). The process of developing an accountability framework was being developed concurrently with the strategic plan. In 1997 the Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability (SCOEA) was established and began its work of analyzing data, and assessing key performance indicators and the associated organizational reports.

The 2000-2001 Performance Plan (BC MoAETT, 2000b) included seventy-seven measures, but these were reduced to seventeen measures in the subsequent year as the more detailed measures were "not helpful in providing information on the broader issue of accountability for the system as a whole" (BC MoAETT, 2001b, p. 16). The sheer number of the initial performance indicators may have been sufficient ground for concern. The new liberal government has increased the performance measures to 30 but several of them are still under development and have yet to be implemented (BC MoEA, 2002b). Many of the measures focus on credentials awarded, retention, completion, costs, and graduate and employer ratings. The measurement of critical thinking, communication and problem solving abilities is included in these indicators. The issue of accountability and measurement of outcomes is ubiquitous in British Columbia as in other countries and it is often associated with the measurement of graduates' abilities.

Howlett and Ramesh (1995) contend that governments rarely address a problem with a single decision; the decisions are commonly inter-related. A number of government initiatives converge on the issue of accountability. The learning outcomes initiative is one of these.

Dennison (1997) provides descriptors to summarize public policy in BC postsecondary education in the last half century. "It might be characterized at various times as disinterest, direct intervention, benign neglect, commitment to access and expansion, or obsession with a need to control budgets" (p. 49). While the New Democratic Party initiated the strategic plan with its focus on increased control and accountability, the obsession trend has continued to grow with the election of the Liberal Party in June 2001.

Many of the issues described in the BC context are similar to those in other jurisdictions both Canadian and international. Variations in policy shifts occur almost

simultaneously in many jurisdictions as is evidenced by the policies in higher education in Alberta and British Columbia, and on a broader scale in the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. This is a reflection of the idea of "policy borrowing" (Halpin & Troyna, 1995) or "policy learning" (Dale, 1999). Globalization has been a factor in increasing these approaches to the development of policy.

Halpin and Troyna (1995) suggest borrowing supports the legitimization of the policy and may also be favoured as an expedient approach. Bennett (1997) argues that policy imitation, emulation or copying might more accurately reflect the nature of the relationship. However, there are many challenges with transferability of policies given the diversity of social and political contexts, so the term policy learning will be used in this study to acknowledge the accommodations and shifts that occur with policies are they are shaped for and in new contexts.

Learning Outcomes Policy in British Columbia

The theoretical framework developed by Bowe et al. (1992) will be used to analyze the learning outcomes policy during its formative period. These authors focus on three contexts: the *context of influences*, of *policy text production* and the *context of practice* (see Figure 1 in Chapter Two).

Context of Influence on the Learning Outcomes Policy

The influences on BC postsecondary education are evident at the provincial, national and international level. In this section I will analyze the nature of the *context of influence* within BC postsecondary education. Who are the players? Who has power and what are their values? These are important questions for a better understanding of the learning outcomes policy.

The influences of the knowledge economy and technological advances led to an increase in international influences. The work of international organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO impact policies about learning. For example, as suggested by Ainley (1998) it has become almost obligatory to include the notion of a learning society in discussions about economic prosperity. Education is viewed as being "at the heart of both personal and community development" (Delores, 1996, p. 19). The values embedded in the international discussions focus on economic competitiveness and social inclusion thereby

espousing both competition and cooperation. The OECD has played an important role in shaping policy conversations about education and economic development. As its name implies, this organization is directed towards economic growth and development, and to further its work it established a Centre for Educational Research and Innovation in June 1968 (OECD, 1994). It has advocated for human capital development through education and supports these approaches through research directed towards measurements of educational outcomes (OECD, 1991, 1995a, 1995b, 1998a, 2000). Dale (1999) argues that these international organizations have a common ideological approach based on, but not limited to, the concepts of financial liberalization, trade liberalization and deregulation.

In the area of learning outcomes the influence of policy makers and educators from the United Kingdom and the United States is particularly important. In 1995 CCPD sponsored several visits to the United States and also implemented workshops in the following years that were facilitated by American and Ontario consultants (Slattery, 2000). Faris (1995) developed a report for the provincial ministry regarding reforms in five countries including Scotland, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Abilities-based education was one of the key strategies investigated in this report. The international influence was augmented by a visit to the United Kingdom in 1998 by five individuals representing C2T2 and the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) (Faris, 1999). The international conversations about competencies, skills and abilities have influenced federal and provincial dialogues about abilities-based education.

The influences at the national level are also readily evident. As previously discussed the federal government exerts its influence through transfer payments and its jurisdiction over economic development and human resources. Much of the federal influence in this policy area has focused on human resource development. Training needs and training wants have been a central focus for research and discussion (Couillard, 1994; Baran, Bérubé, Roy, & Salmon, 2000). Another example is the development of the Internal Trade Agreement (Human Resources Development Canada, 1994). This agreement includes a commitment to decrease barriers to the mobility of Canadians across provincial boundaries. From an educational perspective this has been translated into the definition of standards of practice and opportunities for individuals to demonstrate their abilities to these defined standards. Another important mobility issue is the integration of new immigrants into the Canadian workforce and the importance of abilities-based assessment to allow for increased portability of skills internationally (Faris, 1995).

The provincial ministries of education have also established a national voice through the CMEC, which is described as "an arm of the provinces and territories," an instrument that allows provincial ministries to collaborate with the federal government ministries, and national and international organizations (CMEC, 1996). The Conference Board of Canada (CBOC) is another player on the national scene. It is a not-for-profit applied research organization whose work centers on economic trends, organizational performance and public policy issues. Its *Employability Skills Profile* (1992) was influential in initiating discussions about abilities-based education in community college sectors across Canada. This brief look at the international and national level suggests that there are strong relationships between economic and political spheres in educational policy, particularly the learning outcomes policy.

Other provinces were also assessing their approaches to postsecondary education and producing a number of strategic documents (Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 1990; AAECD, 1994a, 1994b; MPHEC, 1997a, 1997b). The theme of abilities and skills where threaded throughout these documents. The province of Ontario adopted a learning outcomes policy, which it considered central to educational reform. The policy focused on the development of generic abilities for its colleges of applied arts and technology that were to be used to implement a provincial accreditation process (Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 1990; College Standards and Accreditation Council, 1994). Through the accreditation process generic as well as individual program abilities were to be measured and evaluated. This approach linked learning outcomes to accountability measures.

The influence of economic and political contexts also permeates the provincial policy arena. For example, the institutional boards in the college, institute and agency sector are appointed by the provincial government, and the program advisory committee membership includes a large representation from employers. While the program advisory committees have historically been associated with vocational and career technical programs, several university-college administrators indicated that they were considering introducing or had already introduced such advisory committees into their applied degree programs. These are the main channels through which dialogue occurs in this sector. The dialogue is mainly directed towards the political and economic arenas, and the community at large is only minimally represented at the advisory committee and board level.

Ball (1990) presents an interesting theatrical analogy regarding the relationship between the ideological, political and economic spheres. He suggests that we visualize a

theatre stage. The spotlight is centered on ideology; this is the focus of the public dialogue. However, there are other aspects of the stage, the political influences, but these are cast in shadows and are, therefore, less visible. The economic influences are present in the form of the stage backdrop, but we are often even less aware of these factors than the political aspects. Ball's analogy also raises the issue of agency versus structure, and the relationship between them. The lighting on the stage places certain actors in a spotlight, and other actors in the shadow. This raises the question of control. Who controls the lighting and how is it controlled? These are important questions to consider in policy analysis.

This stage analogy is similar to Boyd's (1988) notion of looking through darkened glass. In both cases our view is limited, by the effects of lighting in the case of Ball (1990), and by tinted glass in the case of Boyd. A limitation of Ball's analogy is the absence of the cultural, social and historical contexts. He may consider them to be imbedded in the political, economic and ideological spheres, but this is not clearly stated.

Who are the actors on the college, institute and agency sector stage? BC post-secondary education may be viewed as loosely coupled sectors working within a political framework. The main structures include the government, the ministries of education associated with secondary and postsecondary sectors, other ministries[3], C2T2, organizations[4] in the sector institutions, the university sector, the College Institute Educators' Association (CIEA) and a variety of support staff unions. This eclectic group is set against the backdrop of our provincial economic, political, historical and cultural context. Given the diversity of interest groups within the Canadian mosaic, the players involved in educational policy are numerous. On the boundaries of the sector are the national and international players previously discussed.

Who sets the agenda for the dialogue? From the analysis of the participants and the opening remarks to the 1993 Summit on Skills Development and Training, the government appears to play a major role in shaping the agenda and the dialogue. "We've invited some key players in business, labour, government, and the education and training community to participate in these discussions," Premier Mike Harcourt stated. (Province of British Columbia, 1993, p. 43). In the same address he stated the "key questions" for the summit discussions:

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[3] While the Ministry of Advanced Education is the most influential, the links between this ministry and other ministries are present but more tenuous.

[4] These organizations include the learners, graduate employers, faculty members, college administrators, and college support staff. The faculty members and support staff are commonly organized under union locals that are linked to provincial unions.

- What are the skills training needs of British Columbians for the 21st century?
- How do we ensure access for those individuals who have traditionally been denied opportunity?
- How successfully can we predict what we're educating and training British Columbians for?
- How do we best support employment-based training to the mutual benefit of the workforce and employers?
- Do our formal education and training institutions need reform?
- How can we get better results from our investment in education and training? (Province of British Columbia, 1993, pp. 53-54)

This agenda appears to focus the light on the needs of the economic community. The terms are linked to notions of economic development and growth; they are embedded in the idea of graduates' abilities.

The focus on employment and training raises the question of values. What values and whose values are heard in this *context of influence*? These questions will be explored through the ideologies developed by Williams (1961). These ideologies include the *industrial trainer*, the *old humanists*, and the *public educator*. The notion of the *industrial trainer* is strongly represented in provincial documents (BC MoAETT, 1991b; BC MoSTL, 1994; BC Labour Force Development Board, 1995; BC MoEST, 1996). For example, the recommendations from the Premier's Summit included the following two points:

1. Implement an industry-led workforce development strategy [and] key industry strategy by working with business and labour ...
6. Improving accountability measures across the learning system by putting in place outcome-based accountability frameworks, developing more uniform measures of student outcomes, and developing measures of employer outcomes (Province of British Columbia, 1995, p. 38).

The function of education is described in terms of human capital development. This human capital is expected to support our economic development in the global community. Premier Harcourt stated that "we have to dedicate ourselves to upgrading our education skills -- and keep on upgrading -- or we'll see our standard of living fall and our unemployment and welfare lines grow longer" (Province of British Columbia, 1993, p. i). The notion of a strategic plan was one of the six themes arising from this summit. The other themes included a commitment to life-long learning, equity, access, partnerships in skills and training, and new approaches to education.

In the strategic plan, *Charting a New Course*, which arose from the summit discussions, the *industrial trainer* theme is complemented by the *public educator* ideology. The first goal in this plan is "to provide British Columbians with post-secondary education

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and training to improve the quality of life and citizenship experienced in the province and to enhance current and future job opportunities" (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 2). This suggests a blended approach.

Despite the articulation of the quality of life and citizenship values, the results section of the Ministry's annual report relates specifically to employment data. The introduction to this report does identify that "the ministry recognizes that this is a limited interpretation of competence and that postsecondary education is intended to provide a broad range of experiences" (BC MoEST, 1997b, p. 1). Four pages of employment data overshadow this statement; the employment graphs tend to "speak" louder than a single statement. This would suggest that the *industrial trainer* ideology predominates, but the values of the *public educator* may have been incorporated to allow for ownership by educators, particularly those associated with academic programs. These educators often do not see themselves as preparing learners for employment (Battersby, 1996). The voice of educators was more strongly represented in the strategic planning dialogue when compared to the Summit discussions. The inclusion of the *public educator* ideology may be a reflection of their involvement.

Dale (1989) provides some insights into this reality in his discussions about the "core problem concept." He argues that the agenda of governments is strongly influenced by the capitalist mode of production. From a purely pragmatic perspective, the BC government must support the accumulation of capital as it is dependent on this capital for its survival. While the government may also be involved in other activities, it legitimates capitalism and provides a context for the growth of capitalism. The state is not a neutral player in policy development; it is influenced by the dominant interest groups within its context. It should, therefore, not be surprising that educational policy is strongly influenced by the *industrial trainer* ideology. However, the inclusion of other ideologies, such as the *public educator's* ideology, is not inconsistent. Dale might suggest that this is possible when the dominant ideology supports the capitalist state. It could also be argued that the *public educator's* ideology has become engulfed by the *industrial trainer* ideology. The notion of the good citizen is often linked with the notion of citizens contributing to the welfare of the community in economic terms. Poulson (1996) would suggest that this is an example of how language is used to shape the dialogue and through it, people's perceptions and ways of understanding their world. By shaping the concept of good citizen the then New Democratic government could justify the adoption of what is basically an *industrial trainer* ideology.

How is power used in this *context of influence*? In could be argued that dialogues are initiated to stimulate meaningful discussion which would result in the expansion and blending of participants' horizons and ways of thinking about educational issues and policy. Mike Harcourt indicated that the purpose of the Summit was to "develop a broadly shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities we face" (Province of British Columbia, 1993, p. 2). Others might argue that this dialogue was structured for dominant interest groups to extend their power and control over educational policy. The strong representation from educators, government, labour and business suggests that the "we" may be narrowly defined. See Table 3 for an analysis of the participants in provincial dialogues. Ball would suggest that in this instance the spotlight is directed to the actors associated with the *industrial trainer* ideology. Perhaps dialogue is used both ways. While it may be controlled by dominant interest groups, it may also lead to new understandings among those power groups.

The *context of influence* is the arena in which policy is normally initiated. The learning outcomes policy in BC was shaped by several conversations focused on outcomes and the outcomes of learning. It was influenced by international conversations about learning, abilities, and economic development. It was especially influenced by the policy examples of competencies, essential abilities, key skills and abilities that were prominent in other English speaking countries. It was also shaped by national conversations about employability skills and conversations in other provinces, particularly Ontario with its focus on generic skills. Economic perspectives focused on the development of human capital largely dominated these conversations.

The American conversations about abilities and assessment focused on an economic and pedagogical perspective. These two streams of influence emerged in the BC context. The economic perspective came from the government and ministries while the CCPD staff articulated the pedagogical value of adopting a learning outcomes approach. These conversations ran parallel and merged in the discussions surrounding the strategic plan. The concept of policy subsystems (Howlett, & Ramesh, 1995) provides a way of understanding the influences surrounding the learning outcomes initiative. The Steering Committee for *Charting a New Course*, the CCPD and the offspring of *Charting a New Course*, C2T2, can be viewed as policy subsystems, as forums where actors negotiate and bargain for their particular interests. These discussions, however, occur in the context of the organizational arrangements of postsecondary education. In particular this included the newly established organizational Education Councils with their governance over curriculum policy. The

Table 3.   Analysis of Participants in Provincial Dialogues

Interest Groups	Examples of Forums for Provincial Dialogue About Education Policy					
	Colloquium Year 2000	Premier's Summit	*Training for What* Report	Strategic Planning Group	Board for CCPP[a]	Example of College Education Council
Government (elected)	-	6	-	-	-	-
Government Personnel	8	18	3	5	4 plus 2 CCPD staff	-
Employers	8	35	8	4[b]	-	-
Labour	-	20	8	2	-	-
PSE Faculty & Administrators	55	29	3	6[c]	10	10 Faculty 5 Administrators 2 support staff
Public School Reps	8	4	-	-	-	-
School Trustees	2	-	-	-	-	1 Board Member
Students	-	3	-	2	-	4
Parent Groups	2	-	-	-	-	-
Community Interest Groups	3	10	5	-	-	-
Total Number	86	125	27	19	16	22

[a] CCPD stands for the Centre for Curriculum Program Development. This entity was reorganized into the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology based on the recommendations from *Charting a New Course.*

[b] The employer group was also represented through several college administrators who were also members of the Post Secondary Employers' Association Board.

[c] Faculty members were represented by the President, Past-President and a Local President of the College and Institute Educators' Association (CIEA). Administrators were also represented by the President of the Post Secondary Employers' Association who was also a college president.

entrenchment of learning outcomes into the strategic plan was an important event for the advocates of a learning outcomes approach.

Context of Text Production Related to the Learning Outcomes Policy

Concurrent to the dialogue in the *context of influence*, we have the production of texts about learning outcomes in postsecondary education. Here the ideologies and interests of the dominant groups are formulated into concepts. *Charting a New Course* is the most obvious text, but other texts surround this central document. Through the strategic plan, C2T2 was directed to promote a learning outcomes approach within the college, institute and agency sector. Such an approach was described as important in furthering a learner-focused education system and in promoting the overall goal of educational reform. Personnel from C2T2 initiated workshops and published articles related to the value of a learning outcomes approach (Battersby, 1996, 1997; Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996; Bauslaugh, 1997).

It is important to note that the language of *Charting a New Course* is very similar to that used in the Sullivan report several years earlier. The Sullivan report (1988) entitled *A Legacy for Learners* articulated the need for change in the K to 12 system. It recommended a "loose and tight" system, one that provided for greater diversity and flexibility while at the same time also strengthening the monitoring and accountability components. The report focused on many of the same values and goals as expressed in *Charting a New Course*. Issues of quality, relevance and accountability predominated. These discussions in the K to 12 sector in the 1980s appear to be have been the precursor for the conversations in postsecondary education in the 1990s.

The federal document *Learning Well ... Living Well* (Ministry of Employment and Immigration & Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology, 1991) focused on the articulation of skills essential for our citizens. The Conference Board of Canada produced the *Employability Profile* (1992) that included many of the same generic abilities (See Appendix B). The abilities articulated in these national documents were very similar to ones described in international documents (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992; Queensland Department of Education, & Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, 1994; New Zealand Qualifications Authority,1994)

There are other provincial documents such as the *Client Survey Project* (British Columbia Human Resources Development Project, 1992) *Summary of Proceedings from the Premiers Summit* (Province of British Columbia, 1993), *Skills Now: Real Skills for the Real*

World (BC MoSTL, 1994) and *Training for What?* (BC Labour Force Development Board 1995). These texts address issues surrounding the satisfaction level of graduates with their education and the development of abilities for work. A key message from these documents related to a shift in emphasis in postsecondary education from academic to applied programs with the integration of employability skills throughout postsecondary curricula.

While there were multiple texts influencing the learning outcomes policy in British Columbia, the most influential document was the strategic plan. *Charting a New Course* was designed to be a strategic plan for the BC college, institute and agency sector. The purpose of the plan was to build on the strengths of the current system and "to refocus the system within a broader context of education and training for life and work" (p. 7). It was designed to respond to the "redefined societal expectations of postsecondary education" (p. 7); these expectations were described in the following way:

- ✓ ensuring individuals are prepared to find productive employment in a competitive labour market;
- ✓ providing British Columbians with learning opportunities throughout life; and
- ✓ demonstrating that the system provides good value for the funds invested in public education. (p. 7)

The document is quite large and detailed. It includes twelve value statements, a vision statement with ten points, four goals, and five "primary elements." The goals include the following: relevance and quality, access, affordability and accountability. These goals were to be used to guide the planning process and to evaluate the outcomes of the strategic initiatives. The goals are supported by primary elements required to achieve the goals; they focused on the following characteristics: learner-focused, flexible, integrated, outcome-oriented and innovative. The schematic framework developed for the strategic plan places a "learner-focused" approach at the core of the reform vision (see Figure 2). Double-ended arrows are used to depict the relationships between the above elements.

Part 3 of the report presents 30 pages of strategies for implementing the four goals; it is followed by a ten-page implementation plan. The strategies call for learning outcomes, performance indicators, innovation, relevance and value-added analysis just to mention a few of the themes. This brief summary of the document highlights the complexity of the strategic plan.

Figure 2. Primary Elements Required in the Future Learning Sytem*

shared common resources	meets learners' objectives
linkages between all sources of learning	links curriculum with learning outcomes
common credentials	generates employment opportunities
centres of excellence	produces employability skills
enhanced articulation	

INTEGRATED   OUTCOME ORIENTED

LEARNER FOCUSED

FLEXIBLE   INNOVATIVE

- available anytime
- available anywhere: workplace, community, home and school
- customized curriculum

- meets needs of diversified learners: youth, working adults, and career transition
- student-centred teaching and learning

- lower cost per learner
- new partnerships
- incorporates advanced technology

* from *Charting a New Course: A Strategic Plan for the Future of British Columbia's College, Institutes and Agency System* (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 27).

Understandably connections do exist among the components in the strategic plan, but the links are not clearly defined. For example the term "innovative" is defined as "incorporating information and learning technologies, developing new partnerships and ensuring that the system is affordable and accountable" (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 2). This links accountability and affordability with innovation. In the strategies section, the notion of quality appears to be articulated as an outcomes orientation, a measurement orientation; the idea of relevance was translated into employability skills. This again places increased emphasis on the concept of accountability.

The "goals" themselves look very much like the values of the system; however there is a list of 12 values that clearly include the "goals" with the exception of accountability, which is integrated with the notion of "innovation." Table 4 presents a comparison of the themes that are threaded through these areas. These examples reflect how language is used to create new ways of talking and thinking about ideas. In Poulson's (1996) terminology they would be examples of textual interventions.

The notion of learning outcomes and outcomes of learning is threaded through the goals, particularly as they are articulated under the strategies section of the document. The texts suggest a web of relationships between the outcomes of learning and the goal of relevance and quality, and accountability. Within the accountability goal the relationship is stated in measurement terms. In the relevance and quality goal the notion of learning outcomes is stated in terms of employability skills. Generic abilities, which are called "building blocks or competencies," are articulated. They include abilities related to communication, numeracy, technology, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, and adaptability, all of which reflect the language used in international and national policy documents (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992; Queensland Department of Education, & Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission., 1994; New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1994).

Table 4:   Relationships Between Policy Texts in *Charting a New Course*

Values*	Vision	Goals	Primary Elements
Learner-centered	Focused on learner		Learner-focused
Quality	Orientation to outcomes	Quality (linked with relevance)	Outcome oriented
Relevance	Employability skills	Relevance (linked with quality)	Subsumed under learner-focused
Responsiveness	Flexible and Integrated		Flexible and Integrated
Equity and access		Access	
Partnerships	Subsumed under innovative		Subsumed under innovative
Innovation	Innovative**	Affordability and Accountability	Innovative
Fiscal responsibility	Subsumed under innovative	Subsumed under affordable and accountable	Subsumed under innovative

* The values also included public education, learning, respect and trust, and positive environment but no obvious links were found to the key elements in the other sections.

** Innovative is defined as "incorporating information and learning technologies, developing new partnerships and ensuring that the system is affordable and accountable" (BC MoEST,1996, p. 2).

These discussions about policy documents support Poulson's (1996) view that it is important to analyze policy texts in the past and present to gain a better understanding of their nature. The themes in *Charting a New Course* are not new; they are present in multiple forms in various international, national and provincial documents relating to the public school system and higher education (Sullivan, 1988; Cave et al., 1991; Conference Board of Canada,1992; Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993). The *industrial trainer* ideology is evident throughout these documents, although it is often blended with the *public educator's* theme to a lesser or greater extent. This ideology is then linked to the issue of learning outcomes and the abilities that would support learners in the workplace.

Both Ball (1992) and Poulson (1996) discuss the issues of incoherence, contradiction and ambiguity of policy texts. While there are many similarities in the examples of texts such as the notions of a sustainable economy, development of the individual, relevance, accountability, and access, there are also some tensions. The most obvious tension is between personal development and economic prosperity. Skolnik (2000) refers to this as the tension between humanism and materialism and suggests that we need to determine where the pendulum rests between them. Another tension exists between the individual and society. Which is central, the needs of the community or the needs of the individual? There are also tensions between social, cultural and economic health. The needs in these areas may not necessarily coincide. For example, social policies may be draining on economic resources. The texts appear to be based on the assumption that employment is a desirable state for individuals. It is not clear that all interest groups hold this value.

Poulson (1996) and Ball (1992) both view these tensions and ambiguities as an integral feature in the policy process. In particular Poulson directs his attention to the use of language in texts and the way it is used to create new understandings. For example, the notion of accountability is framed as an "enabling" factor for the sector. However, the dictionary provides a different definition. To be accountable is to be "liable to being called to account; to be answerable" (American Heritage, 1993). Another interesting example is the word "innovative." In *Charting a New Course* this notion is operationalized to mean that costs must be contained through technology and new partnerships. The exploration of language and the shaping of meaning through symbolic political language will be the focus of discussions in further chapters. However, the examples in this section illustrate how policy may be influenced and altered through textual interventions. While the initial texts may be static, their content is continually shaped and redefined through dialogue with interest groups.

Context of Practice Related to the Learning Outcomes Policy

What happens when texts meet practice? From a linear framework, one would explore how the directions in the policy document, *Charting a New Course*, were implemented by the college, institute and agency sector. Fortunately or unfortunately, things are not as simple; people respond to the policy texts. Policy is shaped and redefined as aspects are accommodated, contested, changed and / or distorted. Dialogue alone is not enough to implement a policy. This is where the notion of faculty inertia and autonomy described by Dale (1998) become relevant.

Educators have a certain amount of autonomy within the educational system. Dale (1998) described this within the context of public school educators in Britain in which autonomy is limited to the execution of work. The autonomy of college, institute and agency educators, however, extends beyond this work aspect, to policy formulation through the Education Council. It is interesting, however, that *Charting a New Course* was being developed just as the Education Councils were being established. With one policy, faculty members gained increased autonomy, but with the strategic plan this autonomy was being simultaneously curbed. This is an interesting example of the interaction of policies within the practice context.

The texts of *Charting a New Course* started to be shaped very quickly. C2T2 personnel were influential in the translation of the original texts into further policy texts, particularly those surrounding a learning outcomes approach. The framework presented in the strategic plan places a "learner-focused" approach as the core element in the vision statement (see Figure 2). The learner-focused approach is schematically supported by innovation, integration, flexibility and an outcomes orientation. This "outcome-oriented" notion is defined as including the following aspects:

> "meets learners' objectives,

> links curriculum with learning outcomes,

> generates employment opportunities, and

> produces employable skills" (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 27).

The schematic identifies the inter-relationships between all these elements, but positions the learner-focused approach as the central issue. In contrast, the literature produced by C2T2 incorporates outcomes based education (OBE) as the core element of educational reform (see Figure 3). The C2T2 framework suggests a greater influence of OBE in educational reform. In its framework the OBE approach is based on the principles of applied learning, student-centered learning and criterion-referenced assessment. It is linked to the needs of learners and to labor market trends. Learning outcomes are described as the foundation of the educational design, a foundation that will promote a flexible and seamless, cost-effective, educational structure.

In converting the elements from the vision to an operational strategy, the emphasis was changed in two areas. The first change involved replacing the "learner-centered" concept with an "outcomes based education" concept as the central theme of educational reform. To be learner-focused pertains not just to outcomes but also to other elements in the system such

as the inputs, context and process of education. A learner-focused approach is much broader than an OBE approach. The second change involved a shift from an "outcome orientation" to "outcome based education." An outcome orientation suggested a broader approach, one that could include a variety of strategies. The C2T2 schematic limited the options, by placing learning outcomes as the central element in the educational reform framework. This change in emphasis suggested that the development of learning outcomes was required to support educational reform. The rationale for changing the emphasis from learner-centered to learning outcomes was not readily apparent in the literature from C2T2.

While the notion of outcomes was being shaped into the concept of learning outcomes, it was also being shaped towards a different notion of outcomes, one of performance indicators. Since 1996 these two concepts of outcomes have become linked and specific abilities have now become provincial performance indicators (BC MoAETT, 2001b). In looking at this policy through the lens of this context framework, it appears that the BC government is shaping its role as that of an "evaluative state." Rather than giving specific procedural guidelines, the focus is now directed towards performance indicators. In some ways this might be just as prescriptive as guidelines; in other ways it might provide opportunities to shape the way performance indicators are defined. The context framework suggests there are spaces in which one can create change and movement.

When C2T2 issued an invitation in 1997 for public postsecondary institutions to participate in the Learning Outcomes Network, 21 of the 28 organizations agreed to participate and apply C2T2's funding to the development of learning outcomes within their organizations. While continued funding was not guaranteed, many seemed optimistic that learning outcomes were an important government priority. In June 1998, fifty-four BC educators attended workshops at Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, related to learning outcomes and assessment; this activity was jointly funded by C2T2 and the participating institutions. Among this group were both converts and skeptics.

Figure 3. A Conceptual Framework for Postsecondary Reform*

EDUCATIONAL DESIGN

LINK TO SOCIETY AND WORLD OF WORK

KEY OPERATING PRINCIPLES

PROFICIENCY-BASED CURRICULUM
works backwards form generic skills, knowledge/values required in order to identify learning outcomes and design learning experiences

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION
identifies gaps between skills, knowledge and values needed in society and the workplace and those being produced by education and training systems

APPLIED LEARNING
apply skills as demonstration of knowledge and values; learn by doing in real world situations

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY
flexibility to provide access and services for a diversity of mature learners

OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION
system oriented to produce defined skills, knowledge and values in graduates

STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING
emphasis on student learning needs and how they can be met to maximize student success

SEAMLESS SYSTEM
eliminate barriers so students can move between institutions and programs efficiently and effectively

LIFELONG LEARNING CULTURE
learning is highly valued; adults return cyclically for formal and informal learning based on personal development and changing workplace needs

CRITERION REFERENCED ASSESSMENT
entry point (PLA) and exit assessment for proficiency at generic skills

* from *The Learning Outcomes Approach and Postsecondary Educational Reform* (Bauslaugh, & Hansen, 1996, p. F1).

During the Alverno visit an emergency meeting was held with all the BC Learning Outcomes Coordinators (LOCs); the funding which had been targeted towards learning outcomes for the rest of the fiscal year was now being diverted to pay tuition costs for adult basic education courses. A number of emotions were expressed at the meeting including fear, anger, frustration, and apathy. A small envelope of funding was going to be available for project work and for honorariums for LOCs whose position might otherwise be eliminated. This was the practice environment that existed as I started to gather data for my study.

Summary

Policies do not exist independently; rather they exist within a context that includes an historical element. To better understand the policy process, it is important to consider the policy in transition from its assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation aspects. There is a continuous cycle of policy formulation and implementation as the original policy text is shaped by the context. This constant decontexualization and recontextualization allows for the creation of spaces for dialogue, opportunities to influence and shape the policy. Certainly *Charting a New Course* was seen as a major influence on the learning outcomes policy, but it was not the only influence. It was shaped by other policies both nationally and internationally. The ongoing shaping and implementation of the learning outcomes policy is the central story of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR
DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter is directed to the methodological design of my study and describes my approach to the exploration of the three broad research questions:

(1)   How was the concept of learning outcomes defined in British Columbia colleges and university colleges?

(2)   How did the people in this sector view this policy direction?

(3)   Was the learning outcomes initiative helpful in promoting the vision described in the strategic plan for this sector?

I begin by describing the overall approach to the study. This is followed by a description of the survey instrument and interview protocol. I then present information about the target group and participants in the study. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations and boundaries of the study.

To explore the research questions, the study was divided into three phases:

Phase One: I distributed a structured questionnaire to organizational and department administrators, and individuals associated with the learning outcomes initiative in 15 colleges and university-colleges participating in C2T2s Learning Outcome Network.

Phase Two: In this phase interviews were conducted with 33 members of the survey group and 3 students at four sites.

Phase Three: During this phase I conducted interviews with survey participants from the other organizations (n=10) and key individuals (n=12) who had comprehensive knowledge of learning outcomes and postsecondary education.

During each of these phases the organizational documents from the research sites and C2T2 were analyzed to provide further insights. The study was designed to provide a number of perspectives on the research questions to gain a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding the learning outcomes initiative in BC colleges and university colleges.

Procedure

In this section I outline the activities involved in each of the phases of the study. This will be followed by a more detailed description of the survey and interview instruments, and the participants in my study.

Target Sample

The participants for this study were selected from the organizations that participated in the Learning Outcomes Network. Of the 21 educational institutions participating in this initiative, 20 represented the college, university-college, institute and agency sector. Although the public universities were also invited, only two[1] of the six universities participated in the network. Based on this participation profile, I selected the 16 community colleges and university colleges as the target sample.

The target sample was selected based on two characteristics to promote more cohesive data: (1) all organizations shared a common regional mandate for education, and (2) they provided a range of programs most of which did not exceed two-years in length. The three institutes and the Open Learning Agency were excluded as they have a provincial mandate and the universities were excluded because of their primary focus on degree programs.

Although the university colleges differ from colleges in that they offer degree programs, the similarities between the two organizations are much stronger than their differences. University colleges deliver many college programs while also providing some degree opportunities. Excluding the university colleges from the study would have restricted the data gained since a large segment of educators and administrators associated with certificate and diploma programs would have been excluded.

Phase One

Themes were extracted from the literature to support the construction of a survey instrument; the international literature about learning outcomes was particularly influential as well as the patterns I perceived through workshops and meetings with the Learning Outcomes Network members. I constructed the survey around my research

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[1] One of the two universities was located within the organizational structure of the agency.

questions using the themes that I had developed from the literature and my interaction with BC Learning Outcomes Coordinators and other educators by operationalizing the themes into items within questions.

The draft survey was then piloted by sending the questionnaire to 54 individuals selected for their knowledge of learning outcomes and curriculum management. They represented organizations that were participating in the Learning Outcomes Network, but ones that were not included in the target sample for my study. Many of the individuals selected for the pilot study held positions as organizational and department administrators, Learning Outcomes Coordinators, and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators. The pilot group also included people who had previously held positions as deans, associate deans and department heads but were no longer in these positions. Faculty members and C2T2 personnel were also included in the pilot phase. They were asked to offer suggestions regarding wording, layout and content. Twenty-one people provided feedback (35% response rate). They made small suggestions regarding wording and recommended the inclusion of some additional questions focused on the aims of education, which were incorporated into the survey instrument. This process helped to establish the content validity of the questionnaire.

A letter was sent to the presidents of the 16 colleges and university colleges requesting their consent to conduct the study within their organization. From the initial letter and a follow-up letter, consent was received from 15 organizations.

The following individuals within these 15 organizations were then invited to participate in the survey:

>   Learning Outcomes Coordinators (LOCs),

>   Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators (PLARCs),

>   Department Heads / Coordinators, and

>   Organizational administrators with educational functions including Deans, Associate Deans, etc.

These individuals were selected to receive the survey because they had important responsibilities for curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation. They also had the greatest exposure to the learning outcomes initiative, so it was assumed they were

more likely to have knowledge about the factors influencing decisions regarding the integration of a learning outcomes approach in their areas.

The questionnaire was sent to 709 individuals from the 15 organizations. Coding allowed for identification of respondents from the same institution, and for follow-up with non-respondents. A reminder was mailed to non-respondents three weeks after the initial questionnaire. A total of 313 responses were received providing a 44% response rate.

Phase Two

Of the 313 survey respondents, 115 also agreed to participate in an interview. Of those agreeing to participate in an interview 26 were institutional administrators, 75 department administrators, and 14 individuals who held positions as LOCs or PLARCs. An interview guide was developed by extracting themes from provincial literature as well as the first general overview of the survey data, particularly the comments from the open-ended questions. The interview guide was piloted through interviews with four people, two from the department level, and two from the college administration level in a community college that was part of the target sample, but not selected as an interview site. This pilot phase included three on-site interviews and one telephone interview. Participants made recommendations for changes in the wording of the questions that were then incorporated into the interview guide.

An analysis was conducted of the respondents consenting to be interviewed. The following variables were included in the analysis:

- ➤ geographic location (i.e., in Lower Mainland and Victoria area, and outside this area),
- ➤ type of organization (i.e., college versus university college),
- ➤ institutional administrators versus department administrators,
- ➤ department administrators were further analyzed based on type of program area (i.e., Foundation, Academic, Vocational and Career Technical),
- ➤ individuals who held positions as PLARCs and LOCs,

> participants' responses to the survey question requesting their overall attitude to a learning outcomes approach measured by a 4-point scale with responses ranging from *very negative* to *very positive*.

Based on this analysis four sites were selected where interviews were conducted: two colleges and two university-colleges. Two sites were located in the Lower Mainland and Victoria area of British Columbia, and two were outside this area. Sites were selected to include both supporters and opponents of a learning outcomes approach. A description of the sites and my general site impressions are documented in Appendix C.

The student representatives to Education Council at each of the sites were also invited to participate in an interview. It was believed that student representatives would have the most knowledge about the learning outcomes initiative through their involvement in these councils. During the site visits the minutes of the Education Council meetings and their curriculum sub-committees were reviewed to provide additional insights into the discussions within the organizations about curriculum and educational reform.

Phase Three

The third phase included interviews with key individuals deemed to have knowledge of learning outcomes in post secondary education both within and outside British Columbia. It included the following groups:

> LOCs,

> PLARCs,

> key individuals from C2T2,

> individuals in other organizations linked to postsecondary education,

> individuals at the sites identified as key people within their organizations, and

> people identified as experts with regard to learning outcomes.

This phase also included the review of LOC reports to C2T2, the C2T2 work plans, and C2T2 Board minutes. As well the discussions on the Learning Outcomes Network email group were analyzed. In total 58 in-person and telephone interviews were conducted, 36 interviews at the four sites, 10 interviews with other LOCs and PLARCs in the target

sample, and 12 with key individuals within and outside British Columbia. Table 5 presents a summary of the data collection methods.

Chapter Three provided a discussion of the policy issues surrounding the learning outcomes initiative. Of particular importance was the development of *Charting a New Course*, the establishment of the Education Councils, the provincial Learning Outcomes Network, the establishment of the Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability (SCOEA) and the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act. As discussed by Howlett and Ramesh (1995) issues are not commonly addressed through one policy; it is common to have several policies to support a particular direction. Appendix D provides a list of provincial events surrounding this study. It provides a context for understanding the environment in which the three phases of the study were implemented.

Table 5.   Summary of Data Collection Methods

Groups	Data Collection Method*
BC Institutional Administrators	Survey and interviews
BC Learning Outcomes Coordinators	Survey and interviews
BC Prior Learning Assessment Coordinators	Survey and interviews
BC Department Heads / Coordinators	Survey and interviews
BC Student Representatives	Interviews
Key actors (people with extensive knowledge of the policy initiative within and outside BC)	Interviews

*   The data from participants were supplemented by the analysis of C2T2 and institutional documents, and the discussions from the Learning Outcome Network email discussion group.

General Strategies

In this section I describe the general strategies that guided my approach to this study. It includes descriptions of confidentiality measures and coding approach as well as considerations in the data collection, analysis and interpretation process.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of data and data sources was promoted through a number of strategies. The questionnaires were coded for matching of respondents from each institution and institutional role. It also allowed for non-respondent follow-up initiatives. All survey data were reported in aggregate form; no data that could be linked to individuals were available to persons or agencies outside the university. Access to individual data and the names of participants was restricted to my research supervisor and myself.

Coding of Data

Stake (1995) suggests that research invites readers to draw on their own knowledge in analyzing the data and assertions presented by the researcher. This study is designed to stimulate such an interactive process with the reader. To facilitate this, the interviews and open-ended survey responses have been coded in the following way:

C-admin:	Individuals whose roles are mainly directed to organizational administration (e.g. associate deans, deans, etc.) within college sites.
C-academic:	Individuals whose roles are mainly directed to department administration in the academic area in the college sites.
C-applied:	Individuals whose roles are mainly directed to department administration in the applied area in the college sites.
UC-admin:	Individuals whose roles are mainly directed to organizational administration (e.g. associate deans, deans, etc.) within the university college sites.
UC-academic:	Individuals whose roles are mainly directed to department administration in the academic area within the university colleges.
UC-applied:	Individuals whose roles are mainly directed to department administration in the applied area in the university college sites.
Student:	Students from the college and university college sites.

LOC / PLARC: Individuals who held the position of Learning Outcomes Coordinator or Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinator within the 15 participating organizations.

Key Actors: Individuals whose views were identified as important in understanding the policy direction. The great majority of these currently reside in BC, but some national actors were also interviewed.

C-survey: Comments from the open ended sections of the survey responses from the participating colleges.

UC-survey: Comments from the open ended sections of the survey responses from the participating university colleges.

The data from documents such as the LOC reports to C2T2 and comments from the Learning Outcome Network email discussion group are labeled as LOC – report and LOC – email respectively.

Several decisions supported the coding system. For example, the site LOCs and PLARCs interview data were integrated into the overall LOC / PLARC category to protect the confidentiality of their views. While it is recognized that the dichotomy between "academic" and "applied" is to some extent artificial, it was useful in the context of this study as the discussions often involved these concepts. Another challenge with the categorization related to "professional" programs; I have categorized them under "applied" but realize they span the two categories. I considered a separate category for professional programs but that led to another quagmire, the issue of defining "professional." I felt that would be more hazardous terrain. Two codes were selected to represent the colleges and the university colleges to allow readers to explore their perspectives. The study sites are not identified in the coding system to protect the confidentiality of the interview participants.

Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

The data were collected over a one-year period starting with distribution of the survey instrument in the fall of 1998 and ending with interviews of key actors in the summer and fall of 1999. Initial data analysis was conducted as the data were collected. This allowed me to identify gaps and to obtain additional data. Creswell (1998) describes

qualitative analysis as a spiral through which the researcher "engages in the process of moving in analytical circles rather than using a fixed linear approach" (p. 142). The first loop involves the data management aspects; this is followed by a phase of submersion in the data to get a sense of the entire database. The next loop involves describing, classifying and interpreting while always being open to multiple perspectives. Creswell conceives classification as encompassing a search "for categories, themes, or dimensions of information" (p. 144). The final loop involves the presentation of the data in a form that is accessible to the reader. This best describes the process through which I engaged with the data.

There must also be standards applied to the analysis in order to support the soundness of a study (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Cresswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). However, the literature in qualitative research suggests that researchers have not yet reached consensus on the terminology most appropriate to convey the standards and criteria deemed important for this type of research. The more traditional criteria for evaluating research such as validity, reliability and generalizability have been and continue to be the focus of serious rethinking (Cresewell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Eisner (1991) shapes these ideas into concepts of "structural corroboration" (triangulation), "consensual validation" (seeking the opinions of others) and "referential adequacy" (importance of criticism) (p. 110). Guba and Lincoln (1989) use the concepts of "credibility," "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability" (pp. 234-242) to establish trustworthiness. Although the terminology varies, there are common themes within the literature and these formed the basis of my approach to this study.

Trustworthiness standards. Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest that the concept of internal validity in qualitative research can be regarded at the "truth value" which they shape into the concept of "credibility." Establishing credibility involves determining if there is a "match between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders" (p. 237). Merriam (1998) discusses this issue in terms of "trustworthiness" and "congruence" (p. 199). Researchers suggest that the best way to approach this concept of credibility is

to use strategies to support it. Many of these are implemented by carefully constructing the design of the study (Guba & Linclon, 1989; Yin, 1994; Merriam, 1998).

To support the credibility of my study I used multiple sources of data to gain a holistic understanding; my data included reports and records of email discussions to support the interview and survey data. I visited the four sites to gain a better understanding of BC colleges and university colleges. I sought to make the elements of my study transparent by conducting myself "as if someone were looking over [my] shoulder" (Yin, 1994, p. 37) and by developing what Merriam (1998) calls an "audit trail" (p. 207) and Guba and Lincoln (1989) call a "dependability audit" (p. 242).

I transcribed all the interviews verbatim and then reviewed the interviews to identify general themes. A coding scheme was developed based on my initial analysis. I searched for patterns, for consistencies or correspondence and for multiple realities, given the different and sometimes conflicting views of what was happening with this policy in the college and university college sector. The organizational reports and LOC reports to C2T2 were analyzed for patterns to confirm or question those arising from the interview and survey data.

The site interviewees had the option of a telephone interview or an in-person interview; the majority selected a personal interview at their site. Based on their geographic location and their preference, LOCs, PLARCs and key individuals had the option of a telephone interview or personal interview. Participants were also provided with the option of discussing issues "off the record,"[2] and the opportunity to skip questions or return to previous questions. These strategies help to support the truthfulness of the interview data. Several interviewees identified that their public expression of views was different from their private views; they shared both perspectives. As well my experience as a department administrator and a member of my college's Education Council appeared to support the interviewees' willingness to speak with me; I was seen as 'an insider' as opposed to 'an outsider.'

Usher et al. (1997) describe validity as being "primarily concerned with the production of a 'rigorous' text – one which works within the community of readers to

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[2] Fourteen of the 36 site-interviewees and one key player asked to have certain information off the record. Four of these asked to have the taping halted during this aspect of the interview.

which it is offered and is attuned to the habitus of its audience" (p. 215). Verification of interview data was gained through a feedback loop to interview participants. Participants had an opportunity to review their personal quotes embedded within the results chapter to ensure that their views were presented in an appropriate context. As Guba and Lincoln (1998) identify, the criteria for qualitative research are parallel criteria to those from a quantitative approach, and they are primarily methods criteria.

Triangulation and integration of the survey data. Triangulation strategies have been incorporated into the sampling process, data collection and data analysis[3]. The survey data were used as a component of the triangulation process; in particular the emphasis is on descriptive statistics. However, respondents were also organized into groups based on their organizational role and program area. The analysis includes comparisons of groups with respect to their views on a number of issues.

Non-parametric tests or distribution-free tests were selected for inferential analysis given that my data was ordinal. I acknowledge that the non-parametric tests may be less powerful (Field, 2000), and therefore, introduce a greater chance for a Type II error. However, the actual difference in the power of the parametric and non-parametric tests is questioned (Newton & Rudestam, 1999). Jaccobson (1976) contends that many of the tests based on ranked data yield comparable power to the parametric tests with only five percent more subjects. Given the number of survey respondents (n=313), I contend that non-parametric tests may be just as powerful as the parametric tests in the context of my study.

The Kruskal-Wallis One-Way-Analysis was used to compare differences between three or more independent groups including the respondents' role within the organization and their program areas. This test was selected because its validity is not affected by the absence of a normal distribution; it is more sensitive to medians than means (Howell, 2002). Respondents were categorized based on the following roles: LOCs and PLARCs, department administrators, and organizational administrators. The LOCs and PLARCs were grouped together as many individuals were responsible for both areas or they shared

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[3] The ATLAS-ti software program was used for the thematic and discrepancy analysis of interviews, and the survey data was analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

the responsibility for supporting the development of learning outcomes within the organization. Respondents were also grouped based on their programming area including the following: foundation, academic, vocational and career technical, and applied degree. The applied degree category was selected based on the fact that applied degree programs normally contain academic courses as well as courses directed to a particular career direction; they were viewed as spanning the space between the academic, and the vocational and career technical areas. An alpha of .05 was applied to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis tests and the descriptive statistics related to the statistically significant test results were further analyzed through crosstabluation tables.

It is recognized that the finding of statistical significance does not necessarily imply a difference that is important or meaningful in practice (Newton & Rudestam, 1999; Howell, 2002). As Pedhazur and Schmelkin (1991) argue, "all that statistical significance means is rareness" (p. 202). It offers "a decision-making technique for identifying systematic covariation in a set of data" (Newton & Rudestam, 1999, p. 68). The above referenced authors argue for the importance of descriptive statistics and the necessity for critical thinking to determine the substantive importance of test results. To support such an approach, crosstabulation tables were used to analyze the patterns within the data, and the patterns from different survey questions and the interviews were then analyzed to reach conclusions. The descriptive and inferential data from the survey were used to corroborate ideas and to question the patterns that emerged from the interview data and a variety of organizational documents as well as the email discussions by the LOCs.

Ethics.   Merriam (1998) addresses the issue of ethics, a conversation that Guba and Lincoln (1989) couch in terms of "fairness" criteria (p. 245). Merriam focuses on data collection and the dissemination of findings as two key areas where ethical issues arise. The researcher-participant relationship is central to these areas. I acknowledge that my involvement with college education and my association with participants through the interview process required diligent self-assessment to limit the introduction of bias into my analysis. My experience in health care allowed me to create a supportive and professional environment during the interviews, and to gain ongoing informed consent

during my interactions with participants. The research was conducted under the terms defined by the University of British Columbia ethics review process.

The combination of these approaches supports the soundness of this study. The nature of this investigation is specific to the context in British Columbia. It is not meant for generalization to other jurisdictions. However, it can influence the generalizations we hold by supporting them or possibly questioning them (Stake, 1995). Merriam (1998) suggests that the use of multiple sites allows "the results to be applied by readers to a greater range of other situations" (p. 212). Guba and Lincoln (1998) suggest that the major technique for addressing transferability is to provide what Greetz (1973) termed as "thick description." I strove to provide enough description to allow readers to determine how closely their situation resembles that of the study.

The aim of the study was to gain an understanding of how the people directly involved interpret and understand the learning outcomes policy. This study is interpretive in that it includes an analytical aspect as well as a descriptive component. My aim was to present the multiple realities of this particular policy as it was being implemented in the BC context, but also to understand what was happening and to draw conclusions.

Survey and Interview Instruments

The questionnaire and interview guide were designed to explore the study's research questions:

(1)   How was the concept of learning outcomes defined in British Columbia colleges and university colleges?

(2)   How did the people in this sector view this policy direction?

(3)   Was the learning outcomes initiative helpful in promoting the vision described in the strategic plan for this sector?

The survey questions were designed to elicit a general overview of opinions, to shape the interview questions, to provide a vehicle for gaining consent for the interviews and to assist in the selection of the interview sites. The interview questions were designed to provide enough focus for the study, to help direct my thinking, yet to also allow for the unexpected. Based on the experience of Stake (1994) and Merriam (1998), I expected

that the questions would change and possibly become more elaborate during the course of my study. This proved to be true in regards to the initiation of the policy. The web of relationships between a learning outcomes approach and the goals of the BC strategic plan proved to be complex. It was difficult to discuss the learning outcomes initiative without first delving into the complexities surrounding its origin and introduction to the world of practice.

Questionnaire Construction

When looking for the effects of a policy there are often limited data available against which to assess it (Stake, 1994). The survey instrument was, therefore, designed to gain some overall perspectives on current teaching and evaluation strategies that could be helpful as baseline data for future studies; it was also designed to capture opinions about a learning outcomes approach. The questionnaire consisted of four to five sections[4] that included questions about the following:

➤ program and course implementation (for department administrators only),

➤ familiarity with a learning outcomes approach,

➤ views about a learning outcomes approach,

➤ future plans with regards to a learning outcomes approach, and

➤ views about the aims of postsecondary education.

The questions were developed through a review of the literature and were subsequently pilot-tested. Participants were asked to circle a number on a scale to identify their responses with the scales ranging from four to six points. See Appendix E for the survey instrument. The sections included open-ended components asking respondents to clarify issues important to the understanding of a learning outcomes approach.

Interview Guide

The interview involved a semi-structured approach to provide guidance and flexibility in exploring perceptions and ideas regarding a learning outcomes approach and educational reform. The interview included specific anchor questions in five areas:

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[4] Questions about program and course implementation were included for the department administrators only.

- ➤ key aspects of a learning outcomes approach,
- ➤ origin of the present interest in a learning outcomes approach,
- ➤ issues and problems to be addressed related to a learning outcomes approach,
- ➤ effects of a learning outcomes approach, and
- ➤ important issues in the reform of postsecondary education.

Supplemental questions allowed for further exploration of areas (see Appendix F). The questions were designed to provide guidance, yet allow for flexibility during the 40-50 minute interview.

Participants and Non-Participants

In this section I describe the target sample and its composition (see Table 6). It is followed by an analysis of the survey respondents and non-respondents, and data related to the interview participants.

Survey Target Sample

The target sample included the colleges and the university colleges with the colleges representing 58% of the total and the university colleges 42%. Forty-eight percent of the target sample people were employed in organizations in the Lower Mainland and Victoria area, and 52% outside this area.

Organizational Roles

The target sample included LOCs, PLARCs, department administrators and organizational administrators. The department administrators were the largest group representing 79% of the target sample compared to the organizational administrators at 18%. The LOC / PLARC group was the smallest representing 3.5%, but this group was felt to be central to the study as they were working most closely with the learning outcomes policy throughout their organizations. Their views were considered critical to an understanding of the initiative.

Table 6. Characteristics of Target Sample (N=709) and Survey Participants (n=313)

Group Characteristics	Number in Target Sample By Group	Number of Participants By Group	
	N	n	%*
Type of Organization			
Colleges	412	195	47
University Colleges	297	118	40
Total	709	313	
Location of Organization			
In Lower Mainland & Victoria area	343	153	45
External to Lower Mainland & Victoria area	366	160	44
Total	709	313	
Position in Organization			
Department Administrators	559	227	41
LOCs and PLARCs**	25	18	.72
Institutional Administrators	125	68	54
Total	709	313	
Sex			
Female	303	159	52
Male	406	153	38
Total	709	313	
Department Administrators			
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL, etc)	86	26	30
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	135	39	29
Vocational, Career Technical & Applied Degree Programs	338	161	48
Total	559	227	

* as a percentage of target sample by characteristic
** Learning Outcomes Coordinators and Prior Learning and Recognition Coordinators

Sex

Males represented a slightly larger group of the target sample (58%) compared to the females (43%). This distribution reflects the predominance of males in organizational administrative roles.

Program Areas

It was not possible to determine the program areas for the organizational administrators based on their organizational titles. However, the department administrators (N=559) were further subdivided based on their program areas. The applied area, including vocational, career technical and applied degree programs represented the largest group (61%). The academic areas represented 24% of the target sample and the foundation area 15%. The distribution between the applied areas and the academic areas is a reflection of the vocational and career technical programs that dominate both the colleges and the university colleges. Appendix G presents additional data about each of the 15 participating organizations with regard to organizational roles of the target sample (Tables G1 and G2) and the respondents (Tables G3 and G4).

Survey Participant Characteristics

The following section provides an analysis of the various organizational and individual variables of the survey participants.

Geographic and Organizational Characteristics

The response was slightly higher from the colleges (47%) than the university colleges (40%). There were approximately equal numbers of respondents from the Lower Mainland and Victoria area (45%) when compared to respondents outside those areas (44%).

Sex

The response was higher from females (52%) than males (38%).

Position Within Organization and Program Area

Based on their numbers in the target sample, the LOC / PLARC response rate was higher (72%) than that from the other areas, but their number was small (n=18). Their higher response rate is probably a reflection of their interest in the policy. The response from organizational administrators was also slightly higher (54%) when compared to

department administrators (41%). This may be a reflection of their work with the strategic plan and its implementation.

The response was higher from applied areas (48%) than the foundation (30%) and academic (29%) areas. When looking at the organizational sub-units (see Appendix G, Tables G3 and G4) a similar profile can be seen. This could be a reflection of the small sample size in the academic area in many of the colleges. In one college the academic area is the responsibility of organizational administrators. It could also be a reflection of concerns expressed in the academic area about the implementation of a learning outcomes approach. Within the organizational sub-units the foundation area was not represented in 4 of the 15 organizations; this may be a reflection of the small sample size of this sub-group.

The LOC and PLARC category was not represented in 3 of the 15 organizations. This may be attributed to the fact that several coordinators opted for an interview instead of responding to the survey as they felt their views would be more accurately reflected through an interview.

One organization, University College #2, was under-represented in the survey data. This response rate may have been affected by organizational discussions surrounding this policy. One organizational administrator expressed concern that this study could jeopardize the organization's efforts towards adopting a learning outcomes approach.

Despite these small variations at the organizational level, the overall group data suggest that the respondent sample can be considered representative of the college and university college sector. It may, however, be more slanted to the views of individuals in applied areas including vocational, career technical and applied degree programs.

Additional Survey Participant Characteristics

The survey data provide additional information about the participants including their general work profile, years of employment in postsecondary education, highest educational credential, student status, and hours of professional development activities per year. The characteristics are described in the following section and are supported by data found in Appendix G, Tables G5 - G10.

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General work profile.   Forty percent of respondents had 50% or more hours of student contact time in their work profile (see Appendix G, Table G5 - G6). As well, a further 15% had more eclectic work profiles that included a combination of organizational administration, department administration and students contact elements with each being less than 50%. Overall it appears that people involved with teaching were well represented in the respondent group.

Years of employment in postsecondary education.   Forty percent of respondents had between 11 to 20 years experience in postsecondary education and 29% had more than 20 years of experience (see Appendix G, Table G7 - G8). Respondents generally appeared to have substantial experience in postsecondary education.

Highest educational credential.   The data in this area reflects the respondents' credentials but no attempt was made to determine their specific educational background. Half the respondents (50%) had a master's degree, and 15% had a doctoral degree (see Appendix G, Table G9 - G10). A further 20% had a baccalaureate degree with an additional 14% having either a certificate or diploma. The respondents appeared to be an educated group.

The overall survey data analysis suggests that the respondent sample is representative of the target sample. The respondents represented a variety of program areas and had substantive experience in postsecondary education.

Interview Respondents

A total of 115 survey respondents indicated their willingness to participate in an interview. This included 26 organizational administrators, 75 department administrators, and 14 individuals in the LOC / PLARC category. The student representatives to Education Council at the sites (n=9) were also invited to participate in an interview.

Four sites were selected based on the criteria previously described and the individuals who had given consent through the survey instruments were invited to participate in an interview. In total 36 interviews were conducted at the four sites during Phase Two of the study. Of these, 14 were with organizational administrators, 19 with

faculty members and 3 with students (See Table 7). Of the 33 administrators and faculty members, 2 were from the foundation area, 14 from applied programs, 8 from the academic area, and 9 from the group including LOCs, PLARCs, and other individuals with responsibilities for a variety of areas (see Table 8). While the academic area was less represented in the survey data, their representation was higher in the interview data. This supports the claim that the overall study sample was reflective of the target sample.

Table 7.   Interview Information from the Four Sites (n=36)

Site	Organizational Positions			Total
	Organizational Administrators	Department Administrators	Students	
	n	n	n	n
Site 1	6	3	1	10
Site 2	1	5	1	7
Site 3	3	4	1	8
Site 4	4	7	0	11
Total	14	19	3	36

Table 8. Interviewees Based on Program Areas of Organizational
         and Department Administrators (n=33)

Site	Program / Course Areas				Total
	Foundation[a]	Academic[b]	Applied[c]	Combined[d]	
	n	n	n	n	n
Site 1	0	3	3	3	9
Site 2	1	0	4	1	6
Site 3	1	1	3	2	7
Site 4	0	4	4	3	11
Total	2	8	14	9	33

[a] Foundation = ABE, ESL etc.
[b] Academic = academic courses leading to degrees
[c] Applied = Vocational, Career Technical and Applied Degree Programs
[d] Combined = LOCs, PLARCs and people with responsibilities for a variety of areas.

Phase Three of the study included additional interviews with all the LOCs and PLARCs (n=10) that had provided consent as well as key players (n=12) from organizations associated with postsecondary education and people described as experts in the area of learning outcomes. A snowball technique was used to select additional people from organizations such as C2T2, the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), Colleges and Institute Educators' Association (CIEA), Industry Training Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC), Advanced Education Council of BC, and other organizations. This sampling approach has limitations given that it relied on participants to identify people with knowledge in learning outcomes; it may not have provided a representative sample of experts. However, it provided a way of accessing individuals with knowledge about the policy as their identity was sometimes not known to me. A total of 58 interviews were conducted (see Table 9).

Table 9.   Overall Interviews Conducted (n=58)

Interviews	Number
Site Interviews	36
LOCs and PLARCs* from colleges and university colleges other than the sites	10
Key players	12
Total	58

* LOC = Learning Outcomes Coordinators (LOC) and PLAC = Prior Learning Assessment Coordinators (PLAC). Interviews were conducted with either an LOC or PLAC from 10 of the 15 organizations involved in the survey.

Limitations and Delimitations

While acknowledging the possibility of enlightenment, this study was undertaken with an understanding that policy analysis can be problematic. It may increase our understanding in some areas, but it can also obscure or distort other features. As Boyd (1988) argues, policy analysis may give us a new view, but often a limited view. Readers need to be cognizant of both the strength and limitations of policy analysis when considering the results of this study.

The same skepticism also needs to be applied to the area of research. We search for patterns, draw conclusions and call them assertions, knowing that other interpretations also exist. The guides we have for transforming our data into assertions are limited (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998). The data are based on human perceptions and influenced by their biases, values and world views (Merriam, 1998). This applies to myself as well as the study participants. However, one of the assumptions underlying my research is that reality is not an objective entity, but a reality constructed through the interpretation of individuals.

Not only does the researcher bring a construction of reality to the study, but so do all the participants within the study. Stake writes about three realities: "external reality," "experiential reality" and "rational reality." His perspective is that all realities need to be

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considered. "It is self-jeopardizing to do other than to keep #2 [experiential reality] and #3 [rational reality] robust, and ignoring #1 [external reality] is a poor way to cross a busy street" (p. 101). Taken from this perspective, the aim of my research was to construct a clearer picture of participants' experiential reality and a more sophisticated rational reality, one that can withstand disciplined skepticism.

The following assumptions were made about the target sample within the college and university college sector:

- Organizational administrators would have knowledge about the learning outcomes policy;

- Department administrators would have knowledge of the teaching and learning occurring within their areas;

- Department administrators would have knowledge of the views of the faculty members and learners in their area; and

- Educational administrators, LOCs and PLARCs would be willing to share their views.

The survey data indicated that some participants were more comfortable than others identifying the views of their faculty members and learners. Their comfort level with the survey questions varied and some opted for the interview only. It was also expected that people identified as key players would have knowledge of the policy and would be willing to share that knowledge.

The assumptions related to students were more tentative. I expected that students would have few opinions regarding a learning outcomes approach, but that they would have some views about *Charting a New Course* and educational reform in general. However, it was deemed important to test these assumptions through interviews with students active in organizational governance.

The 44% survey response rate is a further limitation. I received 24 email responses to my first mailing regarding decisions not to participate in the survey. The most frequently stated reasons provided for nonparticipation included time and competing priorities, lack of knowledge about learning outcomes, and the view that other people in their area or organization had responded on their behalf. However, the response

rate is balanced by the analysis that suggests that the survey and interview participants appeared to be representative of the target sample.

As with many studies there are limitations influenced by cost factors and the need for participants. The study relied heavily on individuals who agreed to share their views. People who agreed to participate may have strong views that may not be reflective of their colleagues. By seeking both proponents and opponents of a learning outcomes approach during the site interviews, I attempted to provide multiple perspectives.

This study focused on the colleges and university colleges who participated in the Learning Outcome Network. The agency and institutes were not included because of their provincial mandate. The universities were also not included. Although the six BC public universities were invited, only two elected to participate. People in these organizations, particularly the organizations that did not participate in the network, may have views that would also be important for this study. However, in the case of non-participating organizations it would be difficult to identify where in the organizational structure and by whom the decisions about participation where made. It would have been challenging to track the diffusion of information about learning outcomes through these organizations. Given these challenges, there was no attempt made to contact organizations whose administrators had decided not to become involved in the Learning Outcomes Network.

The consumers of education, the students, employers and the community were only marginally included in the study. This was mainly a cost issue as it related to employers and communities, and an access issue when considering students' input. Since the learning outcomes approach was still new to many educators and administrators, it was difficult to find students with knowledge of this approach who were also interested in participating in the study. The student representatives to the Education Council were invited to participate, but only three of nine individuals responded. Their input, however, will be important in assessing the long-term effects, if any, of a learning outcomes approach. Extending their inclusion in this current study was not warranted given the cost-benefit ratio of gaining their input; just as affordability is a goal in postsecondary education, it was also a consideration in conducting this study.

The newness of the learning outcomes initiative raises issues of timing. Some would argue that this study was conducted too early, that the timing of the study did not

allow for the effects of a learning outcomes approach to become evident. Wholley (1994) would probably recommend starting with an "evaluability assessment" to determine the existence of a learning outcomes approach and the viability of performing a larger assessment. However, Cronbach (1982) would support an early study. He suggests that one can gain valuable data during the embryonic phase of an initiative, data that might be obscured by waiting longer. Evaluation data are also more likely to influence a new program; once a program or initiative is entrenched, it is more difficult to effect change. How appropriate was the timing of this study? It was difficult to look for achievements or outcomes after one year. However, this study is not so much about evidence of the presence of learning outcomes as it is about understanding the learning outcomes initiative. I suggest that this study will contribute to the ongoing understanding of educational policies in British Columbia. It presents perspectives about the initial stages of a policy as the policy is interpreted and shaped by the people within the college and university college sector. While Cronbach (1982) supports early assessment, he also advocates the idea of several smaller studies that are programmatically linked, rather than initiating one large study. As is the case with many studies, they are more valuable when considered within the context of other studies.

Summary

Research is not designed "necessarily to map and conquer the world, but to sophisticate the beholding of it" (Stake, 1995, p. 43). Owen (1996) suggests that a quantitative approach to a research question is much like solving a puzzle; one tries to create a picture by fitting pieces of reality together. A qualitative approach is more like solving a riddle; the riddle unfolds as you work with it. It may go in expected directions, but unanticipated directions are equally likely. Regardless of the approach, new questions often arise as one embarks on the journey to unravel the issues embedded within the research questions. Ball (1994) contends that it is important to investigate the micro-level of educational policies, especially the views and experiences of people. My study is such a study; it addresses the perception and views of people in BC colleges and university colleges as they experienced the learning outcomes initiative advanced by the C2T2. In

the next chapter I present the data from the survey, the interviews and the analysis of organizational documents. This will be followed by the discussion chapter in which I unravel the findings in relation to the research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE
RESULTS

In this chapter I present the results of my data collection with particular emphasis on the interview and survey data. I begin by providing the interviewees' views about *Charting a New Course* and their perceptions about the origins of the learning outcomes policy. As discussed in Chapter Three, the policy texts surrounding learning outcomes are closely linked with the provincial strategic plan. These texts and the respondents' views provide a context for understanding the learning outcomes policy. Next, I present the participants' interpretation of the policy and their views about the policy. Following this I focus on the implementation phase and actions surrounding the policy. I describe what the participants did with the policy and also address the implementation issues, both the enabling and disabling factors surrounding the policy during its implementation phase. The last section will look at the relationship between the learning outcomes policy and the goals of *Charting a New Course* to analyze the perceived value of the approach. The interview and survey data is supplemented by organizational reports and the data from the Learning Outcomes Network email discussion group to provide a comprehensive description of the policy during the implementation phase. In essence this chapter will present data from the *context of practice* as described by Bowe et al. (1992).

Origins of the Learning Outcomes Policy

How did the learning outcomes policy come about in British Columbia? My analysis of the influences and the policy texts affecting its development are found in Chapter Three. In this section I focus on the views of the interview participants related to the origins of the learning outcomes policy. The interview respondents identified several areas of influence; they included influences internal to the academy and external influences at the provincial, national and international level. These factors are schematically represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4.   External and Internal Influences on the Learning Outcomes
Policy in British Columbia as Perceived by Study Participants
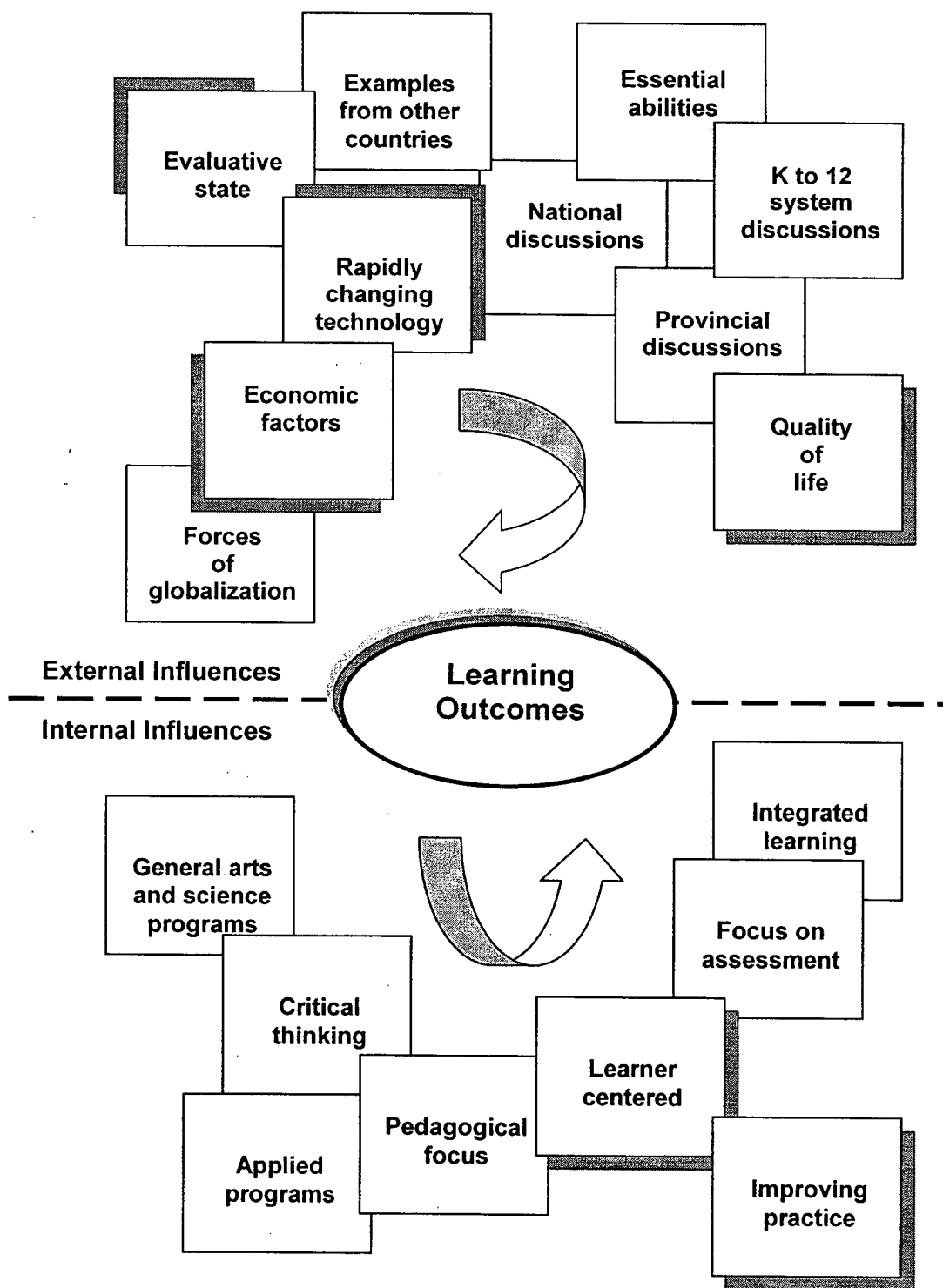
Not surprisingly the most frequent origin of the learning outcomes policy was identified as *Charting a New Course* (BC MoEST, 1996). "I don't know where it came from other than *Charting a New Course*. Whose agenda it was on, is something I have not been terribly concerned with" (UC-admin) (410). "[Learning outcomes] is of course written in *Charting a New Course*. It has come ... directly from that document. ... Not all faculty members are aware of that" (LOC / PLARC) (510). However other policy texts were also mentioned; these referred to the employability skills and the *Skills Now* initiative which focused on increasing access to applied programs, particularly technical and vocational programs (BC MoEST, 1996). The following quote links these elements.

> I think it is probably linked with employability skills. ... The very fact that you link skills and training with education, it gives [those] two words a lot of emphasis. [They] are a clear message from the Ministry saying, when we think of education, we think of training, with skills now. It is not called education now; it is not called learning now; it is called skills now. So I think there is a clear indicator from the Ministry, from the government. It is economically driven. (UC-applied) (48)

Charting a New Course was identified as a central document related to the learning outcomes policy, but interviewees also spoke about the role of the Ministry and C2T2. The following quotes provide examples of this discussion.

> I think initially the impetus or the interest came from our president hearing from the provincial government that 'thou shall' look at this. ... He brought forth the message that the province wanted us to look at learning outcomes as a college and there was money attached. So seriously, cynical or not, that is where the impetus came from. (LOC / PLARC) (56)

> It comes from the Ministry of Education, from some people who have created something they think is unique with the idea. It is ... one of these educational tools that they come up with, and they promote them for a period of time, and then three years later there will be some other things that come along. (UC-academic) (13)

> [It] is from the government level, and C2T2 gave it somewhat of a push, perhaps more from the idea that education has to be accountable. ... I'm also just a little suspect of the government, that this somehow may be related to funding issues. But I do appreciate that the BC government did not come down with an edict that said, "everyone will have learning outcomes." (C-applied) (22)

The government and C2T2 were viewed as important influences in the promotion of this policy, but sometimes it was difficult to tell if the influence came in the form of a directive or a request. There seemed to be some conflicting messages or impressions.

While the Ministry and C2T2 were perceived as influential in the origins of policy, what were the forces behind their support of the learning outcomes initiative? Site interviewees spoke extensively about the link between learning outcomes and accountability; this is where the international influences were seen to be prominent. The accountability factor was often discussed as an external factor while pedagogical influences were discussed from the internal perspective. Interviewees often talked about the differences in the external and internal influences. The following quotes provide examples of these discussions.

> It is by and large the dissemination of fashionable ideas. This is an international trend. It is based in large part in concerns about accountability, value for money, and all of that. ... I have not actually traced the dispersion of these ideas, but I suspect it is the familiar pathway with the United Kingdom, and United States in interaction with the [New Zealanders] out in front, and finding its way through various back doors into Canada. (UC-admin) (16)

> It may come from several sources, not all of which we are totally comfortable with. I think it does come from an increased interest in accountability by outside agencies. ... It has the potential to be a tremendous boom to faculty in terms of designing curriculum. And that is where I see its value primarily. But I think a lot of it has come from the interest in accountability ... as well as some eventual dissatisfaction with competency-based learning. ... I think people were looking for another way to look at curriculum. (UC-admin) (411)

> In one sense since the 1950s and onwards there has been this objectification of instruction, and it is more of a systematized approach to teaching, and it is also an efficiency model. A lot of it is grounded in efficiency. (UC-applied) (12)

The themes of accountability and efficiency were central to the learning outcomes initiative from the perspective of the interview participants. They were discussed as external influences arising from technological and economic factors; many saw learning outcomes as a market driven approach. Some supported this direction, while others had objections and concerns. It was also seen as an international trend towards an evaluative state as evidenced in many European countries, the United States, New Zealand and Australia in particular.

The discussions about external influences were, however, juxtaposed with internal factors related to the needs of learners. Issues of pedagogy were often entwined with the notion of learning-centered. One respondent in particular discussed the interplay of the policy texts.

> We go through a seven or ten year cycle ... trying somehow to serve students better. We started this language around student-centered education, and then somebody sat down and said, "Well, if we're student-centered, then we have

to somehow define that." And so learning outcomes tends to be a natural outcome of that. And now we are talking not about student-centered education but learning-centered education. Well the natural outcome of that is to build, not learning outcomes, but a learning environment where you begin to look at access. ... So there is a tendency to define language, and then define a process that actually fulfills the jargon that we are putting out there. (LOC / PLARC) (58)

This difference in external and internal influences may account for the diversity of views about learning outcomes. The educators who perceived learning outcomes as stemming from and supporting learning were probably more receptive to the initiative; those who saw learning outcomes as an external instrument for accountability and efficiency were probably more opposed to the initiative. However, there were also differences among the interviewees perception of the whole idea of accountability. Some appeared to be very comfortable with the idea of being more accountable to external groups; others were concerned about this trend.

One interviewee drew attention to the complex interplay of influences surrounding the learning outcomes policy. While many of the educators and administrators viewed learning outcomes as an offshoot of *Charting a New Course*, this key actor suggested that *Charting a New Course* was a vehicle for the learning outcomes initiative to be disseminated throughout the system.

The deputy minister ... became interested in the ideas that were coming from the Center (CCPD). Partly that was why it [learning outcomes] got incorporated in the strategic plan, because he thought there was some merit in the idea, a basis for more general educational reform. I think the Center played a fairly significant role in developing the idea more broadly in the system, particularly as applied to academic programs. It always has been an idea for many years; it has been used in career and vocational programs. But what ... was interesting and valuable was to take that idea and use it as a basis for examining what the purpose of academic programs was, and use it as the basis for re-looking at how we do our academic programs. It seemed to me the fundamental need in the province. ... It was really the focus of our set of developing ideas around how to bring about educational reform. (Key actor) (62)

Learning outcomes was seen as a catalyst for change, for educational reform. Embedding it textually in *Charting a New Course* was a strategy to support its integration as an integral aspect of the reform agenda.

The discussions surrounding *Charting a New Course* and the textual links within the document were a strong influence in the initiation of the learning outcomes policy. It appears

that the strategic plan was a vehicle for promoting a learning outcomes approach, a direction that had already been taken previous to the strategic plan.

Shaping the Learning Outcomes Concept

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the learning outcomes initiative was to define it. What exactly was a learning outcomes approach? What if anything was new or different about this approach? On the surface these appeared to be simple questions, but they formed the basis of many conversations surrounding the C2T2 initiative toward the integration of a learning outcomes approach. "Are we talking about an approach, a method, a system, [or] a philosophy?" (Key actor) (67). The study participants were talking about all of them concurrently.

The conversations about learning outcomes occurred at several different levels. Some conversations focused on the philosophical basis of the approach while others were directed to writing curriculum in outcomes language. The texts were multiple, contradictory and at times confusing. This caused some discomfort and frustration for the provincial LOCs who were working with faculty members in their organizations.

Many of the participants on the Learning Outcomes Network discussion group requested clarification and examples of learning outcomes. Pressure was placed on C2T2 personnel to define the exact nature of a learning outcomes approach, but this pressure was resisted. "We continue to have requests for someone to define what a learning outcome is. We resist this request because we believe that learning outcomes is best viewed as an approach to thinking about teaching and learning rather than a formula or change in course outline terminology" (Battersby, 1998, p.1). This ambiguity allowed for the shaping of the policy; educators took on this challenge to define a learning outcomes approach, albeit reluctantly in many cases. There was a range of views expressed by study participants and the following sections present examples of the spectrum of views.

Nothing Very New

Many participants felt that there was nothing new in this approach; it was just a matter of language. Some saw no difference; other perceived little difference. Many viewed a learning outcomes approach as being very similar to what they had been doing for many years. This was true of both the opponents and proponents of the approach. Some described it

as a continuation of reform initiatives that had been discussed for many years. The following quotes reflect this perspective.

> The fact that learning outcomes exist, I do not think is controversial. We do it. We are just surprised that everybody now is making a fuss about what we think we have been doing for a long time. (C-academic) (38)

> Many faculty [members] in my area have read the literature circulated within the college about learning outcomes. My sense is that we, for the most part, understand the perspective that learning outcomes is to represent but we don't think that (a) the differences are as shattering as reformers imply or that (b) we are neglecting this dimension of our pedagogy. Many of us feel that we do, to a great extent, address the learning outcomes, but this goes unrecognized because we don't use that vocabulary to describe our work. (C-survey)

These views about the uniqueness of learning outcomes appear to have been shared by faculty members and administrators in both applied and academic areas, and those associated with the colleges and university colleges. Many saw learning outcomes as similar to their current approach with perhaps a different language twist. Ten of the 14 LOC reports to C2T2 discussed the fact that some faculty members perceived little different in a learning outcomes approach. If they perceived it as being different, the difference appeared to be an evolutionary change rather than a revolutionary one.

These quotes led to discussions about the use of language and also the definition, or lack thereof, of a learning outcomes approach. They also directed attention to the conceptual analysis of learning outcomes; what did proponents view as the key elements of this notion? Some found the ambiguity of the concept empowering, an opportunity to shape it. Others found it frustrating and senseless, an additional burden to their workloads. The following sections provide some insights into these conversations.

Learning Outcomes Undefined

The definition of learning outcomes was a central issue. The lack of consensus about its definition and the concurrent call for action created room for skepticism on the part of many educators and administrators.

> [C2T2 personnel] can get quite enthusiastic about it, but at the end of the day, I still do not know what it is that I am supposed to be enthusiastic about. (UC-academic) (412)

> But the difference between learning objectives and learning outcomes seems esoteric and value-based, and I do not yet feel confident in my ability to define learning outcomes. (LOC-report)

> You don't grab an idea and then run around the system to try to get it defined. Particularly in policy, you should have a very clear, what I will call governance view, what you want to happen, not necessarily how but what. And you can't define the beast, after you let it loose. We have come up with an idea; ... it's a half cooked idea. We're not too sure exactly what it is, and then we go around and try to figure out what ... it is. Of course if you want to build skepticism, that's almost a guaranteed route to doing it. (C-admin) (310)

Both the proponents and opponents of the learning outcomes approach expressed the need for more clarity regarding the concept if it was to be used in any meaningful way.

Use of Language

Interviewees drew attention to the fact that we do not have a common language in education. We do not have the precise definitions found for example in mathematics and the sciences; we tend to create terms and use terms in multiple and different ways. This can make for interesting conversations but difficulties in trying to reach consensus.

> And they use them [competencies and learning outcomes] interchangeably, for the same thing. And there are many people who have written goals for years, and in fact they are the broad learning outcomes of a program. And many people have written goals of a program that are very discreet and are essentially competencies. So this language has been used interchangeably. (LOC / PLARC) (59)

> The constituencies of faculty have extraordinarily diverse opinions of what learning outcomes might be. And many faculty [members] think that it is what they have always done. ...They [learning outcomes] can be translated into ends in view, or objectives, or competencies, or standards, entry-level practice competencies, a whole host of things. ... People have translated the Ministry documents into language that they are familiar with. They have all adopted the words; the meanings are very disparate. (UC-admin) (16)

These quotes focus on the construction of knowledge in education and the values embedded in this construction.

Department administrators, LOCs and PLARCs (n=245) were asked to rate the extent to which their faculty members perceived differences between various elements such as learning outcomes, goals, behavioural objectives and competency statements (see Appendix H, Table H1). Thirty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that their faculty members perceived no difference (*not at all*) or *very little* difference between learning outcomes and general course goals. A similar rating was evident for the perceived differences between learning outcomes and behavioural objectives (35%) and learning outcomes and competency statements (40%). Analyzing the data from another perspective, 53% of respondents

indicated that their faculty members perceived some (*to some extent*) or *a great deal* of difference between learning outcomes and general course goals. A similar rating was evident for the perceived degree of differences between learning outcomes and behavioural objectives (48%) and learning outcomes and competency statements (43%).

Kruskal-Wallis tests (Appendix H, Tables H1.1 to H1.2) indicated that only one dimension was significant, how respondents viewed the difference between learning outcomes and behavioural objectives ($p = .005$). The patterns from the crosstabulation data indicated that respondents from the academic area perceived less difference between these elements than respondents from the foundation, vocational and career technical, and applied degree programs (Appendix H, Tables H1.3).

The data have limitations as respondents were asked to represent the views of their faculty members, and they were not always aware of their views as indicated by the *do not know* responses ranging from 16% to 25%. In all the tests of significance this *do not know* category was not included. The data do, however, support the view that BC faculty members have different ways of conceptualizing these educational concepts.

The introduction of the learning outcomes approach in British Columbia brought forth some interesting questions and debates. One LOC reported that "clearly, there is either a mistrust or a misunderstanding of outcomes based education and the position C2T2 has taken in implementing it across the province." Many saw it as merely a change in semantics. But of course there were also proponents of the approach. Their views are described in the next section.

Key Aspects of a Learning Outcomes Approach

So what did the proponents of a learning outcomes approach see in the concept that was new and different? The first issue discussed was a philosophical shift from teaching to learning reflecting an increased learner- or learning-centered environment. The elements of this shift translated into themes such as transparency, integrated curricula, holistic curricula, larger / broader outcome statements, and a process of achieving such outcomes. The following section is directed toward the presentation of these themes as described by the study participants.

Philosophical Approach

The message from C2T2 suggested that "learning outcomes is best viewed as an approach to thinking about teaching and learning rather than a formula or change in course outline terminology" (Battersby, 1999, p.1). Many of the study participants agreed with this focus. They talked about the philosophical aspects of a learning outcomes approach.

> For me it is really a different philosophy of learning. It is looking at what happens in the learning process. From my experience, it is more student-centered and looks at how students learn, or how a group of students are learning. Previously it was more what the instructor was doing, and you hoped that the students were able to go along with that. So it is a major shift. (LOC / PLARC) (33)

> The learning outcomes approach, however, is more than a definition and a change of language; it is a shift in philosophy about how we design curriculum and where we start. It is a whole systems approach where learning outcomes drive the programs, the courses, the curriculum, the teaching methods, and the assessment. (LOC-report)

From these perspectives adopting a learning outcomes approach involved a different mind-set, a philosophical shift that focused more on learning than on teaching. Others suggested that this philosophy has been integral to the work of many educators for years.

> So the philosophy of learning outcomes has always been part of my work. We have always in some way or another, whether it was a competency statement or a learning objective, we have always stated to students what we hoped they will know and be able to do when they have finished. That philosophical point of view ... in most applied areas is not new. How you state it, there is some change obviously with a learning outcome [approach]. (LOC / PLARC) (52)

This quote leads to further questions about the nature of the philosophical shift and its implications in practice.

Learning-Centered

The main thrust of the conversations about a philosophical shift was directed towards being more learner- or learning-centered.

> It is much more from the students' perspective, and what the student should be expected to get out of a course in fairly generic terms. (C-applied) (26)

> This approach also puts the student in the center of the curriculum design model and avoids the pitfall that I still see a number of instructors embracing: a text driven course or a curriculum which does not take into consideration what a student should be able to do and know at the end of the course. (LOC-report)

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Being learner or learning-centered appeared to be a motherhood statement for many. Who would refute it? It is an ongoing challenge, but as with the previous philosophical approach, interviewees suggested that they were pursuing this direction and had been doing so for many years.

> I feel that we have been concerned with the total needs of our students for a long time. We have always looked at the skills, language, and attitudes our students would need in the real world. Teaching has been learner- or learning-centered. (UC-survey)

This element of a learning outcomes approach does not bring us much closer to an understanding of the concept and how it differs from other approaches that have traditionally been used.

Transparency / Making the Implicit Explicit

Many of the interviewees discussed the idea of formalizing expectations and curricula. They talked about being clear about what they do, being transparent about the nature of courses and programs.

> What an outcomes or an abilities-based approach asks us to do, is to make explicit what we hold implicitly, to make it known so that we can all have a common purpose. And students can also know what is up. (Key actor) (65)

> All of those skills, all the soft skills, that are actually the transfer skills, ... faculty have already been doing them. But they have never made them transparent to students. They have not even made them transparent to the institution because we have been working on objectives, and objectives are narrow and they tend to be discreet.
> (LOC / PLARC) (58)

The proponents of a learning outcomes approach viewed this transparency as being an important aspect of a learning-centered approach. The curriculum should be transparent to learners, educators and administrators.

While people may not have perceived significant differences between a learning outcomes approach and their current approach, some did agree that it might be a way of making the implicit explicit, a way of formalizing the curricula.

> I think educational planners have always taken the view that one starts with goals, departmental goals, then you work your way through. Now they may not be explicit. We may not have been as conscientious as we might have

been, and I think that is perhaps a useful thing, but I do not think it has never been emphasized. (UC-academic) (412)

I would argue that many people subconsciously have been dealing with learning outcomes. All we are doing is formalizing it. Some people have not. Good teachers have dealt with outcomes. They have just not formalized it. (C-admin) (310)

During the site visits, my analysis of course outlines and submissions to Education Council revealed that many of the soft abilities such as critical thinking, problem solving and communication were often presented in the rationales for new courses and revisions of courses. These statements, however, were not an integral part of the course outlines provided to learners. This supports the view expressed in the previous quotes. Educators have been considering broad abilities but they are often not documented in student course outlines.

While many interviewees agreed that making curricula explicit on paper was useful and helpful, they also raised questions about this. How significant was this? Did other approaches not offer ways of making such issues explicit given that course outlines are only one way of communicating with learners and clarifying expectations? Some participants felt that they were communicating these very things in the way they identified the outcomes of their courses and programs, and in the discussions they had with their learners. Others felt that formalizing the outcomes was an important issue, one that created shifts in educational practice.

The liberal arts faculty [members] say, "That is what we're doing now. We are not teaching political science so much; we are teaching analytical skills. We are teaching the process of ethical reasoning; we expect students to develop a kind of social and political awareness of their own society." ... And then you point out to them, "Well where do you have those things identified? Do you actually tell students that this is the expected outcome of a degree or diploma in arts or social sciences? Do you actually organize the teaching or the learning process to maximize the chance of them actually acquiring those outcomes?" ... That is not a trivial difference. ... ... If it [the program] were designed to do that, it would look quite different. So they claim to be teaching to those generic outcomes, but what they are actually doing is teaching a series of highly specialized disciplinary courses, courses that are so specialized that in fact they are of very limited value to the average student. (Key actor) (66)

As one of the previous quotes suggested, some things are so important that they need to be articulated in a formal manner. Many educators agreed with making things explicit. However, they questioned if this could not also be accomplished in other ways, in ways that did not

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necessarily use the language of learning outcomes. As a C2T2 advocate of learning outcomes wrote, "The learning outcomes approach shares with the competency approach clarity about the goals of instruction" (Battersby, 1999, p. 1). Many LOCs agreed that other approaches to curricula also shared this characteristic of being explicit.

Broader/ Holistic/ Integrated

Many of the interviewees described a learning outcomes approach as encompassing a number of characteristics. The notion of a more broadly defined curriculum was a central theme. Interviewees suggested that this broadness allowed for a more holistic and integrated approach to learning.

> The fundamental slogan for learning outcomes is the notion of integrated use. ... It is a shift from a focus of knowing something in the sense of factoids ... to knowing something in the sense of almost "know how," being able to use the knowledge. (Key actor) (61)

> It is different from competency-based and content-based curriculum; it's more holistic. It means taking elements of what we know about content-based instruction (the concepts, themes and issues); and competency-based education (statements of what the students will be able to do); but broadening the learning so that it is more meaningful and more relevant to our students outside the walls of our own institution – to their personal and family lives, their work as learners going on to further education, their lives as citizens in a community, and their careers. In short, it connects classroom experience to outside life. (LOC-report)

Many agreed that a broader approach to curricula would better meet the needs of learners. This is supported by the literature in Chapter Two about the shifts from an industrial age to an information age, and the implications of that shift for postsecondary education. However, a recurring issue raises its head. Do other approaches not offer the same opportunity?

One of the original BC workshops on the issue of learning outcomes by Shipley (1995) presented a dichotomous table (see Table 1 in Chapter 2) reflecting the difference between learning outcomes and behavioural objectives / competencies. The dichotomous table may have been intended to emphasize the need for change, to suggest an urgency for change. Such an approach, however, was also a barrier to communication; it offended people. The following quote describes such a situation and the skepticism that it engendered, but the quote is not intended to refer to the workshop by Shipley as there were many workshops implemented in BC by a variety of facilitators.

> I heard a colleague who went to a learning outcomes workshop and the presenter was talking about learning outcomes in such a way that this person became really upset, because she said, "This is what I'm doing anyway. I am not calling them learning outcomes. We call them objectives; we are student-centered. ... Our focus is on what the students should be able to do." This lecturer was patronizing, basically saying, "You will not understand this." That highlights the problem, which is what is this thing that we are being sold? (UC-academic) (412)

This quote raises the issue of the complexity of educational language, as well as the relationship between theory and practice. The original theories associated with objectives and competencies may no longer be applied in the practice world. Practitioners may already have adapted the theories in many ways while still using the same language to express their educational practices.

One of the interviewees referred to "confluent objectives," objectives with a value component (LOC / PLARC) (58). The following quotes reflect the range of conversations about objectives and competencies in practice.

> What was competency, and what were the objective kinds of approaches based on a behaviouristic model? They were always thought to be very discrete skilled based. However, having worked in those programs there was change and growth over the years that in some ways was making those curriculum approaches move ... to the thinking of learning outcomes. In other words, [they] became a bit broader based, focused more on integration, because there was always a difficulty with a competency-based program in integration. (Key actor) (69)

> They [general objectives] are the ones that tend to be a little more philosophical, and some people say ... like trying to nail jelly to the wall. Nevertheless, it [general objective] provides a general target area, without circumscribing defined boundaries. You can think of it as a little analogous to the atom. We have a pretty good idea that the nucleus should be more or less in the geometric center, but where are the boundaries of the atom? We do not know. It has no limits, because every time we try to measure the limits, we change those limits. That is the uncertainty principle. And I think our general objectives are often just as lacking in any defined boundary. But I think that is good. It also helps to realize that all knowledge overlaps, and merges one into the other anyway. So I think it is healthier to leave it that way. (C-academic) (32)

This evolution of various traditions of articulating curricula may account for the fact that many study participants perceived little or no difference between their current approach and a learning outcomes approach. It may also account for the fact that some were offended by C2T2 communications about a learning outcomes approach.

Knowledge for Use

An often asked question in the Learning Outcomes Network was, "what do you want your learners to be able to know and do" at the end of your course, at the end of your program, or degree? This was in part a reflection of the Alverno model, which clearly articulates the perspective that knowledge and understanding underpin performance (Loacker & Mentkowski, 1994). The idea of knowledge for use was a dominant theme of the learning outcomes initiative.

> And I think basically what it [learning outcomes approach] does is explain why you are learning it. Because learning outcomes for students tell them what it is that they are going to be able to do with the information, what purpose is behind having this information and it takes the information that they are learning out of their heads and kind of puts it into their hands. (LOC/ PLARC) (510)

> So he [workshop facilitator] gave them a way to teach it that was in many cases very applied it in its nature. Almost like "hands on." I do not mean to indicate that it took it out of the academic realm, but it took it out of the abstract. It became much more concrete. (LOC / PLARC) (10)

> But the notion of educating for use, knowledge for use instead of possession, the Alverno slogan, is one that will continue to be at the center of educational reform. (Key actor) (61)

The Alverno faculty members make an interesting distinction between information and knowledge. They view information as being the accumulation of facts while having knowledge is demonstrated by its application, its use. Learning outcomes were seen as a vehicle for promoting the idea of knowledge for use and thus the idea of education for use (Loacker & Mentkowski, 1994). This was a strong element of the message from C2T2, one that was also questioned as will be discussed in future sections.

Process: Putting the Pieces Together

Many of the participants spoke about a process component associated with a learning outcomes approach. It was a way of drawing all the pieces together. In their view, a learning outcomes approach involved a way of designing curricula and learning experiences. This process was sometimes described as a circular process involving the congruence between curricula, assessment and learning experiences; it was also described as having a hierarchical component.

But I think it [a learning outcomes approach] is all of those things [abilities, competencies and objectives]. It is just seeing the hierarchy where those things all fit in the notion. (LOC / PLARC) (33)

It is a whole systems approach where learning outcomes drive the programs, the courses, the curriculum, the teaching methods, and the assessment. It means "designing down" the curriculum – starting with the real and authentic and significant things we want our students to know and be able to do – determining the knowledge base students need to have in order to do it – determining the process skills they will need – and defining tasks they can perform to show evidence of the outcomes. (LOC-report)

I would say it [learning outcomes approach] is about getting results, ... to know what it is you are doing and why you are doing it, and be able to apply it. I think you talk about education been very relevant and pertinent to life, to work, and that does not disregard the intellectual curiosity or the academic knowledge ... but it is pulling the pieces together and making sense of them, and making it meaningful, relevant and useful for students, because that is who our clients are. So it is learner-centered, focused on the learners needs. But it involves a lot more than that. ... You are looking really at the true meaning of learning and education. (LOC / PLARC) (43)

From these perspectives a learning outcomes approach may be best viewed as an approach to learning, as a framework that draws together elements in the learning environment into a more comprehensive and coherent whole, one that is focused on the use of knowledge.

A common thread in the proponents' views of a learning outcomes approach is the notion of emphasis and change in emphasis. They talked about this change in emphasis from a variety of perspectives including the following:

➢ making the outcomes of learning more explicit,

➢ defining the outcomes of learning more broadly,

➢ approaching knowledge more holistically to reflect the change from an industrial age to an information age,

➢ directing more attention towards the use of knowledge and abilities in context,

➢ increasing the focus on the validity and reliability of assessment, and

➢ increasing the focus on integration at multiple levels ranging from individual courses to organizational visions.

The proponents of an outcomes approach in this study wove these threads into the vision of a learning outcomes approach.

Some study participants viewed the change in emphasis as representing a shift on a continuum towards a more learning-centered approach. While such a shift was seen as

helpful, many viewed it as an operational change. Others saw the shift as being significant, one that cumulatively encompassed a major change in philosophy. In their view it represented a strategic change. Figure 5 presents a schematic of how the study participants shaped the concept of learning outcomes in British Columbia.

Critiques of a Learning Outcomes Approach

As is evident from the previous sections, study participants had varied opinions about a learning outcomes approach. Many spoke about the positive elements but others questioned the importance of the approach. Opponents viewed the approach as being too simplistic, too limiting and too time consuming to implement given its value. The approach was also criticized for the lack of evidence to support its implementation. These critiques were often imbedded in discussions about the relationship of learning outcomes to the accountability movement and the concern about the vocationalization of postsecondary education. The respondents from the academic area were the most vocal in their critique of the policy both in the interviews and survey responses, while many in the applied area did not perceive the policy to represent anything new. These views are discussed in more detail in the following section.

Limitations of One Approach

Many respondents spoke about the limitations of one approach. It was described as being too simplistic and too narrow given the complexity of postsecondary education in British Columbia.

> It is too simplistic. The system is too complicated ... for the issues that I think they are trying to address in such an all-encompassing way. (C-academic) (38)

> An entry-level certificate program is speaking to very different students, with very different student needs who have very different interests than an honors program in philosophy. And they are really not comparable programs. They are both postsecondary only because people take them as adults, but they do lots of things when they are adults. There is probably more complementarity between things that are not in the education cluster compared to ... postsecondary education programs. (UC-admin) (16)

> And we are not sure yet whether learning outcomes language is going to give us as much latitude as we need. Or again are we trying to fit the round peg into the square hole and is there just something outside learning outcomes that is still part of our domain? (UC-applied) (46)

Figure 5.   Learning Outcomes as Defined by Study Participants
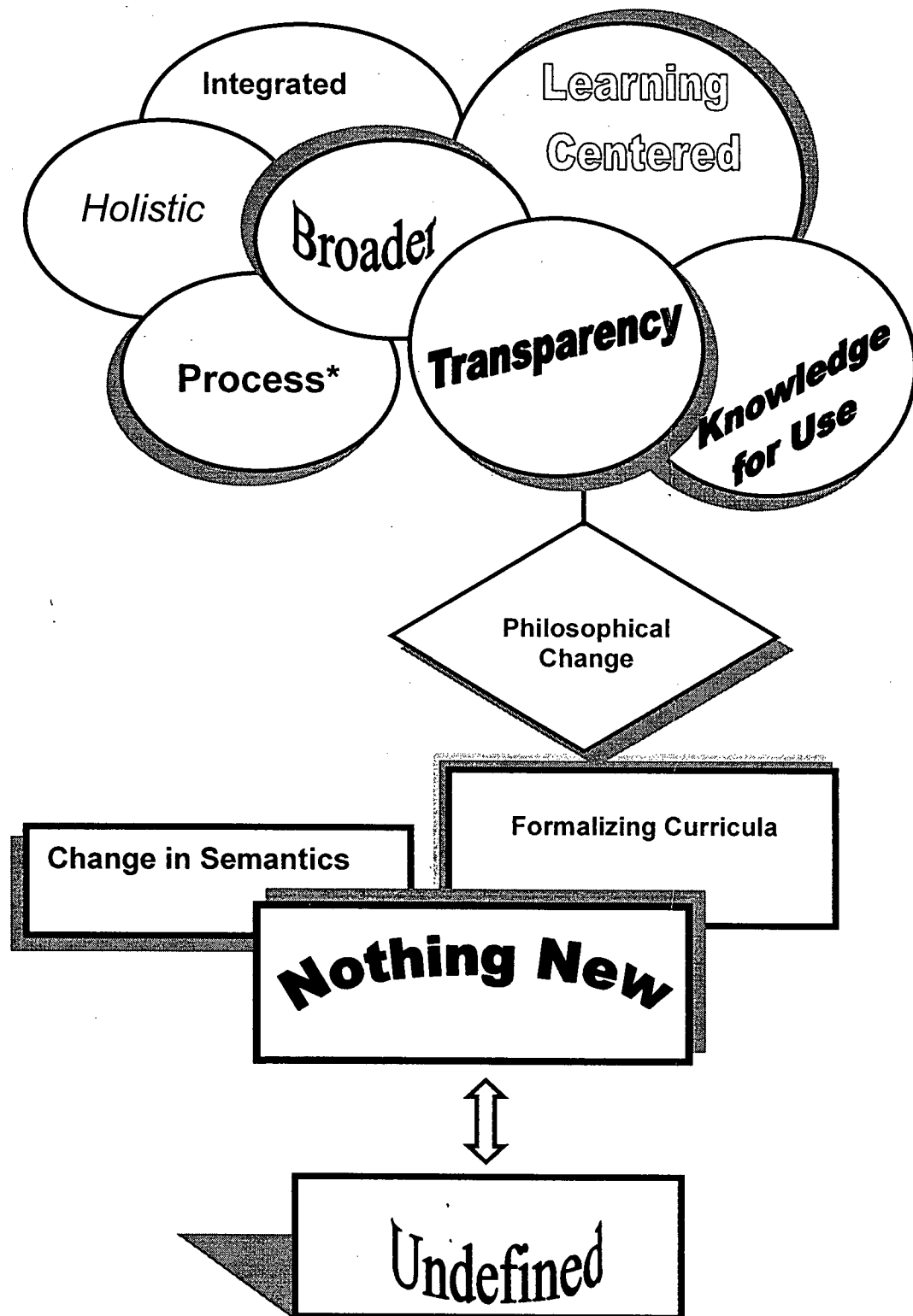
*Process is defined as "designing down" the curriculum.

While its universal application was questioned, interviewees did see its potential value in some areas, particularly the applied areas. Others talked about the value of its application at the program versus course level.

> It is a lot easier in applied programs because those people are pretty clear what those learning outcomes are, and they always have been. ... [But] now shift that into university transfer, years one and two in sociology and anthropology and history and philosophy. It gets a little murky. (UC-admin) (410)

> The learning outcomes approach I have found is very straightforward and clear-cut when we are talking about chemistry and physics. But if you apply it to the social sciences, I think that is where there is more risk of perhaps leaving out valuable things, simply because you have to admit, that you cannot quantify your measurements of them, like critical thinking and social responsibility. (C-academic) (32)

> I find that LOs make sense at the program level, but are more difficult to articulate on an individual course basis. (LOC-report)

Discussions about the limitations of one approach tended to revolve around the idea of measurable outcomes and the challenges associated with such measurements particularly in the short term.

> The outcomes that many in the arts division aim for are often not visible in the short term. To assess our success in achieving them we would have to track students for five, ten, or twenty years after they have left the college. We fear that outcomes which are observable by the end of one semester and can be easily measured are probably trivial. (LOC-report)

The eclectic nature of programs within BC colleges and university colleges presents challenges for policy development at the curriculum level. Study participants questioned the application of one model to all areas and to the articulation of outcomes at both the course and program level.

Articulation of Learning Outcomes Not Sufficient

Study respondents also spoke about the need to go beyond the articulation of learning outcomes and focus on student learning and assessment. Learning outcomes statements only reflected one piece of a larger picture of learning.

> I am inclined to think that the key piece to all of this is assessment. The way to work backwards is to make a determination of what it is that you want to find in the learner. ... Once you are very clear about specifically what it is you expect to find, then I think the task is to determine what kind of instruments might give you some reliable way of finding it. Then you work your way back into curriculum. That seems to me to be the right sequence. We build

curriculum and then we tend to look for assessment tools to discover what it is that the curriculum might have done. (UC-academic) (16)

You can have really good learning outcomes but are people able to support learners to achieve those? I think learning outcomes are only one piece of the change that we are involved in here. We have to support faculty to actually develop new approaches to enabling people to learn using learning outcomes. (Key actor) (72)

The bottom line is do the students learn more as a result of any of this stuff? Are the students better equipped to meet the 21st century? Are the students better critical thinkers? Do the students value critical thinking? All those kind of things are really what is important. ... So to me it has to translate down into students' learning ability in the classroom. (LOC/PLARC) (58)

Many opponents and proponents of a learning outcomes approach in my study agreed with the above perspectives. Proponents viewed a learning outcomes approach as integrating the assessment and learning elements. Opponents viewed learning outcomes as focusing on the articulation of statements that were very similar to other approaches and in themselves might have little impact on student learning.

Others viewed the approach as having potentially detrimental effects on learning. The following quote best articulates this perspective.

I have this concern that the learning outcomes [approach] entrenches knowledge, and ... it can stultify knowledge to the point it could become dogmatic. It is a reductionist argument. We can look at a body of knowledge and say we understand everything about it, and we can reduce it to these 25 learning outcomes, and we can design our instruction to meet those outcomes. ... Knowledge is a very dynamic, growing and changing constructs, and I do not think that the learning outcome approach address that. I think it probably could, but the way it seems to be understood and implemented by many of the people ... it stabilizes [knowledge]. (UC-applied) (12)

This quote alludes to the relationship between theory and practice. While the C2T2 literature (Battersby, 1999) referred to learning outcomes as a philosophical approach, the discussions on the Learning Outcomes Network largely focused on writing learning outcomes and many of the examples looked suspiciously like competencies and objectives. In theory they were conceived as broad, but the texts in practice did not necessarily reflect this characteristic. While C2T2 personnel resisted providing a definition of a learning outcomes approach, they provided feedback regarding statements that were not considered to be learning outcomes. The concept to a certain extent was shaped through the definition of what it was not, rather

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than what it was. In their January 1998 reports to C2T2, several of the LOCs indicated that they continued to struggle with the conception of a learning outcomes. "What does a learning outcome actually look like?" (LOC-report).

Lack of Evidence

A further question raised by study participants focused on the evidence to support a learning outcomes approach. The participants criticized the thinking behind the promotion of the learning outcomes approach. They challenged policy makers to provide evidence that a learning outcomes approach was better than the current approaches used in postsecondary education.

> They [faculty members] need to be convinced that the change will provide meaningful positive benefits and are worth the effort. What we need is not philosophy (which seems to drive most educational change), but empirical results. (C-survey)

> I have yet to see/hear/read anything that shows learning outcomes create better-educated people. They produce better measured once. (UC-survey)

> And students appear to get where they intended as a result of this process [current system]. They become doctors, lawyers, teachers, accountants and engineers. Where is the evidence that it is not working, that it is not being effective, that changes are needed? To simply postulate that change is needed, because there must be a better way, [is not enough]. Where is the evidence that this is the better way? (UC-admin) (19)

The arguments to support learning outcomes were presented from a deductive approach. However, study participants questioned the existence of empirical data to support its implementation within the context of British Columbia's colleges and university colleges. The Alverno experience provided an example of an organization committed to an abilities' based approach, but study participants identified the unique Alverno context[1] and questioned the transferability of this approach to the BC context.

The lack of inductive evidence aroused suspicions regarding the intent of the approach. Respondents questioned the motives behind the policy and focused on the link of learning outcomes to the accountability movement and to what they perceived as an increased trend towards the vocationalization of education.

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[1] Alverno is a degree granting, women's liberal arts college administered by a catholic sisterhood.

Accountability and Vocationalization of Education

The learning outcomes initiative was embedded in the texts of *Charting a New Course* as previously discussed. In particular it was linked with the goals of quality and relevance, and accountability. Its textual association with these two goals stimulated speculation about the motives behind the support for the policy. The notion of quality appeared to be articulated as an outcomes focus, a measurement orientation, and the idea of relevance was translated into employability skills. This further strengthened the accountability message from the strategic plan. The following quotes reflect these views about the increased focus on accountability and employability.

> Learning outcomes is a demand -- response driven phenomenon that assumes that 'education' means the same as 'training'. Hopefully it is ephemeral like so much of the output of government ministries. If not, then Canadian academic education will not compete in the future. (UC- survey)

> I only hope that their [Ministry] motives were strictly that which would benefit the student most, and not necessarily that which might make it easier for them to control and manipulate. (C-academic) (32)

> We have some faculty who are of the opinion that this is almost some kind of conspiracy to turn the universities and the colleges over to the marketplace, more explicitly to a kind of modern-day military, industrial complex, that somehow business has gotten control of the agenda and is driving all of this, and that learning outcomes is just another step in that direction. (UC-admin) (410)

The textual links to accountability were not in themselves a concern. Interviewees did not question the need for accountability, but rather how this accountability was being determined and implemented. Many were concerned that the indicators of accountability would relate to completion and employability data. Concern about the employability focus was also embedded in a much broader conversation about the aims of education.

Aims of Education

Within *Charting a New Course*, the aims of education in the college, institute and agency system were articulated as follows: "to provide British Columbians with postsecondary education and training to improve the quality of life and citizenship experienced in the province and to enhance current and future job opportunities" (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 2). This text identifies three elements, quality of life, citizenship, and employment. The emphasis on education for use raised concerns about the vocationalization

of education. Respondents from the academic area saw learning outcomes as a strategy to obfuscate and distort the intentions of learning. They questioned if personal development and citizenship would be subsumed by the employment focus.

Several interviewees suggested that the language of *Charting a New Course* set the stage to break down the traditional dichotomy of education and training.

> What people do is they cast it [the message from *Charting a New Course*] into one of two dichotomies, either it is the old warmed over [message]; this is turning all education into vocational education. We are all going to be handmaidens to capitalism. ... And the folks on the other side say, no, no, no. This is really about valuing the kind of programs that have traditionally been undervalued, our applied or professional programs. ... That is the way I hear the debate being cast. And it has to be cast in a different way. And I think *Charting a New Course* actually says this, if people read carefully. It really is a different way of looking at postsecondary education than either the traditional applied education or the traditional academic education. But it does not get read that way. The camps split off and they interpret it in their respective ways, and there is no synthesis. (UC-admin) (16)

The views expressed in the above quote were further analyzed through the survey data. Two questions were posed about the aims of postsecondary education. One asked respondents (n=313) to identify the extent to which they agreed or disagreed (5-point scale) with statements about the aims of education (Appendix H, Table H2). The second question asked them to identify how important (4-point scale) specific factors were to the students in their instructional area (Appendix H, Table H3).

The survey respondents identified multiple aims of education, many of which were scored high. The development of individuals' potential was scored the highest; 98% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that developing the individuals' potential was an aim of education. This rating is probably no surprise. They also *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the aims of education included the following:

- ➢ preparing learners for further education (92%),
- ➢ preparing learners for future employment (92%),
- ➢ preparing learners with a well rounded education (89%),
- ➢ developing learners' social and interpersonal skills (83%),
- ➢ preparing learners for current employment (78%),
- ➢ preparing learners for citizenship (72%), and
- ➢ improving learners' financial position (51%).

When analyzing respondents' views from different program areas, Kruskal-Wallis tests (Appendix H, Tables H2.1 to H2.2a) indicated statistically significant differences in seven of the eight items including: preparation for current employment ($p < .001$), preparation for future employment ($p < .001$), improving financial position ($p = .04$), well-rounded education ($p < .001$), preparation for citizenship ($p < .001$), preparation for further education ($p = .009$), and developing individuals' potential ($p = .015$). The analysis of crosstabulation data (Appendix H, Tables H2.3-H2.9) indicated that respondents from the academic area agreed less strongly with the aims surrounding employment (i.e., preparation for current employment, future employment and improving financial position) when compared to respondents from the foundation and applied areas. Respondents from the vocational and career technical area also agreed less strongly with the citizenship and personal development aim of postsecondary education (i.e., preparation for citizenship and further education, providing well-rounded education and developing individuals' potential), when compared to the respondents from the other areas.

The data were also analyzed from the perspective of respondents' organizational positions including those of LOCs and PLARCs, department administrators and organizational administrators (Appendix H, Tables H2.10 – H2.11a). Significant differences were found in five of the eight items including the following: improving financial position ($p = .037$), well-rounded education ($p = .034$), preparation for citizenship ($p < .001$), social and interpersonal skills ($p = .008$), and preparation for further education ($p = .009$). The LOCs and PLARCs consistently agreed more strongly with these items and the department administrators consistently agreed less strongly (Appendix H, Tables H2.12 – H2.16). These results suggest that citizenship and personal development may be a stronger focus in some program areas such as the foundation, academic and applied degree areas. They may also be a stronger focus for those working at the institutional level, but these aims may not be as clearly present at the department level.

Multiple aims were also identified when respondents rated their learners' views about the importance of specific factors (Appendix H, Table H3). Career development and opportunities for life choices were rated the highest: 91% rated career development and 89% rated opportunities for life choices as *quite important* or *very important*. The other factors were not rated as high:

➢ Opportunities for financial gain (77%),

➢ Preparation for further education (76%),

- ➢ Personal development (73%),
- ➢ General education (63%), and
- ➢ Social opportunities (46%).

When analyzing respondents' views from different program areas, Kruskal-Wallis tests (Appendix H, Tables H3.1 - H3.2a) indicated statistically significant differences in four of the seven items including the following: preparation for general education ($p < .001$), preparation for further education ($p < .001$), financial gain ($p < .001$), and career development ($p < .001$). The analysis of crosstabulation data (Appendix H, Tables H3.3 - H3.6) indicated that respondents from the academic and foundation areas agreed more strongly that their students viewed preparation for further education as important and less strongly that they viewed career development as important when compared to respondents from the vocational, career technical and applied degree areas. Respondents from the academic area also agreed more strongly that their learners viewed general education as important and less strongly with the importance of financial gain for their learners when compared to respondents from the other program areas. These findings are not surprising given the context of their program areas.

When analyzing the data from the perspective of organizational positions, statistically significant differences were found in only two of the seven items including the following: preparation for further education ($p = .045$) and financial gain ($p = .045$) (Appendix H, Tables H3.7 - H3.8b). Department administrators agreed less strongly that their learners viewed these as important when compared to organizational administrators, LOCs and PLARCs (Appendix H, Tables H3.9 - H3.10).

The data pertaining to respondents' perceptions of learners' views have some similarities with the data from the 1992 *Client Survey Report* (BC MoAETT). In the Ministry study, students in vocational / career technical and degree programs attached the most importance to career development, personal development and general education. The data supports the claim that educators view personal and career development as important aims of BC postsecondary education and they believe that these are also important to their learners. However, the personal development aim appears to be stronger in the foundation and academic areas.

The interview data and open-ended responses from the survey suggested that respondents held diverse views of the learning outcomes initiative. For some the learning outcomes initiative appeared to be an impetus for change, for the improvement of postsecondary education. Others viewed it as an increased measure of accountability, a move towards more control and centralization. The survey data provided additional insights into this diversity of views.

Benefits and Limitations Statements

Two questions were posed to gain respondents' views about a learning outcomes approach. The first question asked whether respondents (n=313) agree or disagree with statements about learning outcomes (Appendix H, Table H4). The statements included a number of positive perspectives. Directing faculty members' attention to the needs of learners was rated highest with 75% of respondents indicating that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with this statement. Seventy percent also *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that learning outcomes promoted more meaningful curricula for learners. They also *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that learning outcomes could:

> ➤ help graduates acquire skills which are relevant to employment (61%),
> ➤ help the faculty to adopt evaluation strategies which were close to real life situations (60%),
> ➤ be valuable for all types of courses and programs (57%),
> ➤ promote faculty accountability for student learning (56%),
> ➤ allow students to move more easily between programs and institutions (55%), and
> ➤ promote student success in course and program completion (53%).

Less that one half (47%) indicated that learning outcomes could foster skills needed to function in society, and two-fifth (42%) reported that learning outcomes could foster a more flexible learning environment.

Learning outcomes were viewed as helpful in directing attention to the learners' needs and supporting meaningful curricula. However, the perceived value of the approach was less evident when it pertains to supporting learning through such avenues as articulation, transfer and a flexible learning environment.

The statements also included negative perspectives. Respondents also *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that learning outcomes could:

- ➢ become a mechanism for increased control by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (36%);
- ➢ be just another trend that will soon disappear (24%);
- ➢ have little long-term effect on courses and programs (23%);
- ➢ be used as a reason to decrease resources to programs (20%);
- ➢ hinder the acquisition of a broader education (16%).

These data support the view that there were concerns about learning outcomes becoming a mechanism for increased control. However, the concerns did not appear to be extensive when looking at the overall data.

When comparing the respondents based on their program areas, statistically significant differences were found in all of the ten positive statements including: more meaningful curricula ($p < .001$), student success in completion ($p < .001$), more authentic assessments ($p < .001$), skills to function in society ($p < .001$), attention to needs of learners ($p < .001$), relevant employment skills ($p < .001$), faculty accountability ($p = .002$), valuable for all courses and program ($p = .001$), more flexible learning environment ($p < .001$) and transfer more easily ($p = .03$) (Appendix H, Tables H4.1 - H4.2b). Statistically significant differences were also found in three of the five negative statements about learning outcomes including the following: just a trend that will soon disappear ($p < .001$), used to decrease resources ($p = .04$) and mechanism for increased control by ministry ($p = .004$).

The patterns in the crosstabulation data (Appendix H, Tables H4.3 - H4.15) indicated that the respondents from the academic areas agreed less strongly with all the above positive statements about a learning outcomes approach when compared to the respondents from the foundation, vocational and career technical and applied degree programs. The academic group also agreed more strongly with three of the five negative statements about a learning outcomes approach when compared to the other groups. Respondents from the foundation area appeared to be the most positive about a learning outcomes approach.

Kruskal-Wallis tests also identified statistically significant differences when comparing respondents' views based on their organizational positions in nine of the ten positive statements (Appendix H, Tables H4.16 - H4.17b). They included the following: more meaningful curricula ($p < .001$), student success in completion ($p = .007$), more authentic assessments ($p = .002$), skills to function in society ($p = .002$), attention to needs of learners ($p < .001$), faculty accountability ($p = .006$), valuable for all courses and program ($p < .001$), more flexible learning environment ($p = .04$) and transfer more easily ($p = .01$). Respondents'

views also differed in four of the five negative statements about learning outcomes including the following: just a trend that will soon disappear ($p = .04$), used to decrease resources ($p = .001$) and hinders the acquisition of a broader education ($p = .003$) will have little long term effect ($p = .05$).

Not surprisingly the LOC / PLARC group agreed more strongly with the positive statements and agreed less strongly with the negative statements about learning outcomes when compared to the respondents who held positions as department administrators and institutional administrators (Appendix H, Tables H4.18 - H4.30). However, the organizational administrators agreed more strongly with 9 of the 10 positive statements when compared to department administrators. They also agreed less strongly with the four negative statements that were identified as statistically significant.

Many respondents appeared to be ambivalent about the value and limitations of a learning outcomes approach. The percentage of respondents who *neither agreed or disagreed* with the individual statements ranged from 17% to 41% for the positive statements (m=29), and 31% to 48% for the negative statements (m=40%). This may be a reflection of the newness of the approach at the time of my study, or it may also reflect the perspective that many did not perceive the approach as different from what they were currently using. The academic group, however, did not appear to be convinced of the value of the approach and the department administrators were more reserved about the possible benefits of the approach.

Whose Interests Are Served

The second question asked respondents whether they agree or disagree with statements regarding whose interests were being served by a learning outcomes approach (Appendix H, Table H5). Meeting learners' needs was rated the highest with 77% of the respondents indicating that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed*. Meeting employers' needs was second with 72% of respondents indicating that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed*. The other factors were not rated as high: meeting the needs of faculty members (56%), ministry personnel (54%), the public (50%), administrators (48%) and politicians (44%). However, the remaining respondents did not necessarily disagree with these views. Many indicated that they *neither agreed or disagreed*; the responses in this ambivalent area ranged from 16% to 47% (m=35). The percentage of respondents who *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* ranged

from 3 to 14% (m=8). Overall the respondents appear to view the learning outcomes approach as meeting the needs of learners and employers.

When analyzing respondents' views from different program areas, statistically significant differences were found in five of the seven items including learners ($p = .001$), the public ($p < .001$), employers ($p = .003$), faculty members ($p < .001$) and ministry personnel ($p = .05$) (Appendix H, Tables H5.1 - H5.2). The crosstabulation data indicated that respondents from the academic area agreed less strongly that the learning outcomes approach served the needs of learners, the public, employers and faculty members when compared to the respondents from the other program areas. They also agreed more strongly that learning outcomes met the needs of ministry personnel when compared to respondents from the other areas (see Appendix H, Tables H5.3-H5.7).

When analyzing the data related to respondent positions within the organization, significant differences were found in three of the seven items including the following: learners ($p < .001$), the public ($p = .002$) and employers ($p < .001$) (Appendix H, Tables H5.8 - H5.9). It was not surprising to find that the LOC / PLARC group agreed more strongly that the learning outcomes approach served the needs of learners, the public, and employers when compared to the respondents who held positions as department administrators and institutional administrators (see Appendix H, Tables H5.10 - H5.12). While the percentage differences between the LOC / PLARC group and the others were the largest, organizational administrators also rated learning outcomes as meeting the needs of learners, the public and employers slightly higher when compared to department administrators. In both analyses there were no statistically significant differences between their views as to how strongly a learning outcomes approach met the needs of ministry personnel, politicians and organizational administrators.

The results of this analysis suggest that respondents from the academic areas saw less value in a learning outcomes approach when compared to respondents from other program areas. The LOC reports support this conclusion; 12 of the 14 reports included discussions about the skepticism of the faculty in the academic area. As well the department administrators also perceived less value in the benefits of a learning outcomes approach. The interview data identified a spectrum of views about a learning outcomes approach; it was seen as problematic by some and a critical element of educational reform by others. The survey data supported the interview data, and drew attention to the polarization of views in

the academic and applied program areas. This spectrum of views sets the stage for the analysis of the implementation phase of this initiative.

Response to the Learning Outcomes Policy

In this section I describe the response of BC educators and administrators to the learning outcomes policy. Study participants' views about implementation issues surrounding the policy are described. I also focus on the response of C2T2 and the Ministry to this policy during the implementation phase. This section will begin with data from the survey instrument that will then be augmented by interview data.

Intentions and Actions Associated with the Learning Outcomes Approach

The survey instrument included several questions related to participants' familiarity with a learning outcomes approach, their overall attitude towards the policy, their future intentions and plans, as well as changes they had made based on a learning outcomes approach. The results of their responses to these questions provide a context for the interview data.

Familiarity and Involvement With A Learning Outcomes Approach

The survey instrument included questions about respondents' familiarity with a learning outcomes approach prior to and after the C2T2 initiative. The first question asked respondents (n=313) to rate the extent of their involvement with a learning outcomes approach based on a 4-point scale ranging from *not at all*, *very little*, *to some extent* to *a great deal* prior to the C2T2 initiative (see Appendix H, Table H6). Fifty-one percent of respondents indicated that they had heard about a learning outcomes approach *to some extent* or *a great deal*. Using the same rating points, 42% had read about learning outcomes, 39% had been involved in faculty discussions, and 39% had prepared learning outcomes.

Statistically significant differences were found among respondents from different program areas related to three of the four items including the following activities: reading about learning outcomes ($p = .002$), involved in faculty discussions ($p = .05$), and prepared learning outcomes ($p = .008$) (Appendix H, Tables H6.1 - H6.2). Respondents from the vocational, career technical and applied degree area appeared to have been more involved in the above activities when compared to the respondents from the academic and foundation areas (Appendix H, Tables H6.3 - H6.5).

Statistically significant differences were also found when comparing respondents' views related to their organizational positions in two of the four items including the following: having heard about learning outcomes (p = .008) and read about learning outcomes (p = .003) (Appendix H, Tables H6.6 - H6.7). Institutional administrators had heard and read more about learning outcomes than the department administrators and to a lesser extent the LOCs and PLARCs (Appendix H, Tables H6.8 - H6.9). This could be explained by their work with the strategic plan.

The second question used the same rating scale and asked respondents (n=313) to rate the extent of their involvement with a learning outcomes approach since the C2T2 initiative (Appendix H, Table H7). Eighty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they had heard about a learning outcome approach *to some extent* or *a great deal*. Using the same rating points, 66% had read about learning outcomes, 73% had been involved in faculty discussions, and 57% had prepared learning outcomes.

Significant differences were found related to program areas in two of the four items including the following: having read about learning outcomes (p < .001), and having prepared learning outcomes (p < .001) (Appendix H, Tables H7.1 - H7.2). The crosstabulation data indicated that respondents from the academic area still had less involvement in these activities when compared to respondents from the other program areas (Appendix H, Tables H7.3 - H7.4). When analyzing the data related to respondent positions within the organization, significant differences were found in all items including having heard about learning outcomes (p < .001), having read about learning outcomes (p < .001), having been involved in faculty discussions about learning outcomes (p = .002), and having prepared learning outcomes (p < .001) (Appendix H, Tables H7.5 - H7.6). Not surprisingly the LOC / PLARC group had the most involvement with a learning outcomes approach. However, organizational administrators also had more involvement in hearing about, reading about and discussing learning outcomes when compared to department administrators (Appendix H, Tables H7.7 - H7.10). This again is probably a reflection of their involvement in provincial discussions surrounding the strategic plan, articulation and transfer, and new program proposals.

The participants' familiarity and involvement with a learning outcomes approach increased with the C2T2 initiative. However, the academic area was an outlier in the discussions about learning outcomes. The respondents from the academic area had less

familiarity and involvement prior to the C2T2 initiative and this continued after the implementation of the policy.

Attitude and Future Intentions

The survey contained two questions about respondents' views and future intentions related to a learning outcomes approach. The first question asked respondents (n=313) to rate their views about learning outcomes based on a 4-point scale ranging from *very negative, somewhat negative, somewhat positive* to *very positive* (Appendix H, Table H8). Eighty-four percent indicated that they would likely speak *somewhat positive* or *very positive* in college / university meetings about the integration of a learning outcomes approach in other program areas. The same rating points were given as to how they would speak in faculty / divisional meetings (83%) and when speaking with colleagues from other educational organizations (83%). Eighty-one percent indicated that their overall attitude towards a learning outcomes approach was *somewhat positive* or *very positive*.

Statistically significant differences were found between respondents in different program areas in all items including their overall attitude ($p < .001$); how they would speak about the integration of learning outcomes in faculty / division meetings ($p < .001$), how they would speak in organizational meetings ($p < .001$), and how they would speak with colleagues from other educational organizations ($p < .001$) (Appendix H, Tables H8.1 - H8.2). The analysis of crosstabulation data identified that respondents from the academic area were less positive about a learning outcomes approach in all the above areas (Appendix H, Tables H8.3 - H8.6).

With regard to organizational positions, statistically significant differences were found in all items including their overall attitude ($p = .009$), how they would speak about the integration of learning outcomes in faculty / division meetings ($p < .001$), how they would speak in organizational meetings ($p < .001$), and how they would speak with colleagues from other educational organizations ($p < .001$) (Appendix H, Tables H8.7 - H8.8). The LOC / PLARC group was more positive in their attitude about learning outcomes when compared to department and institutional administrators. However, the institutional administrators were also more positive than the department administrators (Appendix H, Tables H8.9 - H8.12). The people who had the primary responsibility for implementing the policy were the least positive about the approach.

The second question asked respondents to rate their future intentions related to learning outcomes based on a 4-point scale ranging from *not likely, somewhat likely, very likely,* to *extremely likely* (Appendix H, Table H9). Sixty percent indicated that they would be *very likely* or *extremely likely* to take further steps to integrate a learning outcomes approach in their instructional area. As well, 55% indicated that they would be *very likely* or *extremely likely* to attend workshops or discussion groups on the topic, and 48% indicated their intention to take further steps to integrate a learning outcomes approach in their educational institution. Overall it appeared that many respondents had the intention to move the policy forward.

When analyzing respondents views from different program areas, statistically significant differences were found in all items including the likelihood of attending workshops or discussion groups ($p < .001$), likelihood of taking further steps to integrate learning outcomes within their instructional area ($p < .001$), and likelihood of taking further steps to integrate learning outcomes in their educational institutions ($p < .001$) (Appendix H, Tables H9.1 - H9.2). The analysis of crosstabulation data indicated that respondents from the academic areas were less likely to take further steps to learn about a learning outcomes approach or to integrate it (Appendix H, Tables H9.3 - H9.5).

Statistically significant differences were also found in all items based on respondent positions; they included the following: likelihood of attending workshops or discussion groups ($p = .006$), likelihood of taking further steps to integrate learning outcomes within their instructional area ($p = .002$), and likelihood of taking further steps to integrate learning outcomes in their educational institutions ($p < .001$) (Appendix H, Tables H9.6 - H9.7). Not surprisingly the LOC / PLARC respondents were more likely to take further steps when compared to department and institutional administrators. However, the institutional administrators were also more likely to take further steps than the department administrators. The implementers again did not appear to be as interested in the learning outcomes initiative. (Appendix H, Tables H9.8 - H9.10).

The answers to these questions may have been influenced by the fact that many respondents identified that they had incorporated learning outcomes for many years. They may, therefore, be less likely to attend sessions or to take further steps to integrate this approach. This may partially explain the lower rating given by department administrators. Certainly in the academic area there appeared to be a consistent pattern that suggested respondents from this area had little interest in the learning outcomes initiative.

Integration of a Learning Outcomes Approach

Several survey questions were designed to go beyond the idea of attitudes and intentions. They asked respondents to identify steps that had been taken to integrate a learning outcomes approach in their area and how valuable those steps were.

Use of learning outcomes in course outlines. The first question asked department administrators, LOCs and PLARCs (n=245) to identify their use of various approaches to identify the intentions of their courses (Appendix H, Table H10). Respondents were asked to identify if faculty members' use of goals, behavioural objectives, competency statements and learning outcomes had increased, stayed the same or decreased. Sixty-one percent indicated *increased use* of learning outcomes, 33% indicated *increased use* of competency statements, 20% indicated *increased use* of behavioural objectives, and 28% identified *increased use* of general course goals.

Kruskal-Wallis tests identified significant differences in two of the four items including the use of competency statements (p = .03) and learning outcomes ($p < .001$) (Appendix H, Tables H10.1 - H10.2). The respondents from the academic area indicated less use of competency statements and learning outcomes when compared to other program areas (Appendix H, Tables H10.3 - H10.4). The difference between the academic group and other program areas may in fact be larger than the data identifies given that many respondents commented that their faculty members had been using a learning outcomes approach for many years so their use had remained the same. Overall it appears that there was some uptake of the learning outcomes approach in program areas. The nature of the uptake is an issue that will become more evident through the analysis of interview data.

Changes made related to a learning outcomes approach. The second question asked respondents (n=313) to identify the changes made in their programs and courses based on a 4-point rating scale ranging from *no changes, minor changes, moderate changes,* to *major changes* (Appendix H, Table H11). Respondents indicated that they had made *moderate changes* or *major changes* in the following areas:

➢ program design (38%),

➢ course design (35%),

➢ program delivery (37%),

➢ course delivery (37%),

> program evaluation (32%),

> course evaluation (34%), and

> prior learning assessment (40%).

About one-third of study participants appear to have made moderate or major changes in response to the learning outcomes initiative. However, from 50 to 60% (m=57) had made no change or minor changes.

When analyzing data related to program areas, statistically significant differences were found in all items: program design ($p = .001$), course design ($p = .006$), program delivery ($p < .001$), course delivery ($p < .001$), program evaluation ($p < .001$), course evaluation ($p < .001$), and prior learning assessment ($p = .002$) (Appendix H. Tables H11.1 - H11.2a). The respondents from the academic area indicated fewer changes that were moderate or major in all the above areas (Appendix H, Tables H11.3 - H11.9). Statistically significant differences were also found in two of the seven items including course design ($p = .03$) and prior learning assessment ($p = .004$) (Appendix H, Tables H11.10 - H11.11a). Department administrators identified fewer changes that were moderate or major when compared to organizational administrators and the LOC / PLARC group (Appendix H, Tables H11.12 - H11.13).

Value of changes made. Respondents (n=241) who had indicated changes were then asked to rate the value of the changes based on a 4-point rating scale ranging from *no value, some value, much value* to *great value* (Appendix H, Table H12). Respondents indicated that changes had been of *much value* or *great value* in the following areas:

> program design (32%),

> course design (38%),

> program delivery (30%),

> course delivery (34%),

> program evaluation (24%),

> course evaluation (28%), and

> prior learning assessment (34%).

The ratings may have been influenced by the newness of the changes. Many respondents indicated that they would be in a better position to judge the value in the future.

When analyzing respondents' views from different program areas, statistically significant differences were found in five of the seven items including the following: program

delivery ($p < .001$), course delivery ($p = .003$), program evaluation ($p = .001$), course evaluation (p .003), and prior learning assessment ($p = .04$) (Appendix H, Tables H12.1 - H12.2a). The respondents from the academic area indicated less perceived value in the changes made when compared to those from other program areas (Appendix H, Tables H12.3 - H12.7). No statistically significant differences were found among the respondents from different positions within the organizations (Appendix H, Tables H12.8 - H12.9a).

It appears that some changes have occurred based on the learning outcomes initiative and respondents appear to value some of those changes. The lower ratings can be partially attributed to the newness of the initiative at the time of my study and the fact that many were of the opinion that they had been implementing a learning outcomes approach for many years. However, the changes do not appear to be as prevalent in the academic areas and the changes do not appear to be as valued by the respondents in the academic area. The department administrators also appeared to be less interested and less convinced about a learning outcomes approach. The survey data provides background from which to gain a better understanding of the implementation issues surrounding the learning outcomes initiative as described in large part by the interviewees.

Implementation Issues

As would be expected with any policy, many issues arose as the policy was promoted in the postsecondary system. In this section I describe the enabling and disabling factors that arose as the policy moved from theory to practice in BC colleges and university colleges.

Charting a New Course

The interviewees had mixed reactions to *Charting a New Course*. Their views ranged from "great stuff" to "it's problematic." It was valued as a vehicle for initiating dialogue about learning and education, a catalyst for change. However it was also criticized as stating the obvious, for not including enough vision.

> It certainly has rhetorical value. It helps to focus a debate. You can use it on both sides of the question. ... So in that sense, I think it is valuable, because it is facilitative for discussion, as long as you can corral people and actually make them talk about the issues. (UC-admin) (16)

> It does not represent to me a fundamental shift in the way we think about our essence. I don't think it's that big a deal, just new wrapping around perhaps an old package. (LOC / PLARC) (57).

We ... looked at it in the faculty, and said it is another piece of political propaganda unfortunately. ... It was almost coming back to a dictatorship. ... It was a lot of talk, and no action. (C-applied) (36)

The vision included so many elements that it obfuscated the location of the goal posts. While its malleable nature was appreciated by some, it was also seen as a weakness. It could be used to justify almost any direction taken; it included a smorgasbord of elements.

The goals are, let's face it, like motherhood in a way. It is when you get down to the concrete strategies that [*Charting a New Course*] is really interesting. ... It is a complex document. ... There are probably at least 20 to 25 coherent strategies that are suggested. The thing that seems to be missing is simply an overall concept or model or vision that underlies all of those strategies and that unites them in some thematic way. I'm quite positive about the document (Key actor) (66).

I believe that it was a hodgepodge of clichés that had one significant idea, one important idea that could lead to reform and that was the outcomes approach. That to me was a key idea in the thing. All the other things were good things, but there was no ... handle to bring about change with the other stuff in the plan. I do not think it has had much of an impact. (Key actor) (62)

This volume (*Charting a New Course*) has become an excuse for just about everything, and is a mantra for nothing. (UC-admin) (110)

Despite its complex nature, it was also viewed as being limited in scope. It focused on one sector of postsecondary education and did not address the issue of relationships with other sectors such as the universities, private postsecondary education and the public school system.

I think the particular problem with that [strategic plan], and it may be that this also has implications for learning outcomes, is that *Charting a New Course* ... set a direction for a certain sector, ... but with absolutely no reference to, or consultation with, the university part of the system. (Key actor) (64)

These were the general views of the policy texts in the strategic plan, a plan that was designed to promote the reform of the college, institute and agency system.

The overall message study participants perceived from *Charting a New Course* focused on addressing the needs of learners in complex and multiple ways.

We have to have more focus on the learner. We needed to look at ... accountability to the learners and to the public. ... How do we provide better and affordable educational opportunities for people and not blow apart the resource base that is there for education? And access ... how do we provide more accessible and more flexible opportunities for all people in all walks of life, especially [for] the mature learners who have to return five times in their lifetime in order to be employable? ... These are the directions we need to go

in order to have higher education surviving the 21st century. (LOC/ PLARC) (53)

The strategic plan identified a need for change. We need to be more accountable and, thereby, better serve the needs of learners and the public. We need to look to our courses and our programs and assess them against the four goals identified in the plan (1) quality and relevance, (2) accessibility (3) affordability and (4) accountability.

Goals of Charting a New Course

Interviewees were, however, concerned about the discussions surrounding accountability and the tensions that existed between the proposed goals.

> What I see as a huge stumbling block, in the concept of *Charting a New Course*, is the accountability side of it. ... My perception is that people do not want this accountability being put on them from the top. (LOC / PLARC) (33)

Interviewees perceived learning outcomes to be a vehicle for increased accountability. Some viewed this as a positive aspect of the learning outcomes approach while others perceived this as problematic and potentially harmful for postsecondary education.

> I see learning outcomes as one of the ways of making education relevant. I also see it as one of the ways of helping [us] to be accountable. (UC-admin) (110)

> And I think it [learning outcomes] can be used as a measuring tool. And I think for some people, this is the reason not to do it. ... They see this as an intrusion, that people may have different standards to them. (LOC / PLARC) (33)

> We have always been subject to external audits, and whether or not we're doing a good job ... is certainly legitimate for the Ministry to examine. But I would hate to see that funding ... is predicated upon whether or not they approve of our list of learning objectives. (C-academic) (32)

The concerns expressed about accountability did not relate so much to being accountable, but rather to issues of validity and reliability of measurements, and the use of the resulting data. These conversations led to a discussion about performance indicators and their definition and measurement.

> We may argue about what the desired outcomes should be, but I cannot see one arguing that we should not have clear outcomes and measure them, and monitor and report on them regularly to show and demonstrate accountability for the shareholders. (Key actor) (67)

Accountability is the one that gives us the greatest amount of problem. Because I think we have to determine what it means to be accountable. ... Right now it seems that accountability is determined by getting 100 percent of your seats filled and in some ways that runs counter to quality and relevance, or at least quality in education. I don't think it always does. But that seems to be the biggest factor right now as far as accountability goes. (LOC / PLARC) (54)

I think that as we move to things like key performance indicators I think there is going to be enormous trouble in the system to figure out what key performance should be for the college system, even harder for the university colleges because they have mixed levels of performance. (LOC / PLARC) (59)

The interviewees tended to focus on being accountable to the public, rather than the government of the day. They did not necessarily see the government and society as sharing the same values. However, they tended to see the accountability to the learners as the ultimate test of accountability to the public. The students shared this perspective.

Educators are directly accountable to the students they teach. Course outlines are handled as the contract with the educator. They are also accountable to the institution to make sure that the quality they are teaching is high. And they are accountable to the public to insure that as well. But most importantly they are accountable to the students. (Student) (31)

The interviewees focused their attention to learners with regard to the accountability issue (see Figure 6). They then met this responsibility through different avenues or a combination of avenues. Some looked towards employer groups, and others looked to the transfer information from the universities to substantiate the value of their courses and programs.

Interviewees were mainly silent on the issue of quality. "Quality of course. How can you not agree with quality?" (LOC / PLAR) (51). Many study participants found this notion self-evident, but a key actor identified that its inclusion in the strategic plan was "a hard fought, long battle" (Key actor) (70).

Figure 6.   Themes from Interview Data Related to Accountability
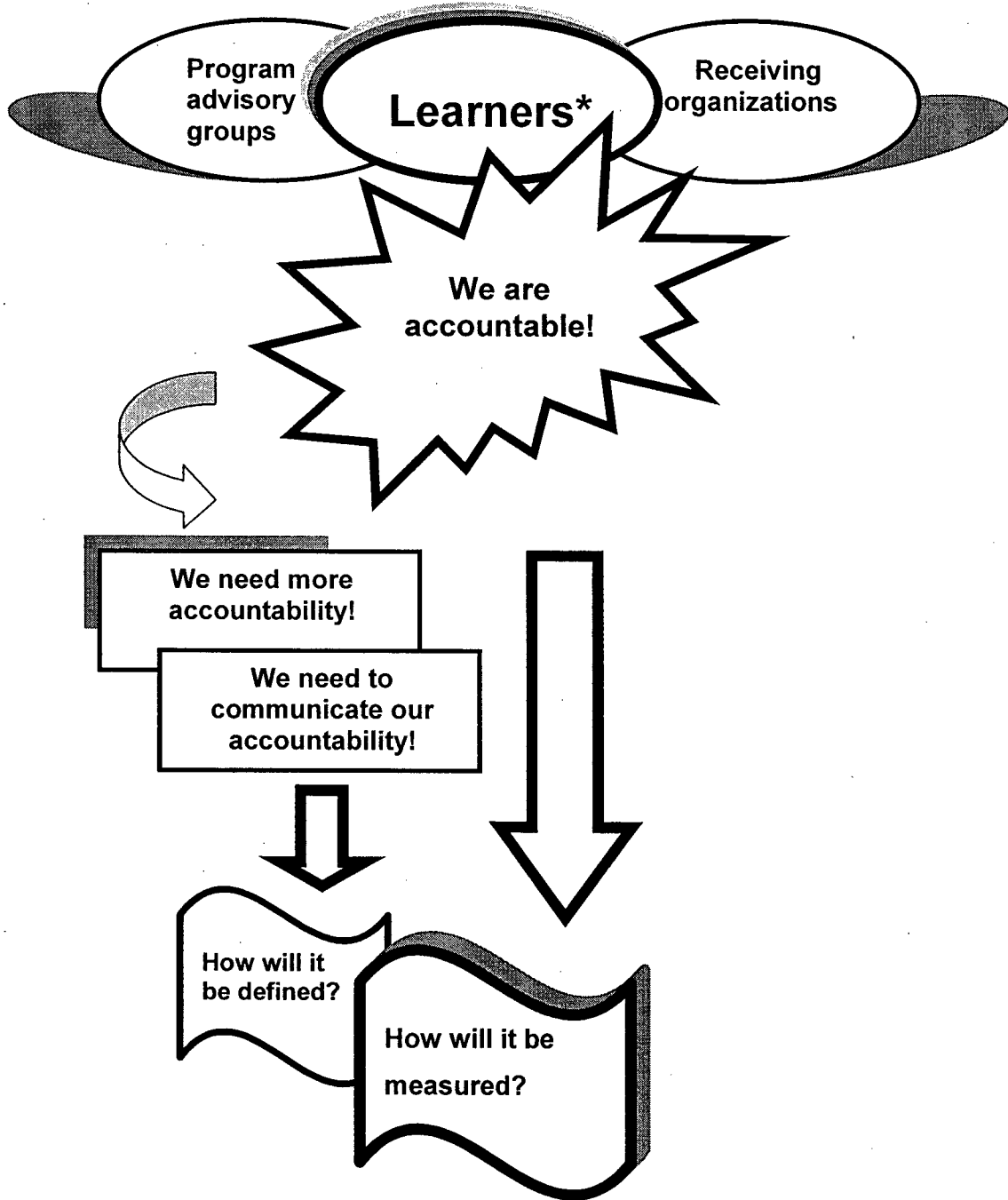
* being accountable to the public was expressed primarily through an accountability to learners.

In contrast to the notion of quality, interviewees frequently talked about the relevance issue. They focused on the importance of relevance and the value of a learning outcomes approach in drawing attention to issue of relevance. However, they also identified that relevance was nothing new in education.

> I've always tried to make information relevant. It just seems to make sense to me. ... I'm always surprised that this is a brand-new direction. I don't remember ever having courses that people did not seem to try to make relevant. (UC-academic) (13)

> We have to look at an outcomes based approach both in terms of the efficiencies that it can bring to a system, and the way it can move the curriculum to be more relevant to more people. (UC-admin) (18)

Others, however, expressed concerns about the interpretation of relevance and the measurement of relevance given the context of the language of *Charting a New Course*.

> The relevance issue ... is the one that I might have trouble with, because I don't think that education is strictly for employability skills. ... There is something broader that happens when people are educated or in a learning environment. ... So when they talk about relevance, I think that needs to be qualified a bit. That [it] is not just relevance to employability skills, but that it has relevance for other things like citizenship. (LOC / PLAR) (51).

> Who has time to examine relevance when you have 300 students trying to get into a class? Literally we have all sorts of courses like that. ... So is that relevant? Yes, end of story. So I do not know why anybody would spend a lot of money to measure that. Now if the program is having problems. If the mandate is in question because students are not showing up or [are] not getting jobs, then that is another story. Then you have an obvious problem. So don't concentrate on a program that is just bursting worrying about a long detailed evaluation. (UC-academic) (49)

The last quote presents another issue, that of resources. This person suggests that we already have good indicators of relevance, student enrollment in courses and programs. When affordability is a further goal, why would we think about using our limited resources to measure something that is already clearly established? This is an example of the perceived tensions that exist between the four goals.

The notion of access seemed important to many in this study. Part of the issue surrounding access was its definition. When referring to access, many thought of the number of student places available. For others it conjured up the image of more open admissions processes, flexibility of scheduling, or geographic access. Certainly these were all included in the list of strategies related to the goal of access in *Charting a New Course*. The interviewees as well referred to many of these notions of access in their conversations.

The need for more reflection, discussion and action regarding access was expressed in many ways. In particular the study participants addressed the perceived tensions inherent in the goal of access in relationship to the other goals.

> And many say, that this is the role of the colleges, to give people an opportunity. But giving people an opportunity to walk through a field of landmines is not really [helpful] ... some students need a bridging program. (LOC / PLARC) (33)

> Of course the more remote that you get, the less likely you are to have the technology to support any kind of Web based courses anyway. For a lot of people, things like correspondence courses are difficult to do if you don't have some support, and someone to help keep you motivated and [to] help keep you going. (C-admin) (27)

> And I don't think a lot of the resources are used rationally. ... We admit a lot of students who are not well prepared for postsecondary education and yet [we] do not provide them with the supports that would allow them to succeed. We are perfectly happy with 50, in some cases greater than 50 percent attrition rate in 1st year programs. That makes no sense. (UC-admin) (16)

The definition of access translated into a waste of resources, financial resources but more importantly human resources. The tensions between access and affordability were a real concern for many. These quotes illustrate the frustrations of educators and administrators who valued access and who were struggling with the challenges of making meaningful decisions to support learners.

The goal of affordability was embedded in the discussions about access, although it also had tensions with the other goals of the strategic plan. The following quotes provide some examples of this discussion:

> If you set tuition at a scale that will support the needs to deliver excellence, we would not have access. So we provide access but are always in a situation of not being able to deliver excellence because of lack of equipment. So I think there is always a compromise. (LOC / PLARC) (59)

> It is definitely a concern to us, that we are mandated to do one thing, and then being measured by something else. (UC-admin) (41).

The last quote referred to the tension between access, affordability and accountability, being mandated to provide access, and then being measured by the number of program graduates and having that data factored into an efficiency framework.

The accountability goal was a major focus for study participants. It was viewed by the study participants as the central theme of the strategic plan (see Figure 7) and it continues to be a central focus of the new provincial government. Accountability links the goals of access, affordability, and relevance and quality into one large bundle for which educators and administrators are deemed to be responsible. The learning outcomes initiative was firmly embedded in this bundle; some viewed it as a vehicle for increased relevance and quality, increased access, increased affordability and increased accountability, while others perceived it as a colossal waste of resources.

The fact that many interviewees perceived the goals of the strategic plan to be motherhood statements suggests that the language of the document did not capture people's interest. It was seen by many to represent the current system rather than a future system. It may have guided some, but not necessarily inspired them. Few people spoke about being motivated and challenged by the message from the document.

Delivery of Learning Outcome Message

The message about learning outcomes was textually embedded in the strategic plan as an element of the goal of quality and relevance, and accountability. C2T2 personnel were influential in the translation of these texts into further policy texts. In this shaping process, the notion of outcomes based education was shifted from the periphery to a central position in the reform agenda (see Figure 2 and 3 in Chapter Three). Articles about learning outcomes were published in the *Learning Quarterly*, the C2T2 publication (Bauslaugh, 1996, 1997a; Battersby, 1997) and consultants were also brought in from Ontario and Portland to conduct workshops about learning outcomes.

Figure 7. Study Participants' Views Related to the Message in *Charting a New Course*

Note: The issue of integrated learning was associated with the focus on learners.

The policy texts surrounding learning outcomes in BC were cast in a dichotomous framework (see Table 1 in Chapter Two); learning outcomes were contrasted to other approaches in efforts to substantiate their importance. Such language may have been used to create a sense of urgency and to promote action. However, it left some faculty members feeling devalued.

> The Ministry efforts to date to implement learning outcomes has been dismal.
> It has left faculty feeling inadequate and in conflict with Learning Outcome
> presenters who have been forceful in their approach with faculty. (C-survey)

> I did pick up from people that they were feeling devalued as teachers. ...
> Teachers want to be valued for their contribution to the process. (LOC /
> PLARC) (51)

Learning outcomes has been pushed so hard by C2T2 and the Ministry that it is regarded as nothing more than rabid ideological dogma by me and most of my colleagues. (UC-survey)

There was an additional twist in the message from C2T2. In response to a discussion with the Council of Education Council Chairs, C2T2 personnel asked Education Councils to "take responsibility for sending out the call and selecting the learning outcomes network coordinator" (Battersby & Malnarich, personal communication, October 30, 1997). A letter was also sent to the organizations' presidents "informing them of our request to Education Councils and asking them to support this initiative" (p.1). This offended some administrators as Education Councils do not have the mandate related to personnel and budgetary allocations. It appeared that this was a way to circumvent the organizational administration. The following quote addresses the relationship issue between government and BC postsecondary organizations related to this policy.

> Who owns it [learning outcomes]? It does not come out of an institutional process that builds either understanding or appropriate application within the context of the institution. It comes out of a basically quasi-governmental body which, frankly, I don't care how many institutions are represented, does not build a kind of intellectual investment. ... These are things, which need institutional character invested into them. And the way we have always done that in the academy, we have created institutional character of the concepts, but we have created them through effective critical constructive collegial processes. And that does not happen when you have a centralized Ministry, which feeds out from the center. (UC-admin) (110)

There was a cognitive and an emotional response to the introduction of the learning outcomes initiative. Some were related to the concept of learning outcomes and some were related to the way that the message about the policy was delivered.

Feasibility of a Learning Outcomes Approach

As discussed in previous sections, the learning outcomes approach was critiqued from a pedagogical perspective. It was, however, also criticized from a feasibility perspective. The path from theory to practice was fraught with challenges. I begin this section by presenting survey data related to factors that supported the integration of a learning outcomes approach and those that were perceived to present barriers. This will be followed by the presentation of interview data related to this discussion about the journey from theory to practice.

Enabling Factors. The respondents (n=241) who indicated they were making changes were asked to rate the importance of specific factors in their faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach based on a 4-point scale ranging from *not important, somewhat important, quite important* to *very important* (Appendix H, Table H13). The group of factors that over half the respondents identified as *quite important* or *very important* included the following:

> ➢ Potential benefits to learners (76%),
> ➢ Relevance to learner needs (75%),
> ➢ Emphasis on integration of learning (60%)
> ➢ Interest in improving assessment (57%),
> ➢ Consistency with faculty's philosophy (54%) and
> ➢ Relevance to employer needs (51%).

These appeared to be the most important factors for respondents. They focused on the general theme of learning with a hint of the employment focus.

Statistically significant differences were found among respondents from different program areas in only four of the eighteen items including the following: consistency with faculty philosophy (p = .05), relevance to employer needs (p < .001), influence of institutional administrators (p = .02) and requests for prior learning assessment (p = .02) (Appendix H, Tables H13.1 - H13.2b). Respondents from the academic area were less influenced by the argument that learning outcomes supported education relevant to employer needs when compared to respondents from the other program areas. It appears that learning outcomes were more consistent with the faculty philosophy for those in the foundation, vocational and career technical areas when compared to those from the academic and applied degree areas. The foundation, vocational and career technical groups also appeared to be more influenced by requests for prior learning assessment when compared to those from the academic and applied degree areas. However, respondents from the academic, vocational and career areas appeared to be more influenced by institutional administrators in their decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach (Appendix H, Tables H13.3 - H13.6).

Statistically significant differences were found among respondents from different organizational positions in only four of the eighteen items including the following: emphasis on the integration of learning (p = .05), potential benefit to learners (p = .03), prior faculty direction and decision (p = .02), and requests for prior learning assessment (p < .001), (Appendix H, Tables H13.7 - H13.8c). Department administrators appeared to be less

influenced by all of the above factors when compared to the LOC / PLARC group and organizational administrators in particular (Appendix H, Tables H13.9 - H13.12). A number of variables appeared to influence faculty decisions to integrate a learning outcomes approach.

Disabling Factors. The respondents (n=49) who had not indicated making any changes were asked to rate the importance of specific factors in their faculty members' decision not to integrate a learning outcomes approach based on a 4-point scale ranging from *not important, somewhat important, quite important* to *very important* (Appendix H, Table H14). The group of factors that 50% or more of the respondents identified as *quite important* or *very important* included the following:

➢ Satisfaction with current programs and courses (76%),

➢ Lack of faculty knowledge of learning outcomes approach (64%),

➢ Lack of evidence to support change to a learning outcomes approach 63%),

➢ Few requests for prior learning assessments (60%),

➢ Concern about the value and relevance of a learning outcomes approach (60%),

➢ Few evident benefits from such a change (57%), and

➢ Concern about faculty workload to implement change (50%).

These factors appear to focus on the costs and benefits of changing to a learning outcomes approach. Comparative analysis was not conducted on the data from this question as the number of respondents was too small for such tests.

Articulation Issues. One of the controversial areas surrounding the learning outcomes initiative in the academic area was its relationship to articulation and transfer arrangements. Some respondents perceived it as an enabling factor while others viewed it as a disabling factor.

> Get it [learning outcomes] accepted at an articulation level, and you will change the way the curriculum is examined. ... Once you get the notion of sending and receiving linked into outcomes, it is going to be much easier, because we will then be talking in common language. (LOC / PLARC) (45)

> The big issue, for the academics especially, is whether or not curriculum written in learning outcomes will be transferable to universities ... whether the universities will accept that curriculum. That is what is holding the academic faculties back. (LOC / PLARC) (54)

> I think you're looking at two different perceptions. They hinder articulation because if learning outcomes is not just a semantic exercise, they will change the curriculum. If they change the curriculum then my agreements with the other universities may be void. ... On the other hand if you got all of the institutions using learning outcomes, including the universities, then it makes it easier because you no longer have to look at the detail, week by week, the content. You can just look at the learning outcomes ... without going through all of the tedium. (UC-admin) (410)

From one perspective a learning outcomes approach was perceived to support articulation and transfer; the relationship between them was seen as symbiotic. The potential of the approach to provide a common language and promote dialogue among diverse organizations was seen as a positive aspect of the initiative. The articulation process was described as a potential vehicle to promote the diffusion of a learning outcomes approach. However, there were also perceived risks associated with its integration if the universities did not accept the approach. From this perspective it could be a barrier for the academic programs and a potential waste of resources. Eight of the 14 LOC reports to C2T2 discussed faculty perceptions related to potential problems with articulation and transfer agreements.

However, some questioned the existence of the risk and the reason behind the resistance of people in the academic area and universities.

> I see course outlines from all over this province, and they come in an amazing variety of styles, content and organization. ... I really do not believe that receiving institutions are going to look at those outlines all that much differently, then they are looking at existing ones. ... So I think it is a bit of a red herring. (UC-admin)

> I suspect that the universities are not involved because they are not going to touch an over regulated sector with a barge pole, and quite properly so. I think it is just a watershed item. I suspect that if you look at what the universities are actually doing, that there are lots of people who are thinking about and are working with concepts that are compatible with learning outcomes. ... I suspect, what is offensive, is the notion of an over-regulated, centralized, too-close-at-hand to government [organization] establishing something that should be coming out of the intellectuals within the sector. (UC-admin) (110)

From this perspective the learning outcomes initiative was seen as an infringement on the autonomy and culture of postsecondary education.

Culture and Autonomy of Postsecondary Education. Respondents talked about the magnitude of the change implied in the learning outcomes approach given the culture and diversity of postsecondary education. The following quotes reflect this discussion.

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But on the other hand, you can't really dictate or mandate one special way of doing things. ... There is a certain amount of academic freedom, and there has to be, because ... we have such a wide range of programs, and departments. And culture in every single program is different. So the needs are different. And it [learning outcome approach] needs to be addressed the way that is appropriate for that particular program, for that language and culture. (LOC / PLARC) (143)

[Learning outcomes approach represents] major, major [change], especially ... [in] comprehensive organizations with all sorts of cultures and all sorts of ways of doing things. It's a major thing [given] the diverse learner groups that we have. That is always an issue, to address their needs individually and at the same time address the needs of that diverse organization. ... [in] developing curriculum for learners that can be in some way standardized across an institution or across provincial programs, but at the same time meet the individual needs of diverse learners is always a challenge. (LOC / PLARC) (53)

As you get that culture, and that history, it becomes a part if you. ... It is part of their [academic faculty members'] tradition too. And that is what makes them so university oriented, and so research oriented, and so different from the more practical, vocational programs. You are trying to ask them to do something that goes against their nature when you ask them to pin down exactly ... what you mean by critical thinking. You should not have to define what critical thinking is, or analyze it; when you know, then you will know that you know. There is no need to define it. (LOC / PLARC) (43)

These quotes emphasize the magnitude and the depth of change that was stimulated with the learning outcomes initiative. The change was particularly difficult as it challenged the culture of the academic area.

In the academic area learning outcomes were viewed as an affront to the autonomy of educators. However, respondents from the applied area appeared to be more comfortable that their autonomy could be supported.

There is still lots of room about how a particular instructor would accomplish that [outcome] in their studios or classrooms. So I do not think it limits the instructors at all, in terms of their methodologies for teaching or project scope. It simply gives them a clearer road map of how they are going to get from A to B, and have the learners arrive at the destination too. (UC-applied) (47)

So if we decide what we want to be accountable for and then work towards being accountable for that, then we have some sort of autonomy over what it is that we want to do. (LOC / PLARC) (54)

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Respondents from the applied area often saw learning outcomes as a pragmatic approach to clarify the intentions of courses and programs. These perspectives help to partially explain the polarity of views evident in the survey data.

Impact on Faculty Members. Respondents from all the program areas described the impact of this initiative on faculty members. This discussion has several facets including a change in the conception of teaching, increased collaboration with colleagues, and an increase in workload without any apparent release time. The following quotes present these views.

> So the teacher's role then becomes, I will not say secondary, because it is anything but, but it does become one of always trying to design educational activities that will lead towards the achievement of those outcomes. (UC-admin) (411)

> We have not provided any resources for faculty to teach these things [generic abilities]. ... I don't know anything about teaching teamwork skills. There is nowhere that I can go to get that information, and no one who is going to come in and help me with it or do it with me. (UC-academic) (412)

> That exercise we went through, although it was very productive, was a lot of work. We spent tons of time together, much more than in our usual curriculum development time. So we saw it as, ... "this is enormous." How are we to do it without being compensated in some way? We are expected to be in our classes; we are expected to be in the community; we are expected to also do this? Let's be realistic. (UC-applied) (46)

The comment about facilitating teamwork skills addressed the concern that the integration of employability skills throughout the curriculum had further implications for the role of faculty members that required different professional development initiatives.

Resources and Competing Priorities. The issue of resources dominated many of the conversations about the implementation phase; one interviewee spoke about "drive-by-funding." The quotes in the previous sections alluded to resource issues; the following quotes address the issue more specifically and from a more global perspective.

> Setting up policies is not going to do anything. Having committees is not going to get you anywhere. ... If you believe that learning outcomes are different then it involves people sitting down and rethinking their program from top to bottom, looking at top-down design, and people re-phrasing how they do everything. And this is an enormous work and there is just not any money around to do that. You have to convince people. (UC-academic) (412)

> Provincially, a lot of these initiatives are being produced, and then ... the mechanism is missing to sustain it. When you implement ... it doesn't have any wheels on it; you can't go anywhere. (UC-admin) (41)

> Policy change is fine but it has to be brought in at a rate at which it can be accepted. And I think some very good ideas are getting destructive interference because they are running into each other: PLA, learning outcomes, lifelong learning, English across the curriculum, [and] technological education. (UC-admin) (310)

The sheer number of initiatives and strategies suggested in *Charting a New Course* was problematic from an implementation perspective. This became an increasing issue of concern with continued downsizing and fiscal restraint.

Some participants questioned the leadership provided to postsecondary education by the Ministry.

> If we knew where we were going and what the goal was then we would have some idea of what it looks like when we get there. It might be easier for people to cope with. (LOC / PLARC) (510)

> Since the coming out of *Charting a New Course* there has not been much in the way of Ministry direction for postsecondary education. The Ministry itself is extremely quiet about its directions for public postsecondary education. It is a very small Ministry; there are few coordinators, and they tend to be really overloaded. They do not produce any kind of leadership for the system. (Key actor) (68)

> I do not see a lot of change agents in the system or in the Ministry. I do not see a lot of champions for change amongst people who can have some influence to make it happen. (Key actor) (67)

There was some confusion about the different directions in which postsecondary education was being taken and concern about the leadership that existed to support change.

Structural Barriers. Study participants talked about the current structures and culture of the postsecondary organizations that make these types of initiatives difficult to implement.

> [In the academic area] there is no habit or tradition of achieving shared aims. ... There are no structural arrangements. People find integrated courses difficult to organize. They seldom sustain themselves, because they are going against the flow of the institutional faculty traditions. ... We need to encourage people to look at institutional change that would sustain [learning outcomes] rather than just leaving it to the people who are prepared to go against the flow. (Key actor) (61)

I think there is an issue with our structural support within organizations. We are very bureaucratic. As yet we do not support ... these kinds of initiatives. It is usually a ground swell, and there is not a lot of infrastructure to support the kinds of things that need to be done. ... These kinds of educational reform initiatives ... can create a lot of havoc for infrastructure. (LOC/PLARC) (53)

It is very hard to have flexible learning and assessment in a system in which people get paid to have people sit on seats in classrooms. So there are some conflicts there at the policy level, in the way that we fund our institutions. ... I think many of our colleges are still administratively driven rather than learner- or learning-driven. (Key actor) (72)

The participants described many organizational barriers in postsecondary education, among them were formulas for funding and workload allocation.

There appeared to be a number of barriers to the implementation of a learning outcomes approach. Some involved perceptions and the influences of organizational culture, while others were grounded in discussions about the tensions between competing priorities and the overall funding of change. However, the survey data would support the view that satisfaction with current approaches, the perceived lack of evidence and value of a learning outcomes approach were more influential than the structural and funding issues. However, the combination of these factors led to resistance within the colleges and university colleges.

Cosmetic Change and Resistance. Respondents discussed the resistance that arose to the learning outcomes initiative. This resistance was expressed in several forms as the following quotes illustrate:

Basically I have not done anything with it. Everyone once in a while we change the way we do our course outlines. And so we write outcomes on them. ... I feel generically the same thing goes under a lot of different names. (UC-academic) (49)

There's no practical uptake in terms of what people do. So you have this phenomenon in my view where people simply adapt their language if they are forced to, if they need to get a Ministry approval for example. If you take a look at the changes that have been made in the approval documents for programs approval or new degree approvals, a number of the criteria force you to write in a certain way, and that is what people do. They simply meld the language so it looks as though it speaks to the particular point, but they have not really shifted their position or their thinking, or what it is that they will ultimately do. (UC-admin) (16)

Academics are trained to use language. ... Our faculty of science is a very good example. They have repackaged most of their programs ... in terms of relevance to industry, partnerships and collaborations. They have adopted the

language of *Charting a New Course*, but they are still teaching classic majors degrees in math, physics and chemistry. They have re-described what they are going. ... I do not think that this is unusual. I think this is what typically happens. Maybe in time ... there is a better alignment between the rhetoric and realities, but I suspect by that time the ideas will be pretty shopworn, and people will have a new set of ideas that they would like to see operationalized in education. (UC-admin) (13)

There was resistance from people who teach "intangibles" such as attitudes and values. There was also resistance from those who viewed learning outcomes as too reductionistic. Respondents from the academic and applied degree programs voiced these views most frequently. As well, the affront to autonomy and culture may have also influenced the resistance that developed to a learning outcomes approach in the academic area. It appears that the resistance to the initiative was both overt and covert.

The response to the learning outcomes initiative was varied. It ranged from strong support, to general ambivalence or apathy, to resistance expressed in several ways. Generally the proponents appeared to adopt the learning outcomes approach because they perceived it to be relevant and valuable for learners, while the opponents appeared to question its value and the evidence to support it. Both groups discussed barriers to its implementation, particularly those surrounding structural issues, workload and resources. Participants from the applied areas appeared to be more supportive of the initiative while those from the academic area tended to be more skeptical. Interestingly, the respondents from the departments appeared to place less value in the initiative when compared to organizational administrators. This may be a reflection of the fact that many in the applied areas did not perceive the approach to be substantially different from their present approach. These varied perspectives set the stage for a discussion about the outcomes of the learning outcomes initiative.

Outcomes of the Learning Outcomes Policy

The respondents had diverse views about the outcomes of the learning outcomes policy and its relationship to the concept of educational reform. I first present the respondents' views about the nature of the relationship between learning outcomes and educational reform. Then I present their views about the impact of the policy in BC colleges and university colleges.

Relationship between Learning Outcomes and Educational Reform

The dictionary definition of reform includes the notion of improvement. At one end of the spectrum were those who had difficulty understanding how learning outcomes were related to reform strategies.

> I don't know what the big movement is about. This is a question I have been asking for years. Is this just different terminology? I don't think I am that stupid, that I would have missed it if somebody actually told me. I hear people say things, but I think there has to be something substantive in a reform movement so that people can see that it is substantially beneficial. And I have not seen that yet. (UC-academic) (412)

At the other end of the spectrum were those who regarded it as a complex initiative linking all the elements within the learning environment.

> And I think it is a much more complex change, than anyone ... realizes when they first start on the process. ... You are continuing to open the door that leads to more doors, and more doors. It is fascinating. I think many people, certainly at the college, are looking at it just as an add-on to PLA, and then are realizing ... the complexity and the possible richness that is there. (LOC / PLARC) (33)

> It is a concept that is at the center of a whole range of reforms and changes that need to come about in how postsecondary institutions operate, everything from curriculum to the teaching and learning process, to how students are assessed. ... It is not something that is marginal or narrow in focus. It is a concept, which has implications for all of those areas of the operation of a postsecondary institution. (Key actor) (66)

These respondents perceived it to be central to educational reform.

Others held more conservative views about the learning outcomes policy. It was seen as an evolutionary concept.

> My impression is that learning outcomes is perceived by strong advocates as a major solution and that where it does not exist education/training is ineffective, or perhaps with less hyperbole, not as effective as it should be. I do not see education/training and learning outcomes in that way. To me learning outcomes will help improve what we do, but the degree of its effects will vary and it will not revolutionize postsecondary education. (UC-survey)

> In the long run [learning] outcomes ... in the applied programs does not represent anything revolutionary. It represents the latest refinement, and by and large it is received that way. In the university transfer [area] where the tradition goes back to an elitist education of people ... there is more work to make the programs meaningful and relevant for the students. In the applied areas on the other hand, the concern there is to create genuine breadth of

understanding within the very limited time with the very job specific demands that they have. (Key actor) (61)

Overall the approach was described as supportive of educational change, particularly one that focused on making postsecondary education more learner-centered. However, several participants preferred to talk about "change" rather than "reform" as they questioned the substantive nature of the learning outcomes initiative.

Study participants discussed the relationship of learning outcomes to the goals in *Charting a New Course*. The following quotes reflect these views.

It [learning outcomes] enables you to be very much clearer, and very much more persuasive in terms of accountability. (Key actor) (66)

In the context of educational reform, I think that the reform [learning outcomes] is to make curriculum more responsive to the needs of students. (UC-admin) (42)

But I think really the learning outcomes are looking at abilities and general learning outcomes grow from that because it is really learning about what you need, and learning how to be a self-directed learner and understanding what your skill sets are and how to acquire the knowledge that you need to move forward with your career and life. (Key actor) (69)

These discussions were mainly focused on the goals of accountability, relevance, and access. The relationship to relevance was often expressed through the articulation of generic or essential abilities.

Participants also discussed another valuable aspect about the learning outcomes initiative, the dialogue about practice that the policy generated.

I think subversively it is transforming. I do not know if people are aware of it. … Just the fact that people are talking about it, they are reading about it, and they are protesting against it, and they are discussing, they are actually probably a little more aware and more involved in education and teaching and in their own professional development from where they were before. But is that really a lot different then any of the other trends? … Do other trends do that? I don't know. But it is too big, and too far away to really say or know that I can see change. (LOC / PLARC) (43)

I think the profound effect … is that by the very notion of saying that it is a brand new innovation, it makes people examine what it is that they do in practice. And every time we examine our practice, I think we improve our education. (LOC / PLARC) (59)

From this perspective the policy was seen to be valuable in the reflection and discussion it generated about educational practice.

A key actor summarized these discussions about the relationship of a learning outcomes approach and educational reform in the following way.

> I would say that learning outcomes have to do with being clear about your curriculum and being focused on what students need to know and be able to do. ... And it should not have to carry the burden of being anything else. It should not have to carry the burden of being a panacea for all the ills of postsecondary education. It should not have to carry the burden of being a totally different and new way of doing and thinking about education. It should not have to carry the burden of being the way we now think about transfer. It should not have to be the answer to a lot of other problems. It is an excellent method for organizing curriculum and for improving pedagogy. (Key actor) (64)

It was viewed by many to be a valuable strategy for articulating curriculum, particularly for programs in the applied areas. While it was deemed as valuable, the strength of its relationship to educational reform was questioned by study participants, particularly those in the academic areas. Even in the applied areas it was most often described as a refinement.

Impact of a Learning Outcomes Approach

The discussion about the effects of a learning outcomes approach raises questions about the extent of these effects. How widespread were the outcomes of the learning outcomes policy?

The views of respondents varied. The following quotes present the range described by participants.

> I think it has had a profound effect. (LOC/PLARC) (59)

> I do not see a lot really happening differently, except some people are getting rich from talking about it and writing articles about it. And some people really do care, and they are interested philosophically. Some people are trying it in their classrooms, but I am not sure it is any different than 10 years ago. (LOC/PLARC) (43)

> Increasingly attention is being given to submitting course outline with learning outcomes, which should facilitate PLA. However it is not clear yet whether real benefits are being experienced. (UC-survey)

> Very little effect. The fact that people gather together from different institutions, and talk about it, is a steppingstone. (LOC / PLARC) (45)

> I do hear a great variety of responses at meetings, everything from, ... "We are all really committed to a learning outcomes approach; we find that it is really a lot easier in the long run" to sneering and put downs, "Oh yes, the Education Council did this. Who do they think will comply with this? I do not

know, but certainly it will not be me." It is the whole gamut from enthusiastic support to absolute rejection. (Key Actor) (64)

It has produced some results. It has not produced system results; it has produced individual results. (C-admin) (310)

The views about the impact of a learning outcomes approach varied, but most participants questioned the influence of the initiative. This may be partially explained by the newness of the initiative.

Many participants were reserved about the current effect of the initiative, but they also suggested that there were some key factors that might have an impact on the integration of the approach in the long run.

It has not had the sweeping change that one might hope for yet. But certainly PLA is much more embedded in the thinking of many faculty [members] in the college and university system than it ever was before. And if faculty grapple with and understand and accept PLA, then to a certain extent they are starting to accept the movement towards a learning outcomes approach to curriculum, because they have to then start to look at what it is their courses are purporting to teach, or that students are to learn in their courses. ... And that then focuses them on their curriculum and its design. (Key actor) (70)

To the extent that learning outcomes do their job of facilitating that business of articulation, and facilitating the business of credentialing our students, to the extent that it does those things, it will catch on. (UC-admin) (410).

The relationship of the policy to prior learning assessment and recognition efforts, and articulation and transfer were seen as potential vehicles for the promotion of a learning outcomes approach. However, the survey data reveals that only 36% indicated that prior learning assessment was *quite important* or *very important* in their decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach. This may be partially explained by the respondents who had not integrated a learning outcomes approach; 60% indicated that few requests for prior learning assessment was *quite important* or *very important* in their decision not to adopt a learning outcomes approach. Interviewees also talked about the cost : benefit ratio of prior learning assessment.

When the funding dries up, where does the funding come from to do it [prior learning assessment]? Do we shut down classes to do prior learning assessment? Three classes for every prior learning assessment class, [that is the] equivalent [cost] to implement. ... That is just crazy when you have five, six, eight hundred students lined up on our doors who cannot get access in the first place. (C-admin) (310).

Prior learning assessment may be pedagogically sound, but it is costly from an efficiency framework and may, therefore, not be an important factor in moving the learning outcomes approach forward.

The same applies to the issue of articulation and transfer. Only 34% of survey respondents indicated that the opportunity to promote transfer of credits was *quite important* or *very important* in their decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach. As previously discussed, the relationship of learning outcomes to articulation and transfer agreements was controversial. Some respondents viewed it as an enabling factor, while others viewed is as a hindrance and barrier. Given this diversity of views, it is hard to imagine that articulation will become an important enabling factor for the long-term integration of a learning outcomes approach.

The analysis of the LOC reports to C2T2 provides additional perspectives to support the interview data. Of the 15 participating institutions in my study, 14 submitted reports to C2T2 in the spring and summer of 1998 when the LOCs were being funded. These reports provided evidence of the following organizational activities:

➢ presentations to Education Council about a learning outcomes approach (n=12),
➢ establishment of a committee or task force about learning outcomes (n=12),
➢ workshops conducted by internal or external people (n=13),
➢ C2T2 personnel or other consultants involved in discussions with faculty (n=10),
➢ Education Council initiating change in the template for submission of course outlines (n=5),
➢ survey of faculty members about their view of learning outcomes (n=2), and
➢ inclusion of learning outcomes and employability skills in course outlines (n=2),

The analysis of the minutes of Education Council meetings suggested that the discussions about learning outcomes was minimal. They were mainly conducted within the context of information reports from C2T2, presentations to the Council by the organization's LOC, or the approval of course outline formats.

Changes to the course and program templates received the most attention as they were controversial.

> That dichotomy between the academic area and the career area came out when
> I took the proposal [to integrate a learning outcomes approach into course
> outlines] to Education Council. It surfaced there. (LOC/PLARC) (33)

> The big [challenge] is getting people away from treating it as a semantic
> exercise, as just one more piece of bureaucracy, or the Education Council as

flexing its power muscles and demanding that everyone go through this exercise. So the big thing is probably changing that perception, and getting people to understand the value of learning outcomes. (UC-admin) (410)

Conversations about learning outcomes were more prevalent in the minutes of the curriculum subcommittees of the Education Councils. However, the discussion at the subcommittee level focused mainly around format and grammatical perspectives, not about the relevance or quality of the outcomes. A student representative to Education Council had a similar observation.

> Education Council is too late for program discussion. If it goes to Education Council, it is going to pass. Even if it fails once, it is going to pass. And when it goes through the curriculum approval committee, you are not really questioning the person who designed [it], you are just questioning whether or not it is grammatically correct, or that it is in conflict with another course at the school. You are not really getting into the actual content of the course because there is no time for it. (Student) (31)

These views support the perspective that changes towards a learning outcomes approach may have been cosmetic changes in language.

Many department administrators were not aware of the existence of the Learning Outcomes Network established by C2T2. However, its participants, the LOCs, appeared to value it but questioned its influence.

> I think it has had an effect on the people who are in it. I found it very enlightening. ... It has given me a sense of community, that I am not all alone trying to make changes. ... For me it has been a very positive thing, having access to other people's opinions. (LOC/PLARC) (33)

> I guess I'm not clear about the Learning Outcomes Network. ... It seems very diffuse to me, and very open-ended. And maybe that is where it needs to be. I am finding that ... the Network is quite fragmented. (LOC/PLARC) (53)

Opponents and proponents of the approach questioned the influence of the learning outcomes initiative, both the concept and the network established to implement it.

It appears that the learning outcomes policy has had little impact on education within BC colleges and university colleges. The language in course outlines may have changed, but it is unclear if the changes translated into more relevant learning experiences or more valid assessment approaches. Both the opponents and proponents were concerned about the lack of resources to implement the policy and the competing priorities that educators were facing in their practice contexts.

Events Following My Data Collection Phase

After my survey, interviews and site visits were completed, participants continued to discuss issues through the Learning Outcome Network although its membership expanded to include any interested individuals wishing to subscribe. There was also a shift to more generic language, the provincial learning network. The discussions shifted from writing of learning outcomes to the articulation and measurement of "generic abilities" or "essential abilities." This focus was articulated through the Identifying and Developing Essential Abilities (IDEA) Project. Funding was allocated to workshops and colloquiums related to essential abilities and their implementation. With the conference entitled "Kaleidoscope 2000," the concept of "best practices" became a central theme of C2T2 initiatives. A best practices web site was established to facilitate the exchange of ideas, and in 2001 funding was offered to enable educators to connect with their peers.

The dialogue continued but there was also concern expressed about the support or perceived lack of support that the learning outcomes approach was being given. One LOC reported, "I am disappointed that [Learning Outcomes Approach] has faded from the scene" (LOC-email). Other participants on the list serve concurred.

There were also concerns raised that it might be "resuscitated ... based on a centralized model of definition and application which does not give faculty / advisory groups the lead in program construction and evaluation" (LOC-email). The link with the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act continued to be a concern.

C2T2 personnel also participated in this discussion and identified a shift in the organization's approach to learning outcomes.

> As the Centre [C2T2] has matured and worked with individuals and institutions, we are more mindful of our role as an agency providing services to the postsecondary system that are wished for by the system. ... In the past few years we have attempted to be more integrative in our work and to make connections across what have been different project areas. So while the MAETT funding for the outcomes and assessment area may have declined relative to some other areas, there is more linkage between projects that reinforce a learning outcomes approach. (C2T2 personnel, April 30, 2001)

This response from C2T2 supports the view that opposition from postsecondary organizations influenced the direction taken by the organization. It suggests that other priorities have subsumed the learning outcomes policy, and its influence will only be seen in so far that it facilitates other priorities. The information on the C2T2 website [www.c2t2.ca] suggests that technology has become the dominant theme; expanding choices for learners through

technology is linked to the goal of access and appears to be the new thrust in BC postsecondary education.

The discussion about performance indicators for the system still continues. The number of indicators fluctuated with the previous new democratic government from 77 in the initial year to 17 indicators in 2001 (BC MoAETT, 2001a). The new liberal government has currently established 30 indicators for the Ministry (MoAE, 2002b). The measurement of abilities is included in these indicators under the heading of improving the quality of education. The other indicator in this heading relates to the "usefulness of education in performing job" (MoAE, 2002b, p. 9). Many of the indicators focus on credentials awarded, number of seats (especially those provided through on-line access), retention, completion, costs, and graduate ratings.

The measurement of abilities is further shaped in the document. The outcomes statements identify the measurement of critical thinking, communication and problem solving abilities. The methods section identifies that these will be measured by gaining college graduates' perspectives on the degree to which their program prepared them for "written communication," "oral communication" and "analysis / problem solving" (MoAE, 2002b, p. 9). For university graduates, the measure will focus on the graduates' views about the three abilities in performing their job. The three abilities are measured in terms of "verbally expressing opinions and ideas," "clear and concise writing," and "resolving issues and problems" (MoAE, 2002b, p. 9). These data have been collected through the outcomes surveys that have been implemented in the BC colleges and universities for several years. The measurement of outcomes appears to be a continuation of previous activities rather than the creation of a new approach to the measurement of abilities. This may be a reflection of the many challenges associated with the implementation of performance indicators as described in Chapter Two.

It appears that there has been little movement regarding a learning outcomes approach at the provincial level since the implementation of my survey and interviews in BC colleges and university colleges. If anything, it appears that action in this area has decreased rather than increased.

Summary

Implementation of the learning outcomes policy faced many challenges. Its definition was the first obstacle encountered. Many participants in my study saw it as a "spin" policy, as

new wording for their current approach to teaching and learning. For those who perceived a difference in the conception of a learning outcomes approach, the differences were often couched in terms of changes in emphasis. A learning outcomes approach was described as being more holistic and integrated. It defined the outcomes of learning in broad and relevant terms, thus making them more explicit, particularly for learners. The approach helped to direct attention of the use of knowledge and thus also promoted more valid assessments. These characteristics were threaded into the vision that proponents of the approach described.

Other participants were concerned about the implications of adopting this approach in postsecondary education. They discussed the lack of empirical evidence to support the adoption of learning outcomes, and the limitation of one approach for the eclectic programs and courses offered in postsecondary education. They perceived it as stultifying knowledge and leading to the vocationalization of education.

The views about a learning outcomes approach were polarized. The academic area opposed the approach while many in the applied and foundation areas perceived it as valuable given that many felt they had been implementing such an approach for many years. Those that saw value in the approach tended to focus on broadening educational outcomes as a way of shifting away from the level of detail and minutia present in many courses and programs. They also perceived it to be valuable for generating dialogue about educational practice.

A further barrier to its implementation was its perceived link with the accountability movement as articulated in *Charting a New Course*. The texts of the learning outcomes policy were embedded within the strategic plan, particularly as it related to the goals of quality and relevance, access and accountability. This textual link and an emphasis on the employment aims of education aroused suspicions, particularly in the academic area. The strategic plan and the learning outcomes initiative were perceived as a strategy to increase government control over education and more specifically, over curriculum.

The way the message was delivered resulted in cognitive and emotional responses to the approach. Faculty members expressed surprise that this was deemed to be a novel approach and some were insulted by the suggestion that they had not been concerned about the articulation of the outcomes of their courses or programs. Both the proponents and the opponents felt that their knowledge and expertise was not being acknowledged.

The feasibility of implementing the policy was also questioned. The policy collided with the culture of the academic area and was perceived as an affront to professional autonomy. It also suggested a shift in the role of faculty members that necessitated increased collaboration with others. The focus on employability skills or generic abilities required

faculty to extend their teaching beyond their discipline area. Its introduction during times of fiscal restraint created tensions for faculty members who were faced with decreased resources and increasing workloads.

These contextual realities led to resistance, particularly from faculty members in the academic area. Some of this resistance was expressed overtly through the shaping of motions in Education Councils to change the organizational template for course outlines. Other resistance was expressed in more subtle ways through cosmetic changes in the language of course outlines without any substantive impact on the course.

Despite these challenges approximately one-third of survey participants had made what they considered moderate or major changes in response to the learning outcomes initiative and these changes were often described as valuable. Proponents valued the learning outcomes approach for its potential benefits to learners in supporting integrated and relevant learning. It was perceived to link with the goals of relevance and quality, access and accountability as articulated in the strategic plan. However, the changes were more prevalent in the applied and foundation areas when compared to the academic area. The longevity of the changes can also be questioned given the decreased emphasis and financial support for a learning outcomes approach at a provincial level.

While changes have been made to courses and programs related to a learning outcomes approach, the overall effect of the policy on student learning appears to be minimal. There does not appear to be a provincial movement or impact related to a learning outcomes approach. Action in this area has, in fact, decreased since my data collection phase. This chapter has provided a picture of the implementation phase of the learning outcomes policy to support further discussions in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an exploration of the efforts to bring about reform in postsecondary education through a learning outcomes approach. The study was guided by three broad questions: (1) How was the concept of learning outcomes being defined in the colleges and university colleges? (2) How did the people in this sector view this policy direction? (3) Was the learning outcomes initiative helpful in promoting the vision described in the strategic plan of the BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training? These research questions will be addressed through the integration of the data gained from the survey, interviews and documents. The discussion will be conducted from the perspective of policy literature as it is embedded in many disciplines (Howlett, & Ramesh, 1995).

The framework by Bowe et al. (1992) including the *context of influence, context of policy text production* and *context of practice* will be used to structure the discussion. The adaptations made by Ball (1994) to include a *context of outcomes* and the *context of political strategy* will also be integrated. See Figure 8 for a schematic representation of my focus in this chapter based on the work of these authors.

Figure 8.   Focus of Policy Analysis of Learning Outcomes Study*
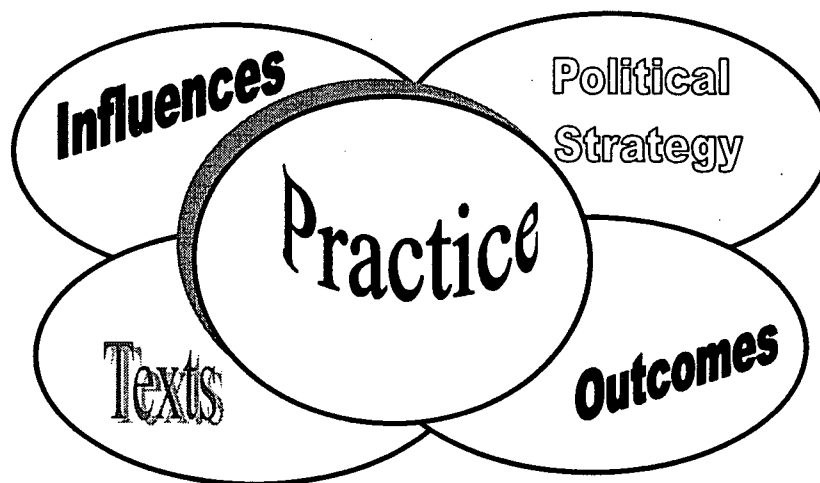
* as interpreted from the work of Bowe et al. (1992) and Ball (1994).

Defining Learning Outcomes in British Columbia

In this section I analyze the shaping of the learning outcomes concept in BC colleges and university colleges. The relationship between education and the economy was at the core of educational reform initiatives, and the development of learning outcomes was described as an important aspect of this relationship (MoEST, 1996).

Context of Influence

There were many influences shaping the concept of learning outcomes in British Columbia. Figure 4 in Chapter Five identifies the external and internal influences on the learning outcomes policy as perceived by study participants. The international discussions about competencies, skills and abilities influenced federal dialogues about the outcomes of learning. This influence appears to have come from an economic and employment focus, the *industrial trainer* ideology. External influences were, however, juxtaposed with internal factors related to the needs of learners. Issues of pedagogy were often entwined with the idea of creating learning-centered environments to provide holistic, integrated and relevant learning experiences in life contexts. The assessment movement in the United States was also influential and it too had a dual thrust, one related to the pedagogical issues of assessing abilities and the other to the accountability movement.

Interviewees often spoke about the internal influences as stemming from the notion of improving practice. They talked about transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990), mindful learning (Langer, 1997) and a number of learner-oriented approaches. In particular they talked about clarity, about making the educational process more transparent for learners. The differences in how the learning outcomes message was framed by external and internal influences partially accounts for the diversity of views about learning outcomes. The educators who perceived learning outcomes to stem from and support learning were more receptive to the initiative; those who saw learning outcomes as an external instrument for accountability were more vigorously opposed.

It is not easy or even helpful to separate the internal and external influences. The various factors merely illustrate the web of influences at play in any policy area. The thread that links these influences is the notion of accountability: accountability to learners, to employers, to the government and to the public. The influences ultimately blended in conversations about curriculum reform.

Policies are representations that are encoded and decoded in complex ways. "A policy is both contested and changing, always in a state of 'becoming'" (Ball, 1994, p. 16). In this section I highlight how policy texts shaped the learning outcomes concept in BC. This shaping was a fluid process that allowed educators the opportunity to create their own texts within the structure of provincial texts. Figure 9 presents a schematic summary of how the concept of learning outcomes was shaped in BC.

The work of international organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO was influential in shaping texts around the aims of education. For example, the UNESCO document *Learning, The Treasure Within* (Delors, 1996) articulates four pillars as the foundation for education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. The first three pillars are seen as supports for the fourth pillar, learning to live together. The OECD supported this direction through its discussions surrounding the development of human capital (OECD, 1991; OECD, 1995c).

The federal report *Learning Well ... Living Well*, a consultation paper released by the Ministry of Employment and Immigration & Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology (1991) integrated similar language. The focus on the language of abilities was supported by educational approaches such as the competency approach and the DACUM process. Abilities for learning and earning became central themes of policy texts related to education.

The texts in *Charting a New Course* mirrored the language used in international reports, particularly those from the United Kingdom (Hodgson et al., 2001), Australia (Queensland Department of Education, & Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, 1994), New Zealand (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1994) and the United States (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1992). This is not surprising given that Faris (1995) developed a report for the BC ministry regarding educational reforms in these countries.

The strategic plan also mirrored national documents such as the previously described federal report and the employability skills profile developed by the Conference Board of Canada (1992) as well as provincial documents. In particular *Charting a New Course* used language very similar to that used in the Sullivan (1988) report several years earlier. The discussions about quality, relevance and accountability in the K to 12 sector in the 1980s were precursors to the conversations in postsecondary education in the 1990s.

Figure 9.   Shaping of the Learning Outcomes Concept in British Columbia
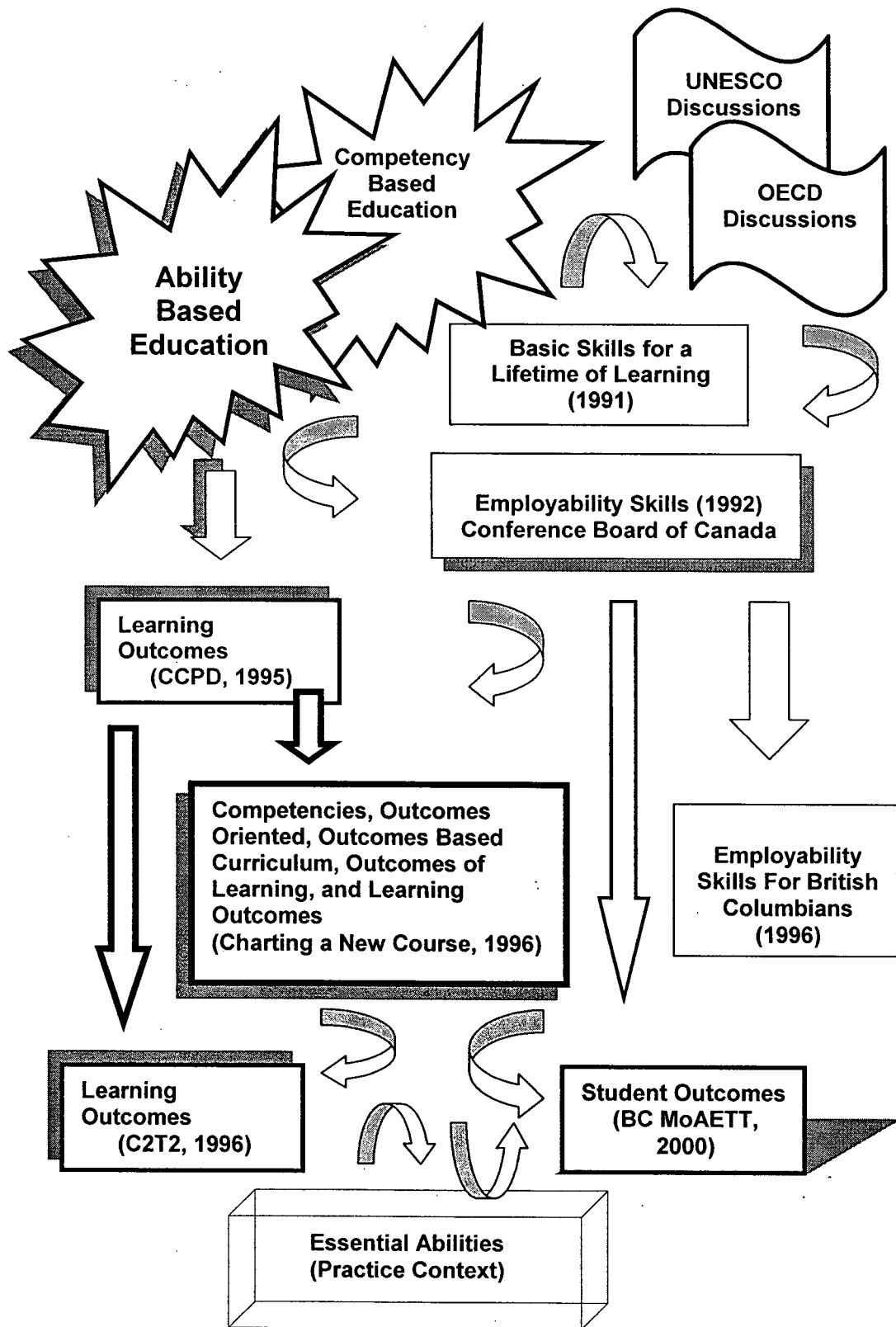
Marginson (1997b) suggests that we have experienced a recurring policy cycle of illusion / disillusion with education. Both aspects of this cycle are evident in the strategic plan generated in British Columbia. Education is touted as the vehicle for economic growth and individual prosperity, but the accountability theme permeates the document. It appears to reflect a love / hate relationship between government and advanced education. *Charting a New Course* was a symbol (Yanow, 1996) with messages directed to external as well as internal audiences.

Initiatives directed to a learning outcomes approach started prior to the strategic plan through the work conducted by the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development (CCPD), the precursor of C2T2. During the time that *Charting a New Course* was being formulated, a provincial technical institute (Debling & Behrman, 1996) and one of the university colleges (Slattery, 2000) were also working on the articulation of employability skills. Directions had already been taken within BC towards an abilities-based approach in postsecondary education and the strategic plan became a vehicle to support its integration. The strategic plan was seen as a policy window (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995) for the implementation of a learning outcomes approach.

However, the language in *Charting a New Course* did not capture people's interest. In a survey conducted by the Editorial Committee of the *Learning Quarterly*, a C2T2 publication, the Chairs of the Education Councils were asked to respond to five questions about *Charting a New Course*; questions focused around its use, its value and its limitations (Matthews, 1999). They received 4 responses from a group of 22 organizations, two from colleges and two from university-colleges. The responses were similar to those expressed by study participants. One respondent indicated that the most valuable aspect of the plan was the "unified framework of values upon which to base decisions" (p. 20), but another indicated that the values had been central to the work of the organization for many years. While it may be problematic to make judgments about non-respondents without additional information, the 18% response rate does suggest a certain amount of avoidance or apathy. Camfield (1999) observed a similar reaction to the strategic plan. "Some 'stakeholders' love it, others hate it, but a majority of those potentially most affected – students and faculty – seem curiously unmoved by its claims" (p. 6). It did not stimulate involvement.

The conversations about the goals from *Charting a New Course* are central to the understanding of the learning outcomes policy as they form the backdrop for the learning outcomes policy using the stage analogy described by Ball (1990). As was previously

discussed in Chapter Three the wording in the "Primary Elements" of *Charting a New Course* was "outcome-oriented." Not until the discussion of the strategies to achieve the goals was the concept of "learning outcomes" introduced, and then it was introduced under the goal of quality and relevance, and accountability. In both areas it was linked to the notion of measurement and accountability. The following are two of the main passages related to learning outcomes, the first is a more indirect reference to "outcomes-based standards" found under the goal of relevance and quality, and the second is a more direct reference to learning outcomes under the goal of accountability:

> Establishing outcomes-based standards for general education and liberal arts programs, including measures of accountability to both the learner, the community and the employee. Through these mechanisms, the value of a liberal arts and general education in providing the attributes of general knowledge and employability skills, will be recognized and strengthened. (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 34)

> A key element in moving to a learner-centered focus in post-secondary education and training is the specification of learning outcomes and their assessment through processes external to instruction. (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 51)

The language in the first quote subsumes the value of liberal arts education under the notion of employability skills. This is the same type of language used in the conclusion of the executive summary that states that the vision "recognizes the vocational value of liberal arts education and reflects the need for balance between intellectual and practical endeavours" (1996, p. 6). This wording reflected what some would label a paradigm shift "that recognizes that 'education and training' float on a sea of learning'" (Faris, 2001, p. 14). For others it signified a domination of market forces in postsecondary education.

Reference is made in the strategic plan to "building blocks or competencies" under the heading of relevance and quality. In this particular area the text was framed along the lines of "generic skills" as the term is applied in the Ontario policy documents (CSAC, 1994, 1996). The language surrounding abilities in BC was gradually shaped into the idea of essential abilities to make it more palatable for the academic area, as the employability notion was an affront to their views regarding the aims of education. Several interviewees mentioned that people in the academic area paled when competencies or employability skills were mentioned.

C2T2 personnel were influential in the translation of the original texts about learning outcomes. As described in Chapter Three, the "learner-centered" concept of the schematic in the strategic plan was replaced by the concept of "outcomes based education." As well the

idea of "outcomes orientation" shifted to "outcomes based education" (see Figures 2 and 3 in Chapter Two). The concept of learning outcomes was advocated as a vehicle to break down the barriers between practical learning and liberal education. Bauslaugh (1997b) argued that a learning outcomes approach had the ability to bring about a new vision of the aims of education that would no longer be embedded in a dichotomous conception of liberal education and practical education. It was also intended to provide more relevant learning in both the academic and the applied areas. In the applied areas it was anticipated that a learning outcomes approach would lead to an increased focus on general abilities and would reduce the emphasis on the detailed technical aspects. In the academic areas it was anticipated to clearly show the relevance of learning to learners' career goals and their lives (Bauslaugh, 1992, 1997a; Battersby, 1997).

Concurrent to the shaping of learning outcomes by C2T2, the concept of learning outcomes also was adapted into performance indicators through the work of the Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability (SCOEA). This shaping reflected a shift in Ministry strategies to those of an evaluative state. As Ball (1994) argues, policy texts are not necessarily "clear, closed or complete. ... They are typically the cannibalized products of multiple (but circumscribed) influences and agendas" (p. 16). The texts surrounding the learning outcomes policy reflected these characteristics and suggested the existence of spaces in which educators might create change and movement.

Policy Borrowing and Policy Learning

The directive to develop a learner-centered approach was emphasized in the strategic plan. However, the mandate regarding outcomes was more general. C2T2 was directed "to facilitate the development of learner-centred, outcomes-based provincial curriculum standards" (BC MoEST, 1996, p. 41). This generic statement was operationalized by C2T2 into a specific outcomes model, one that had received attention in Ontario (College Standards and Accreditation Council, 1995; Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996).

Many of the issues described in the British Columbia context were similar to those in other jurisdictions, both Canadian and international. Variations in policy shifts occur almost simultaneously in many jurisdictions as is evidenced by the policies in higher education in Alberta and British Columbia, and on a broader scale in the United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. "Policy borrowing" (Halpin & Troyna, 1995) and "policy learning" (Dale, 1999) have been invoked to explain these variations in policy shifts.

Bennett (1997) argues that policy imitation, emulation or copying might more accurately reflect the nature of the relationship. Regardless of the term applied, the transfer of a policy implies a certain amount of learning. The learning outcomes policy in BC reflected this trend; it represented an example of policy borrowing and policy learning.

Participants talked about the wave or ripple effects coming from the United Kingdom, United States, Australia and New Zealand. Halpin and Troyna (1995) suggest borrowing supports the legitimization of the policy and may also be favoured as an expedient approach. BC had the advantage of learning from the Ontario initiative that had been implemented several years earlier; several study participants applauded the fact that BC had taken a more collaborative approach to this policy than was evident in the Ontario approach which was seen as authoritarian and controlling.

Participants in my study had mixed views about this policy borrowing. Some viewed it as the adoption of a policy that was central to educational reform; others expressed concerns about embracing an idea they felt had already experienced difficulties in other jurisdictions, an idea whose time had passed. Some participants also questioned the transferability of the policy into BC. While the Alverno model was seen as interesting and in many cases convincing, participants questioned the feasibility of the transfer from one relatively unique organization into a provincial system. They were concerned about the transferability of the policy given the diversity of social and political contexts in British Columbia. Policy borrowing was evident, but many questioned if policy learning had occurred.

Context of Practice

Mills and Hyle (2001) draw attention to the fact that "policy does not get translated directly into organizational actions. Implementation requires additional rounds of interpretation and negotiations at the implementers' level" (p. 455). Implementers were trying to make meaning of the texts; they were active in influencing, contesting and constructing their own responses. Pressure was placed on C2T2 personnel to define the exact nature of a learning outcomes approach, but this pressure was resisted. The abstract nature and ambiguity of the learning outcomes concept allowed for the shaping of the policy by educators.

Weick (2001) contends that defining is a negotiated process and often a social process. The establishment of the Learning Outcomes Network provided a social forum for the continued shaping of the concept. This group constituted what Howlett and Ramesh

(1995) call a "policy network"; they became a subset of college and university college people who interacted with each other on a regular basis through the email discussion group, meetings, workshops and conferences. People in the colleges and university colleges struggled to define the unique features of a learning outcomes approach. The conversations about learning outcomes occurred at several different levels. Some focused on the philosophical basis of the approach while others were directed to writing curriculum in outcomes language. The texts were multiple, contradictory and confusing for many.

The Implementation of a Learning Outcomes Approach

As is evident from the findings in Chapter Five, study participants had varied opinions about a learning outcomes approach. Many spoke about the positive elements surrounding integrated and holistic learning but others questioned the importance of the approach. Opponents viewed it as being too simplistic, too limiting and too time consuming to implement given its value. The approach was also criticized for the lack of evidence to support its implementation. In this section I continue to focus on the *context of practice* as I analyze the participants' views about a learning outcome approach and discuss the challenges associated with its implementation.

Multiple Realities

Participants expressed multiple perspectives about the implementation of a learning outcomes approach. At one end of the spectrum were those who perceived it as an integral aspect of a learning-centered approach; at the other end were those who perceived it as a government ploy to make education the "handmaiden of capitalism."

Key Element in Educational Reform

The proponents of a learning outcomes approach saw it as a mind-set, a philosophical shift that emphasized learning. Their discussions resonated with the views of Barr and Tagg (1995) who called for what they termed a paradigm shift from teaching to learning. It was seen to challenge the foundations of our educational institutions that have traditionally been focused on educators. They saw a learning outcomes approach as a shift in power and language; learning became a public, explicit and shared experience. This transparency was expected to assist learners to better understand what was expected of them, thus promoting access and success as discussed by Ecclestone (1994) and McDaniel et al. (2000).

Proponents saw learning outcomes as bringing coherence and structure to education, a theme that is supported in the literature (Jennings, 1997; Mentkowski, 1998; Canning, 1998; Kuh, 2002). A key element of coherence in education was the connection of learning with assessment as discussed by Loacker and Mentkowski (1994). These attributes of a learning outcomes approach were viewed as leading to more relevant learning that would help to bridge the gap between general and vocational education as discussed by Collins (1993) and Bauslaugh (1997b). Proponents agreed with the C2T2 position that learning outcomes were central to educational reform.

Unfulfilled Concept

Both proponents and opponents viewed learning outcomes as being similar to the approach they currently used. There appeared to be little difference in what was being asked for with the learning outcomes approach when compared to other approaches. "We have always sliced our bread" (C-academic). It was regarded as a new "buzzword" or the "flavour of the month." For some it appeared to entail subtle shifts in thinking; for many it appeared to be an issue of language, a change in semantics.

The confusion arising from the use of language is certainly not a new phenomenon in education, particularly in the curriculum area with its multiple terms to denote statements of purpose. The introduction of yet another term emphasized and added to the existing confusion. One participant compared the conversations about learning outcomes to theological discussions. As is the case with many religions, we may believe in the same thing, but we all appear to have different versions of it. The reference to "the theology of it" presents an interesting analogy to understanding the diverse conversations about learning outcomes. While educators have different sets of beliefs about the expression of curriculum, many felt that these beliefs were grounded in what learners should be able to know, to do and to be as expressed by Delors (1996) when discussing the pillars of education.

Some found the ambiguity of the concept empowering, an opportunity to shape it. Others found it frustrating and senseless, an additional burden in their already heavy workload. The lack of consensus about its definition and the concurrent call for action created skepticism on the part of many educators and administrators. However, Yanow (1996) contends that ambiguity is helpful to support policy implementation.

> To see ambiguous policy language as a problem to be solved in order to improve implementation chances is to ignore the reality of purposive ambiguity: it temporarily resolves conflicts and accommodates differences,

allowing contending parties to legislate and move on to implementation actions. (p. 228)

The C2T2 response to requests for clarity suggested that ambiguity was used to provide flexibility and opportunities for adaptation, particularly for those in the academic area. Duke (1992), however, contends that issues of definition and clarity are often used as a resistance strategy. Both perspectives may have been at play in the BC context. However, Yanow's perspective appears to have been dominant, given that both proponents and opponents of the learning outcomes approach expressed the need for more clarity regarding the concept if it was to be used in any meaningful way.

The learning outcomes approach appeared to have more meaning in applied programs. Even respondents from the applied areas indicated that the approach was difficult to implement in university transfer areas. People in the academic area found it challenging to articulate and demonstrate their outcomes in a concrete manner. Narrow outcomes were restrictive and could stultify knowledge but when broadened, they tended to sound so generic that they lost their meaning and value. Bruneau and Savage (2002) made a similar observation about performance indicators; more precise ones are restrictive, but the less precise they are, the more they look like "academic hot air" (p. 97). This explains the challenges reported by respondents from both the academic and the applied areas regarding the implementation of learning outcomes approach at the course level.

The learning outcomes approach as implemented in the BC context was an "unfulfilled concept" one that was not "sufficiently coherent in the abstract to be fully 'realized' in practice" (Stalker, 1996, p. 12). The value of the approach resonated at the theoretical level, but often disappeared in the practice context particularly at the course level. Even the LOCs found it difficult to articulate the concept. This reflected the challenges of shifting the concept from theory to practice.

Misguided Approach

While some found the term ambiguous and nebulous, others had great concerns about its implementation; they viewed the concept as harmful. Shaping diverse and complex curricula into one model would normalize the educational experience to the lowest common denominator, and produce a mechanistic view of learning that oversimplified the complex process learning involves. The BC discussion mirrored those in other jurisdictions.

There were concerns about "measurable outcomes" particularly short-term outcomes. This echoed the argument by Ecclestone (1994) that a preoccupation with precise and measurable outcomes leads to prescriptive and unwieldy models. Participants voiced similar concerns to those described by Strathern (2000) who argues that focusing on immediate assimilation of information may obfuscate the long-term effects of learning experiences. By emphasizing one type of reality, other perspectives are eclipsed.

Participants from the academic area were particularly concerned that trivial outcomes would be measured. Yorke (2000) used a coconut analogy to describe the risks associated with performance indicators but his analogy reflected the views of study participants. He argued that attention would be directed to the hard outer shell, the easier data to measure, at the expense of the more difficult to measure soft abilities. The issue of measurement was central to the divergent views expressed by respondents from the academic and applied areas. The word "outcome" was attached to learning to place emphasis not so much on the intentions of education, but on the results of the learning experiences (Allan, 1996). This was not a trivial distinction, and it was also a challenging one.

One construction that was adamantly challenged by study participants was the idea of "education for use." Proponents of a learning outcomes approach viewed this idea as an integral aspect of the approach that resulted in more relevant and coherent learning. They often talked about it in the context of use for employment, but also citizenship and life. Others, however, were concerned that the interpretation of education for use was directed solely to employability skills. A shift to a learning outcomes approach represented an increased trend towards the vocationalization of education, and this was a trend that did not agree with their perspectives about the aims of postsecondary education. This concern was heightened by the language in *Charting a New Course*, which supported both citizenship and employment aims, but tended to be more heavily slanted towards employment.

This conversation about a shift in the aims of postsecondary education is evident in international and national literature. Ecclestone (1994) argues that words, which have traditionally been associated with liberal education such as personal development and life long-learning, are now being framed in corporate contexts. She suggests that discussions about the aims of higher education have been subsumed by economic aims to the point that discussions about democratic values embedded in broader social and political contexts are criticized for being elitist, exclusive and irrelevant thus silencing debates about their importance. Academic competence is being displaced by the notion of technical competence

(Ecclestone, 1994; Dunne et al., 1997). Rather than bridging the gap, the new vocational focus is narrowing the focus of higher education (Soucek, 1993).

Skolnik (2000) addresses the tension between what he calls materialism and humanism, with materialism being related to the employability focus. He contends that the balance between humanism and materialism has shifted over time and this is an issue that we need to address. He argues that economic objectives are presently being given enough attention; we do not need to augment them by basing funding on their achievement. Many of the study participants agreed with this view. The concurrent development of performance indicators to measure the outcomes of learning heightened educators' suspicions about the shift towards the economic focus.

The Ministry report (BC MoAETT, 2000a) acknowledged the difficulties of "measuring" citizenship. "While it is accepted that postsecondary education in BC has a role in imparting an enhanced social perspective to those who participate, at this time there is no method developed that can measure its magnitude or quality" (p. 17). While it may be comforting for some that the complexity of measuring the outcomes of learning are acknowledged, this shift away from citizenship is also problematic. One could argue that it has shifted the whole focus of the accountability equation to employment, a shift of considerable concern to faculty members in academic areas.

Many of the conversations about the articulation of educational intentions revolved around shifting from the specific to the general. Over time educators have moved back and forth on the continuum between very general and very specific approaches. The movement has also differed in various disciplines and program areas; contextual variables often influenced the direction and the size of the shift. The assessment movement tended to shift the direction towards the specific. With the introduction of such ideas as 'standards,' 'criteria' and 'conditions,' outcomes tended to be expressed quantitatively. The competency-based movement directed increased attention to the measurable aspects of educational outcomes. Some study participants suggested that a learning outcomes approach represents a shift towards the "soft" abilities, which would suggest a qualitative approach to measurement. Others saw it as a movement towards the quantitative end of the scale, a movement towards specific 'employability skills.'

Riseborough (1993) discusses the interaction of educators with policy. "Lived experience of policy is not something that merely happens to teachers and learners but rather a happening accomplished by them, albeit in relationship to powerful others" (p. 156). His

comment highlights the influence educators have on policies. While Riseborough was referring to primary and secondary teachers, his comments are relevant to educators in the BC college and university college sector. The interaction of participants with the policy during the implementation phase accounts for the diversity of views about a learning outcomes approach. Despite this diversity of views, there were also some areas of common agreement as will be discussed in the following section.

Change in Faculty Role

Respondents from all program areas described the impact of this initiative on faculty members. Their discussion had several facets including a change in the conception of teaching, increased collaboration with colleagues and an affront to professional expertise and autonomy. Some of these issues were perceived as positive forces while others were seen as barriers to the implementation of a learning outcomes approach.

From a positive perspective, McDaniel et al. (2000) contend that an abilities-based approach encourages consensus building around collective outcomes. Faculty members relate their courses more directly to collective abilities articulated by their departments, organizations and / or national policy frameworks. Candy (2000) suggests that abilities are a way of promoting vertical integration of the curriculum and helping educators manage "information overdose" that is a reflection of the exponential increase in knowledge. Mentkowski (1983) presents a similar perspective; she argues that an abilities-based approach provides faculty with a basis for a vision that can bring about organizational cohesion and change. Many participants in my study agreed with these perspectives and were hopeful about organizational change and transformation based on the learning outcomes initiative. Others perceived this change as an affront to their autonomy and as a measure by the government to exert control over postsecondary curricula.

Participants perceived that learning outcomes changed their role as educators. It decreased the emphasis on the role of knowledge expert and focused on educators as facilitators of abilities. Concerns were expressed that a learning outcomes approach would undermine the central position of knowledge that underpins performance. Some also felt ill-prepared for this new role and questioned their ability to facilitate abilities such as teamwork and written communication.

The focus on employability skills throughout the curriculum had further implications for the role of faculty members. Many saw this as a not so subtle shift in the aims of

education towards the vocationalization of education. For those in the academic area the close association of the learning outcomes policy with employment discourse represented a fundamental shift in the aims of education with which they disagreed.

In the academic area learning outcomes were viewed as an affront to the autonomy of educators. However, respondents from the applied area appeared to be more comfortable that their autonomy could be supported. They viewed learning outcomes as a pragmatic approach to clarify the intentions of courses and programs. Once these were clarified faculty members could create individual approaches to facilitate learning. As is evident from these perspectives, the change in the role of faculty members was seen as a substantive change by many of the participants.

The learning outcomes policy was introduced with a sense of urgency and innovation that offended many faculty members and created a barrier to communication. They expressed surprise that this was deemed to be a novel approach and some were insulted by the suggestion that they were not concerned about the articulation of the outcomes of their courses or programs. They felt devalued for their knowledge and expertise. These views pervaded all program areas, but were expressed more often and more vociferously in the academic area. While Kotter (1998) argues that a sense of urgency is critical to the success of change, it created a barrier in the case of this particular policy.

Feasibility of Learning Outcomes Approach

The feasibility of implementing the approach was questioned given the economic climate in British Columbia and the many competing priorities expressed through government directions. It was difficult to reflect on curriculum and assessment revisions when such essentials as library hours and services were being reduced in response to budget cuts.

Participants talked about the ever-increasing workload within colleges and university colleges. Faculty members were expected to be educators as well as entrepreneurs and fund raisers. In the academic area, class sizes were often large to support efficiency models, and faculty members questioned the feasibility of introducing experiential learning and authentic assessments into this structure.

Cameron (1988) suggests that once public policy has been established, then policy makers need to determine which strategy to employ, incentives or regulation, to motivate movement in the direction of the policy. In this particular case a carrot was used to promote the involvement of educational organizations through partial funding for the LOCs. However,

this carrot was removed early in the implementation phase and many perceived the existence of a stick in the background through the possibility that performance funding would be introduced and linked to learning outcomes.

The sheer number of initiatives and strategies suggested in *Charting a New Course* was problematic from an implementation perspective. This became an increasing issue of concern with continued downsizing and fiscal restraint to the extent that some participants questioned the leadership provided to postsecondary education by the Ministry. Cameron (1988) contends that incentives work more effectively than regulations in cases were adaptability is a key objective. However, he argues that the articulation of public policy needs to be clear. Neither the clarity nor the incentives were present in the learning outcomes policy.

Collins and Porras (1998) suggest that articulating a vision should include the ideas of "core purpose" and "core values," but also needs to contain an "envisioned future," something that looks into the future. They would argue that the architects of *Charting a New Course* need to revisit the plan and extract or extrapolate issues that are core values; values that people in the system could not live without. The document contains an overwhelming number of values, twelve in total (See Table 4 in Chapter Three). Some of these values were threaded throughout the other components of the document; others were less obvious or missing in the other sections. The language was shaped and changed in different sections so that many terms started to meld and blend. The vision expressed in *Charting a New Course* was too fuzzy, too ambiguous; it was an "excuse for just about anything, and a mantra for nothing" (UC-admin). Yanow (1996) argues that ambiguous language provides opportunities for implementers; Ferman (1990) agrees but also contends that it can create dilemmas for implementers.

The issue of resources dominated many of the conversations about the implementation phase; one interviewee spoke about "drive-by-funding." As Grubb (1999) notes:

> increases in funding can be spent without substantially improving the quality of teaching, and decreases in funding may take forms that don't substantially affect teaching. But improvement does generally require additional resources, carefully spent, and reduced funding makes the task of improving teaching ever more difficult. (p. 342)

While increased resources do not necessarily lead to the implementation of a policy, some resources are necessary to support policy outcomes. Ferman (1990) contends that the

dispersion of resources becomes a real barrier to policy implementation. The funding for this policy was initially minimal at the organizational level; 25% release time for one person does not stretch far. Then the provincial component was cut six months into the implementation phase.

The study participants struggled with allocation of resources to competing priorities and expressed frustration at being placed in what many perceived as an untenable position. Both proponents and opponents questioned the feasibility of the policy given the economic context of BC. It was difficult to accept the central position of learning outcomes in educational reform when so few resources were being allocated to its implementation.

Change in Governance Structure

Study participants were concerned about the implications of the learning outcomes policy for the governance of postsecondary education. The learning outcomes policy intersected with the focus on increased accountability within postsecondary education. Many respondents perceived a potential for increased government control in the relationship of learning outcomes to the provincial accountability framework.

Outcomes of learning were generally viewed as encompassing a wide range of outcomes (BC MoEST, 1996), while learning outcomes tended to be defined in terms of abilities. But ultimately there appeared to be a convergence of the idea of performance indicators (outcomes of learning) and learning outcomes. This convergence may have been accidental or planned; many respondents felt it was planned, but others questioned this and regretted the perceived strong relationship between the two. It appears that CCPD personnel promoted the entrenchment of the learning outcomes approach as a strategy to support learning. However, its close relationship with the accountability movement caused concern among policy implementers.

While evaluation had always been part of higher education, the emergence of the evaluative state not only entailed a shift to outcomes, it also shifted the focus of evaluation from systems' maintenance to an evaluation for strategic change (Neave, 1988). *Charting a New Course* is a reflection of this trend; it was the first strategic plan implemented for postsecondary education in British Columbia, but it was a plan for only one part of the system. Jones et al. (1998) question why "the center for gravity for the co-ordination of higher education within Canadian provinces changed very little" (p. 26) at a time when many national governments were moving towards a system's approach to higher education. They

suggest two influences on this: the deference of governments to university autonomy, and the prestige differential between the university and college sectors. These influences may account for the fact that the BC strategic plan focused on the college, institute and agency sector, a factor that limited its potential value to support change in postsecondary education.

Study participants questioned the rhetoric about decentralizing Ministry control through the empowering aspects of the accountability movement. They saw it as a mechanism for increased control. Karlsen (2000) raises the distinction between decentralization as delegation versus devolution, where devolution implies a shift in power and authority. In Karlsen's definition of delegation the central authority still defines the priorities; only the tasks and responsibilities are shifted to the periphery. Ball (1994) raises a similar issue. He contends that the discourse on self-management is legitimized through a discourse on autonomy. However, this autonomy may be the managers' autonomy and may be a constraint on faculty members.

The establishment of the Education Councils in 1994 is an example of Karlsen's (2000) concept of decentralization as delegation. While it appears that power in the curriculum area shifted to Education Councils, the shift is questionable given the concurrent development of the strategic plan. College administrators and educators were given more responsibilities regarding programming, but the government increased its control through numerous and specific directions articulated through the strategic plan.

Gueissaz and Häyrinen-Alestalo (1999), and Kells (1992) argue that decentralization has in most cases led to an increased concentration of power in government or organizational administrators. Skolnik (1995) also contends that deregulation does not necessarily translate into increased power and autonomy; it just reflects a changing form of regulation, one based on criteria and indicators. Study participants viewed the learning outcomes policy as a new reporting mechanism rather than a learning-centered approach. It was reflection of what Jackson (1993) and Foley (1999) describe as the audit culture. Policy makers expounded on the liberating effects of an evaluative approach, but many study participants only perceived increased accountability and reporting mechanisms.

However, there were also differences among the interviewees' perceptions regarding accountability. Some were very comfortable with the idea of being more accountable to external groups; others were concerned about this trend. As Poulson (1996) suggests, accountability may be seen as a moral obligation related to self-regulation, or it may be perceived as a method of control. Individuals who espoused a collegial or developmental

culture (Bergquist, 1992) were probably more inclined to view this policy as controlling, while those from a managerial culture were more comfortable with the language and the approach. The different cultures of the sub-groups within colleges and university colleges may partially explain the diversity of views.

Cutt and Dobell (1988) suggest that governments have two approaches to the control of postsecondary education. They can control decision-making by educational organizations or they can increase mechanisms for accountability. These authors suggest that it would be prudent for educators to focus on the accountability side to decrease the application of rigorous controls over decision-making. Many study participants in the applied areas echoed this perspective. They felt that greater accountability could support continued autonomy and perhaps even increased funding.

Ball (1994) contends that policies typically change power relationships. This is evident in several aspects of the learning outcomes initiative and helps to explain the polarity of the views about the learning outcomes policy. The policy changed the role of educators from one of disciplinary expert to one of facilitating abilities that were often couched in employment terms. The link with the accountability movement was a further affront. It was seen as an auditing measure to increase government control over curriculum in postsecondary education.

The policy collided with the culture of subgroups within the colleges and university colleges. It minimized professional expertise and infringed on the autonomy of educators who saw themselves as already begin accountable to learners. The idea of abilities in itself was alien to the traditional knowledge-based culture of the academic area. Many of the study participants did not accept the learning outcomes policy as a symbol (Gueissaz & Häyrinen-Alestalo, 1999) of unacceptable educational practice or verifying learner concerns about the relevance and quality of postsecondary education. If they viewed it as a positive direction, they perceived it mainly as an evolutionary refinement. Opponents viewed it as a misguided policy that did not reflect the complexity and diversity of learning in postsecondary education.

Outcomes of a Learning Outcomes Approach

Policies can be understood in multiple ways (Mills & Hyle, 2001). People must interpret the policy in order to respond and often this making sense process occurs in a social

context (Weick, 1995). They must compare their interpretations to those made by others to determine if there is a foundation for mutual understanding and action (Yanow, 1996). Ball (1990) notes that policies do not usually tell people what to do; they create circumstances that set a range of options related to particular goals or outcomes. The responses are often diverse. They may result in an "interpretation of texts [that] is proactive, critical and self-assured, ... in others, reactive passive and unquestioning" (Bowe et al., 1992, p. 119-120).

Palumbo and Calista (1990) view reinterpretation as an important part of the policy process that allows for a balance of power. Policy-making is viewed as symbolic action demonstrating values, and reinterpretation by the implementers allows for shaping the policy to meet contextual needs (Yanow, 1996).

In this section I discuss the responses to the learning outcomes policy as educators focused on its implementation or non-implementation in the context of practice. The responses ranged from integration, compliance to resistance. Through an analysis of these responses I focus on the outcomes of the policy as supported by the interview, survey and report data.

Integration of the Learning Outcomes Approach

Learning outcomes were integrated in BC colleges and university colleges despite the various implementation challenges. However, study participants questioned the extent and the nature of the changes made in response to the policy.

Riseborough (1993) draws attention to the importance of what he labels "secondary adjustments," the shaping of policy in the practice context. He notes that educators may decide to contain the policy so that change is not radical. This appears to have been a strategy in the learning outcomes initiative. The policy appears to have been contained by introducing cosmetic changes and placing pressure on C2T2 to change direction as suggested by the communication of C2T2 personnel quoted in Chapter Five (C2T2 personnel, April 30, 2001).

Approximately one-third of survey participants had made what they considered moderate or major changes in response to the learning outcomes initiative and these changes were often described as valuable. However, the changes were not as prevalent in the academic area and the changes were not as valued by the respondents in the academic area. Integration of learning outcomes was more widespread in the foundation and applied areas.

The LOC reports and site documents identified three organizations that had made what appeared to be substantive movement towards the integration of employability skills or

what many termed essential abilities. In one particular case, all courses submitted for approval to Education Council must identify essential abilities, and also describe the relationship between the course elements and the essential abilities. However, in all three cases, actions had been taken towards this end prior to the provincial strategic plan and the initiation of the Learning Outcomes Network. Weick (2002) would contend that these previous actions would have increased the commitment within these organizations to take further action. While this data supports the fact learning outcomes are being defined in terms of essential abilities, it does not support the claim that the learning outcomes policy brought about this change.

The learning outcomes approach appears to have been integrated in many courses and programs, particularly in the applied and foundation areas. In the applied degree area learning outcomes helped give shape to new degree programs facilitating the vertical integration of the curriculum as suggested by Candy (2000). However, they were also used for instrumental purposes to support the acceptance of new degrees. In the vocational and career technical area, learning outcomes helped educators manage the large volumes of information that are common to their programs. They provided opportunities to reduce the amount of information within courses and programs after years of looking at curriculum reform through the addition of more information. As well they supported increased vertical integration, a feature that was often missing in the competency approach.

There appears to have been some uptake of the learning outcomes approach, particularly in the applied areas. However, it is difficult to determine if this is a substantive change or merely a cosmetic change for instrumental purposes. A few organizations have focused on essential abilities as cross-curricular themes. The learning outcomes policy may have supported ongoing development in this direction, but it does not appear to have initiated this trend.

Creative Non-implementation

Ball (1994) argues that we often fail to study the adjustments that occur as educators adapt policies to their context.

> There is a privileging of the policy maker's reality. The crude and over-used term 'resistance' is a poor substitute here, which allows for both rampant over-claims and dismissive under-claims to be made about the way policy problems are solved in context. (p. 20)

Ball substitutes the idea of "creative non-implementation" to provide a less biased perspective on the complex interaction between policy intentions, texts, interpretations and reactions. He selected the adjective "creative" to emphasize that the "translation of the crude, abstract simplicities of policy texts into interactive and sustainable practices of some sort involves productive thought, invention and adaptation" (p. 19). This highlights the reality that a response must be constructed; it does not involve mere "robotic reactivity." In previous discussions I used the term "resistance" as it reflected the words used by study participants; I will now employ the term "creative non-implementation" to provide opportunities for a broader discussion.

While the initial text may be static, its content is continually shaped and redefined through dialogue with interest groups in the system. This dialogue may lead to implementation or non-implementation, both of which require thought and energy. Non-implementation was expressed in several ways. Ball (1994) contends that it may be possible to hide from policy, but that this is rarely an option. In the case of the learning outcomes initiative some participants did have the opportunity to hide and they did avail themselves of this option. In cases where the Education Councils made the integration of the approach mandatory in course outlines, some participants maneuvered around this reality by making only cosmetic changes in language.

Some faculty members contested the learning outcomes approach. They challenged policy makers to provide evidence that a learning outcomes approach was better than the current approaches used in postsecondary education. Gueissaz and Häyrinen-Alestalo (1999) contend that absence of a clear link between the process and the expected results has a double effect on individuals; they are not motivated to become involved and they mistrust the process. The authors were describing a study on evaluation, but their discussion applies equally to the learning outcomes policy. The lack of evidence was often given as a reason for non-implementation of the policy.

During the implementation phase the Education Councils became policy subsystems (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995); they provided forums where actors negotiated and bargained for their particular interests. Supporters of the policy made motions to require learning outcomes in course outlines, while opponents of the policy negotiated for optional language. The analysis of LOC reports indicated that only 5 of the 14 organizations identified that changes had been initiated in the course outline template, but in several cases the language was optional as opposed to directive.

Respondents talked about waiting for the initiative to pass, they talked about making cosmetic changes to their courses, and they talked about voicing their concerns in faculty, Education Council and articulation meetings. Creative non-implementation was the approach more frequently used by faculty members from the academic area.

Discussions About Educational Practice

People within the colleges and university colleges discussed the learning outcomes policy; they contested it, challenged it, or supported it, but they became involved to a certain degree. That may have been the most substantial effect of the policy. It generated discussions about best practices.

The LOC reports identify that workshops were conducted by external or internal facilitators in 13 of the 14 organizations. As well, 10 of the organizations had C2T2 personnel and other consultants involved in faculty discussions about learning outcomes. These activities suggest that discussions about learning outcomes were initiated through this policy.

Ball (1994) contends that there are often key mediators of policy in any setting. The LOCs were such people and C2T2 relied upon them to disseminate information throughout their organizations. Many did so, but these activities were often conducted "off the side of their desks" given the limited resources provided for the initiative.

Study participants talked about the fact that organizational structure and culture did not provide opportunities for the kind of discussions curriculum decisions deserved. This perspective is supported by Grubb (1999) who contends that college educators are often left in isolation to fend for themselves. He noted the lack of institutional support for teaching within American community colleges and argued that the quality of teaching in colleges depended on individual educators.

The dialogue about the outcomes of learning in our BC context is also evident in other parts of the world. Allan (1996) suggests that "the design of learning experiences in higher education is becoming increasingly outcome-led but there is confusion regarding what constitutes these outcomes, disquiet concerning their ostensible association with behaviourism, and apprehension concerning their implementation" (p. 93). The discussions in BC echoed these perspectives.

Discussions about curriculum have become a central issue in educational reform. "Traditional teaching methods, as well as a traditional curriculum and the role of knowledge

within this, are being challenged" (Dunne et al., 1997, p. 512). Bridges (2002) contends that curriculum has become the focus for the clash of epistemologies, values and priorities in higher education. Educators are faced with practical as well as philosophical questions when reflecting on the knowledge that should be represented and how it should be constructed. This raises questions about how knowledge should be organized from an institutional perspective as well as a teaching and learning perspective. Bridges identifies five competing pressures on curricula in higher education:

- the deconstruction of the subject, as reflected in, for example, the modularization of the curriculum;
- the crosscurricular 'key' skills movement;
- the learning through experience movement and the shift of the seat of learning outside the academy;
- the anarchic potential of web-based learning; and
- the reaffirmation of the subject as the academic and organisational identity. (p. 42)

These pressures were all evident in the strategies section of *Charting a New Course* and the interviews data.

While reflection on practice is commonly viewed as positive, the way the discussions were constructed around learning outcomes had a negative effect on the relationships between applied and academic faculty members. It tended to pit them against each other and accentuated the differences in their programming areas. To a certain extent it may have supported the continuation of a dichotomous approach to practical learning and liberal learning.

Dow (1990) argues for a non-dualistic approach for framing discussions. She applied the term "Babylonian approach" to a mode of thought that "involves approaching any issue from a variety of starting-points, using a range of partial analyses in order to build up a picture" (p. 146). Respondents in this study applied this approach to discussions about a learning outcomes approach. But ultimately the discussions focused on one central theme. "What should students know and be able to do?" (www.C2T2.ca). The learning outcomes approach in BC was ultimately framed through this question.

Gueissaz and Häyrinen-Alestalo (1999) also support the fundamental need for negotiation, open discussion and confrontation among actors in the policy process. Despite the limitation stated above, the discussions generated about best practices may have been the greatest impact of the learning outcomes policy. It forced faculty members to challenge and defend their educational practices.

Ball (1994) lists a number of factors that influence the integration of policy texts into practice including: commitment, understanding, capability, resources, practical limitations, cooperation and inter-textual compatibility. The participants in my study referred to each of these influences as affecting their implementation or creative non-implementation of the learning outcomes policy.

The range of interpretations and the lack of clear conceptualization of the term created challenges during its implementation phase. Ultimately it was viewed as an unfulfilled concept that raised as many questions as it attempted to answer. Dunne et al. (1997) summarize the dilemma of educators during a discussion of the core skills movement in England.

> Although it may well be important to emphasize what is required of graduates in wider terms than traditional disciplinary knowledge and core skills, such lists confirm the continuing confusion. A major problem is that changing the vocabulary does not change the conceptual and practical difficulties. (p. 520)

The complexity of facilitating learning and assessing that learning still remain, and to suggest that there was a simple and easy approach to reducing this complexity offended many educators. The absence of evidence and a clear conceptual analysis focused people's attention to the possible link between learning outcomes, performance indicators and performance funding.

The overall effect of this policy on student learning was minimal. Many study participants questioned if any "real" change had happened in classrooms. While there may have been changes in specific courses and programs, there does not appear to be a provincial movement or impact related to a learning outcomes approach. If anything, action in this area has decreased since my data collection phase. Discussions on the Learning Outcome Network have become infrequent and discussions about learning outcomes only arise in the context of other initiatives such as the delivery of on-line courses and programs. Web-based learning is the dominant policy direction that has overtaken the learning outcomes policy as the critical element in the reform of postsecondary education. The lasting evidence of the learning outcomes policy appears to be found in the increased focus on discussions of best practice. The policy generated discussions that may support incremental change in learning environments and assessment strategies.

Relationship of Learning Outcomes to the Strategic Plan

In the previous sections I focused on the *context of influence, context of policy text production* and *the context of practice*. Ball (1994) argues that the model by Bowe et al. (1992) require two additional contexts. The first context arises from the need to assess what Ball labels "first order (practice) effects" and "second order effects"; these concepts reflect a focus on short-term and long-term effects within the context of public policy goals. Ball labels the second order effects as the *context of outcomes*. The *context of outcomes* then leads to a discussion of the *context of political strategy*, the search for political and social activities to more effectively address inequalities. In this section I analyze the two contexts as presented by Ball in relationship to the learning outcomes policy.

Gueissaz and Häyrinen-Alestalo (1999) assert that aims can be mingled in contradictory ways. This is how study participants viewed the goals from the strategic plan. Participants identified a relationship between the learning outcomes policy and the goal of relevance and access, but their strongest association was made to the accountability focus. Their perspectives on the goals provide a context through which to explore the *context of outcomes*. In the next sections I analyze the possible long-term effects of a learning outcomes approach as expressed through prior learning assessment and recognition, articulation and transfer arrangements and the accountability goal. This will be followed a discussion of its relationship to strategies that promote inclusion and equity.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLARC)

Mills and Hyle (2001) found that implementers generated alternate constructions of the policy and this was evident in my study. Many interview participants viewed the learning outcomes policy as a vehicle for PLARC. Certainly the link between learning outcomes and PLAR was voiced several times, and PLARC was also linked to the concept of access. Some participants argued that PLAR also supported affordability of education because it reduced the number of courses learners were required to repeat. However, this was a contentious claim as the process of PLAR is often very time consuming and costly to learners. The analysis of the survey data suggested that PLARC was not an important influence in decisions to integrate a learning outcomes approach. Interviewees spoke about the structural and process issues that were overpowering the vision of PLARC. Recognizing prior learning often resulted in students losing their financial aid grants or their eligibility for scholarships and awards. The influence of PLARC may wane with the increased emphasis on efficiency

frameworks. It may be pedagogically sound, but it is costly from an efficiency framework and may, therefore, not be an important factor in moving learning outcomes forward.

Articulation and Transfer

One of the controversial areas surrounding the learning outcomes initiative in the academic area was its relationship to articulation and transfer arrangements. Some respondents viewed it as an enabling factor, while others viewed is as a hindrance and barrier. Interviewees highlighted the diversity of approaches currently being used in such agreements and questioned whether a learning outcomes framework would in reality be a barrier to university acceptance of agreements. It is therefore difficult to imagine that this factor will have a substantive influence on the long-term integration of a learning outcomes approach.

Accountability

The policy texts about key performance indicators in *Charting a New Course* were very similar to the policy texts developed in the United Kingdom. Through this text production the notion of generic skills was linked with measurement and reporting to the provincial Treasury Board. This textual construction was the basis for the concern expressed by many study participants. However, the proponents of the learning outcomes approach saw it as a positive vehicle for demonstrating increased accountability through the articulation of learners' abilities.

With the strategic plan came discussions about the development of provincial performance indicators based on learner abilities (BC MoAETT, 2001b). The measurement of abilities is currently included in these indicators under the heading of improving the quality of education. The other indicator in this heading relates to the "usefulness of education in performing job" (BC MoAE, 2002b, p. 9). Many of the indicators focus on credentials awarded, number of seats (especially those provided through on-line access), retention, completion, costs, and graduate ratings.

The outcomes statements identify the measurement of critical thinking, communication and problem solving abilities. The methods section identifies that these will be measured by gaining college graduates' perspectives on the degree to which their program prepared them for "written communication," "oral communication" and "analysis / problem solving" (BC MoAE, 2002b, p. 9). These data have been collected through the outcomes surveys that have been implemented in the BC colleges and university colleges for several

years. As such, the measurement of outcomes appears to be a continuation of previous activities rather than the creation of a new approach to the measurement of abilities. This may be a reflection of the many challenges associated with the implementation of performance indicators as described in Chapter Two.

It is acknowledged that performance indicators may have generally increased the reporting mechanism to the Ministry. However, the learning outcomes initiative does not appear to have influenced performance indicators in any substantial manner, and does not appear to have had any effect on increasing accountability within postsecondary education. The same data are being collected about learners' abilities as were collected prior to the learning outcomes policy.

An analysis focused on the *context of outcomes* suggests that the learning outcomes policy will probably have few long-term effects. The outcomes of a learning outcomes approach in BC colleges and university colleges appear to be limited. However, the words "learning outcomes" are now ubiquitous in provincial texts and organizational course outlines. A language change has occurred; the term is applied as a generic term to refer to statements that have been traditionally labeled goals, instructional objectives, behavioural objectives and competencies. This conclusion then leads to a discussion of the *context of political strategy*, the search for political and social activities to more effectively address inequalities. This is explored through an analysis of the link of a learning outcomes approach with credentialism and its role in creating a vision for educational reform.

Certified Society

In the post World War II era access to education in democratic states came to be seen as a human right. "Access to post-secondary education is correctly perceived as the principal gateway to life chances" (Schuetze & Day, 2001, p. 3). However, there are a number of forces at play in this equation. In North America employers often use college and university credentials as a screening process for hiring (Rubenson, 1987; Casse & Manno, 1998).

Carnevale and Desrochers (2000) argue for the value of credentialing systems and discuss the increased role of community colleges in this area. A focus on learning outcomes is described as a way of facilitating this process. Others, however, are concerned about this trend. Jarvis (2000) identifies the risk with a learning outcomes approach that only learning that "is recognized by some form of award becomes defined as 'real' learning, while all the other human learning that helps make people what they are will be neglected and regarded as

unreal – and even unnecessary – and lifelong learning will become equated with worklife learning" (p. 63). Ainley (1998) raises a similar issue. He suggests that policy directions are focused on credentialism, not on learning. We are creating a certified society, not a learning society.

The focus on abilities could result in the creation of a marginalized "underclass" through the lack of worthwhile credentials (Ainley, 1998). Given these two potential directions, it is no wonder that the notion of learning outcomes evokes such passion in educators. The learning outcomes approach is viewed as having the potential to empower learners, but perhaps also to marginalize them.

Vision for Educational Reform

The central vision in *Charting a New Course* was "learner-focused." This was then shaped into the idea of "outcomes based education." Despite the central position of these themes in documents, study participants perceived the central values of the reform agenda to be focused more on efficiencies and accountability. Gillroy (1992) argues that public policy needs to be grounded in values that are deeper than efficiencies. "Public policy must address the ethical questions of obligation, equality, cooperation and distribution as prior to considerations of efficiency" (p. 100). The vision in the strategic plan and the C2T2 literature did not appear to inspire or motivate many of the study participants.

Collins and Porras (1998) emphasize the importance of an "envisioned future" as being an integral aspect of a vision statement. They recognize that their term is paradoxical in that "it conveys concreteness – something visible, vivid and real. On the other hand, it involves a time yet unrealized – with its dreams, hopes and aspirations" (p. 40). They suggest that goals are common place in many organizations, but what people need is a challenge that energizes and excites people. A useful vision statement should be clear, compelling, a catalyst for change; these do not appear to be the characteristics associated with the vision in *Charting a New Course* or the C2T2 literature about a learning outcomes approach. The definition of learning outcomes was too abstract to provide a vision for the reform of postsecondary education.

In the last several years the term "learner success" has been used in various discussions in British Columbia. For example, the 1999 report about furthering directions from *Charting a New Course* was entitled *Learner Support and Success* (James, 1999). The phrase "learner success" might provide a more simple vision statement that could encompass

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many of the goals / values expressed in *Charting a New Course*. James presents a schematic that has learner success as its central theme surrounded by notions of access, learning assessment and outcomes, learning options, and learning support. While this is a vision for support services, it could provide an example from which a larger sector vision could evolve. This new language of learner success is a reflection of the shaping that has occurred in practice. Perhaps the vision is starting to emerge from people within the system working with the general directions from the strategic plan.

Based on this analysis it seems unlikely that learning outcomes will have a long-term impact on education in BC colleges and community colleges. It has stimulated discussions about educational practice and those discussions may lead to positive practice changes. In some sense the policy will live on through the question, "What do you want learners to know and be able to do?" That may be the ultimate legacy of the learning outcomes policy.

Summary

The concept of learning outcomes as introduced into the BC colleges and university colleges, is an example of an unfulfilled concept. The initial thrust for a learning outcomes approach was presented to educators as a *readerly friendly* text (Barthes, 1970; Hawkes, 1977). C2T2 resisted providing a definition and presented it as a philosophical approach to learning. This left ample space for interpretation but also room for major skepticism. The definitions which emerged were too similar to other concepts associated with the articulation of curriculum; its substantive difference was unclear. Its definition was too abstract to provide a vision for the reform of postsecondary education. This situation caused implementers to question the nature of the policy. Many viewed is as a *writerly* text aimed to increase government control over curricula in postsecondary education. It was seen as being linked to the specter of performance funding.

The challenges of its definition were compounded by issues of resources and organizational culture. The implementation of the policy was not supported by either clarity of the process or incentives. Educators in the foundation and applied areas were more supportive of the initiative and appeared to value it, particularly from a program perspective. Many found it similar to the current approach they were using and readily integrated the language of outcomes into their contexts. Educators in the academic areas were more skeptical of the approach and questioned the evidence to support its selection over other

approaches. The views of the policy ranged from strong support, general ambivalence to overt resistance.

The policy encountered a number of competing priorities and lost the financial support of the Ministry and C2T2 to the vision of technology being the panacea for access and cost-efficiencies; web-based learning has become the major thrust of C2T2 initiatives and learning outcomes are supported to the extent that they link with this initiative. In the next chapter I provide a summary and expand on the conclusions drawn from this study as well as provide recommendations arising from this research.

CHAPTER SEVEN
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In 1996, a learning outcomes policy was introduced to British Columbia's postsecondary education through the first provincial strategic plan for the college, institute and agency sector. Through this plan, the Centre for Curriculum Transfer and Technology (C2T2) was directed to promote a learning outcomes approach within this sector.

In October 1997, C2T2 sent an invitation to BC public postsecondary education institutions requesting their participation in a Ministry-funded learning outcomes program, a Learning Outcomes Network. The invitation was accompanied by an offer of partial funding to establish a coordinator position within each participating organization. The provincial network of coordinators established through C2T2 was viewed as a group to facilitate the collaborative development of a learning outcomes approach that was described as the central element in the reform of BC postsecondary education (Bauslaugh & Hansen, 1996). In this chapter I provide a summary of the study, draw conclusions and present recommendations.

Summary of Study

This study investigated the suitability of adopting a learning outcomes approach as a strategy for educational reform in the BC colleges and university college sector; it focused on the views of institutional and department administrators during the initial implementation phase as the policy was shaped and interpreted by people within the sector. The study is guided by three broad questions: (1) How was the concept of learning outcomes being defined in the colleges and university colleges? (2) How did the people in this sector view this policy direction? (3) Was the learning outcomes initiative helpful in promoting the vision described in the strategic plan of the BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training?

Educators, administrators and students from 16 colleges and university colleges participating in the C2T2 Learning Outcome Network program were invited to participate in the study. The first phase of the study involved a structured questionnaire, which was sent in the fall of 1998. The survey was sent to learning outcomes coordinators (LOCs), prior learning assessment and recognition coordinators (PLARCs), department heads / coordinators, and administrators in the educational areas of the 15 colleges and university colleges whose presidents had consented. A total of 311 responses were received from a

group of 709 representing a 44% response rate. Consent for an interview was gained through the survey with 115 consents being received from survey respondents.

The second phase of the study included the selection of four sites for the interviews; two sites were located in the Lower Mainland area of Vancouver and Victoria, and two were external to this geographic location. Two sites were colleges and two were university colleges. Sites were selected to include both supporters and opponents of a learning outcomes approach and the student representatives to Education Council at each of the sites were also invited to participate in an interview. The interviews were conducted in the spring of 1999. During the site visits the minutes of the Education Council meetings and its curriculum subcommittees were reviewed to provide additional insights into the discussions within the organizations about curricula and learning issues.

The third phase included further interviews in colleges and university colleges as well as other organizations involved in post-secondary education. During the course of the spring and summer of 1999, interviews were conducted with the following groups:

- Learning Outcomes Coordinators (LOCs),
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators (PLARCs),
- key individuals in organizations linked to postsecondary education including C2T2, and
- people identified as experts in the area of learning outcomes.

This phase also included the review of LOC reports, the C2T2 work plans and the C2T2 Board minutes. In total 58 interviews were conducted, 36 interviews at the four sites, 10 interviews with LOCs and PLARCs in the system, and 12 with key individuals. The data collection was mainly completed by September 1999, although the conversations on the LOC email discussion group were integrated throughout the writing phase.

Triangulation strategies were incorporated into the sampling process, data collection and data analysis. The survey data were used as a component of the triangulation process; in particular the emphasis was placed on descriptive statistics. However, respondents were also organized into groups based on their organizational role and program area. The analysis included comparisons of groups with respect to their views on a number of issues. Provincial reports and organizational documents helped to corroborate the themes and findings that emerged from the survey and interview data.

Ball (1994) contends that it is important to investigate the micro-level of educational policies, especially the views and experiences of people. My study is such a study; it

addressed the perceptions and views of people in BC colleges and university colleges as they experienced the learning outcomes initiative advanced by C2T2.

Conclusions

The study was designed to gain a more complete understanding of the learning outcomes policy in BC during its implementation phase. It produced the following conclusions.

The Strategic Plan

The strategic plan was generally seen as a Ministry document, not a collaborative system document. Many educators perceived a large amount of rhetoric but little reality in the vision; others felt devalued and excluded from the vision. The strategic plan was seen as an expression of naiveté and arrogance about the wrongs of the postsecondary education and how these could be corrected. It was a vision for part of BC postsecondary education thus making it ineffective in a context where organizational collaboration through articulation and transfer is a major focus.

The vision was complex and multifaceted; it also included detailed implementation strategies that translated into increased government control in the BC college, institute and agency sector. Government can demand accountability and transparency but the strategic plan was seen as an infringement of ministers and bureaucrats into the area of curriculum and evaluation, an area historically within the domain of educators.

In theory, the strategic plan was developed collaboratively with educators, but the collaboration was not of the quality to make it a living vision for those in the college, institute and agency sector. The fact that it was a vision for one sector of postsecondary education severely limited the value of the plan. A new vision is needed in BC education, one that integrates all educational organizations within the province, but if not all, then at least all postsecondary organizations.

Policy Borrowing and Policy Learning

The learning outcomes policy was borrowed from several jurisdictions, both national and international. It came from a quasi-governmental body, and its initial planners failed to account for the history and the culture in BC postsecondary education. The initial

implementation strategies failed to build on the knowledge and experiences of educators, and the curriculum approaches that already existed. Although some efforts were made to build institutional character into the concept through critical collegial processes, the conversations remained largely within the context of the Learning Outcomes Network and did not permeate through organizations.

Policy borrowing may be an expedient approach to policy, but the policy learning aspects need to be augmented. Policies borrowed from other jurisdictions need to be adapted to meet the culture and context of BC postsecondary education. Policy makers need to be respectful of the history and culture of the policy implementers. It is anticipated that the long-term benefits of such an approach may be more cost effective when compared to short-term efficiencies.

Convergence of Policy Directions

The learning outcomes policy was promoted with the idea of improving pedagogy. However, it intersected with the development of performance indicators through the work of SCOEA. Respondents feared increased government control exerted through the link of performance funding to learning outcomes. People in the college and university college sector were concerned about the link between the learning outcomes initiative, the call for increased accountability and the industrial trainer ideology expressed in the strategic plan as well as other provincial documents. They feared that performance indicators would be linked to performance funding, and that the learning outcomes policy was a government initiative to gain increased control over curriculum to shift it to meet the needs of capitalism.

As Bridges (2000) identified, the curriculum in higher education has become the site for a discussion about our values and priorities. The discussion about learning outcomes is ultimately about the aims of education. It is about the balance between what Skolnik (2000) calls materialism and humanism. While this has been an ongoing debate in higher education, we need to continue the debate to ensure that the shifts we are making support the needs of our societies not just the market place. We need to nurture our democracies as well.

Learning Outcomes as an Unfulfilled Concept

C2T2 invited educators to become involved in the articulation of the learning outcomes concept. However, the department administrators in the colleges and university colleges found the concept too nebulous and abstract to make meaning of it at the practice

level as a unique reform initiative. It shared too many characteristics with other approaches to be touted as the central theme for the reform of postsecondary education in BC.

The learning outcomes approach as implemented in the BC context was an unfulfilled concept (Stalker, 1996), which had some substance at the theoretical and program level but often disappeared at the grass roots practice level within courses and learning environments. A concept that is to be the central theme of a policy direction must have enough substance that implementers can see a clear link between the policy and the expected results. In the absence of such a link, implementers will have little motivation for involvement, and they may even begin to mistrust the process and become involved in creative non-implementation activities.

Curriculum Models

Postsecondary education is too complex and diverse for one model to fit all curriculum needs in different program areas. Rather than attempting to establish the uniqueness and superior value of a particular approach, it would be more fruitful to gain consensus regarding the characteristics important to a curriculum approach. The issue of integration of learning and assessment strategies with curricula appears to have been a key element in the influences to support a learning outcomes approach in the BC context. This is acknowledged to be an important element but it can be and has been achieved with various approaches. While it may be important to gain some general consensus about substantive themes in the construction of curriculum, such consensus could perhaps be more easily achieved within an organizational context rather than a provincial context. No concept can live up to the expectations placed on the learning outcomes approach in BC.

Implementation Challenges

The response to the learning outcomes initiative was varied. It ranged from strong support, to general ambivalence or apathy, to non-implementation expressed in several ways. Both proponents and opponents discussed barriers to its implementation, particularly those surrounding structural issues, workload and resources. It is acknowledged that increased resources do not necessarily translate into improvements; however, some resources are necessary to implement a policy. These were not forthcoming with the learning outcomes policy.

The number of competing priorities articulated in the strategic plan and previous provincial documents was problematic. The rate of policy change resulted in destructive interference between ideas, which lead to frustration and skepticism on the part of many implementers. The combination of competing priorities and limited resources seriously affected the implementation of the learning outcomes policy. This again highlights the need for a provincial vision that supports organizations in their efforts to prioritize their limited resources, particularly in times of fiscal restraint and downsizing.

Outcomes of a Learning Outcomes Approach

The learning outcomes approach was integrated into many programs, especially in the applied and foundation areas. In particular, it was used to identify graduate learning outcomes. In the vocational and career technical areas it helped educators manage information and increase vertical integration. In the applied degree area it gave shape to new degree programs and helped to facilitate their acceptance by provincial approval committees. Educators in the academic area made fewer changes and perceived less value in the changes. Their changes tended to be cosmetic ones and many approached it from a creative non-implementation perspective.

Learning outcomes may facilitate PLAR activities and articulation and transfer arrangements, but such activities have been supported by other approaches as well. The learning outcomes initiative has also not influenced performance indicators in any substantial manner, and does not appear to have had any effect on increasing accountability within postsecondary education.

Regardless of the changes implemented, the overall effect of this policy on student learning appears to be minimal. Certainly the term "learning outcomes" is now familiar to both educators and learners. The term has been integrated into many course outlines and other organizational documents. Outcomes language in general has taken hold but the term learning outcomes is used ubiquitously as a general term for a variety of statements such as instructional objectives, learning objectives and competencies. But from a more substantive pedagogical perspective, the policy appears to have had minimal impact.

The discussions generated about best practices may have been the greatest impact of the learning outcomes policy. It forced faculty members to challenge and defend their educational practices. In some sense the intention of the policy will live on through the question, "What do you want learners to know and be able to do?" That may be the ultimate

legacy of the learning outcomes policy. While this question is important, it is not substantive enough to form the central theme for educational reform.

Recommendations

Discussions about curriculum have become a central issue in educational reform; curriculum has become the site for a discussion about our values and priorities. The recommendations arising from this study will, therefore, focus on broad issues for governments and educators in postsecondary education, and areas for further research.

Recommendations for Ministry of Advanced Education and Educators

The results of this study prompt the following recommendations for the provincial government and educators.

1. The Ministry of Advanced Education needs to facilitate the articulation of a vision for BC postsecondary education, a vision that could provide a framework for postsecondary education in BC, but would not include the level of direction and detail outlined in *Charting a New Course*. The current vision set out in the strategic plan is limited, and has not captured the interest of postsecondary educators and administrators.

    It is acknowledged that gaining the involvement of the universities in such an endeavour would be challenging; they would not be interested in becoming involved in a process where the Ministry was perceived as being at the center of the spider's web as one interviewee noted. However, the evolution of the university colleges in BC and the increased influx of private postsecondary organizations may provide a leverage point from which to elicit their involvement in articulating a vision. Working in isolation may no longer be an effective long-term strategy for universities. There is a need to articulate the core values of the system and to clarify the mandate of the organizations in postsecondary education. These are important elements to assist educators in establishing priorities and minimizing the destructive interference encountered by the plethora of initiatives being implemented.

2. The Ministry of Advanced Education needs to facilitate coordination between the various sectors in postsecondary education while respecting the autonomy and culture of organizations within the system. While it would be appropriate for the Ministry to

initiate this process, a consensus-based process would support the long-term success of the coordinating structure. BC postsecondary institutions are much more differentiated than they were when the MacDonald report (1962) set the stage for the expansion of postsecondary education. A liaison mechanism between postsecondary institutions could support organizations to better meet the needs of their constituencies, local as well as provincial. It could help to support contextual adaptation of learning opportunities within differing organizations.

3. To support policy implementation, the Ministry of Advanced Education needs to first develop an intellectual investment by BC postsecondary educators in relation to policy surrounding such issues as curriculum, teaching and learning initiatives, areas commonly in the domain of educators. The learning outcomes policy came from a quasi-government organization and it was promoted without first gaining either an institutional or a provincial understanding. By and large, there was no institutional ownership of the policy and little institutional creativity invested into the approach. Policy planners need to provide opportunities for the implementers to have an integral role in the creation of policy through constructive collegial processes that are respectful of the knowledge and culture of educators. Failure to first gain ownership by educators is wasteful of the limited resources available to postsecondary education.

4. Educational organizations need to create forums for dialogue about the relationship between liberal learning, practical learning and education for citizenship. The development of citizenship has often been left to secondary schools, but this may no longer be sufficient.

> Our colleges and universities must prepare us – as a nation and as individuals – for a new form of international citizenship in which neither progress nor our own national leadership is guaranteed. They must prepare us for a transnational world. (Featherman, 1993, p. 68)

While education for citizenship appears to be a focus in the foundation and academic areas, its inclusion in the applied areas is not as solid. Atwell (1993) saw the potential risk of a "Yugoslavia of the soul" (p. 51) if the issue of citizenship and its associated values were not integral to higher education. The increased focus on the relationship between education and work may obfuscate issues surrounding citizenship. As Atwell explains, what society wants from higher education tends to be more instrumental in nature, often associated with economic considerations and the world of work.

However, society also needs the teaching of citizenship and values to manage the complex economic, political and social questions.

Higher education, like our pluralistic society, is replete with paradoxes and contradictions. It is called upon to meet the needs of the present and the future, and to encourage both conformity and innovation (Delors, 1998). Educators cannot afford to be overtaken and overwhelmed by day-to-day activities; there is a need to create some space for a dialogue to help them reconcile the competing and divergent aims confronting post-secondary education.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study indicates a need for further research in the following areas.

1. Further research is warranted in the area of curriculum to determine the approaches that would best help facilitate learning and support the integration of learning and assessment strategies. We are too focused on definitions, definitions we try to establish by contrasting one approach to another. This obfuscates the deeper conversations about learning. As Dunne et al. (1997) assert, "changing the vocabulary does not change the conceptual and practical difficulties" (p. 520). In looking at how we express our curriculum, we need to espouse what Dow (1990) calls the "Babylonian" approach, and allow for the construction of multiple perspectives. This will allow us to move beyond conceptual analysis and comparative analysis of specific terms to explore larger issues such as how we can effectively link curricula to learning and assessment to support learner success. Curriculum statements only reflect one piece of a larger picture of learning. While the focus of this recommendation may appear to be a large and daunting area, I believe it would be more fruitful, for example, to look at the congruence between curricula, delivery and assessment rather than exploring the value of a learning outcomes approach.

2. Further research is warranted to assess the ways through which Education Councils meet their mandate to support the development of sound and effective educational policy. Education Council minutes were largely silent on the issue of the learning outcomes policy; it was often only mentioned briefly in relationship to correspondence received, presentations and reports from the LOCs, and motions related to the templates for the submission of courses to the Council. The minutes of the curriculum sub-committees were also largely silent on this issue. It is

acknowledged that the analysis of minutes provides only sketchy perspectives regarding the extent and the quality of discussions. However, it would be helpful gain more information about the work of these councils by perhaps conducting interviews with Council members to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how Education Councils implement their mandate, and how well they function in supporting the teaching and learning environment.

3.   Further research is warranted to determine what currently happens behind the closed doors of the instructional environments in BC postsecondary education, as there is a paucity of knowledge about teaching and learning in that context. From his research, Grubb (1997) concluded that American community college administrators know little about what happens in the learning environment and much of our knowledge about teaching in community colleges is based on learner satisfaction surveys; the claims of colleges as teaching institutions were seen as more rhetoric than reality. The same applies to BC colleges and university colleges; administrators know little about what happens in the learning environment. This is not to suggest that educators are not involved in diverse and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. However, Grubb concluded that the quality of teaching was dependent on the individual educator and teaching was often mediocre. He also emphasized the isolation of faculty members in their program and discipline areas; organizational structures allow little opportunity for faculty to interact and discuss issues beyond their own area, a situation that is also a reality in the BC context. By gathering data through observations and interviews, we could gain a better understanding about what happens in the learning environment. This information would be helpful in supporting professional development initiatives for postsecondary educators, and hopefully promoting learner success in the long run.

Concluding Comments

This study focused on the implementation phase of the learning outcomes initiative in BC colleges and university colleges. Palumbo and Calista (1990) contend that the analysis of policy implementation has emerged as a new sub field of policy analysis because of the significance of implementation, and the realization of its importance to the outcomes of public policy.

The views of study participants provided an interesting example of how policy is interpreted and transformed during the implementation phase. "Even though small studies do not resolve the debate, they help to frame it. And having a debate informed by (although not resolved by) data is a value which is an educational good in itself" (Birnbaum, 2000b, p. 129). I suggest that this study will contribute to the ongoing understanding of educational policies in British Columbia.

It could be seen as a study of policy failure to some degree. It highlighted the futility of developing a strategic plan for one sector of postsecondary education while disregarding the influences and impacts of existing collaborations between the university sector and other postsecondary organizations. It also focused attention on the need to have a clear enough definition of the policy direction to provide some guidance yet allow for organizational adaptations, which acknowledge the history and culture of varied organizations.

New questions often arise as one embarks on the journey to unravel the issues embedded within the research question. That is the challenge of research; new understandings and insights are often overpowered by new questions. In particular the relationship between theory and practice can be quite unsettling; it often requires a high tolerance for ambiguity. It appears that a learning outcomes approach has value at the program level, but the difference between it and other approaches often disappears at the course level. Does a learning outcomes approach have transformational potential, or is it a misguided approach that has the potential to stultify knowledge and reduce our curriculum to triviality? It appears that both perspectives are equally valid in the context of practice. Participants in the applied and foundation areas found some value in the learning outcomes approach. However, its lasting value may be evident in the dialogue it generated as it forced educators to challenge and defend their practices.

As is the case with many studies, they are more valuable when considered within the context of other studies. Further exploration of policies surrounding curriculum in postsecondary education would be helpful for increasing our understanding of this complex area. This study reflects my efforts as an educator to gain a deeper understanding of my practice; I hope that my efforts to convey the views of the study participants will present readers with a similar experience and opportunity.

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EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROFILE[1]

Canadian Workplace

Academic Skills

. Those skills which provide the basic foundation to get, keep and progress on a job and to achieve the best results

Personal Management Skills

The combination of skills, attitudes and behaviours required to get, keep and progress on a job and to achieve the best results

Teamwork Skills

Those skills needed to work with others on a job and to achieve the best results

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Canadian employers need a person who can:

Communicate
- Understand and speak the languages in which business is conducted
- Listen to understand and learn
- Read, comprehend and use written materials, including graphs, charts and displays
- Write effectively in the languages in which business is conducted

Think
- Think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions
- Understand and solve problems involving mathematics and use the results
- Use technology, instruments, tools and information systems effectively
- Access and apply specialized knowledge from various fields (e.g., skilled trades, technology, physical sciences, arts

Canadian employers need a person who can demonstrate:

Positive Attitudes and Behaviours
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Honesty, integrity and personal ethics
- A positive attitude toward learning, growth and personal health
- Initiative, energy and persistence to get the job done

Responsibility
- The ability to set goals and priorities in work and personal life
- The ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals
- Accountability for actions

Adaptability
- A positive attitude toward change
- Recognition of and respect for people's diversity and individual differences

Canadian employers need a person who can:

Work with Others
- Understand and contribute to the organization's goals
- Understand and work within the culture of the group
- Plan and make decisions with others and support the outcomes
- Respect the thoughts and opinions of others in the group
- Exercise "give and take" to achieve group results
- Seek a team approach as appropriate
- Lead when appropriate, mobilizing the group for high performance

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[1] http://www2.conferenceboard.ca/nbnec/eprof-e.htm

COMPARISON OF ABILITIES FROM
PROVINCIAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

The following information provides a comparison of the themes articulated in various documents regarding graduates' abilities. Obviously many of the ideas can be categorized under different terms, and may be emphasized or de-emphasized in various ways. For example the notion of humanities was identified as a distinct ability in the 21st Century table (Wilson et al., 2000) whereas it was subsumed into other areas in the other documents. The focus of this analysis is directed to the main themes, given that other sub-texts exist within each category.

Table B1.   Comparison of Abilities from International Documents

Reports and Jurisdictions

Abilities	Alverno[1]	21 Century[2]	SCANS Focus[3]	UK Focus[4]	Australia Focus[5]	New Zealand[6]	European[7]
Ability to learn						✓	✓
Communication (oral & written)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Numeracy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Technology literacy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Problem solving & decision-making	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Critical thinking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teamwork	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Creativity	✓	✓	✓				
Leadership	✓						
Personal responsibility/ Self-management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cultural / Diversity / global	✓	✓			✓		✓
Career development				✓	✓		
Adaptability							✓
Citizenship	✓						

[1] Schmitz, 1994; [2] Wilson et al., 2000; [3] Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), 1992; [4] Hodgson, Spours and Savory, 2001; [5] Queensland Department of Education, & Queensland Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission., 1994; [6] New Zealand Qualifications Authority. 1994; [7] Hutmacher, 1997.

Table B2.   Comparison of Abilities from Canadian Documents

Reports and Jurisdictions

Abilities	Federal Report[1]	Employability Skills[2]	Ontario[3]	BC Employ Skills[4]	Charting A New Course[5]
Ability to learn	✓	✓			
Communication (oral & written)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Numeracy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Technology literacy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Problem solving & decision-making	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Critical thinking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teamwork	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creativity			✓	✓	
Leadership	✓			✓	
Personal responsibility/ Self-management	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cultural / Diversity / global		✓		✓	
Career development	✓		✓		
Adaptability		✓	✓		✓
Citizenship					

[1] Ministry of Employment and Immigration & Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology,1991;
[2] Conference Board of Canada, 1992 ;
[3] CSAC, 1995.;
[4] Debling & Behrman, 1996;
[5] BC MoEST, 1996.

THE STUDY SITES AND GENRAL SITE IMPRESSIONS

The participants of my study practiced within a diversified public higher education context that consisted of six universities, five university colleges, eleven colleges and several institutes (BCCAT, 2000). As well there was an ever-growing number of private educational organizations providing a wide range of programs and degrees. With the public and private sector combined there were 14 degree granting institutions in British Columbia at the time of my study (BC MoAETT, 2001a). The four sites are briefly described in the following pages to provide a context for understanding the nature of the sites while supporting their anonymity.

Site 1

Site 1 is a multi-campus university college situated outside the lower mainland of British Columbia. The two main campuses are located within an urban centre with several satellite campuses in smaller centers within the organization's catchment area. Site 1 has approximately 7,000 students in the four larger campuses as well as a further 30,000 students in continuing courses and programs in all its sites. Site 1 offers certificate, diploma and degree programs. Its degree programs include Arts, Science, Education, Fine Arts, Social Work, Nursing and Business Administration to name but a few; many of the degree programs are directed towards an applied mandate to meet the needs of the community.

Site 1 serves a population base of about 300,000 people. Like the other university colleges in British Columbia, Site 1 existed for many years as a college before it became a university college. Its home web page indicates that Site 1 views itself as a comprehensive institution, serving the needs of the region, but also extending into international education. "We are dedicated to providing learning opportunities for all citizens at every stage of life and educational experience."

Site 1 is located in a desirable recreational area with a diversified economic profile. The area has a rich history in agriculture, but currently also includes a strong manufacturing, high technology, health care and tourism base.

During my visit to Site 1, I had the opportunity to spend time at the two main campuses; the older campus is located downtown and the newer campus is located on the edge of the city. The older campus tends to house the more traditional certificate and diploma programs, and the newer campus is the home of many of the university transfer courses and the new applied degree programs.

Despite the economic resources of the area, Site 1 was faced with significant budget cuts at the time of my visit. It was trying to deal with the harsh realities of a large deficit. The overall BC economy had been in a downturn for several years and provincial funding had been gradually reduced. The multi-campus nature of the organization was seen to be an important characteristic for fulfilling the organization's mandate, but it was also seen as a detriment in regards to the resources required to provide basic support to its learners. While the new campus certainly had the look, smell and feel of new construction, people talked about the lack of basics

such as internet connections and library books at some of the satellite campuses. Faculty members and staff seemed to be very proud of their organization, but there appeared to be a sense of frustration that they were not able to fulfill their mandate to the community because provincial funding did not factor in their geographic realities and their associated implications for providing services.

Site 2

Site 2 is a community college outside the lower mainland of British Columbia. It is a multi-campus college that serves a large geographic area, one of several colleges in BC with such a profile. The main campus is located in a city of 75,000 people with the satellite campuses located in the smaller surrounding communities. Site 2 provides a variety of programs in business, trades, technologies, health and social services as well as foundation programs and university transfer courses; many of their programs are tailored to meet the needs of their communities, ecotourism, wood technology and wilderness guiding. The web page message from its President identifies a focus on "quality instruction and services" to support students, as well as relevance from the perspective of new programs and international connections.

The region has a single resource economy; forestry is the primary industry with mining as a secondary resource industry. The communities that Site 2 serves have been seriously affected by the decreased production in the mills and mines of the region. In a letter to the Minister of Finance dated October 26, 1998, the President of the local Chamber of Commerce wrote about the grim economic situation. "Job losses are mounting, people are moving out of [the city] because of a lack of work, consumers are reducing spending and retail businesses are hurting." However, the residents of the area pride themselves in the beauty of its natural setting with its clean air and water. While its Chamber of Commerce web site lists the competitive advantages of the area such as access to hydropower, natural resources, education and affordable housing, it also identifies disadvantages of the region such as lack of telecommunications, aboriginal land claims and lack of economic diversity.

I had the opportunity to visit the main campus during my visit to Site 2. It is not a new campus, but it has new additions; there is an impression of space and light as one enters through the main doors. For many years Site 2 was the main provider of postsecondary education in the area, but the region now has a university just down the road from Site 2. This has provided opportunities for collaborative programs and degree completion programs. While this has been very positive for the learners, some of the Site 2 faculty members are concerned about loss of autonomy through collaborative projects. Some also question the value of university transfer courses at Site 2 and wonder if the duplication of these courses with the university is warranted. Access and affordability is taken very seriously at Site 2; faculty members strive to create varied opportunities for learners in their satellite communities. There is a culture of independence expressed by faculty members; perhaps this comes from the frontier history of the area. They do not like to be told what to do; they need to be convinced of the need for change.

Site 3

Site 3 is a community college within the lower mainland area of British Columbia with an enrollment of approximately 7,000 students in credit courses. It is also a multi-site college with the main campus nestled in a natural setting within a relatively affluent suburb, and satellites in the smaller communities on the outskirts of the urban area.

The lower mainland is the shipping, financial, industrial and cultural center of the province; it has an international flavour as well as its own unique West Coast ambiance. Its Chinatown is the second largest in North American. It is nestled between the ocean and the rugged coastal mountains. The combination of its natural beauty and international character make it a prime tourist area. It has gone through periods of rapid growth but has also been affected by the economic challenges that have plagued the province for several years.

Site 3 provides a variety of programs in business, recreation, tourism, film, trades, technologies, health and social services as well as foundation programs and university transfer courses. Its faculty members pride themselves on the unique

programs offered at Site 3, which attract students from across Canada and internationally. It has tapped into the needs of the Pacific Rim connection by offering a variety of Asian language courses. The faculty members spoke positively about collaborative degree programs developed in conjunction with other degree granting institutions in the lower mainland area. As a result of these efforts, their calendar identifies several degree programs even though Site 3 itself does not have degree granting status.

The words "innovation" and "excellence" are threaded throughout the literature in their calendar. The title page of the Site 3 calendar presents this college as the place "were opportunities begin". It states that the college is "a dynamic source of leadership within the communities it serves". This is supported by the "Speakers Bureau" page on their web site through which community groups can gain access to volunteers on a variety of topics.

I had the opportunity to visit the main campus of Site 3. Faculty members spoke about the success of their graduates in transferring to universities and creating their own employment opportunities. They also spoke highly of their administration; they spoke about open communication and feeling supported in their work. The Site 3 calendar states that "the College values everyone involved in the teaching and learning process"; this value seems to be expressed in words and deeds.

There was a general esprit de corps at Site 3. The faculty members appeared to value their college and the role it plays in their community, and its contribution to postsecondary opportunities for a diverse population of the lower mainland area.

Site 4

Site 4 is a university college in the lower mainland of British Columbia. It is also a multi-campus organization, but the satellite sites are within 30 to 40 minutes of the main campus. The campuses are located in several distinct suburbs, each with unique characteristics. In this regard Site 4 is probably most reflective of the pluralistic nature of Canadian society. The enrollment is approximately 23,000 students; this number equates to approximately 7,600 full-time equivalents. Being in the lower mainland, it shares the same economic environment as Site 3.

Site 4 started as a campus of another college; then it became its own college and later transformed into a university college. It is located in a growing region of the lower mainland; its metamorphosis is probably a reflection of that. It now offers certificate, diploma and degree programs. As with the other sites, it offers programs in trades, technology, health, social work, business, etc. and a range of developmental and university transfer courses. It also has its unique programs such as horticulture and equine studies specific to its community settings. Its degree programs tend to focus on specialized areas such as design, journalism and technology. As was the case with Site 1, the faculty members expressed pride in the unique nature of their degree programs.

During my interviews, I had the opportunity to visit all the campuses. Each campus reflected the community it served. There was an impression of activity and fullness at all the sites. I was not surprised to see construction activities at the main campus and to hear of plans for expansion. The students were also involved in this process; they were involved in the planning and financial support for a physical recreational facility for the main campus. This was a concrete expression of the team notion that was described by many of the interviewees.

The value of access is taken seriously at Site 4; they look at initial access to courses and programs, and continued access to degree completion opportunities. The calendar presents the slogan of "offering more opportunities" as being key. "A distinguishing feature of [Site 4] is that 65% of our programs integrate with bachelor degrees. This is a huge advantage if you're exploring career choices". Quality is another theme in the discussions; in the calendar an invitation is extended to "join an award-winning group of students, faculty and programs." On the same page it lists the programs that are accredited or have received recognition by professional associations. Study participants viewed recognition as being important to the ongoing development of their organization.

Equality and collegiality were other values that came forth in the interviews; people talked about the way they retained equality among faculty members during the transition to a university-college. These values were imbedded in their decision-making process and promotion policies.

General Site Impressions

One of the central themes in all the sites is that of pride, pride in the faculty members, in the programs and courses, and in the learners and graduates. Interviewees talked about dedicated faculty members, and successful graduates who reached their career goals and transferred to further studies at highly recognized universities. They talked about their graduates being sought after and recruited by companies.

When speaking about courses and programs, the word "unique" was often used; the offerings were described as unique in that they provided:

> ➢ access to learners with work experience;
> ➢ access to transfer and articulation opportunities;
> ➢ experiential learning opportunities through technology, specialized equipment, work experiences; and
> ➢ mobility for career development.

Interviewees talked about the value of their programs and their recognition locally, provincially, nationally and internationally in some cases.

Access appeared to be a strong value at all the sites, and also an issue that caused many frustrations. Faculties and administrators wanted to implement their mandate in providing access but felt hampered by various structural and funding barriers. The issue of resources was an area of concern, particularly for the people at the two sites outside the lower mainland; this was linked to access issues. This concern in Site 1 and Site 2 may reflect the reality that learners in urban areas have a wide range of organizations and programs from which to choose; accessing technology and other resources appears to be easier in the lower mainland. This is not the reality for the sites in other parts of BC; they are often the only option learners have for opportunities in postsecondary education. The pressures associated with access issues are, therefore, much stronger in the areas outside the lower mainland.

The issue of mandate itself was problematic for many of the site interviewees. The introduction of university colleges and two new universities complicated the issue of clarity of mandate. Participants reflected on their own changing organizational mandates, their relationships with the new organizations and the implications of these organizations on their work. The perceived number of ministry priorities also complicated the issue of mandate. People in the system appeared to be frustrated by the challenges presented by the ever growing and changing Ministry

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priorities. This made decision-making and planning particularly challenging, especially in regard to the allocation of growingly scarce resources.

I felt privileged to be invited to these sites and to speak with the people in the colleges and university colleges, as well as others involved in some way with the learning outcomes policy. Their willingness to talk about their practices and perspectives provided bountiful data from which to gain a better understanding of a learning outcomes approach in the college and university colleges sector and its complex relationship with other BC educational initiatives.

EVENTS SURROUNDING THE
BC LEARNING OUTCOMES POLICY

Date	Events
September 1988	Report of the Provincial Access Committee by Stan Hagan. University-college concept introduced and UNBC announced
1991	First degree graduates from BC university colleges
1991/92	First phase of UNBC
1992	Employability Skills developed by the Conference Board of Canada
October 1992	Tom Perry appointed the Carter / Ministry Committee on Governance
1993	Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (later reorganized in 1996)
1994	20 Community Skills Centres (CSCs) were established by MAETT and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)
June 1994	College and Institute Amendment Act or Bill 22 received royal assent
1994/95	Skills Now initiative
Spring 1995	Education Councils elected and faculty elected to Boards
May 1995	Center for Curriculum, and Professional Development established a Centre Steering Committee on Learning Outcomes
June 1995	Steering Committee for the strategic plan was established
October 1995	Formation of Council of Education Council Chairs (CoEdCo)
1995	New Degree Approval Process (NDAP)
October 1995	Workshop facilitated by Dale Shipley on learning outcomes sponsored by the Advanced Education Council of BC and the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development
1996	BCIT produced essential abilities document

(table continues)

Date	Events
1996	Ministry of Education, Skills and Training created (had been the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour since 1993)
1996	*Charting a New Course* (final draft)
1996	Reorganization of CCPD and other structures into the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C2T2)
1996	Ministry of Education, Skills and Training created (had been the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour since 1993)
1996	Articles appearing about a learning outcomes approach and workshops on learning outcomes held by C2T2 staff
1997	Establishment of Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability (SCOEA) the Ministry and the AECBC
December 1997	Invitation sent to Education Councils from C2T2 to participate in the Learning Outcomes Network
January 1998	Funding starts for ¼ release time for Learning Outcomes Coordinators for a 6-month period First meeting of Learning Outcomes Coordinators at Bowen Island
February 1998	Email list serve organized for the Learning Outcomes Coordinators
June 1998	Learning Outcomes Coordinators and other faculty attend workshops on learning outcomes and assessment at Alverno College in Milwaukee
June 1998	Announcement made that funding for Learning Outcomes Coordinators would not continue
Summer 1998	Elimination of tuition fees for adult basic education
August 1998	New director started at C2T2
1998/99	Provincial Learning Network received funding
Fall 1998 to Fall 1999	Data collected for the author's study
1999 onward	C2T2 provided forums for the Learning Outcomes Coordinators to meet and share ideas
1999/00	Colloquiums were implemented related to assessments and best practices
March 2000	First workshop on critical thinking outcome; the focus shifted to exploring the implementation of essential abilities
2000	Budget Transparency and Accountability Act (BTAA)
2001-2002	First Performance Report required under the BTAA

Section A   **This section contains questions about your educational institution, instructional area, and role within the organization.**

A.1   What is the name of your educational institution? Check one.

___1	Camosun College	___9	Northern Lights College
___2	Capilano College	___10	North Island College
___3	College of New Caledonia	___11	North West Community College
___4	College of the Rockies	___12	Okanagan University College
___5	Douglas College	___13	Selkirk College
___6	Kwantlen University College	___14	University College of the Cariboo
___7	Langara College	___15	University College of the Fraser Valley
___8	Malaspina University College	___16	Vancouver Community College

A.2   Please identify the general characteristics of **your instructional area** in the following table.

Course / Program Area: What courses / program(s) are included in your area? Check as many boxes as apply.

Course / Program Length: What is / are the typical length(s) of the courses / program(s) in your area? Identify the months in the table below.

Full-time and / or Part-time: Is / are the courses / program(s) in your area typically full-time or part-time? Check as many as apply.

	Course / Program Area	Length in Months	Full-time	Part-time
	English as a second language			
	Adult basic education			
	Vocational			
	Career technical			
	General arts and science (1st and 2nd year)			
	General arts and science (3rd and 4th year)			
	Other: please specify			

A.3   What is your position within the institution? Check as many as apply.
    ___1   Department Administrator (e.g. department head / chair, program coordinator)
    ___2   Learning Outcomes Coordinator
    ___3   Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator
    ___4   College / University-College Administrator (e.g. associate dean, dean, etc.)
    ___5   Other: please specify _____

A.4   Approximately what percentage of your time are you commonly engaged in the following activities? Indicate percentages for those items that apply for a total of 100%.
    ____ % in college / university-college administration
    ____ % in program administration
    ____ % of student contact
    ____ % in curriculum development activities
    ____ % in the development of evaluation tools for learning
    ____ % in the development of other instructional materials
    ____ % other: please specify _____
100% total

A.5   How many years have you been employed in postsecondary education?
    _____ years

A.6   What educational preparation have you completed? Check as many as apply.
    ___1   Certificate / Trades Qualification
    ___2   Instructor's Diploma (ID Program)
    ___3   Diploma other than Instructor's Diploma
    ___4   Associate Degree
    ___5   Bachelor Degree
    ___6   Master Degree
    ___7   Doctoral Degree
    ___8   Other: please specify _____

A.7   Are you currently a student in a diploma, certificate or degree program? Check one.
    ___1   No
    ___2   Yes   If *yes*, please specify your level and program of study _____

A.8   Approximately how many hours per year do you participate as a learner in professional development activities such as courses, workshops, seminars, etc ?
    _____ hours

A.9   What is your sex?   ____1 male   ____2 female

This section contains questions about program and course implementation in your area.

B.1 In the past three years has **faculty member use** of the following in course outlines increased, decreased or remained the same? Please circle the *one best* response for each option.

	Increased Use	Same Use	Decreased Use	Do not Know
a. general course goals	1	2	3	4
b. behavioral objectives	1	2	3	4
c. competency statements	1	2	3	4
d. learning outcomes	1	2	3	4

Comments:

B.2 In your view, to what extent do your faculty members **perceive differences** between the following: (Circle the *one best* response for each option.)

	Not at All	Very Little	To some Extent	A great Deal	Do not Know
a. learning outcomes and general course goals	1	2	3	4	5
b. learning outcomes and behavioral objectives	1	2	3	4	5
c. learning outcomes and competency statements	1	2	3	4	5
d. competency statements and behavioral objectives	1	2	3	4	5
e. competency statements and general course goals	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

B.3   Approximately what percentage of your faculty members use the following **instructional methods and techniques** in course delivery? Please circle the *one best* response for each option.

	Not at All	Between 1-25%	Between 26-50%	Between 51-75%	More than 75%	Do not Know
a. lectures	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. seminars	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. laboratory / bench exercises	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. simulation exercises	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. student presentations to classmates	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. cooperative learning group activities	0	1	2	3	4	5
g. problem based activities / cases	0	1	2	3	4	5
h. services provided to customers on-site	0	1	2	3	4	5
i. community projects, rotations, practicums	0	1	2	3	4	5
j. computer based instruction	0	1	2	3	4	5
j. telephone tutoring	0	1	2	3	4	5
l. on-line tutoring	0	1	2	3	4	5
m. other: please specify _____	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

B.4   What percentage of your faculty members use the following **evaluation methods**? Please circle the *one best* response for each method.

	Not at All	Between 1-25%	Between 26-50%	Between 51-75%	More than 75%	Do not Know
a. written examinations including multiple choice and short answer questions	0	1	2	3	4	5
b. written examinations including essays, problems and case studies	0	1	2	3	4	5
c. written assignments such as papers and reports	0	1	2	3	4	5
d. assignments based on problems and simulation exercises	0	1	2	3	4	5
e. presentations to classmates	0	1	2	3	4	5
f. debates with classmates	0	1	2	3	4	5
g. oral examinations	0	1	2	3	4	5
h. journals and log books	0	1	2	3	4	5
i. products and services provided to customers	0	1	2	3	4	5
j. self assessment	0	1	2	3	4	5
k. peer assessment	0	1	2	3	4	5
l. portfolio development	0	1	2	3	4	5
m. assessment by individuals external to the program.	0	1	2	3	4	5
n. Other: please specify _____	0	1	2	3	4	5

_____

Comments:

Section C   **This section contains questions about your familiarity with a learning outcomes approach.**

C.1   **Prior to** the learning outcomes initiative through the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C^2T^2), to what extent had you: (Circle the *one best* response for each option.)

	Not at All	Very Little	To some Extent	A great Deal
a. heard about a learning outcomes approach?	1	2	3	4
b. read about a learning outcomes approach in journals, books and other educational references?	1	2	3	4
c. been involved in faculty discussions about learning outcomes?	1	2	3	4
d. prepared learning outcomes for courses or program graduates?	1	2	3	4
e. other: please specify	1	2	3	4

_____

C.2   **Since** the C^2T^2 learning outcomes initiative, to what extent have you: (Circle the *one best* response for each option.)

	Not at All	Very Little	To some Extent	A great Deal
a. heard about a learning outcomes approach?	1	2	3	4
b. read about a learning outcomes approach in journals, books and other educational references?	1	2	3	4
c. been involved in faculty discussions about learning outcomes?	1	2	3	4
d. prepared learning outcomes for courses or program graduates?	1	2	3	4
e. other: please specify _____	1	2	3	4

Comments:

... please continue to Section D

Section D

This section contains questions directed towards your views about a learning outcomes approach and about changes in your program / division area.

D.1 To what extent do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statements about a learning outcomes approach. Please circle the number that *best* reflects your views.

A learning outcomes approach:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. promotes more meaningful curricula for learners.	1	2	3	4	5
b. helps direct faculty members' attention to the needs of learners.	1	2	3	4	5
c. helps the faculty to adopt evaluation strategies which are close to real life situations.	1	2	3	4	5
d. may become a mechanism for increased control by the Ministry	1	2	3	4	5
e. is valuable for all types of courses and programs.	1	2	3	4	5
f. promotes faculty accountability for student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
g. fosters a more flexible learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5
h. is just another trend that will soon disappear.	1	2	3	4	5
i. helps graduates acquire skills which are relevant to employment.	1	2	3	4	5
j. could allow students to move more easily between programs and institutions.	1	2	3	4	5
k. promotes student success in course and program completion.	1	2	3	4	5

(Question continues)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A learning outcomes approach:					
l. fosters skills needed to function in society.	1	2	3	4	5
m. may be used as a reason to decrease resources to programs.	1	2	3	4	5
n. will have little long-term effect on courses and programs.	1	2	3	4	5
o. hinders the acquisition of a broader education.	1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

D.2 To what **extent** have your faculty members made **changes** in the following areas based on a learning outcomes approach? Circle the number that *most accurately* reflects your views.

	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	Do not Know
a. program design	1	2	3	4	5
b. course design	1	2	3	4	5
c. program delivery	1	2	3	4	5
d. course delivery	1	2	3	4	5
e. program evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
f. course evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
g. prior learning assessment	1	2	3	4	5
h. other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

If your faculty members have made *no* changes, proceed to Question D.5 on page 11.

D.3 If your faculty members have made changes, how **valuable** were the changes to the following areas in promoting a learner-centered approach? Circle the number that *most accurately* reflects your views.

	No Value	Some Value	Much Value	Great Value	Do Not Know	Not Applicable
a. program design	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. course design	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. program delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. course delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. program evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. course evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. prior learning assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. other: _____	1	2	3	4	5	6

Comments:

D.4 In your view, how **important** was each of the following factors in your faculty members' decision **to integrate** a learning outcomes approach? Please circle the *one best* response for each factor.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important
a. priority of the government	1	2	3	4
b. prior faculty direction and decisions	1	2	3	4
c. funding from ministry	1	2	3	4
d. funding from institution	1	2	3	4
e. opportunity to promote transfer of credits	1	2	3	4
f. requests for prior learning assessments	1	2	3	4
g. influence of institutional administration	1	2	3	4
h. popularity of the learning outcomes approach	1	2	3	4
i. Education Council directive / requirement	1	2	3	4
j. relevance to learner needs	1	2	3	4
k. interest in improving assessment	1	2	3	4
l. emphasis on integration of learning	1	2	3	4
m. employer support for the approach	1	2	3	4
n. contribution to faculty's prestige	1	2	3	4
o. potential benefits to learners	1	2	3	4
p. potential benefits to faculty	1	2	3	4
q. relevance to employer needs	1	2	3	4
r. consistency with faculty's philosophy	1	2	3	4
s. other: please specify _____	1	2	3	4

Comments:

Please proceed to Question D.6 on page 12.

D.5 In your view, how **important** was each of the following factors in your faculty members' decision **NOT to integrate** a learning outcomes approach? Please circle the *one best* response for each factor.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important
a. lack of funding to implement change	1	2	3	4
b. concern that only measurable elements in education will be valued	1	2	3	4
c. few evident benefits from such a change	1	2	3	4
d. concern about the value and relevance of a learning outcomes approach	1	2	3	4
e. prior faculty decisions towards other outcome models	1	2	3	4
f. lack of evidence to support change to a learning outcomes approach	1	2	3	4
g. lack of human resources to support change	1	2	3	4
h. satisfaction with current programs and courses	1	2	3	4
i. few requests for prior learning assessments	1	2	3	4
j. influence of institutional administration	1	2	3	4
k. lack of faculty knowledge of learning outcomes approach	1	2	3	4
l. potential problems with course transfer	1	2	3	4
m. concern about faculty workload to implement change	1	2	3	4
n. concern that curriculum may be dominated by employer needs	1	2	3	4
o. concern that this approach may be used as a rationale to decrease funding	1	2	3	4

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D.6   Is there anything else you wish to add about:
- the factors that influenced your faculty members' decisions about learning outcomes, and
- the changes your faculty members have made when integrating a learning outcomes approach?

... please continue to Section E

This section contains questions about your future plans with regard to a learning outcomes approach. You are also asked to clarify issues and add information that would be helpful in understanding your views about a learning outcomes approach.

E.1   Please respond to the following questions by circling the *one best* response, which reflects your views.

	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive
a. How would you describe your **overall attitude** towards a learning outcomes approach?	1	2	3	4
b. How would you likely speak in **faculty / division meetings** about the integration of a learning outcomes approach in your program area?	1	2	3	4
c. How would you likely speak in your **college / university meetings** about the integration of a learning outcomes approach in other program areas?	1	2	3	4
d. How would you likely speak with colleagues from **other educational organizations** about the integration of a learning outcomes approach?	1	2	3	4

E.2   Please respond to the following questions by circling the *one best* response that reflects your views.

	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely
a. How likely would you be to attend **workshops or discussion groups** about learning outcomes?	1	2	3	4
b. How likely would you be to take further steps to integrate a learning outcomes approach in your **instructional area**?	1	2	3	4
c. How likely would you be to take further steps to integrate a learning outcomes approach in your **educational institution**?	1	2	3	4

Comments:

E.3 To what extent do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statements about the interests being served by a learning outcomes approach? Please circle the number that *best* reflects your views.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A learning outcomes approach serves the interests of:					
a. learners	1	2	3	4	5
b. faculty members	1	2	3	4	5
c. administrators	1	2	3	4	5
d. employers	1	2	3	4	5
e. politicians	1	2	3	4	5
f. ministry personnel	1	2	3	4	5
g. the public	1	2	3	4	5

E.4   To what extent do you **agree** or **disagree** with the following statements about the aims of post-secondary education? Please circle the number that *best* reflects your views.

The aim of postsecondary education is to:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. prepare learners for current employment	1	2	3	4	5
b. prepare learners for future employment	1	2	3	4	5
c. improve learners' financial position	1	2	3	4	5
d. develop individuals' potential	1	2	3	4	5
e. provide learners with a well-rounded education	1	2	3	4	5
f. prepare learners for further education	1	2	3	4	5
g. prepare learners for citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
h. develop learners' social and interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4	5

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following questions reflect the main interview guide implemented during this study; the questions pertain to the site groups. The guide was adapted to reflect the other interview groups such as students and key actors.

1. What type of involvement / experience have you had with a learning outcomes approach?

    Supplemental: *Have you had an involvement with the Learning Outcomes Network?*

2. What do you see as key aspects of a learning outcomes approach?

    OR

    What do you see as the differences between learning outcomes and other ways of expressing the outcomes of education (e.g. competencies or behavioural objectives)?

3. How do you see / understand the present interest in a learning outcomes approach and where does it come from?

4. From your perspective what are the issues and problems that need to be addressed / sorted out in relation to the learning outcomes approach?

    OR

    What do you see as the benefits and limitations of the learning outcomes approach being supporting through the C2T2 initiative?

5.   Would you say that learning outcomes have had an effect on the way education is approached or thought about today ... in your area ... in the BC postsecondary system as a whole?

   Supplemental: *How valuable is a learning outcomes approach in your program area?*

                            From your perspective, how valid is a learning outcomes approach in expressing the outcomes of education?

6.   There appears to be a lot of discussion about *Charting a New Course.* How do you understand the message from this document?   What is it saying?

OR

   In *Charting a New Course* several goals were identified. These goals include relevance and quality, access, affordability and accountability. It is suggested that these goals will be used to evaluate initiatives in postsecondary education. What are your views about this direction?

   Supplemental: *What are your views about the value and relevance of the BC strategic plan Charting a New Course?*

7.   What do you see as the relationship between learning outcomes and educational reform?

OR

   How do you view learning outcomes in the context of educational reform?

8.   From your perspective, what do you see as important issues in the reform of colleges / university-colleges and BC postsecondary education as a whole?

OR

   What are the issues or problems that need to be addressed / sorted out in relation to college / university-college education and BC postsecondary education as a whole?

9.　What opportunities do you see to support educational reform initiatives?

OR

What recommendations would you have for C2T2 and the Ministry about educational reform initiatives or directions?

Supplemental: *What are your views about the way funds are being allocated in BC postsecondary education?*

10.　How well do you feel we currently address the learning needs of students in post-secondary education?

11.　Is there anything else about the Learning Outcome Network or the learning outcomes approach that you think is important for me to know or understand?

For C2T2 people and other key players:

12.　Who else would be important for me to talk to about this?

TARGET SAMPLE AND RESPONDENT DATA

The following tables provide information about the characteristics of the target group and the respondents.

Table G1. Organizational Positions of Target Sample Expressed in Percentages (N=709)

Category	Organization Administrators %**	Department Administrators			LOCs & PLARCs* %**	Total %**
		Foundation %**	Academic Leading to Degree %**	Vocational, Career Tech. & Applied Degrees %**		
Organization						
College 1 (n=57)	8.8	10.5	15.8	61.4	3.5	100
College 2 (n=60)	23.3	10.0	21.7	41.7	3.3	100
College 3 (n=37)	27.0	10.8	13.5	45.9	2.7	100
College 4 (n=25)	16.0	16.0	8.0	56.0	4.0	100
College 5 (n=61)	9.8	3.3	29.5	54.1	3.3	100
College 6 (n=23)	30.4	8.7	8.7	43.5	8.7	100
College 7 (n=29)	34.5	10.3	17.2	31.0	6.9	100
College 8 (n=43)	25.6	23.3	9.3	37.2	4.7	100
College 9 (n=27)	18.5	11.1	7.4	55.6	7.4	100
College 10 (n=50)	14.0	24.0	0.0	60.0	2.0	100
UC 1 (n=64)	14.1	9.4	23.4	51.6	1.6	100
UC 2 (n=72)	12.5	9.7	34.7	40.3	2.8	100
UC 3 (n=57)	19.3	14.0	26.3	36.8	3.5	100
UC 4 (n=53)	18.9	17.0	11.3	49.1	3.8	100
UC 5 (n=51)	13.7	7.8	27.5	49.0	2.0	100
N	125	86	135	338	25	709

* Learning Outcomes Coordinators, and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators

** as a percentage of organization's target sample

Table G2. Organizational Positions of Target Sample Expressed in Numbers (N=709)

Category	Organization Administrators	Department Administrators			LOCs & PLARCs*	Total
		Foundation	Academic Leading to Degree	Vocational, Career Tech. & Applied Degrees		
	N	N	N	N	N	N
Organization						
College 1	5	6	9	35	2	57
College 2	14	6	13	25	2	60
College 3	10	4	5	17	1	37
College 4	4	4	2	14	1	25
College 5	6	2	18	33	2	61
College 6	7	2	2	10	2	23
College 7	10	3	5	9	2	29
College 8	11	10	4	16	2	43
College 9	5	3	2	15	2	27
College 10	7	12	0	30	1	50
UC1	9	6	15	33	1	64
UC2	9	7	25	29	2	72
UC3	11	8	15	21	2	57
UC4	10	9	6	26	2	53
UC5	7	4	14	25	1	51
N	**125**	**86**	**135**	**338**	**25**	**709**

* Learning Outcomes Coordinators, and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators

Table G3.　Organizational Positions of Survey Respondents Expressed in Percentages (n= 313)

Category	Organization Administrators	Department Administrators			LOCs & PLARCs*	Total
		Foundation	Academic Leading to Degree	Vocational, Career Tech. & Applied Degrees		
	%**	%**	%**	%**	%**	%***
Organization						
College 1　(n=30)	10.0	0.0	20.0	63.3	6.7	100
College 2　(n=29)	24.1	14.0	17.2	41.4	3.4	100
College 3　(n=13)	30.8	23.0	0.0	46.2	0.0	100
College 4　(n=13)	23.1	8.0	0.0	53.8	15.4	100
College 5　(n=23)	13.0	0.0	21.7	60.9	4.3	100
College 6　(n=15)	40.0	7.0	6.7	40.0	6.7	100
College 7　(n=13)	38.5	0.0	0.0	53.8	7.7	100
College 8　(n=19)	15.8	16.0	10.5	47.4	10.5	100
College 9　(n=15)	6.7	13.0	13.3	46.7	20.0	100
College 10　(n=25)	24.0	20.0	0.0	52.0	0.0	96
UC 1　(n=26)	23.1	8.0	19.2	46.2	3.8	100
UC 2　(n=24)	12.5	4.0	29.2	54.2	0.0	100
UC 3　(n=26)	34.6	8.0	7.7	46.2	3.8	100
UC 4　(n=22)	31.8	9.0	9.1	45.5	4.5	100
UC 5　(n=20)	10.0	0.0	10.0	70.0	10.0	100
n	68	26	39	161	18	312***

*　Learning Outcomes Coordinators, and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators

**　as a percentage of organization's respondent sample

***　One respondent obliterated coding so it was not possible to determine programming area. Sub-totals sub to 312.

Table G4. Organizational Positions of Survey Respondents Expressed in Numbers (n= 313)

Category	Organization Administrators	Department Administrators			LOCs & PLARCs*	Total
		Foundation	Academic Leading to Degree	Vocational, Career Tech. & Applied Degrees		
	n	n	n	n	n	n
Organization						
College 1	3	0	6	19	2	30
College 2	7	4	5	12	1	29
College 3	4	3	0	6	0	13
College 4	3	1	0	7	2	13
College 5	3	0	5	14	1	23
College 6	6	1	1	6	1	15
College 7	5	0	0	7	1	13
College 8	3	3	2	9	2	19
College 9	1	2	2	7	3	15
College 10	6	5	0	13	0	25
UC 1	6	2	5	12	1	26
UC 2	3	1	7	13	0	24
UC 3	9	2	2	12	1	26
UC 4	7	2	2	10	1	22
UC 5	2	0	2	14	2	20
n	**68**	**26**	**39**	**161**	**18**	**312****

* Learning Outcomes Coordinators, and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators

** One respondent obliterated coding so it was not possible to determine programming area. Sub-totals sub to 312.

Table G5.   General Work Profile by Respondent Position Expressed in Percentages (n=313)

Organizational Position	Work Profile						Total %
	>50% organizational administration	> 50% program administration	>50% in organizational and program administration	> 50% student contact	>50% development time	Eclectic work profile	
LOCs and PLARCs	11.1	16.7	5.6	27.8	22.2	16.7	100.0
Department Administrators	2.3	18.6	5.9	52.3	4.5	16.4	100.0
Organizational Administrators	59.7	9.0	14.9	3.0	1.5	11.9	100.0
Total % per Profile	15.4	16.4	7.9	40.0	4.9	15.4	100.0

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Table G6.   General Work Profile by Respondent Position Expressed in Numbers (n=313)

Organizational Position	Work Profile						Total n
	>50% organizational administration	> 50% program administration	>50% in organizational and program administration	> 50% student contact	> 50% development time	Eclectic work profile	
LOCs and PLARCs	2	3	1	5	4	3	18
Department Administrators	5	41	13	115	10	36	220
Organizational Administrators	40	6	10	2	1	8	67
Total n	47	50	24	122	15	47	305

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Table G7.   Years of Employment in Postsecondary Education by Respondent Position Expressed in Percentages (n=313)

Organizational Position	Years of Employment in Postsecondary Education			Total %
	10 years of less	Between 11 and 20 years	More than 20 years	
LOCs and PLARCs	38.9	44.4	16.7	100.0
Department Administrators	33.6	40.8	25.6	100.0
Organizational Administrators	21.2	36.4	42.4	100.0
Total % per Category	31.3	40.1	28.7	100.0

Table G8.   Years of Employment in Postsecondary Education by Respondent Position Expressed in Numbers (n=313)

Organizational Position	Years of Employment in Postsecondary Education			Total n
	10 years of less	Between 11 and 20 years	More than 20 years	
LOCs and PLARCs	7	8	3	18
Department Administrators	75	91	57	223
Organizational Administrators	14	24	28	66
Total n	96	123	88	307

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Table G9. Highest Educational Credential by Respondent Position Expressed in Percentages (n=313)

Organizational Position	Highest Educational Credential					Total %
	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	Doctorate	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	22.2	72.2	5.6	100.0
Department Administrators	2.7	16.8	24.3	43.4	12.8	100.0
Organizational Administrators	1.5	0.0	7.4	67.6	23.5	100.0
Total % of Highest Credential	2.2	12.2	20.5	50.3	14.7	100.0

Table G10. Highest Educational Credential by Respondent Position Expressed in Numbers (n=313)

Organizational Position	Highest Educational Credential					Total n
	Certificate	Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	Doctorate	
LOCs and PLARCs	0	0	4	13	1	18
Department Administrators	6	38	55	98	29	226
Organizational Administrators	1	0	5	46	16	68
Total n	7	38	64	157	46	312

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Statistical Data

This Appendix contains the frequency data and inferential statistical data.

Table H1.   Extent of perceived differences regarding specific course outline elements –
Department administrators, LOCs and PLARCs (n=245)* See Appendix E,
Question B.2.

Elements in Course Outlines**	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	Do not Know	Total %
Learning outcomes and general course goals (n=236)	6.4	30.9	33.5	19.1	10.2	100.0
Learning outcomes and behavioral objectives (n=236)	10.6	23.7	34.3	14.4	16.9	100.0
Learning outcomes and competency statements (n=234)	11.5	27.8	33.3	10.3	17.1	100.0
Competency statements and behavioral objectives (n=233)	9.4	21.0	29.2	15.0	25.3	100.0
Competency statements and general course goals (n=232)	8.6	22.0	31.5	19.5	18.1	100.0

*   Section B questions were only included for the department administrators, learning outcomes
coordinators, and prior learning assessment and recognition coordinators.

Table H1.1.   Respondents views regarding perceived differences among specific course outline elements by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=227)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Learning outcomes & general course goals (n=200)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	21	99.50
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	34	78.88
	Vocational & Career Technical	114	104.05
	Applied Degrees Programs	31	111.84
Learning outcomes & behavioural objectives (n=183)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	19	102.47
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	31	63.03
	Vocational & Career Technical	104	96.46
	Applied Degrees Programs	29	100.12
Learning outcomes & competency statements (n=182)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	19	98.21
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	28	71.71
	Vocational & Career Technical	111	95.93
	Applied Degrees Programs	24	88.77
Competency statements & behavioural objectives (n=163)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	17	94.03
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	62.37
	Vocational & Career Technical	99	83.41
	Applied Degrees Programs	24	86.48
Competency statements & general course outlines (n=178)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	18	97.97
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	25	77.02
	Vocational & Career Technical	108	92.23
	Applied Degrees Programs	27	84.50

Table H1.2.   Respondents views regarding perceived differences among specific course outline elements by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Learning outcomes & general course goals	Learning outcomes & behavioural objectives	Learning outcomes & competency statements	Competency statements & behavioural objectives	Competency statements & general course outlines
Chi-Square	7.096	12.736	5.704	5.916	2.749
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.069	.005	.127	.116	.432

Table H1.3.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Learning Outcomes (n=183)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	5.3	26.3	47.4	21.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	32.3	38.7	16.1	12.9	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	9.6	24.0	51.0	15.4	100.0
Applied Degrees	10.3	27.6	34.5	27.6	100.0

Table H2. Extent of agreement with statements regarding the aims of postsecondary education (n=313) See Appendix E, Question E.4.

Aims of Postsecondary Education	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total %
Develop individuals' potential (n=310)	0.3	0.0	1.8	33.9	64.2	100.0
Provide learners with a well-rounded education (n=310)	0.6	1.9	8.4	34.8	54.2	100.0
Prepare learners for further education (n=309)	0.3	1.9	6.1	45.6	46.0	100.0
Develop learners' social and interpersonal skills (n=309)	0.6	3.6	12.9	48.2	34.6	100.0
Prepare learners for citizenship (n=308)	2.3	4.5	21.1	34.1	38.0	100.0
Prepare learners for future employment (n=310)	1.3	1.3	5.5	56.1	35.8	100.0
Prepare learners for current employment (n=310)	2.9	7.1	123	51.0	26.8	100.0
Improve learners' financial position (n=308)	2.6	11.7	34.1	37.3	14.3	100

Table H2.1. Extent of agreement with statements regarding the aims of postsecondary education by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=282)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Prepare for Current Employment (n=278)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	132.52
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	80.67
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	166.70
	Applied Degrees Programs	50	130.95
Prepare for Future Employment (n=278)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	123.77
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	103.15
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	157.83
	Applied Degrees Programs	50	137.46
Improve Financial Position (n=276)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	137.50
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	117.95
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	149.62
	Applied Degrees Programs	50	129.55
Well-rounded Education (n=278)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	134.62
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	181.26
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	120.08
	Applied Degrees Programs	50	152.38
Prepare for Citizenship (n=276)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	150.89
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	162.42
	Vocational & Career Technical	139	118.67
	Applied Degrees Programs	50	159.62
Social and Interpersonal Skills (n=277)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	141.09
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	130.62
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	135.68
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	156.38
Prepare for Further Education (n=277)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	138.33
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	167.81
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	128.54
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	137.81
Develop Potential (n=278)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	131.80
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	161.80
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	129.50
	Applied Degrees Programs	50	148.70

Table H2.2. Extent of agreement with statements regarding the aims of postsecondary education by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Prepare for Current Employment	Prepare for Future Employment	Improve Financial Position
Chi-Square	54.236	25.317	7.585
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.055

Table H2.2a. Extent of agreement with statements regarding the aims of postsecondary education by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Well-rounded Education	Prepare for Citizenship	Social and Interpersonal Skills	Prepare for Further Education	Develop Potential
Chi-Square	30.140	19.683	3.729	11.616	10.434
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.292	.009	.015

Table H2.3. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Preparation for Current Employment (n=278)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	3.0	12.1	72.7	12.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	9.3	22.2	22.2	42.6	3.7	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.7	1.4	9.9	46.8	41.1	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.0	12.0	6.0	58.0	20.0	100.0

Table H2.4.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Preparation for Future Employment (n=278)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	0.0	0.0	81.8	18.2	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	1.9	3.7	13.0	66.7	14.8	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	1.4	0.0	3.5	46.8	48.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.0	4.0	4.0	54.0	36.0	100.0

Table H2.5.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Improvement of Financial Position (n=276)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	12.5	34.4	46.9	6.3	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	7.5	13.2	41.5	28.3	9.4	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	1.4	11.3	30.5	37.6	19.1	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.0	16.0	32.0	38.0	10.0	100.0

Table H2.6. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Well-rounded Education (n=278)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	3.0	0.0	51.5	45.5	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	0.0	0.0	3.7	13.0	83.3	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	1.4	3.5	14.2	39.0	41.8	100.0
Applied Degrees	0.0	0.0	4.0	36.0	60.0	100.0

Table H2.7. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Preparation for Citizenship (n=276)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	3.0	12.1	48.5	36.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	3.7	5.6	9.3	27.8	53.7	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	2.2	5.8	33.1	33.1	25.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.0	0.0	16.0	30.0	50.0	100.0

Table H2.8.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Preparation for Further Education (n=277)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.6	39.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	0.0	0.0	3.7	31.5	64.8	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.7	2.8	9.9	46.8	39.7	100.0
Applied Degrees	0.0	4.1	2.0	51.0	42.9	100.0

Table H2.9.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Developing Potential (n=278)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.4	57.6	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.4	79.6	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.7	0.0	3.5	38.3	57.4	100.0
Applied Degrees	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	70.0	100.0

Table H2.10. Extent of agreement with statements regarding the aims of postsecondary education by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=282)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Prepare for Current Employment (n=310)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	169.81
	Department Administrators	225	152.53
	Institutional Administrators	67	161.64
Prepare for Future Employment (n=310)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	160.00
	Department Administrators	225	152.85
	Institutional Administrators	67	163.19
Improve Financial Position (n=308)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	191.39
	Department Administrators	224	147.56
	Institutional Administrators	66	167.98
Well-rounded Education n=310)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	165.17
	Department Administrators	225	148.39
	Institutional Administrators	67	176.77
Prepare for Citizenship (n=308)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	195.94
	Department Administrators	223	142.90
	Institutional Administrators	67	181.99
Social & Interpersonal Skills (n=309)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	184.89
	Department Administrators	224	146.17
	Institutional Administrators	67	176.49
Prepare for Further Education (n=309)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	183.47
	Department Administrators	224	148.17
	Institutional Administrators	67	170.18
Develop Potential (n=310)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	151.89
	Department Administrators	225	151.42
	Institutional Administrators	67	170.16

Table H2.11. Extent of agreement with statements regarding the aims of postsecondary education by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Prepare for Current Employment	Prepare for Future Employment	Improve Financial Position
Chi-Square	1.206	.945	6.595
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.547	.623	.037

Table H2.11a. Extent of agreement with statements regarding the aims of postsecondary education by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Well-rounded Education	Prepare for Citizenship	Social and Interpersonal Skills	Prepare for Further Education	Develop Potential
Chi-Square	6.762	15.697	9.571	6.277	3.285
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.034	.000	.008	.043	.194

Table H2.12. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Improvement of Financial Position (n=308)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	22.2	66.7	11.1	100.0
Department Administrators	2.7	13.4	36.2	35.3	12.5	100.0
Organizational Administrators	3.0	9.1	30.3	36.4	21.2	100.0

Table H2.13. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Well-rounded
Education (n=310)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.4	55.6	100.0
Department Administrators	0.9	1.8	9.8	37.8	49.8	100.0
Organizational Administrators	0.0	3.0	6.0	22.4	68.7	100.0

Table H2.14. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Preparation for
Citizenship (n=308)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	5.6	38.9	55.6	100.0
Department Administrators	2.7	5.4	26.0	33.2	32.7	100.0
Organizational Administrators	1.5	3.0	9.0	35.8	50.7	100.0

Table H2.15. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Social and
Interpersonal Skills (n=309)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.6	44.4	100.0
Department Administrators	0.4	4.5	15.6	49.1	30.4	100.0
Organizational Administrators	1.5	1.5	7.5	43.3	46.3	100.0

Table H2.16.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Preparation for
Further Education (n=309)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.9	61.1	100.0
Department Administrators	0.4	2.2	7.1	48.2	42.0	100.0
Organizational Administrators	0.0	1.5	4.5	38.8	55.2	100.0

Table H3.   Respondent views about the importance of specific factors for students related to the aims of postsecondary education (n=282) See Appendix E, Question E.5.

Aims of Postsecondary Education	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Total %
Career development (n=306)	1.0	8.5	29.7	60.8	100.0
Opportunities for life choices (n=306)	1.0	10.1	36.7	52.3	100.0
Opportunities for financial gain (n=306)	2.9	19.9	35.3	41.6	100.0
Preparation for further education (n=306)	2.6	21.9	42.8	32.7	100.0
Personal development (n=306)	2.6	24.2	43.8	29.4	100.0
General education (n=304)	3.6	33.6	41.8	21.1	100.0
Social opportunities (n=304)	12.5	41.8	31.9	13.8	100.0

Table H3.1. Respondent views about the importance of specific factors for students related to the aims of postsecondary education by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=282)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
General education (n=272)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	144.37
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	174.43
	Vocational & Career Technical	138	121.40
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	132.26
Social Opportunities (n=272)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	153.87
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	148.88
	Vocational & Career Technical	138	130.75
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	128.05
Personal development (n=274)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	135.20
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	138.45
	Vocational & Career Technical	139	139.60
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	131.99
Preparation for further education (n=274)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	194.08
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	173.21
	Vocational & Career Technical	139	116.93
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	119.54
Opportunities for life choices (n=274)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	156.13
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	142.00
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	137.07
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	121.69
Financial gain (n=274)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	121.63
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	107.34
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	155.13
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	130.41
Career development (n=274)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	111.27
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	98.92
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	158.06
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	138.42

Table H3.2. Respondent views about the importance of specific factors for students related to the aims of postsecondary education by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	General education	Social opportunities	Personal development	Preparation for further education
Chi-Square	20.537	4.657	.422	44.559
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.199	.936	.000

Table H3.2a. Respondent views about the importance of specific factors for students related to the aims of postsecondary education by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Opportunities for life choices	Financial gain	Career development
Chi-Square	4.843	18.689	34.870
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.184	.000	.000

Table H3.3. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to General Education (n=272)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	35.5	38.7	25.8	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	1.9	11.1	51.9	35.2	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	5.8	39.9	39.9	14.5	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.1	36.7	38.8	20.4	100.0

Table H3.4. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Preparation for Further Education (n=274)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	3.1	28.1	68.8	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	0.0	9.3	37.0	53.7	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	5.0	28.8	44.6	21.6	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.0	28.6	49.0	20.4	100.0

Table H3.5. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Financial Gain (n=274)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	29.0	41.9	29.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	7.4	27.8	42.6	22.2	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	1.4	14.3	32.9	51.4	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.1	22.4	36.7	36.7	100.0

Table H3.6. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Career Development (n=274)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	25.0	28.1	46.9	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	1.9	18.5	44.4	35.2	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.0	2.9	21.4	75.7	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.2	4.2	29.2	62.5	100.0

Table H3.7. Respondent views about the importance of specific factors for students related to the aims of postsecondary education by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=313)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
General education (n=304)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	154.75
	Department Administrators	221	149.58
	Institutional Administrators	65	161.79
Social opportunities (n=304)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	162.64
	Department Administrators	220	151.72
	Institutional Administrators	66	152.35
Personal development (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	175.72
	Department Administrators	222	156.77
	Institutional Administrators	66	136.44
Preparation for further education (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	169.42
	Department Administrators	222	146.26
	Institutional Administrators	66	173.50
Opportunities for life choices (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	169.64
	Department Administrators	222	150.51
	Institutional Administrators	66	159.16
Financial gain (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	182.53
	Department Administrators	221	146.51
	Institutional Administrators	67	168.75
Career development (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	171.78
	Department Administrators	221	155.50
	Institutional Administrators	67	142.00

Table H3.8. Respondent views about the importance of specific factors for students related to the aims of postsecondary education by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	General education	Social opportunities	Personal development	Preparation for further education
Chi-Square	1.115	.289	4.441	6.209
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.573	.865	.109	.045

Table H3.8a. Respondent views about the importance of specific factors for students related to the aims of postsecondary education by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Opportunities for life choices	Financial gain	Career development
Chi-Square	1.391	6.063	2.689
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.499	.048	.261

Table H3.9. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Preparation for Further Education (n=306)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	16.7	44.4	38.9	100.0
Department Administrators	3.6	23.9	43.2	29.3	100.0
Organizational Administrators	0.0	16.7	40.9	42.4	100.0

Table H3.10. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Financial Gain (n=306)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	16.7	22.2	61.1	100.0
Department Administrators	4.1	21.3	36.7	38.0	100.0
Organizational Administrators	0.0	16.4	34.3	49.3	100.0

Table H4.   Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach (n=313) See Appendix E, Question D.1.

Positive Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total %
Helps direct faculty members' attention to the needs of learners. (n=303)	1.3	7.3	16.5	51.5	23.4	100.0
Promotes more meaningful curricula for learners. (n=307)	2.6	4.9	22.8	50.2	19.5	100.0
Helps the faculty to adopt evaluation strategies which are close to real life situations. (n=302)	2.0	5.9	29.5	45.7	13.9	100.0
Helps graduates acquire skills which are relevant to employment. (n=305)	3.0	8.9	27.9	45.6	14.8	100.0
Could allow students to move more easily between programs and institutions. (n=306)	2.9	10.5	32.0	41.8	12.7	100.0
Promotes faculty accountability for student learning. (n=305)	3.9	11.1	28.9	43.9	12.1	100.0
Promotes student success in course and program completion. (n=306)	4.2	7.5	35.3	43.1	9.8	100.0
Is valuable for all types of courses and programs. (n=307)	5.5	17.9	20.2	41.7	14.7	100.0
Fosters skills needed to function in society. (n=305)	5.6	6.6	40.7	36.7	10.5	100.0
Fosters a more flexible learning environment. (n=305)	6.2	13.8	38.0	34.4	7.5	100.0

(table continues)

Table H4.   *(continued)*

Negative Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total %
May become a mechanism for increased control by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. (n=305)	5.9	12.1	46.2	23.0	12.8	100.0
Is just another trend that will soon disappear. (n=305)	8.9	28.5	38.7	13.8	10.2	100.0
May be used as a reason to decrease resources to programs. (n=304)	6.9	25.3	48.0	14.5	5.3	100.0
Will have little long-term effect on courses and programs. (n=304)	6.6	35.2	34.5	20.4	3.3	100.0
Hinders the acquisition of a broader education. (n=305)	15.7	37.4	30.8	11.8	4.3	100.0

Table H4.1.   Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach
by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=283)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Promotes more meaningful curriculum (n=275)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	172.34
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	87.45
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	148.05
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	141.32
Promotes student success in completion (n=274)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	166.19
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	89.04
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	148.09
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	139.73
Supports more authentic assessments (n=270)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	138.56
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	50	83.62
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	155.73
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	128.69
Supports acquisition of skills to function in society (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	162.47
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	84.14
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	150.10
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	140.45
Directs attention to needs of learners (n=271)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	163.65
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	96.89
	Vocational & Career Technical	139	145.27
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	133.72
Supports acquisition of relevant employment skills (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	136.77
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	81.90
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	160.96
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	126.67
Promotes faculty accountability (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	30	155.28
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	103.19
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	144.91
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	139.60
Valuable for all courses / programs (n=275)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	159.55
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	103.30
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	148.52
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	131.19
Fosters a more flexible learning environment (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	30	170.05
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	97.40
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	146.35
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	132.68

(table continues)

Table H4.1. *(continued)*

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Promotes student transfer (n=274)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	137.67
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	110.70
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	146.43
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	140.12
A trend that will soon disappear (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	120.06
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	188.88
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	124.01
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	130.26
May be used to decrease resources to programs (n=272)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	118.85
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	161.07
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	130.72
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	138.26
May become a mechanism for increased Ministry control (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	125.97
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	170.08
	Vocational & Career Technical	139	129.89
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	128.59
Hinders a broader education (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	119.34
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	157.42
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	130.76
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	144.20
Will have little long term effect (n=272)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	131.64
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	51	156.78
	Vocational & Career Technical	141	132.84
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	128.93

Table H4.2.   Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach
by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	More meaningful curricula	Student success in completion	More authentic assessment	Skills to function in society	Attention to needs of learners
Chi-Square	34.882	30.026	36.603	35.116	22.257
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table H4.2a.   Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach
by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Relevant employment skills	Faculty accountability	Valuable for all courses / programs	More flexible learning environment	Transfer more easily
Chi-Square	44.366	14.437	16.769	22.970	8.709
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.002	.001	.000	.033

Table H4.2b.   Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach
by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Just a trend that will disappear	Used to decrease resources to programs	Increased control by ministry	Hinders a broader education	Little long-term effect
Chi-Square	30.724	8.619	13.247	6.996	4.713
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.035	.004	.072	.194

Table H4.3.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to More Meaningful Curriculum (n=275)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	0.0	12.5	59.4	28.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	11.3	13.2	37.7	34.0	3.8	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.0	4.3	23.4	51.8	20.6	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.1	4.1	18.4	59.2	14.3	100.0

Table H4.4.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Student Success in Completion (n=274)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	3.1	28.1	56.3	12.5	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	17.3	19.2	36.5	26.9	0.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	1.4	4.3	39.0	45.4	9.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.1	12.2	28.6	46.9	8.2	100.0

Table H4.5. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to More Authentic Assessment (n=270)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	12.9	29.0	41.9	16.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	10.0	24.0	38.0	26.0	2.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.0	2.9	27.9	52.9	16.4	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.0	12.2	28.6	51.0	6.1	100.0

Table H4.6. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Skills to Function in Society (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	3.2	35.5	51.6	9.7	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	20.8	17.0	45.3	15.1	1.9	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	4.3	2.8	41.1	40.4	11.3	100.0
Applied Degrees	0.0	12.5	41.7	35.4	10.4	100.0

Table H4.7.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Attention to Needs of Learners
             (n=271)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	0.0	9.7	61.3	29.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	7.7	17.3	25.0	40.4	9.6	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.0	5.8	16.5	53.2	24.5	100.0
Applied Degrees	0.0	10.2	16.3	55.1	18.4	100.0

Table H4.8.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Relevant Employment Skills
             (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	3.2	9.7	25.8	51.6	9.7	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	13.5	15.4	48.1	21.2	1.9	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.7	2.8	23.4	54.6	18.4	100.0
Applied Degrees	0.0	20.4	28.6	36.7	14.3	100.0

Table H4.9. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Promoting Faculty
Accountability (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	10.0	23.3	53.3	13.3	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	17.0	24.5	17.0	35.8	5.7	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.0	8.5	34.0	46.8	10.6	100.0
Applied Degrees	6.1	10.2	28.6	40.8	14.3	100.0

Table H4.10. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Valuable for All Courses /
Programs (n=275)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	18.8	12.5	53.1	15.6	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	17.0	22.6	26.4	30.2	3.8	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	2.8	15.6	23.4	44.0	14.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	8.2	24.5	16.3	38.8	12.2	100.0

Table H4.11. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to More Flexible Learning Environment (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	3.3	40.0	46.7	10.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	17.0	26.4	34.0	22.6	0.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	2.8	12.8	40.4	36.9	7.1	100.0
Applied Degrees	12.2	16.3	28.6	36.7	6.1	100.0

Table H4.12. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Transferring More Easily (n=274)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	9.4	34.4	53.1	3.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	9.6	17.3	34.6	30.8	7.7	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	2.8	6.4	33.3	43.3	14.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	0.0	18.4	28.6	34.7	18.4	100.0

Table H4.13. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Being Just a Trend That Will Disappear (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	9.4	31.3	46.9	9.4	3.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	3.8	11.5	23.1	36.5	25.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	9.2	31.9	43.3	6.4	9.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.2	37.5	35.4	16.7	6.3	100.0

Table H4.14. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Being Used to Decrease Resources to Programs (n=272)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	45.2	38.7	12.9	3.2	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	3.8	11.5	55.8	15.4	13.5	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	7.1	24.8	50.4	14.2	3.5	100.0
Applied Degrees	8.3	20.8	47.9	16.7	6.3	100.0

Table H4.15. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Increased Control by Ministry (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	6.3	15.6	46.9	21.9	9.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	1.9	3.8	41.5	24.5	28.3	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	5.0	11.5	52.5	22.3	8.6	100.0
Applied Degrees	6.1	18.4	40.8	22.4	12.2	100.0

Table H4.16. Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=313)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
More meaningful curricula (n=307)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	223.72
	Department Administrators	222	145.29
	Institutional Administrators	67	164.12
Student success in completion (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	199.67
	Department Administrators	221	145.22
	Institutional Administrators	67	168.41
More authentic assessment (n=302)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	217.58
	Department Administrators	218	146.78
	Institutional Administrators	66	149.05
Skills to function in society (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	204.72
	Department Administrators	220	143.90
	Institutional Administrators	67	168.99
Attention to needs of learners (n=303)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	223.86
	Department Administrators	219	143.21
	Institutional Administrators	66	161.58
Relevant employment skills (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	185.44
	Department Administrators	220	147.38
	Institutional Administrators	67	162.73
Promotes faculty accountability (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	205.33
	Department Administrators	221	145.35
	Institutional Administrators	66	164.33
Valuable for all courses / programs (n=307)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	232.75
	Department Administrators	222	144.77
	Institutional Administrators	67	163.44
More flexible learning environment (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	200.42
	Department Administrators	220	151.03
	Institutional Administrators	67	146.72
Transfer more easily (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	178.81
	Department Administrators	221	144.84
	Institutional Administrators	67	175.25
Just a trend that will disappear (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	105.81
	Department Administrators	220	158.16
	Institutional Administrators	67	148.75

(table continues)

Table H4.16 *(continued)*

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Used to decrease resources to programs (n=304)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	117.22
	Department Administrators	219	163.04
	Institutional Administrators	67	127.52
Increased control by ministry (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	148.72
	Department Administrators	220	156.00
	Institutional Administrators	67	144.31
Hinders a broader education (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	102.08
	Department Administrators	220	162.23
	Institutional Administrators	67	136.37
Little long-term effect (n=304)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	129.97
	Department Administrators	219	159.87
	Institutional Administrators	67	134.47

Table H4.17. Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach
by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	More meaningful curricula	Student success in completion	More authentic assessment	Skills to function in society	Attention to needs of learners
Chi-Square	16.518	9.995	12.558	12.176	17.860
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.007	.002	.002	.000

Table H4.17a. Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach
by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Relevant employment skills	Faculty accountability	Valuable for all courses / programs	More flexible learning environment	Transfer more easily
Chi-Square	4.711	10.237	19.036	6.274	8.575
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.095	.006	.000	.043	.014

Table H4.17b. Extent of agreement with statements about a learning outcomes approach
by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Just a trend that will disappear	Used to decrease resources to programs	Increased control by ministry	Hinders a broader education	Little long-term effect
Chi-Square	6.630	13.179	1.071	11.824	6.112
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.036	.001	.585	.003	.047

Table H4.18. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to More Meaningful Curricula (n=307)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	5.6	38.9	55.6	100.0
Department Administrators	2.7	5.4	25.7	50.9	15.3	100.0
Organizational Administrators	3.0	4.5	17.9	50.7	23.9	100.0

Table H4.19. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Student Success in Completion (n=306)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	27.8	44.4	27.8	100.0
Department Administrators	5.0	8.6	37.6	41.6	7.2	100.0
Organizational Administrators	3.0	6.0	29.9	47.8	13.4	100.0

Table H4.20. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to More Authentic Assessment (n=302)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	100.0
Department Administrators	2.3	9.2	31.2	45.4	11.9	100.0
Organizational Administrators	1.5	10.6	27.3	50.0	10.6	100.0

Table H4.21. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Skills to Function in Society (n=305)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	27.8	44.4	27.8	100.0
Department Administrators	7.3	6.8	44.1	32.7	9.1	100.0
Organizational Administrators	1.5	7.5	32.8	47.8	10.4	100.0

Table H4.22. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Drawing Attention to
Needs of Learners (n=303)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.9	61.1	100.0
Department Administrators	1.8	8.2	17.8	53.4	18.7	100.0
Organizational Administrators	0.0	6.1	16.7	48.5	28.8	100.0

Table H4.23. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Promoting Faculty
Accountability (n=305)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	22.2	44.4	33.3	100.0
Department Administrators	5.0	10.4	33.0	42.1	9.5	100.0
Organizational Administrators	1.5	16.7	16.7	50.0	15.2	100.0

Table H4.24.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Valuable for All
            Courses / Programs (n=307)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	5.6	5.6	33.3	55.6	100.0
Department Administrators	5.0	19.4	25.2	39.6	10.8	100.0
Organizational Administrators	9.0	16.4	7.5	50.7	16.4	100.0

Table H4.25.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to More Flexible
            Learning Environment (n=305)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	5.6	33.3	33.3	27.8	100.0
Department Administrators	6.4	14.5	37.3	35.9	5.9	100.0
Organizational Administrators	7.5	13.4	41.8	29.9	7.5	100.0

Table H4.26. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Transferring More Easily (n=306)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	11.1	16.7	55.6	16.7	100.0
Department Administrators	4.1	11.3	35.3	38.0	11.3	100.0
Organizational Administrators	0.0	7.5	25.4	50.7	16.4	100.0

Table H4.27. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Being Just a Trend That Will Disappear (n=305)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	16.7	44.4	33.3	5.6	0.0	100.0
Department Administrators	7.3	27.7	39.5	13.6	11.8	100.0
Organizational Administrators	11.9	26.9	37.3	16.4	7.5	100.0

Table H4.28. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Being Used to
Decrease Resources to Programs (n=304)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	16.7	38.9	27.8	16.7	0.0	100.0
Department Administrators	5.0	21.9	49.8	16.9	6.4	100.0
Organizational Administrators	10.4	32.8	47.8	6.0	3.0	100.0

Table H4.29. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Hindering a Broader
Education (n=305)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	38.9	38.9	16.7	0.0	5.6	100.0
Department Administrators	11.4	36.8	35.0	12.3	4.5	100.0
Organizational Administrators	23.9	38.8	20.9	13.4	3.0	100.0

Table H4.30. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Having Little Long-term Effect (n=304)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	11.1	44.4	27.8	11.1	5.6	100.0
Department Administrators	5.5	31.1	38.8	20.5	4.1	100.0
Organizational Administrators	9.0	46.3	22.4	22.4	0.0	100.0

Table H5. Extent of agreement regarding whose interests are being served by a
learning outcomes approach (n=313) See Appendix E, Question E.3.

A learning outcomes approach serves the interests of:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total %
Learners (n=304)	2.3	4.3	15.8	43.4	34.2	100.0
Employers (n=301)	2.0	1.3	25.2	43.5	27.9	100.0
Ministry personnel (n=300)	2.7	5.7	37.3	29.3	25.0	100.0
Administrators (n=303)	2.6	3.6	46.5	32.7	14.5	100.0
Faculty members (n=305)	4.6	9.2	30.5	40.7	15.1	100.0
The public (n=301)	5.0	6.3	39.2	31.9	17.6	100.0
Politicians (n=298)	4.0	5.7	47.3	24.5	18.5	100.0

Table H5.1. Extent of agreement regarding whose interests are being served by a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=282)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Learners (n=272)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	154.32
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	92.72
	Vocational & Career Technical	137	150.37
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	133.07
Public (n=269)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	153.98
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	100.12
	Vocational & Career Technical	137	144.88
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	132.38
Faculty members (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	160.68
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	98.94
	Vocational & Career Technical	138	149.08
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	128.20
Employers (n=269)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	131.94
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	103.25
	Vocational & Career Technical	137	147.03
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	137.10
Ministry personnel (n=268)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	123.55
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	51	160.22
	Vocational & Career Technical	137	129.62
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	128.30
Politicians (n=266)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	30	131.12
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	51	154.05
	Vocational & Career Technical	137	126.14
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	134.17
Administrators (n=271)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	149.52
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	134.00
	Vocational & Career Technical	137	137.70
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	124.59

Table H5.2. Extent of agreement regarding whose interests are being served by a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistic

	Learners	Public	Faculty members	Employers	Ministry personnel	Politicians	Admin-istrators
Chi-Square	25.577	16.213	21.150	13.689	7.804	5.627	2.435
df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.001	.000	.003	.050	.131	.487

Table H5.3.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Learners (n=272)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	3.0	12.1	45.5	39.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	11.3	9.4	28.3	37.7	13.2	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.0	2.2	15.3	45.3	37.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.0	8.2	14.3	46.9	28.6	100.0

Table H5.4.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to the Public (n=269)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	0.0	41.9	32.3	22.6	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	13.5	13.5	50.0	23.1	3.8	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	3.6	3.6	38.0	33.6	19.0	100.0
Applied Degrees	6.1	6.1	34.7	36.7	12.2	100.0

Table H5.5.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Faculty Members (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	3.0	9.1	18.2	45.5	24.2	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	18.9	11.3	37.7	24.5	7.5	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.7	8.0	29.7	45.7	15.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	4.1	14.3	32.7	36.7	12.2	100.0

Table H5.6. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Employers (n=269)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	0.0	25.0	59.4	15.6	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	7.7	3.8	38.5	34.6	15.4	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.7	0.7	23.4	43.1	32.1	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.1	2.1	22.9	47.9	25.0	100.0

Table H5.7. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Ministry Personnel (n=268)

Program Area	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	3.2	3.2	45.2	32.3	16.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	2.0	3.9	25.5	27.5	41.2	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	3.6	3.6	41.6	29.2	21.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.0	14.3	30.6	28.6	24.5	100.0

Table H5.8. Extent of agreement regarding whose interests are being served by a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=313)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Learners (n=304)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	219.72
	Department Administrators	219	142.75
	Institutional Administrators	67	166.31
Public (n=301)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	209.83
	Department Administrators	216	142.38
	Institutional Administrators	67	163.00
Faculty Members (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	179.67
	Department Administrators	220	150.99
	Institutional Administrators	67	152.44
Employers (n=301)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	217.92
	Department Administrators	216	140.71
	Institutional Administrators	67	166.19
Ministry Personnel (n=300)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	155.17
	Department Administrators	216	149.54
	Institutional Administrators	66	152.36
Politicians (n=298)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	156.22
	Department Administrators	214	145.54
	Institutional Administrators	66	160.50
Administrators (n=303)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	147.06
	Department Administrators	218	146.75
	Institutional Administrators	67	170.42

Table H5.9. Extent of agreement regarding whose interests are being served by a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistic (n=313)

	Learners	Public	Faculty members	Employers	Ministry personnel	Politicians	Admin-istrators
Chi-Square	17.020	12.889	1.958	17.847	.120	1.875	4.414
df	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.002	.376	.000	.942	.392	.110

Table H5.10. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Learners (n=304)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.8	72.2	100.0
Department Administrators	1.8	5.0	19.2	45.2	28.8	100.0
Organizational Administrators	4.5	3.0	9.0	41.8	41.8	100.0

Table H5.11. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to the Public (n=301)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	22.2	33.3	44.4	100.0
Department Administrators	5.6	7.4	41.2	32.9	13.0	100.0
Organizational Administrators	4.5	4.5	37.3	28.4	25.4	100.0

Table H5.12. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to the Employers (n=301)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale					Total %
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	5.6	27.8	66.7	100.0
Department Administrators	0.9	1.9	30.1	44.9	22.2	100.0
Organizational Administrators	6.0	0.0	14.9	43.3	35.8	100.0

Table H6.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes prior to the C2T2 initiative (n=313) See Appendix E, Question C.1.

Activities	Not at All	Very Little	To some Extent	A great Deal	Total %
Heard about a learning outcomes approach? (n= 306)	20.6	28.4	33.7	17.3	100.0
Read about a learning outcomes approach in journals, books and other educational references? (n= 304)	26.3	31.3	34.2	8.2	100.0
Been involved in faculty discussions about learning outcomes? (n=305)	31.1	30.2	28.5	10.2	100.0
Prepared learning outcomes for courses or program graduates? (n=303)	41.6	18.8	25.4	14.2	100.0

Table H6.1.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes prior to the C2T2 initiative by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=283)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Heard about learning outcomes (n=274)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	125.39
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	131.52
	Vocational & Career Technical	139	138.28
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	150.29
Read about learning outcomes (n=272)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	128.47
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	110.59
	Vocational & Career Technical	139	138.08
	Applied Degrees Programs	47	167.05
Faculty discussions about learning outcomes (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	125.75
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54	117.03
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	140.66
	Applied Degrees Programs	47	156.71
Prepared learning outcomes (n=271)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	123.47
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	107.92
	Vocational & Career Technical	139	145.99
	Applied Degrees Programs	47	146.66

Table H6.2.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes prior to the C2T2 initiative by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Heard about learning outcomes	Read about learning outcomes	Faculty discussions about learning outcomes	Prepared learning outcomes
Chi-Square	2.534	14.657	8.004	11.934
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.469	.002	.046	.008

Table H6.3. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Having Read
About Learning Outcomes (n=272)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	25.0	43.8	28.1	3.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	44.4	25.9	27.8	1.9	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	28.1	29.5	35.3	7.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	10.6	36.2	36.2	17.0	100.0

Table H6.4. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Being Involved in
Faculty Discussions About Learning Outcomes (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	34.4	37.5	18.8	9.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	44.4	24.1	27.8	3.7	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	28.6	31.4	30.0	10.0	100.0
Applied Degrees	19.1	34.0	31.9	14.9	100.0

Table H6.5.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Having Prepared
               Learning Outcomes (n=271)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	46.9	25.0	18.8	9.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	64.2	11.3	13.2	11.3	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	36.7	17.3	30.2	15.8	100.0
Applied Degrees	29.8	31.9	23.4	14.9	100.0

Table H6.6.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes prior to the
               C2T2 initiative by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks
               (n=313)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Heard about learning outcomes (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	155.33
	Department Administrators	221	144.80
	Institutional Administrators	67	181.70
Read about learning outcomes (n=304)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	171.36
	Department Administrators	219	142.42
	Institutional Administrators	67	180.40
Faculty discussions about learning outcomes (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	161.31
	Department Administrators	220	148.01
	Institutional Administrators	67	167.14
Prepared learning outcomes (n=303)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	178.78
	Department Administrators	218	149.28
	Institutional Administrators	67	153.66

Table H6.7.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes prior to the C2T2 initiative by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Heard about learning outcomes	Read about learning outcomes	Faculty discussions about learning outcomes	Prepared learning outcomes
Chi-Square	9.677	11.485	2.817	2.123
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.008	.003	.245	.346

Table H6.8.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Frequency Data Related to Having Heard About Learning Outcomes (n=306)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
LOCs and PLARCs	27.8	22.2	22.2	27.8	100.0
Department Administrators	23.5	28.5	35.3	12.7	100.0
Organizational Administrators	9.0	29.9	31.3	29.9	100.0

Table H6.9.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Frequency Data Related to Having Read About Learning Outcomes (n=304)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
LOCs and PLARCs	27.8	22.2	22.2	27.8	100.0
Department Administrators	28.8	34.7	31.5	5.0	100.0
Organizational Administrators	17.9	22.4	46.3	13.4	100.0

Table H7.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes since the
C2T2 initiative (n=313) See Appendix E, Question C2.

Activities	Not at All	Very Little	To some Extent	A great Deal	Total %
Heard about a learning outcomes approach? (n=305)	1.0	10.5	40.3	48.2	100.0
Read about a learning outcomes approach in journals, books and other educational references? (n=305)	8.9	25.2	48.9	17.0	100.0
Been involved in faculty discussions about learning outcomes? (n=305)	6.2	21.0	45.9	26.9	100.0
Prepared learning outcomes for courses or program graduates? (n=299)	25.4	17.4	32.4	24.7	100.0

Table H7.1.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes since the
C2T2 initiative by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=283)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Heard about learning outcomes (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	134.95
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	122.49
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	138.44
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	149.92
Read about learning outcomes (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	138.85
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	99.12
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	142.97
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	159.36
Faculty discussions about learning outcomes (n=273)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	136.02
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	113.58
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	140.78
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	152.03
Prepared learning outcomes (n=267)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	144.30
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	50	89.49
	Vocational & Career Technical	138	146.73
	Applied Degrees Programs	47	136.97

Table H7.2.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes since the
C2T2 initiative by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Heard about learning outcomes	Read about learning outcomes	Faculty discussions about learning outcomes	Prepared learning outcomes
Chi-Square	3.738	19.247	7.575	22.571
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.291	.000	.056	.000

Table H7.3.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Having Read About Learning
Outcomes (n=273)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	33.3	60.6	6.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	25.0	32.7	38.5	3.8	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	9.3	26.4	45.0	19.3	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.1	20.8	58.3	18.8	100.0

Table H7.4. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Having Prepared
Learning Outcomes (n=267)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	21.9	15.6	34.4	28.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	54.0	16.0	22.0	8.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	19.6	18.1	32.6	29.7	100.0
Applied Degrees	25.5	17.0	31.9	25.5	100.0

Table H7.5. Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes since the
C2T2 initiative by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks
(n=313)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Heard about learning outcomes (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	209.50
	Department Administrators	221	142.96
	Institutional Administrators	66	171.20
Read about learning outcomes (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	234.83
	Department Administrators	221	139.88
	Institutional Administrators	66	174.61
Faculty discussions about learning outcomes (n=305)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	215.67
	Department Administrators	221	145.93
	Institutional Administrators	66	159.57
Prepared learning outcomes (n=299)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	206.11
	Department Administrators	216	154.55
	Institutional Administrators	65	119.35

Table H7.6.   Respondent views regarding familiarity with learning outcomes since the C2T2 initiative by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Heard about learning outcomes	Read about learning outcomes	Faculty discussions about learning outcomes	Prepared learning outcomes
Chi-Square	15.906	28.258	12.436	17.594
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.002	.000

Table H7.7.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Having Heard About Learning Outcomes (n=305)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	100.0
Department Administrators	1.4	13.1	43.0	42.5	100.0
Organizational Administrators	0.0	4.5	37.9	57.6	100.0

Table H7.8.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Having Read About Learning Outcomes (n=305)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	44.4	55.6	100.0
Department Administrators	11.8	30.3	43.4	14.5	100.0
Organizational Administrators	1.5	15.2	68.2	15.2	100.0

Table H7.9.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Being Involved in Faculty Discussions About Learning Outcomes (n=305)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	5.6	33.3	61.1	100.0
Department Administrators	7.2	25.8	40.7	26.2	100.0
Organizational Administrators	4.5	9.1	66.7	19.7	100.0

Table H7.10.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Having Prepared Learning Outcomes (n=299)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not at All	Very Little	To Some Extent	A Great Deal	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	5.6	55.6	38.9	100.0
Department Administrators	23.6	17.6	31.5	27.3	100.0
Organizational Administrators	38.5	20.0	29.2	12.3	100.0

Table H8.   Respondent views about a learning outcomes approach (n=282) See
              Appendix E, Question E.1.

Specific Questions	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	Total %
How would you describe your **overall attitude** towards a learning outcomes approach? (n=302)	3.3	15.6	39.1	42.1	100.0
How would you likely speak in **faculty / division meetings** about the integration of a learning outcomes approach in your program area? (n=296)	3.0	14.5	41.6	40.9	100.0
How would you likely speak in your **college / university meetings** about the integration of a learning outcomes approach in other program areas? (n=292)	3.1	13.0	49.3	34.6	100.0
How would you likely speak with colleagues from **other educational organizations** about the integration of a learning outcomes approach? (n=294)	3.4	13.3	46.3	37.1	100.0

Table H8.1. Respondent views about a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=313)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Overall Attitude (n=270)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	150.73
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	95.38
	Vocational & Career Technical	136	144.10
	Applied Degrees Programs	49	143.94
Speak in Faculty / Division Meetings (n=264)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	145.73
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	85.39
	Vocational & Career Technical	131	145.74
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	138.31
Speak in College / University College Meetings (n=260)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	138.02
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	50	90.91
	Vocational & Career Technical	131	139.23
	Applied Degrees Programs	47	143.16
Speak with Colleagues from Other Organizations (n=262)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	138.80
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	51	89.05
	Vocational & Career Technical	131	141.70
	Applied Degrees Programs	47	144.01

Table H8.2. Respondent views about a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Overall Attitude	Speak in Faculty / Division Meetings	Speak in College / University College Meetings	Speak with Colleagues from Other Organizations
Chi-Square	19.767	28.976	20.694	23.479
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table H8.3.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Overall Attitude (n=270)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	6.1	51.5	42.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	13.5	32.7	30.8	23.1	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.7	14.0	42.6	42.6	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.0	18.4	32.7	46.9	100.0

Table H8.4.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Speaking in Faculty / Division Meetings (n=264)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	6.1	54.5	39.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	11.5	32.7	42.3	13.5	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	1.5	10.7	43.5	44.3	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.1	18.8	35.4	43.8	100.0

Table H8.5.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Speaking in College /
University College Meetings (n=260)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	9.4	59.4	31.3	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	14.0	28.0	42.0	16.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	0.8	9.9	55.7	33.6	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.1	14.9	40.4	42.6	100.0

Table H8.6.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Speaking with
Colleagues from Other Organizations (n=262)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	9.1	57.6	33.3	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	13.7	29.4	41.2	15.7	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	1.5	9.9	50.4	38.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.1	14.9	38.3	44.7	100.0

Table H8.7.   Respondent views about a learning outcomes approach by
Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=313)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Overall Attitude (n=302)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	192.00
	Department Administrators	217	143.19
	Institutional Administrators	67	167.54
Speak in Faculty / Division Meetings (n=296)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	215.67
	Department Administrators	212	138.44
	Institutional Administrators	66	162.50
Speak in College / University College Meetings (n=292)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	201.17
	Department Administrators	208	136.51
	Institutional Administrators	66	163.08
Speak with Colleagues from Other Organizations (n=294)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	205.97
	Department Administrators	210	137.52
	Institutional Administrators	66	163.32

Table H8.8.   Respondent views about a learning outcomes approach by
Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Overall Attitude	Speak in Faculty / Division Meetings	Speak in College / University College Meetings	Speak with Colleagues from Other Organizations
Chi-Square	9.392	18.416	15.546	16.157
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.009	.000	.000	.000

Table H8.9.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Overall
Attitude (n=302)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	
LOCs and PLARCs	5.6	0.0	27.8	66.7	100.0
Department Administrators	2.8	19.4	40.6	37.3	100.0
Organizational Administrators	4.5	7.5	37.3	50.7	100.0

Table H8.10.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Speaking
in Faculty / Division Meetings (n=296)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	16.7	83.3	100.0
Department Administrators	2.8	17.5	45.3	34.4	100.0
Organizational Administrators	4.5	9.1	36.4	50.0	100.0

Table H8.11. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Speaking in College / University College Meetings (n=292)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total
	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	100.0
Department Administrators	2.9	15.9	52.9	28.4	100.0
Organizational Administrators	4.5	7.6	42.4	45.5	100.0

Table H8.12. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Speaking with Colleagues from Other Organizations (n=294)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Very Negative	Somewhat Negative	Somewhat Positive	Very Positive	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	0.0	27.8	72.2	100.0
Department Administrators	3.3	16.2	49.5	31.0	100.0
Organizational Administrators	4.5	7.6	40.9	47.0	100.0

Table H9.   Respondent views about future intentions related to a learning outcomes approach (n=313) See Appendix H, Question E.2.

Specific Actions	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely	Total %
How likely would you be to attend **workshops or discussion groups** about learning outcomes? (n=306)	15.0	30.4	35.6	19.0	100.0
How likely would you be to take further steps to integrate a learning outcomes approach in your **instructional area**? (n=292)	14.4	25.3	32.2	28.1	100.0
How likely would you be to take further steps to integrate a learning outcomes approach in your **educational institution**? (n=297)	22.9	30.0	26.6	20.5	100.0

Table H9.1.   Respondent views about future intentions related to a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=282)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Attend Workshops or Discussion Groups (n=265)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	33	176.44
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	53	95.44
	Vocational & Career Technical	140	142.76
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	141.83
Take Further Steps to Integrate in Own Area (n=261)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	31	143.56
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	81.37
	Vocational & Career Technical	134	143.84
	Applied Degrees Programs	44	141.70
Take Further Steps to Integrate in Organization (n=265)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32	139.86
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52	91.86
	Vocational & Career Technical	133	145.46
	Applied Degrees Programs	48	138.48

Table H9.2.   Respondent views about future intentions related to a learning outcomes
            approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Attend Workshops or Discussion Groups	Take Further Steps to Integrate in Own Area	Take Further Steps to Integrate in Organization
Chi-Square	25.805	30.314	20.435
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000

Table H9.3.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Attend Workshops
            or Discussion Groups (n=274)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	24.2	48.5	27.3	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	32.1	39.6	24.5	3.8	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	15.0	31.4	31.4	22.1	100.0
Applied Degrees	12.5	29.2	45.8	12.5	100.0

Table H9.4.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Taking Further
             Steps to Integrate Learning Outcomes Approach in Own Area (n=261)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	6.5	19.4	54.8	19.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	42.3	32.7	11.5	13.5	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	8.2	29.1	29.9	32.8	100.0
Applied Degrees	9.1	22.7	43.2	25.0	100.0

Table H9.5.   Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Taking Further
             Steps to Integrate a Learning Outcomes Approach in the Organization
             (n=265)

	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	15.6	40.6	28.1	15.6	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	51.9	26.9	11.5	9.6	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	20.3	30.8	24.1	24.8	100.0
Applied Degrees	16.7	33.3	43.8	6.3	100.0

Table H9.6. Respondent views about future intentions related to a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=313)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Attend Workshops or Discussion Groups (n=306)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	210.42
	Department Administrators	221	146.39
	Institutional Administrators	67	161.67
Take Further Steps to Integrate in Own Area (n=292)	LOCs and PLARCs	17	205.15
	Department Administrators	212	138.31
	Institutional Administrators	63	158.23
Take Further Steps to Integrate in Organization (n=297)	LOCs and PLARCs	18	218.00
	Department Administrators	213	132.93
	Institutional Administrators	66	182.05

Table H9.7. Respondent views about future intentions related to a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Attend Workshops or Discussion Groups	Take Further Steps to Integrate in Own Area	Take Further Steps to Integrate in Organization
Chi-Square	10.309	12.333	30.908
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.006	.002	.000

Table H9.8.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Attending
              Workshops or Discussion Groups (n=274)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely	
LOCs and PLARCs	5.6	11.1	38.9	44.4	100.0
Department Administrators	16.3	33.5	33.5	16.7	100.0
Organizational Administrators	13.4	25.4	41.8	19.4	100.0

Table H9.9.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Taking
              Further Steps to Integrate a Learning Outcomes Approach in
              Own Area (n=261)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	5.9	41.2	52.9	100.0
Department Administrators	15.1	30.7	29.2	25.0	100.0
Organizational Administrators	15.9	12.7	39.7	31.7	100.0

Table H9.10. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Taking Further Steps to Integrate a Learning Outcomes Approach in the Organization (n=274)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Likely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	16.7	33.3	50.0	100.0
Department Administrators	27.7	35.2	22.1	15.0	100.0
Organizational Administrators	13.6	16.7	39.4	30.3	100.0

Table H10.   Extent of faculty members' use of the following elements in course outlines in the past 3 years – Department administrators, LOCs and PlARCs (n=245)* See Appendix E, Question B.1.

Elements in Course Outlines	Increased Use	Same Use	Decreased Use	Do not Know	Total %
general course goals (n=235)	28.5	65.1	2.1	4.3	100.0
behavioral objectives (n=227)	21.1	52.4	13.7	12.8	100.0
competency statements (n=229)	33.2	49.3	6.1	11.4	100.0
learning outcomes (n=231)	61.0	28.6	0.4	10.0	100.0

* Section B questions were only included for the department administrators, learning outcomes coordinators, and prior learning assessment and recognition coordinators.

Table H10.1.   Extent of faculty members' use of the following elements in course outlines in the past 3 years by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=227)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
General Course Goals (n=214)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	23	107.17
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	38	126.00
	Vocational & Career Technical	122	103.73
	Applied Degrees Programs	31	99.92
Behavioural Objectives (n=187)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	21	86.90
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	31	99.84
	Vocational & Career Technical	110	92.72
	Applied Degrees Programs	25	98.36
Competency Statements (n=191)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	21	94.67
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	30	117.50
	Vocational & Career Technical	114	94.39
	Applied Degrees Programs	26	79.31
Learning Outcomes (n=197)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	23	96.33
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	30	135.10
	Vocational & Career Technical	112	91.29
	Applied Degrees Programs	32	94.06

Table H10.2. Extent of faculty members' use of the following elements in course outlines in the past 3 years by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistic

	General Course Goals	Behavioural Objectives	Competency Statements	Learning Outcomes
Chi-Square	6.510	1.260	9.021	21.607
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.089	.739	.029	.000

Table H10.3. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Competency Statements (n=191)

Program Area	Rating Scale			Total %
	Increased Use	Same Use	Decreased Use	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	42.9	47.6	9.5	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	13.3	83.3	3.3	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	42.1	50.0	7.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	53.8	46.2	0.0	100.0

Table H10.4. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Learning Outcomes (n=191)

Program Area	Rating Scale			Total %
	Increased Use	Same Use	Decreased Use	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	69.6	30.4	0.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	30.0	70.0	0.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	75.0	24.1	0.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	71.9	28.1	0.0	100.0

Table H11.   Respondent views regarding the extent of changes made based on a
learning outcomes approach (n=313) See Appendix E, Question D.2.

Course / Program Areas	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	Do not Know	Total %
Program design (n=296)	36.5	21.3	28.4	10.1	3.7	100.0
Course design (n=296)	24.0	28.0	31.8	12.8	3.4	100.0
Program delivery (n=296)	33.1	23.6	30.7	7.4	5.1	100.0
Course delivery (n=296)	31.4	26.0	31.1	6.4	5.1	100.0
Program evaluation (n=296)	36.8	24.3	23.6	8.4	6.8	100.0
Course evaluation (n=296)	32.8	27.0	27.4	7.4	5.4	100.0
Prior learning assessment (n=294)	35.0	16.0	21.8	18.0	9.2	100.0

Table H11.1. Respondent views regarding the extent of changes made based on a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=283)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Program design (n=258)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	27	132.93
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	49	93.45
	Vocational & Career Technical	135	140.63
	Applied Degrees Programs	47	133.15
Course design (n=258)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	26	130.71
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	50	97.89
	Vocational & Career Technical	136	137.64
	Applied Degrees Programs	46	139.11
Program delivery (n=255)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	26	130.69
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	49	80.96
	Vocational & Career Technical	134	140.90
	Applied Degrees Programs	46	139.01
Course delivery (n=255)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	25	125.24
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	49	86.58
	Vocational & Career Technical	135	141.22
	Applied Degrees Programs	46	134.83
Program evaluation (n=251)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	26	130.48
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	46	82.83
	Vocational & Career Technical	133	136.89
	Applied Degrees Programs	46	135.14
Course evaluation (n=254)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	25	133.28
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	49	86.45
	Vocational & Career Technical	135	138.36
	Applied Degrees Programs	45	136.42
Prior learning assessment (n=243)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	22	103.91
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	47	96.09
	Vocational & Career Technical	129	126.60
	Applied Degrees Programs	45	144.72

Table H11.2. Respondent views regarding the extent of changes made based on a
learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test
Statistics

	Program design	Course design	Program delivery	Course delivery
Chi-Square	16.268	12.304	27.705	22.342
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.001	.006	.000	.000

Table H11.2a. Respondent views regarding the extent of changes made based on a
learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test
Statistics

	Program evaluation	Course evaluation	Prior learning assessment
Chi-Square	22.362	21.000	14.472
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.002

Table H11.3. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Program Design (n=258)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	37.0	22.2	29.6	11.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	69.4	12.2	8.2	10.2	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	32.6	19.3	37.8	10.4	100.0
Applied Degrees	36.2	23.4	29.8	10.6	100.0

Table H11.4. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Course Design (n=258)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	23.1	34.6	26.9	15.4	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	44.0	30.0	20.0	6.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	25.0	22.1	37.5	15.4	100.0
Applied Degrees	15.2	37.0	34.8	13.0	100.0

Table H11.5. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Program Delivery (n=255)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	34.6	23.1	34.6	7.7	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	65.3	26.5	4.1	4.1	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	29.1	21.6	39.6	9.7	100.0
Applied Degrees	26.1	28.3	39.1	6.5	100.0

Table H11.6. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Course Delivery (n=255)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	32.0	36.0	24.0	8.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	59.2	28.6	10.2	2.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	28.9	21.5	40.7	8.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	28.3	28.3	39.1	4.3	100.0

Table H11.7. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Program Evaluation (n=251)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	34.6	30.8	26.9	7.7	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	69.6	23.9	2.2	4.3	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	33.8	23.3	33.8	9.0	100.0
Applied Degrees	37.0	21.7	28.3	13.0	100.0

Table H11.8. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Course Evaluation (n=254)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes 7	Minor Changes 9	Moderate Changes 7	Major Changes 2	25
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	28.0	36.0	28.0	8.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	59.2	32.7	4.1	4.1	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	31.1	23.0	37.0	8.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	28.9	28.9	35.6	6.7	100.0

Table H11.9. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Prior Learning Assessment (n=243)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	54.5	9.1	27.3	9.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	59.6	14.9	14.9	10.6	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	36.4	16.3	28.7	18.6	100.0
Applied Degrees	28.9	15.6	20.0	35.6	100.0

Table H11.10. Respondent views about the extent of changes made based on a learning
outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test
Ranks (n=313)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Program design (n=285)	LOCs and PLARCs	16	164.00
	Department Administrators	208	138.26
	Institutional Administrators	61	153.65
Course design (n=286)	LOCs and PLARCs	16	171.06
	Department Administrators	208	136.06
	Institutional Administrators	62	161.36
Program Delivery (n=281)	LOCs and PLARCs	14	148.29
	Department Administrators	205	137.87
	Institutional Administrators	62	149.69
Course Delivery (n=281)	LOCs and PLARCs	14	141.89
	Department Administrators	207	136.93
	Institutional Administrators	60	154.82
Program evaluation (n=276)	LOCs and PLARCs	13	157.08
	Department Administrators	203	135.64
	Institutional Administrators	60	144.14
Course evaluation (n=280)	LOCs and PLARCs	14	172.46
	Department Administrators	205	136.12
	Institutional Administrators	61	147.89
Prior learning assessment (n=267)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	166.10
	Department Administrators	194	124.96
	Institutional Administrators	58	155.94

Table H11.11. Respondent views about the extent of changes made based on a learning
outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test
Statistics

	Program design	Course design	Program delivery	Course delivery
Chi-Square	3.022	6.889	1.240	2.486
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.221	.032	.538	.288

Table H11.11a   Respondent views about the extent of changes made based on a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Program evaluation	Course evaluation	Prior learning assessment
Chi-Square	1.399	3.613	10.850
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.497	.164	.004

Table H11.12.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Course Design (n=286)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
LOCs and PLARCs	12.5	25.0	43.8	18.8	100.0
Department Administrators	28.8	29.3	29.3	12.5	100.0
Organizational Administrators	14.5	29.0	41.9	14.5	100.0

Table H11.13.   Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Prior Learning Assessment (n=267)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
LOCs and PLARCs	13.3	33.3	20.0	33.3	100.0
Department Administrators	45.4	14.9	22.7	17.0	100.0
Organizational Administrators	22.4	22.4	29.3	25.9	100.0

Table H12.   Respondent views regarding the value of changes made related to a
learning outcomes approach in promoting a learner-centered approach (n=
241)* See Appendix E, Question D.3.

Course / Program Areas	No Value	Some Value	Much Value	Great Value	Do not Know	NA**	Total %
Program design (n=191)	2.6	45.5	22.0	9.9	12.0	8.4	100.0
Course design (n=200)	3.5	45.5	24.5	12.5	11.0	3.0	100.0
Program delivery (n=197)	7.1	39.6	20.8	9.1	15.2	8.1	100.0
Course delivery (n=199)	6.5	41.2	22.1	11.6	12.6	6.0	100.0
Program evaluation (n=195)	4.6	42.6	15.4	9.2	17.4	10.8	100.0
Course evaluation (n=198)	5.1	44.4	18.2	9.6	15.7	7.1	100.0
Prior learning assessment (n=193)	9.8	31.6	16.6	16.6	13.5	11.9	100.0

*   The data for this table were derived by analyzing the respondents who had indicated some change in the
previous question (D.2).
** NA = not applicable

Table H12.1. Respondent views regarding the value of changes made related to a learning outcomes approach in promoting a learner-centered approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=224)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Program design (n=137)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	15	81.00
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	15	56.27
	Vocational & Career Technical	80	70.56
	Applied Degrees Programs	27	64.78
Course design (n=156)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	19	80.39
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	20	62.30
	Vocational & Career Technical	85	84.01
	Applied Degrees Programs	32	72.88
Program delivery (n=137)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	13	88.23
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	15	33.43
	Vocational & Career Technical	79	72.34
	Applied Degrees Programs	30	69.67
Course delivery (n=147)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	16	85.38
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	18	41.83
	Vocational & Career Technical	83	77.30
	Applied Degrees Programs	30	78.12
Program evaluation (n=126)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	13	60.81
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	12	29.21
	Vocational & Career Technical	74	67.19
	Applied Degrees Programs	27	69.93
Course evaluation (n=138)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	15	63.60
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	15	38.90
	Vocational & Career Technical	80	74.41
	Applied Degrees Programs	28	75.04
Prior learning assessment (n=130)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	10	61.50
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	16	42.19
	Vocational & Career Technical	74	70.47
	Applied Degrees Programs	30	67.02

Table H12.2. Respondent views regarding the value of changes made related to a learning outcomes approach in promoting a learner-centered approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Program design	Course design	Program delivery	Course delivery
Chi-Square	4.290	5.317	18.523	14.247
df	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.232	.150	.000	.003

Table H12. 2a. Respondent views regarding the value of changes made related to a learning outcomes approach in promoting a learner-centered approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Program evaluation	Course evaluation	Prior learning assessment
Chi-Square	15.626	13.623	8.352
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.001	.003	.039

Table H12.3. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Program Delivery (n=137)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	38.5	38.5	23.1	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	46.7	46.7	6.7	0.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	6.3	53.2	25.3	15.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	6.7	53.3	33.3	6.7	100.0

Table H12.4. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Course Delivery (n=147)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	0.0	50.0	25.0	25.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	33.3	55.6	11.1	0.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	6.0	49.4	27.7	16.9	100.0
Applied Degrees	6.7	46.7	30.0	16.7	100.0

Table H12.5. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Program Evaluation (n=126)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	7.7	61.5	23.1	7.7	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	41.7	58.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	2.7	59.5	27.0	10.8	100.0
Applied Degrees	3.7	55.6	22.2	18.5	100.0

Table H12.6. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Course Evaluation (n=138)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	6.7	66.7	20.0	6.7	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	33.3	60.0	6.7	0.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	3.8	56.3	25.0	15.0	100.0
Applied Degrees	3.6	53.6	32.1	10.7	100.0

Table H12.7. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Prior Learning Assessment (n=130)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	No Changes	Minor Changes	Moderate Changes	Major Changes	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	10.0	50.0	30.0	10.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	43.8	31.3	18.8	6.3	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	8.1	44.6	18.9	28.4	100.0
Applied Degrees	16.7	33.3	26.7	23.3	100.0

Table H12.8. Respondent views regarding the value of changes made related to a learning outcomes approach in promoting a learner-centered approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=241)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Program design (n=153)	LOCs and PLARCs	8	78.69
	Department Administrators	111	74.71
	Institutional Administrators	34	84.09
Course design (n=173)	LOCs and PLARCs	9	102.56
	Department Administrators	125	85.43
	Institutional Administrators	39	88.45
Program Delivery (n=152)	LOCs and PLARCs	7	81.21
	Department Administrators	112	75.38
	Institutional Administrators	33	79.32
Course Delivery (n=163)	LOCs and PLARCs	9	88.00
	Department Administrators	119	80.78
	Institutional Administrators	35	84.61
Program evaluation (n=141)	LOCs and PLARCs	7	78.93
	Department Administrators	104	69.24
	Institutional Administrators	30	75.27
Course evaluation (n=154)	LOCs and PLARCs	9	92.78
	Department Administrators	112	75.42
	Institutional Administrators	33	80.39
Prior learning assessment (n=145)	LOCs and PLARCs	9	95.78
	Department Administrators	100	68.32
	Institutional Administrators	36	80.31

Table H12.9. Respondent views regarding the value of changes made related to a learning outcomes approach in promoting a learner-centered approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Program design	Course design	Program delivery	Course delivery
Chi-Square	1.474	1.236	.343	.392
df	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.478	.539	.842	.822

Table H12.9a. Respondent views regarding the value of changes made related to a learning outcomes approach in promoting a learner-centered approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Program evaluation	Course evaluation	Prior learning assessment
Chi-Square	1.003	1.816	5.526
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.606	.403	.063

Table H13. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach (n= 241)* See Appendix E, Question D.4.

Specific Factors	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Do not Know	Total %
Potential benefits to learners (n=211)	2.4	21.3	40.8	35.1	0.5	100.0
Relevance to learner needs (n=213)	5.2	19.7	46.9	27.7	0.5	100.0
Emphasis on integration of learning (n=206)	13.6	25.7	38.8	21.4	0.5	100.0
Interest in improving assessment (n=209)	13.4	28.7	37.3	20.1	0.5	100.0
Consistency with faculty's philosophy (n=211)	16.1	27.0	35.1	19.4	2.4	100.0
Relevance to employer needs (n=211)	22.7	26.1	27.0	23.7	0.5	100.0
Prior faculty direction and decisions (n=209)	24.0	32.8	30.4	11.8	1.0	100.0
Employer support for the approach (n=209)	34.4	21.5	26.8	16.3	1.0	100.0
Influence of institutional administration (n=212)	27.4	33.0	27.4	11.8	0.5	100.0
Potential benefits to faculty (n=207)	25.1	33.8	31.9	7.7	1.4	100.0
Requests for prior learning assessments (n=208)	30.8	32.7	25.0	10.6	1.0	100.0
Opportunity to promote transfer of credits (n=208)	33.7	30.8	26.4	7.7	1.4	100.0
Education Council directive / requirement (n=206)	42.2	28.6	15.5	12.1	1.5	100.0

(table continues)

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Table H13. *(continued)*

Specific Factors*	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Do not Know	Total %
Funding from ministry (n=207)	46.6	21.7	18.8	12.1	1.0	100.0
Popularity of the learning outcomes approach (n=211)	34.6	39.3	19.4	5.6	0.9	100.0
Funding from institution (n=209)	48.5	21.8	17.0	11.7	1.0	100.0
Priority of the government (n=209)	42.6	34.4	18.2	4.3	0.5	100.0
Contribution to faculty's prestige (n=207)	66.7	20.3	9.2	2.9	1.0	100.0

* The data for this table were derived by analyzing the respondents who had indicated change in some area of question D.2.

Table H13.1. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=241)

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Emphasis on integration of learning (n=188)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	23	96.83
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	69.48
	Vocational & Career Technical	103	98.37
	Applied Degrees Programs	39	97.67
Relevance to learner needs (n=195)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	102.06
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	24	77.35
	Vocational & Career Technical	107	104.55
	Applied Degrees Programs	40	90.44
Potential benefit to learners (n=191)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	98.63
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	79.04
	Vocational & Career Technical	105	102.69
	Applied Degrees Programs	39	86.38
Consistency with faculty's philosophy (n=188)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	23	96.11
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	72.33
	Vocational & Career Technical	103	102.76
	Applied Degrees Programs	39	84.82
Interest in improving assessment (n=191)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	92.65
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	71.09
	Vocational & Career Technical	105	102.53
	Applied Degrees Programs	39	95.17
Relevance to employer needs (n=191)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	95.92
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	52.54
	Vocational & Career Technical	106	108.58
	Applied Degrees Programs	38	87.28
Prior faculty direction & decision (n=185)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	22	96.89
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	22	69.00
	Vocational & Career Technical	101	94.65
	Applied Degrees Programs	40	99.89
Potential benefit to faculty (n=187)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	23	94.26
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	22	76.75
	Vocational & Career Technical	104	99.75
	Applied Degrees Programs	38	88.09
Employer support for approach (n=190)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	81.56
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	94.24
	Vocational & Career Technical	105	101.92
	Applied Degrees Programs	38	87.33

(table continues)

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Table H13.1 *(continued)*

	Program Area	N	Mean Rank
Funding from ministry (n=188)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	86.98
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	24	89.31
	Vocational & Career Technical	102	101.25
	Applied Degrees Programs	38	84.41
Influence of institutional administration (n=194)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	71.58
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	24	101.27
	Vocational & Career Technical	107	106.29
	Applied Degrees Programs	39	87.03
Funding from institution (n=187)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	83.79
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	86.33
	Vocational & Career Technical	102	100.08
	Applied Degrees Programs	38	88.76
Priority of government (n=191)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	24	81.19
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	24	105.04
	Vocational & Career Technical	104	102.70
	Applied Degrees Programs	39	81.69
EdCo directive / requirement (n=188)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	22	83.07
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	24	115.27
	Vocational & Career Technical	104	95.78
	Applied Degrees Programs	38	84.50
Contribution to faculty's prestige (n=187)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	23	77.91
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	23	87.13
	Vocational & Career Technical	103	97.81
	Applied Degrees Programs	38	97.58
Requests for PLA (n=191)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	22	74.27
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	24	75.40
	Vocational & Career Technical	106	105.34
	Applied Degrees Programs	39	95.54
Popularity of the LO approach (n=190)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	22	92.07
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	24	80.10
	Vocational & Career Technical	107	101.76
	Applied Degrees Programs	37	89.43
Opportunity to promote transfer of credits (n=189)	Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	23	86.43
	Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	24	82.00
	Vocational & Career Technical	103	97.61
	Applied Degrees Programs	39	101.15

Table H13.2. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Emphasis on integration of learning	Relevance to learner needs	Potential benefit to learners	Consistency with faculty's philosophy	Interest in improving assessment
Chi-Square	6.090	6.226	5.551	8.034	6.782
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.107	.101	.136	.045	.079

Table H13.2a. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Relevance to employer needs	Prior faculty direction & decision	Potential benefit to faculty	Employer support for the approach	Funding from ministry
Chi-Square	22.035	5.748	4.232	4.149	4.117
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.125	.238	.246	.249

Table H13.2b. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Influence of institutional administration	Funding from institution	Priority of government	EdCo directive / requirement	Contribution to faculty's prestige
Chi-Square	10.009	3.467	7.484	6.537	4.741
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.018	.325	.058	.088	.192

Table H13.2c. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the
faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by
Program Area: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Requests for PLA	Popularity of the LO approach	Opportunity to promote transfer of credits
Chi-Square	10.726	4.286	2.918
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.013	.232	.404

Table H13.3. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Consistency with
Faculty's Philosophy (n=188)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	17.4	26.1	34.8	21.7	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	39.1	21.7	26.1	13.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	13.6	24.3	36.9	25.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	15.4	43.6	25.6	15.4	100.0

Table H13.4. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Relevance to Employer Needs (n=191)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	16.7	41.7	16.7	25.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	52.2	34.8	13.0	0.0	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	17.0	22.6	28.3	32.1	100.0
Applied Degrees	28.9	23.7	34.2	13.2	100.0

Table H13.5. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Influence of Institutional Administration (n=194)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	45.8	37.5	16.7	0.0	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	29.2	33.3	16.7	20.8	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	24.3	29.0	34.6	12.1	100.0
Applied Degrees	35.9	35.9	20.5	7.7	100.0

Table H13.6. Program Area: Frequency Data Related to Requests for PLA (n=191)

Program Area	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
Foundation (e.g. ABE, ESL)	3.2	3.2	45.2	32.3	100.0
Academic Courses Leading to Degrees	2.0	3.9	25.5	27.5	100.0
Vocational & Career Technical	3.6	3.6	41.6	29.2	100.0
Applied Degrees	2.0	14.3	30.6	28.6	100.0

Table H13.7. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Ranks (n=241)

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Emphasis on integration of learning (n=214)	LOCs and PLARCs	16	112.94
	Department Administrators	151	101.34
	Institutional Administrators	47	125.43
Relevance to learner needs (n=220)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	121.27
	Department Administrators	158	105.01
	Institutional Administrators	47	125.52
Potential benefit to learners (n=216)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	127.13
	Department Administrators	154	101.54
	Institutional Administrators	47	125.35
Consistency with faculty's philosophy (n=212)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	92.87
	Department Administrators	153	104.36
	Institutional Administrators	44	118.59
Interest in improving assessment (n=216)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	109.77
	Department Administrators	154	105.34
	Institutional Administrators	47	118.46
Relevance to employer needs (n=216)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	99.10
	Department Administrators	153	107.35
	Institutional Administrators	48	115.10
Prior faculty direction & decision (n=208)	LOCs and PLARCs	13	121.65
	Department Administrators	149	97.36
	Institutional Administrators	46	122.78
Potential benefit to faculty (n=210)	LOCs and PLARCs	14	97.21
	Department Administrators	150	105.87
	Institutional Administrators	46	106.80
Employer support for the approach (n=215)	LOCs and PLARCs	16	111.09
	Department Administrators	153	105.41
	Institutional Administrators	46	115.55
Funding from ministry (n=215)	LOCs and PLARCs	16	120.97
	Department Administrators	151	104.93
	Institutional Administrators	48	113.34
Influence of institutional administration (n=220)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	127.80
	Department Administrators	156	104.33
	Institutional Administrators	49	124.84

(table continues)

Table H13.7 *(continued)*

	Organizational Positions	N	Mean Rank
Funding from institution (n=212)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	117.47
	Department Administrators	151	103.13
	Institutional Administrators	46	114.00
Priority of government (n=217)	LOCs and PLARCs	16	109.03
	Department Administrators	153	106.27
	Institutional Administrators	48	117.69
EdCo directive / requirement (n=212)	LOCs and PLARCs	14	94.57
	Department Administrators	152	105.26
	Institutional Administrators	46	114.22
Contribution to faculty's prestige (n=211)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	111.07
	Department Administrators	151	101.77
	Institutional Administrators	45	118.51
Requests for PLA (n=215)	LOCs and PLARCs	14	157.32
	Department Administrators	154	99.17
	Institutional Administrators	47	122.24
Popularity of the LO approach (n=216)	LOCs and PLARCs	15	95.03
	Department Administrators	153	105.34
	Institutional Administrators	48	122.79
Opportunity to promote transfer of credits (n=213)	LOCs and PLARCs	14	109.82
	Department Administrators	153	102.13
	Institutional Administrators	46	122.35

Table H13.8. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Emphasis on integration of learning	Relevance to learner needs	Potential benefit to learners	Consistency with faculty's philosophy	Interest in improving assessment
Chi-Square	6.067	4.827	7.532	2.857	1.735
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.048	.089	.023	.240	.420

Table H13.8a. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Relevance to employer needs	Prior faculty direction & decision	Potential benefit to faculty	Employer support for the approach	Funding from ministry
Chi-Square	.990	8.053	.315	1.067	1.606
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.610	.018	.854	.587	.448

Table H13.8b. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Influence of institutional administration	Funding from institution	Priority of government	EdCo directive / requirement	Contribution to faculty's prestige
Chi-Square	5.486	1.871	1.376	1.471	3.998
df	2	2	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.064	.392	.503	.479	.135

Table H13.8c. Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the faculty members' decision to integrate a learning outcomes approach by Organizational Position: Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics

	Requests for PLA	Popularity of the LO approach	Opportunity to promote transfer of credits
Chi-Square	15.704	4.052	4.225
df	2	2	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.132	.121

Table H13.9. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related Emphasis on Integration
of Learning (n=214)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
LOCs and PLARCs	12.5	25.0	37.5	25.0	100.0
Department Administrators	17.9	27.8	35.1	19.2	100.0
Organizational Administrators	6.4	19.1	46.8	27.7	100.0

Table H13.10. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Potential
Benefit to Learners (n=216)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
LOCs and PLARCs	0.0	13.3	40.0	46.7	100.0
Department Administrators	4.5	23.4	43.5	28.6	100.0
Organizational Administrators	0.0	21.3	27.7	51.1	100.0

Table H13.11. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Prior Faculty
Direction and Decision (n=208)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
LOCs and PLARCs	15.4	23.1	53.8	7.7	100.0
Department Administrators	28.2	36.9	24.8	10.1	100.0
Organizational Administrators	17.4	23.9	41.3	17.4	100.0

Table H13.12. Organizational Position: Frequency Data Related to Requests for PLA
(n=216)

Organizational Position	Rating Scale				Total %
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	
LOCs and PLARCs	12.5	25.0	37.5	25.0	100.0
Department Administrators	17.9	27.8	35.1	19.2	100.0
Organizational Administrators	6.4	19.1	46.8	27.7	100.0

Table H14.   Respondent views regarding the importance of specific factors in the
faculty members' decision NOT to integrate a learning outcomes approach
based on respondents who had indicated "no change" in all categories of
D.2 (n=49)* See Appendix E, Question D.5.

Specific Factors	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Do not Know	Total %
Satisfaction with current programs and courses (n=34)	5.9	14.7	32.4	44.1	2.9	100.0
Lack of faculty knowledge of learning outcomes approach (n=33)	12.1	15.2	18.2	45.5	9.1	100.0
Few requests for prior learning assessments (n=33)	15.2	15.2	18.2	42.4	9.1	100.0
Lack of evidence to support change to a learning outcomes approach (n=33)	12.1	15.2	36.4	27.3	9.1	100.0
Concern about the value and relevance of a learning outcomes approach (n=33)	21.2	15.2	33.3	27.3	3.0	100.0
Concern about faculty workload to implement change (n=34)	26.5	17.6	11.8	38.2	5.9	100.0
Few evident benefits from such a change (n=33)	21.2	18.2	30.3	27.3	3.0	100.0
Concern about increased government control in postsecondary education (n=32)	31.3	15.6	21.9	21.9	9.4	100.0
Lack of human resources to support change (n=33)	39.4	9.1	12.1	30.3	9.1	100.0
Concern that only measurable elements in education will be valued (n=33)	36.4	15.2	24.2	21.2	3.0	100.0

(table continues)

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Table H14. *(continued)*

Specific Factors	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Do not Know	Total %
Concern that curriculum may be dominate by employer needs (n=32)	37.5	15.6	9.4	28.1	9.4	100.0
Concern that this approach may be used as a rationale to decrease funding (n=32)	37.5	15.6	18.8	18.8	9.4	100.0
Lack of funding to implement change (n=34)	52.9	11.8	2.9	26.5	5.9	100.0
Prior faculty decisions towards other outcome models (n=33)	45.5	18.2	12.1	12.1	12.1	100.0
Influence of institutional administration (n=33)	51.5	18.2	9.1	12.1	9.1	100.0
Potential problems with course transfer (n=33)	57.6	9.1	15.2	6.1	12.1	100.0

* The data for this table were derived by analyzing the respondents who had indicated "no change" in all categories (n=49) in question D.2 This group was directed to by-pass D.3 (value of changes) and D.4 (influences to integrate) and proceed to this question.

Table H15.   Respondent views regarding the percentage of faculty members using specific instructional methods and techniques in course delivery – Department administrators, LOCs and PLARCs (n=245)* See Appendix E, Question B.3.

Instructional Methods and Techniques	Not at All	Between 1-25%	Between 26-50%	Between 51-79%	More than 75%	Do not Know	Total %
Lectures (n=236)	1.7	14.0	14.0	16.5	51.7	2.0	100.0
Problem based activities / cases (n=226)	6.4	25.4	19.1	18.6	24.2	6.4	100.0
Cooperative learning group activities (n=239)	4.2	28.9	21.3	16.7	23.8	5.0	100.0
Laboratory / bench exercises (n=230)	15.7	17.0	21.3	11.7	30.9	3.5	100.0
Student presentations to classmates (n=238)	7.1	27.7	20.6	16.0	25.2	3.4	100.0
Simulation exercises (n=234)	12.4	26.1	20.1	17.1	15.4	9.0	100.0
Seminars (n=226)	13.7	35.8	16.8	10.6	18.0	4.9	100.0
Community projects, rotations, practicums (n=235)	23.8	28.5	16.2	10.2	18.7	2.6	100.0
Computer based instruction (n=237)	24.5	33.8	17.3	7.6	13.5	3.4	100.0
Services provided to customers on-site (n=229)	46.3	21.0	10.0	5.7	7.0	10.0	100.0
Telephone tutoring (n=231)	61.5	27.7	2.2	0.4	2.6	5.6	100.0
On-line tutoring (n=234)	64.5	23.1	3.4	1.3	2.6	5.1	100.0

*   Section B questions were only included for the department administrators, Learning Outcomes Coordinators and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators.

Table H16. Respondent views regarding the percentage of faculty members using specific evaluation methods – Department administrators, LOCs and PLARCs (n=245)* See Appendix E, Question B.4.

Evaluation Methods	Not at All	Between 1-25%	Between 26-50%	Between 51-79%	More than 75%	Do not Know	Total %
Written exams including multiple choice and short answer questions (n=235)	6.4	16.2	11.9	10.6	52.3	2.6	100.0
Written assignments such as papers and reports (n=237)	6.3	14.8	14.8	16.9	44.7	2.5	100.0
Written exams including essays, problems and case studies (n=236)	10.6	18.2	14.8	16.5	36.9	3.0	100.0
Assignments based on problems and simulation exercises (n=237)	7.6	20.3	22.4	19.0	25.7	5.1	100.0
Presentations to peers (n=236)	9.7	23.8	20.8	21.2	21.6	3.0	100.0
Journals and log books (n=236)	24.2	38.6	11.0	10.6	9.7	5.9	100.0
Self assessment (n=236)	27.1	36.9	8.9	7.6	11.0	8.5	100.0
Peer assessment (n=235)	28.9	39.1	9.4	6.8	6.8	8.9	100.0
Debates with peers (n=233)	33.5	32.2	12.9	7.3	3.9	10.3	100.0
Products and services provided to customers (n=232)	56.9	15.5	4.7	4.3	7.8	9.9	100.0
Portfolio development (n=232)	44.8	31.5	4.3	4.7	6.9	7.8	100.0
Assessment by external individuals (n=237)	51.1	23.2	6.3	6.8	6.3	6.3	100.0
Oral examinations (n=231)	55.0	32.9	3.0	1.3	1.3	6.5	100.0

* Section B questions were only included for the department administrators, Learning Outcomes Coordinators and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Coordinators.