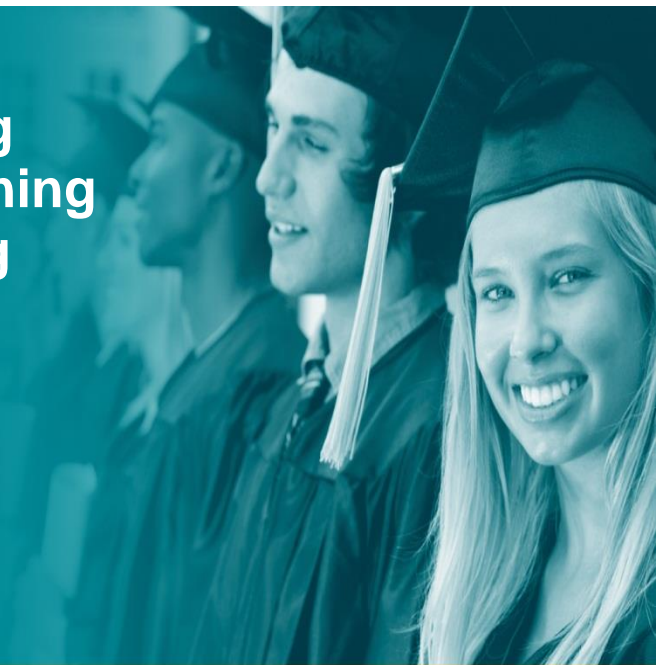Higher Education
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Community Service Learning and Community-Based Learning as Approaches to Enhancing University Service Learning

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Executive Summary

This report describes a study exploring the impact of academic community-based learning (CBL), course community-service learning (CSL) and other in-course learning activities (ICLA) on student learning. Informed by Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, the study used a survey instrument, adapted from several existing survey instruments, examining students' self-reporting in a number of areas such as:

- Student engagement
- Depth of learning
- Perceptions of course environment including teaching quality and course workload
- Educational outcomes

The study, conducted over a two-year period (July 2011 to July 2013), surveyed 485 York University undergraduate students enrolled in a variety of introductory and upper-year courses across various academic disciplines. In addition, faculty members who taught these courses were also invited to take part in focus group sessions. The focus groups provided additional qualitative data about instructors' motivations, strategies and challenges associated with incorporating experiential education approaches to their teaching and instructors' perceptions of how CBL, CSL and ICLA impact student learning and experience.

The study revealed that students in CBL and CSL courses reported higher levels of engagement and experiential education outcomes. As a result of developing ties with community organizations and related projects, students developed a stronger ability to apply theory to practice, make meaningful contributions and enhance career development. This was true despite the fact that students in CBL and CSL reported higher workloads and were less clear on goals and standards compared to students in ICLA. Most instructors agreed that experiential education courses, and especially those working in collaboration with community partners, require more work on the instructor's part but are deeply rewarding and potentially transformative from a student learning perspective.

Given that a growing number of universities have committed to embedding experiential education opportunities into undergraduate academic programs, this study offers several recommendations for future consideration:

1) Faculty development and operational support (e.g., risk management/legal considerations, community partnerships) at an institutional or faculty/school-level should support faculty members as they develop and deliver CBL, CSL or ICLA courses.
2) Programs should be designed intentionally to structure experiential education opportunities within a degree program so that CBL or CSL courses are offered at upper years of the degree, when students are more readily able to make community and/or career connections.
3) Supportive practices and incentives would expand the adoption of experiential education (including CBL, CSL and ICLA) to a greater number of instructors and strengthen instructors' capacity to foster community relationships and incorporate student reflection in courses.
4) Classroom learning conditions should support student success in experiential courses by articulating clear goals/standards in course outlines and reasonable student expectations and workload.

Introduction

Rapid scientific and technological advancement, globalization, cross-cultural encounters and changes in the balance of economic and political power show no sign of slowing down (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2007). Canada has also been subject to these trends, which has resulted in greater demand for individuals with higher levels of education and skill (OECD, 1996). For example, Statistics Canada found that in Canada the number of high-knowledge businesses (such as those providing services in engineering, sciences and related disciplines) increased by 78% between 1991 and 2003, while the number of low-knowledge businesses (such as accommodation, and food and beverage services) grew by just 3% (Lapointe et al., 2006).

For postsecondary institutions, the need to equip students with a broad range of skills that adequately prepare them for a rapidly changing world and workforce has encouraged the development of stimulating and effective learning environments. Moving away from classroom experiences that merely expect students to absorb information or learn by rote, there is greater recognition that students benefit from learning activities that integrate theory and practice, allowing them to apply what they are learning to "real world" situations or problems. Such activities – often described as experiential education (EE) – "enhance the critical elements of a liberal education through promoting a deeper understanding of the subject matter and the relevance of that knowledge, and strengthening self-directed learning and the capacity for critical thinking and analysis" on the part of students (Kolb, 1984; Wright, 2000; *Building a More Engaged University*, 2010).

Experiential education, typically defined as a "process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984), helps students connect theoretical context with practical experience and facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and transferrable skills (Ives-Dewey, 2009). Experiential education can take a variety of forms but this paper focuses on academic community service learning (CSL), in-course community-based learning (CBL) and in-course learning activities (ICLA). The definition of these pedagogies is evolving but for the purposes of our study we have defined them as follows:

- Academic community service learning (CSL) sends students into the community as part of a course. Students may engage in CSL by providing a direct service, such as helping at a food bank or by taking on a project that is defined by a community organization. An example might be going to a recreational program in the community to assess how well the program fits with the developmental needs of toddlers.
- Community-based learning (CBL) occurs when community partners are invited into the classroom to present authentic problems, questions or areas of research interest. Students work with the problems provided by the community partners, apply their developing knowledge and skills, and reflect on how the actual experience relates to or informs their learning.[1]
- In-course learning activities (ICLA) include guest speakers, role playing, skits, case studies, simulations, laboratory courses or course-based research (in the form of independent research courses or undergraduate theses). Projects and assignments that apply the course material to individuals or groups within the community extend this form of EE (which can include interviews with professionals working in the community). Ideally, in-course learning activities provide students with opportunities to reflect upon the learning activity that they can make connections to theory and course content.

Given EE's association with a variety of desirable learning outcomes, as well as higher student retention and greater student satisfaction levels (Bowen, 2005; Bringle, Hatcher & Muthia, 2010), it is no surprise that an increasing number of Canadian universities have begun to prioritize experiential education. In

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[1] One additional way to distinguish CSL from CBL is that in CSL students are embedded within an organization; they may have office space and they keep regular weekly hours. In contrast, CBL students have a peripheral relationship to the community organization, have the ability to work remotely and/or have a "consulting" role.

2014, 75 institutions in Canada will participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which uses components of experiential education activity, such as community service learning, as part of its measures of educational quality. University and faculty academic plans often prioritize effective teaching and many already include explicit references to the enhancement of experiential education (Lenton et al., 2010). Finally, in Ontario, many of the strategic mandate agreements submitted by postsecondary institutions make reference to experiential education as an existing or emerging priority.

While maximizing opportunities to introduce experiential education is a prescient move for any university in today's environment, there are several factors that make it particularly beneficial for urban universities like York to increase opportunities for students to participate in an experiential education activity as a component of their degree program. For example, opportunities for in-class learning activities (ICLA), community-based learning (CBL) and community service learning not only allow students to become engaged in their learning but allow the institution to engage with surrounding communities while promoting positive community-campus relationship – particularly in the case of CBL (*Building a More Engaged University*, 2010). Given the number of community organizations that often exist within urban settings, universities may be able to establish relationships with community partners that represent a variety of mandates and services, thereby offering students opportunities in a variety of different areas.

Despite the apparent benefits of various forms of experiential education, challenges to its implementation exist in a university setting. To administer EE effectively, an institution must invest time, resources and money. Students may perceive a greater workload, which may lead them to adopt a more instrumental approach to completing coursework. The risk is that students focus on task completion, memorization and reproduction, resulting in a shallower approach to learning than the type of deep learning that seeks meaning and understanding (Biggs & Tang, 2012; Case & Gunstone, 2003; Hall, Ramsey & Raven, 2004; Kember, 2006; Kember, Ng, Tse, Wong & Pomfret, 1996; Kreber, 2003; Trigwell & Prosser, 1991; Trigwell, Prosser & Waterhouse, 1999; Wilson & Fowler, 2005).

Although pedagogies like CSL, CBL and ICLA have been studied in isolation, they have rarely been compared with one another. Given that the implementation of various forms of experiential education requires differing investments of time, resources and money, further research is needed to assess which is most effective pedagogically and which is most economical for the institution to implement.

The present investigation examines the differences between CSL, CBL and ICLA on several measures. First, we examine student levels of engagement in each, as well as student approaches to learning, perception of the learning environment and overall educational outcomes. Second, through a series of interviews with instructors, we examine their perspectives in terms of their motivations for EE, possible implementation challenges, and the extent to which reflection is utilized in the EE activity. Our overall aim is to determine if less resource-intensive forms of EE like CBL and ICLA are as effective as CSL in terms of the overall educational experience.

Literature Review

Over the past several decades, experiential education has grown in popularity as a pedagogical approach (e.g., Kolb, 1984). It offers students direct practical experience relevant to the issues being studied in class and an opportunity to work inside and outside of the classroom on relevant unfamiliar problems.

Benefits of Experiential Education

According to Katula and Threnhauser (1999), students often find it difficult to relate course content to the world outside the classroom. Experiential education can thus be a potent tool in helping them link theoretical context to real-life practice (Bobbitt, Inks, Kemp & Mayo, 2000; Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2004).

Indeed, experiential education is used in many disciplines as a vehicle to improve student learning (Hamer, 2000; Chavan, 2011).

Educational research posits that EE opportunities tend to be more engaging and enjoyable for students than traditional approaches to learning (Hamer, 2000; Blunsdon, Reed, McNeil & McEachern, 2003). This helps participants connect to the subject matter (Wright, 2000) and become more actively involved in their learning (Kolb, 1984). Students acquire deep comprehension of class material and issues (Wright, 2000; Estes, 2004; Ives-Dewey, 2009), perceive that they learn more and become capable of applying their knowledge in different contexts (Blunsdon et al., 2003). The end result is often higher levels of intellectual motivation and improvement in academic performance (Hamer, 2000; Chavan, 2011).

Experiential education is also useful for skill development. It aids students in accumulating experiences (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Chavan, 2011) that are beneficial for employment after graduation (Chavan, 2011). Students get opportunities to work on challenging projects and develop skills like teamwork, report writing, problem solving, critical thinking, communication skills (Hunter-Jones, 2012), and self-management and decision making (Bobbitt et al., 2000). Such skills enhance their cognitive and personal growth (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Donovan, 2008). As employers often favour community experience over academic credentials (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999), these practical experiences give students a competitive edge when applying for employment and help them transition into the labour market (Chavan, 2011).

Implementing Experiential Education

Although there is clear evidence of the benefits of experiential education for learners in the existing literature, the experience must be structured properly to result in maximum benefit. An effective EE experience should guide the learner through the four stages of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984; Chavan, 2011) (see Figure 1).

According to Kolb (1984), experiential education has four stages: a) concrete experience, b) reflection, c) abstract conceptualization and d) active experimentation. A participant must go through a concrete experience, look back and reflect upon this experience, determine useful and key information to formulate abstract concepts and generalizations, and apply this new information to subsequent actions (Kolb, 1984; Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Owen & Stupans, 2009; Chavan, 2011). The model clearly illustrates that merely having an experience does not necessarily lead to learning (Kolb, 1984; Rubin, 2002); other processes like reflection and abstract conceptualization play equally important roles (Kolb, 1984).

Figure 1: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984)
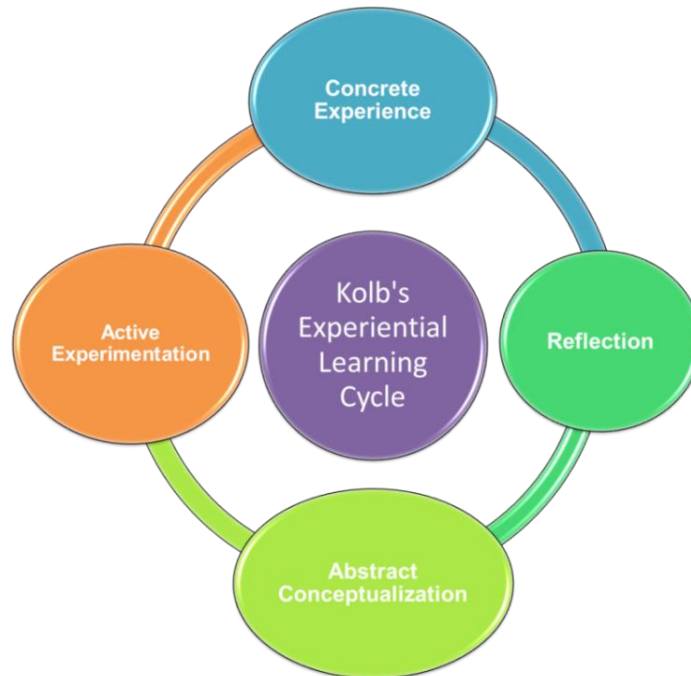
Apart from the challenges associated with experiential education generally, there are benefits and difficulties associated with implementing individual forms of experiential education. ICLA, for example, tends to be preferred when CSL or CBL are not practical for a variety of reasons, including cost and time constraints. The following section provides a description of each along with potential benefits and barriers to implementation.

Community Service Learning

CSL, also called service learning, is a strategy or pedagogy that connects specific theoretical context to a meaningful practical experience (Simons & Cleary, 2006; Prentice, 2007). The CSL experience is linked to course learning objectives (Simons & Cleary, 2006; Holland & Robinson, 2008) along with social, personal, professional and civic goals. It provides students with an opportunity to obtain structured experiences that are associated with their class or program and enables them to enhance their educational growth by engaging in some form of service activity in the community. The outcomes are mutually beneficial for both parties, meeting the needs of the student as well as those of the community or local organization (Ash & Clayton, 2004; Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning, 2013; Fredericksen, 2000; Furco, 2001; Gardner & Baron, 1999; Holland & Robinson, 2008; Mooney & Edwards, 2001; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Sattler & Peters, 2011). Students hone their skills, become active citizens and potentially develop careers; community organizations get valuable assistance without charge, because students receive credit rather than salary for their work (Sattler & Peters, 2011).

The potential risk of student exploitation can be mitigated if students receive course credit for their work and the CSL partnership is monitored by EE staff. Ideally university and community partnerships survive on an ongoing basis if each party in the partnership receives benefits (e.g., see Beere, 2009). Typically the working conditions of the student and the expectations of the partner organization are agreed upon prior to the start of the CSL experience. During the course of the CSL experience, the partnership is monitored by the instructor and/or EE staff. Any emergent concerns raised by students, the instructor or

the community partner are mitigated and/or addressed. These also reflect the conditions under which the current study was conducted.

When implementing CSL, community partners function as co-educators along with instructors and both parties facilitate the student's learning process (Holland & Robinson, 2008). The CSL experience is followed by critical reflection and assessment strategies such as reports or projects to demonstrate the attainment of learning outcomes that are graded by the course instructor (Holland & Robinson, 2008).

Benefits of CSL

For the student: Students can benefit from CSL in the context of academic and social skill development, active citizenship and career exploration. CSL fosters student empowerment by creating a sense of responsibility in the community setting and facilitating skills development (Fredericksen, 2000; O'Hara, 2001; Groh, Stallwood & Daniels, 2011). There is mounting evidence that CSL contributes to higher academic learning and personal development (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Fredericksen, 2000; Ash & Clayton, 2004; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Smith, 2008; Riehle & Weiner, 2013), specifically self-esteem, relationship-building with others (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Giles & Eyler, 1998; Simons & Cleary, 2006), communication, leadership (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Riehle & Weiner, 2013) and critical thinking skills (Matthews & Zimmerman, 1999; Mooney & Edwards, 2001; Riehle & Weiner, 2013). Students exposed to CSL also show an increased appreciation for diversity and develop their interpersonal skills (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Donovan, 2008; Gardner & Baron, 2008; Holland & Robinson, 2008; Smith, 2008; Groh et al., 2011).

Finally, CSL has been identified as a way to enhance students' self-knowledge and assist in their career development (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda & Yee, 2000; Eyler et al., 2001; Eyler, 2002; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Through a CSL experience, students get opportunities to test out their career choices and affirm or modify their decisions (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000; Simons & Cleary, 2006). They can also build connections within the community (Hancock et al., 2010) and enhance their resumes for future employment (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999).

Development of citizenship: CSL is an effective tool to heighten political awareness and civic engagement among students and create active citizens in communities (Eyler, Giles & Schmeide, 1996; Mabry, 1998; Mooney & Edwards, 2001; Strage, 2001; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Smith, 2008; Prentice, 2007; Prentice & Robinson, 2010; Warren, 2012). It can help students change their stereotypical beliefs and increase their knowledge of social diversity and community needs (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Borden, 2007). Communities in turn benefit from more civic-minded and intellectually flexible citizens.

After undergoing a CSL experience, students have a deeper comprehension of social problems (Mabry, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Borden, 2007) and many students develop a belief that they are capable of making a difference in society (Gallini & Moely, 2003). CSL strengthens student interests in social justice (Groh et al., 2011) and assists them in finding solutions for social issues in particular and other complex issues in general (Mabry, 1998).

For the institution: Research has shown a positive correlation between participation in CSL and student persistence at the undergraduate level (Bringle, Hatcher & Muthia, 2010). Students who have participated in CSL can have more interest and success in continuing their education at the graduate level (Astin et al., 2000; Riehle & Weiner, 2013).

Challenges associated with CSL

As with other forms of experiential education, students need to go through Kolb's learning cycle in order for the CSL experience to be effective. However, CSL is inherently more complex to administer than other forms of experiential education for the following reasons:

- Meaningful partnerships must be established with community organizations. Student schedules must be adjusted and insurance-related or risk management issues must be addressed (Wright, 2000).

- Depending on the learning site, students might be required to undergo police checks and/or medical examinations to satisfy insurance requirements and to sign waivers that mitigate legal risk to the university.
- Students need to be managed at the site. Community partners need to provide an orientation to the students, find a physical place for them to work and provide supervision and oversight.
- From the student's point of view, CSL is typically more intense than other EE pedagogies. Students spend at least 10 hours per week on average in the community for a specified time period (Rubin, 2002).

Although CSL provides many benefits to students, the literature documents that there may be time and resource costs associated with this pedagogy (Altman, 1996). It requires significant planning and time to set up and perform ongoing supervision for CSL students. Financial costs can also be a barrier to implementation (Furco & Holland, 2004; Hou, 2010). CSL may not be possible to implement in every situation, in which case CBL and ICLA might be appropriate alternatives.

Community-Based Learning

Community-based learning (CBL) has been defined in the literature in various ways. Some consider it an umbrella term for experiential education activities held outside the classroom (like CSL, internship, placements and co-op), while others believe that CSL and CBL are synonymous. We have distinguished between CBL and CSL with respect to where the student is located during the learning process. In CSL, students work at a community site; in CBL, students work on a project in an online or classroom setting although they may have reason to visit the site as part of the experience (Sattler & Peters, 2011).

CBL projects are structured to solve a particular problem and provide a solution as a final product. External community partners present students with a predetermined authentic problem and set out the goals of the project (Sattler & Peters, 2011). Students then work on the project in teams over the course of the term as they would in the labour market (Thomas, 2000; Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; DeClou, Sattler & Peters, 2013; Markham, 2011; Sattler & Peters, 2011). For instance, students in a business class might be asked to suggest ways in which a company might improve its cost efficiency. Students would be assessed by faculty members and get informal feedback from community partners (Sattler & Peters, 2011).

CBL has also been associated with applied research (Sattler & Peters, 2011) because students learn to apply their research skills (Stocking & Cutforth, 2006) and theoretical constructs learned in class to specific projects in order to meet community needs (Brown, 2011; Sattler & Peters, 2011; DeClou, Sattler & Peters, 2013). This latter example is also known as community-based research (CBR) and distinguishes itself from CBL in that additional considerations such as research ethics and data sharing agreements (i.e., addressing who "owns" the data, where it is it stored, under which conditions can it be disseminated) have to be worked out with the community organization.

For students: Educational experiences are enhanced if students get an opportunity to work on real-world projects (DeClou, Sattler & Peters, 2013). Like CSL, CBL helps students enhance their skills and personal development (Sattler & Peters, 2011; Peters & Academica Group Inc., 2012) and it improves mastery of the subject matter (Sattler & Peters, 2011). Students engaged in CBL courses can improve their critical thinking, problem solving, presentation, analytical (Sattler & Peters, 2011) and interpersonal skills (Stocking & Cutforth, 2006).

Developing citizenship: CBL deepens students' relationship with community work (Stocking & Cutforth, 2006) and community partners benefit from academic expertise (Sattler & Peters, 2011).

For the institution: CBL improves the perception of quality. One study examined classes that incorporated CBL activities (including reflection) and reported that students deemed that their educational experience was enhanced (Lichtenstein, Thorme, Cutforth & Tombari, 2011).

Challenges associated with CBL

Like CSL, students need to go through Kolb's four-step learning cycle in order to obtain the full benefit of CBL (see Figure 1 above). It takes time and energy for instructors to foster and maintain community partners. CBL can intensify student workload. Based on the experiences at our own institution, a further challenge can be completing a specific project within the timeframe of a single course and providing continuity for the community partner from one class to the next. However, because CBL students do not work at the site of the community partner, logistical issues such as risk management, insurance issues and the provision of space at the community site are mitigated or eliminated.

In-Course Learning Activities

In-course learning activities (ICLA) are classroom-based activities designed to bring a practical, hands-on component to student learning. They can include computer simulations, role playing, debates, group work (Hamer, 2000), video cases, case studies, class exercises, guest speakers (Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2004), site visits, observerships, shadowing and oral interviews (Rubin, 2002). These learning activities are not ends in themselves but means to ends.

For example, by exposing students to different perspectives on subject matter through an experiential education activity like a guest speaker, students gain direct practical experience. Through reflection they analyze the experience, connect it with theory and scrutinize their knowledge, experience, attitudes, stereotype and beliefs. They propose new ideas and theories as part of classroom discussions and assignments. Activities are chosen depending on the course content and learning goals.

Benefits of ICLA

Some studies have found that there is greater evidence of increased student learning in classes containing ICLA than in traditional classes (Hamer, 2000; Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2004). Students who engaged in classroom-based activities believed that their skills were enhanced and that their learning was enjoyable and effective (Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2004). ICLA is less resource- and time-intensive than other forms of experiential education.

Challenges associated with ICLA

Most often, reflection is absent in ICLA activities, which may reduce its effectiveness relative to CSL and CBL (Kolb, 1984; Mabry, 1998; Koliba, 2004; Brownell & Swaner, 2010). Thus, while ICLA may represent an opportunity to add a practical component to a postsecondary classroom in a less resource-intensive and intrusive way than CSL or CBL, it may be less effective educationally.

Quantifying the Benefits

Although research seems to indicate that all three of the pedagogies assessed offer benefits for student learning, this study seeks to determine if students in different experiential education practices will have the same: a) degree of student engagement, b) deep approach to learning and c) perception of the learning environment within the course such as quality of teaching, clear goals and standards and appropriate workload and assessment. We offer, therefore, a brief description of each measure, including how it contributes to student learning and connects with experiential education.

Key Concepts

Student Engagement

Regardless of the mode of instruction that teachers employ, a meaningful learning experience requires that students pay attention, are interested and are motivated to learn. In any given class, one can see disengaged students sitting in the last row (Bowen, 2005). Improving student engagement should be one of the pivotal goals of any institution because it offers extensive benefits to student learning (Smith, Sheppard, Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Engagement tends to enhance the personal development, growth and learning of students (Bowen, 2005; Coates, 2006; CCI Research Inc., 2009) and leads to better academic outcomes in general (Bowen, 2005; Kuh, 2008; CCI Research Inc., 2009; Schweinle, Reisetter & Stokes, 2009). As a consequence considerable attention is being paid to engagement in postsecondary institutions across Canada and the United States (CCI Research Inc., 2009).

Student engagement can be defined as "the effort, interest, and time that students invest in meaningful educational experiences" (CCI Research Inc., 2009). Engaged students are involved in different activities and experiences from which quality learning is obtained. Their time, effort, personal interest, desires and motivation determines the extent of engagement; merely paying attention in class is not sufficient (Bowen, 2005; Struyyen, Dochy & Janssens, 2008). Students must participate actively in class by asking questions and taking part in discussions, invest time in course work, integrate information from a variety of resources for assignments, and have interactions with peers, the community and faculty members (Belcheir, 2003). Pedagogies like CSL, CBL and ICLA aim to enhance active engagement (Bowen, 2005).

Some of the educational practices that increase engagement include offering academically challenging work and encouraging higher-order thinking, greater student-faculty interaction and more active and collaborative learning. The literature points to the following best practices:

- **Challenge students.** When students put more time and effort into a course, they learn better. Setting high expectations and emphasizing student effort assists with engagement practices (Smith et al., 2005). Adopting academically challenging curriculum with the incorporation of active and collaborative learning helps students prepare for the outside world (Kuh, 2008).
- **Encourage high-level interaction with faculty.** Students who have meaningful interactions with faculty members and with their peers tend to be more successful academically compared to those who do not (Evenbeck & Johnson, 2012). However, managing the demand for meaningful interaction between students and faculty members is difficult because faculty members have other priorities. This conflict may have the unintended consequence of providing an incentive for instructors to reduce the academic challenge of a course to reduce the demand on their time (Kuh, 2003).
- **Interact with peers and the community.** Meaningful involvement with peers and using knowledge in different settings leads to deep learning (Belcheir, 2003; Smith et al., 2005). Students must be active learners and have support from their peers to attain deep learning.
- **Give prompt assessment and feedback.** Sufficient and prompt feedback from faculty members can enhance student skills like critical thinking and writing, and can help students improve their academic performance (Belcheir, 2003; Kuh, 2003; Evenbeck & Johnson, 2012). Engagement is also enhanced when students and faculty members discuss grades, assignments, class content or readings outside the class (Kuh, 2003).

Although few studies have explored the relationship between either CBL or ICLA and engagement, research has shown that CSL enhances student engagement and improves academic outcomes because students tend to be more motivated and responsible towards learning, be engaged with class content and participate sufficiently in classrooms (Astin et al., 2000). CSL also enhances higher-order thinking (Warren, 2012), aids in retention of information and comprehension of class content (Vogelgesang &

Astin, 2000; Strage, 2001), and helps students apply that information effectively to projects (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Astin et al., 2000; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Gardner & Baron, 2008).

Gallini and Moely (2003) found higher academic engagement in CSL students and reported that students study more for CSL courses than non-CSL courses. Some studies found a difference in grades between CSL and non-CSL classes, yet others have found none (Mabry, 1998; Porter, Summers, Toton & Aisenstein, 2008). According to a longitudinal study carried out in 177 institutions, students engaged in CSL had higher grade point averages and better critical thinking and writing skills than non-CSL students (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Another meta-analysis study reported that there is a significant relationship between CSL and improved student learning outcomes (Warren, 2012).

Deep Approaches to Learning

Deep learning can be defined as "a motivation to seek meaning, understand underlying principles and identify relationships between ideas or concepts" (Kreber, 2003). This approach to learning entails "striving for improved understanding by applying and comparing ideas" (Lizzio, Wilson & Simons, 2002). High engagement in classrooms contributes to deep approaches to learning (Elton, 2001; Wilson & Fowler, 2005; Baeten, Kyndt, Struyven & Dochy, 2010) and it is one of the key outcomes of experiential education pedagogies if implemented effectively.

The depth of an approach to learning can be measured by considering the strategies and motives that students use (Hall et al., 2004) (see diagram in Appendix A). "Strategies" are the activities or methods in which students participate with the aim of learning the material; the focus here is on *how* students approach the material. For example, a student is using a deep strategy if they explore material through various means, such as spending more time learning about a particular topic, doing suggested readings and self-testing the class content to comprehend the material better. However, if the student simply memorizes the information, it would be considered a surface strategy.

"Motives", on the other hand, represented the reasons for which students conduct themselves in a certain way, with a focus on *why* they approach the material as they do (Biggs, Kember & Leung, 2001; Wilson & Fowler, 2005; Baeten et al., 2010; Socha & Sigler, 2012). A motive is deep if a student is genuinely interested in the class content or experience (Socha & Sigler, 2012) and gains personal satisfaction through learning the material. A deep motive seeks meaning while a surface motive is only concerned with completing the task (Hall et al., 2004; Wilson & Fowler, 2005).

For a variety of reasons, some faculty members have adopted teaching approaches based on convenience.[2] When faculty members teach through traditional lecture-style methods, students tend to adopt *surface learning approaches* (Hughes & Mighty, 2010; Diseth & Martinsen, 2003) and become passive rather than active learners (Hamer, 2000). They spend less time learning and more time memorizing and reiterating information for fear of failing (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Diseth & Martinsen, 2003; Hall et al., 2004; Kember, Biggs & Leung, 2004; Wilson & Fowler, 2005; Baeten et al., 2010; Hughes & Mighty, 2010).[3]

Students involved in surface learning are mainly concerned with obtaining enough knowledge to complete the course work (Hall et al., 2004; Wilson & Fowler, 2005) and focus on end goals, like getting a good job upon graduation (Biggs, 1989). They listen passively to lectures and take notes without being engaged with the class content (Hamer, 2000). Students adopting this approach find it more difficult to meet learning outcomes and acquire skills and competencies (Hall et al., 2004).

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[2] These reasons can include class size, lack of time, the instructor's own approach to teaching, or some combination of the above.
[3] However, the negative aspects of the lecture mode can be mitigated if faculty incorporate active learning strategies, such as ICLA (e.g., see Jones, 2007). ICLA engages the audience members and ideally links activities directly or indirectly to subsequent assessment techniques that rely on higher-order cognitive skills like analysis, synthesis and application (e.g., Biggs & Tang, 2011).

In contrast, experiential education can enable students to adopt *deep learning approaches*. In practices like CBL, students are actively engaged with their class content, feel excited about acquiring knowledge and invest more time in learning the material (Kuh, 2008; Hughes & Mighty, 2010). They also share their knowledge with other people, apply it to the wider context and learn important life skills (Kuh, 2008). Deep learning approaches specifically contribute to the development of conceptual, analytical and critical thinking skills (Hall et al., 2004). Students are committed to learning, and the intention is to comprehend the material and make connections between previous knowledge, course content and experiences (Biggs, 1989; Hall et al., 2004). Nonetheless, these benefits are not universal; it is quite possible for some experiential education opportunities to lead to sub-optimal engagement depending upon specific learner characteristics (see Hunter-Jones, 2012).

Surface learning is typically associated with lower content understanding, low self-awareness and poor academic performance, while deep learning is linked with stronger understanding of the material, enhanced self-understanding and better student outcomes (Biggs, 1989; Lizzio et al., 2002; Diseth & Martinsen, 2003; Hall et al., 2004; Wilson & Fowler, 2005; Hughes & Mighty, 2010). Some studies have suggested a positive relationship between deep learning approach and academic achievement (Lizzio et al., 2002; Diseth & Martinsen, 2003). However, Lizzio et al. find a stronger relationship between higher grades and *surface* strategies, which they attribute to how students are assessed rather than how well they have mastered the material (Lizzio et al., 2002).

Despite extensive literature on the benefits of deep approaches to learning, many faculty members continue to foster a surface approach through their teaching (Hughes & Mighty, 2010). In order to prepare skilled and active citizens, postsecondary institutions need to encourage students to take deeper approaches to learning. Experiential education has been known to impact the student learning process profoundly (Wright, 2000), and there is a strong relationship between CSL and deep learning (Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Kuh, 2008; Hancock et al., 2010). There is still a gap in the literature, however, concerning the approach to learning that CBL promotes.

It is worth noting that certain risks or challenges associated with experiential education, and particularly CSL, may influence the approach to learning that students choose to adopt:

- **Increased workload for students**. Whether projects for community partners are conducted inside or outside the classroom, they tend to be time-consuming. Several studies note that when students have a heavy workload, deep learning can be obstructed and shallow or surface approaches to learning can ensue (Lizzio et al., 2002; Hall et al., 2004; Law & Meyer, 2011). Paradoxically, one study found that a lower workload contributed to higher acquisition of skills like problem solving because students had more time to develop their skills (Lizzio et al., 2002). When designing a CSL or CBL, workload needs to be monitored and assessed.
- **Appropriate assessment is crucial.** Assessment that provides an incentive for students to engage with course content more deeply and at a higher level of cognitive processing (including analysis, synthesis, making judgments and application of theories; see Biggs & Tang, 2011) encourages students to learn effectively rather than simply reiterate content.
- **Instructor must provide quality teaching and clear learning objectives.** These goals help facilitate understanding of material and encourage deep learning, which can contribute to high academic achievement and lifelong learning (Law & Meyer, 2011). A quality teaching and learning environment also contributes to attainment of generic skills like problem solving, planning and teamwork (Lizzio et al., 2002). It is critical for students to acquire these skills at the undergraduate level because they are more broadly applicable in a work setting (Griffin et al., 2003).

Experiential education is an effective teaching tool. It brings a practical real-life component to the classroom that enables students to become actively involved in learning, enhances their capacity for higher-order thinking and develops their skills. In the process, experiential education has the potential to make a classroom environment more conducive to learning by improving student engagement, enabling deeper approaches to learning and rendering the classroom experience more enjoyable and interesting.

In order to benefit from these advantages in their classrooms, practitioners should consider adopting CSL, CBL and ICLA. Research indicates that all three can have benefits for the learning environment; however, they have only been studied in isolation thus far, and rarely compared. This study addresses this gap by comparing CSL, CBL and ICLA with respect to how they foster student engagement, deep learning and a positive classroom environment.

Methodology

The present investigation is composed of two separate studies, as described below. The first is quantitative and focuses on students as participants in courses containing ICLA, CBL or CSL. The second is qualitative and focuses on instructors who taught courses containing ICLA, CBL or CSL.

Quantitative Study

Procedure

This study was run over two years at York University, a large university of 55,000 students in the city of Toronto. Courses at York that included either CBL or CSL components were identified over several academic terms, from July 2011 to July 2013. The original research plan was to pair each of these courses with another course on the same topic and/or taught by the same instructor that involved either the traditional lecture-style format or some other type of pedagogical innovation. For a variety of reasons, the pairing of courses by the same instructor proved problematic, as did establishing a control group of courses comprised of only lectures. The final study thus compares courses with CBL, CSL or some other in-course learning activities (ICLA) designed to bring a "real-world" component to student learning.

Faculty members who had worked at least once in the past with York's Office of Experiential Education (OEE) were invited to participate. The OEE is an administrative unit providing experiential education support to faculty members of York's Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies. Faculty members were informed about the voluntary nature of the study and given information about it.

Those faculty members interested in participating provided a date and time within the last two weeks of the end date of their course during which a survey could be administered to their students. Students enrolled in these courses were surveyed using a paper and pencil method. Surveying students near the end of their term allowed them to reflect on the majority of their experience in the course.

Recruiting faculty members who had previous affiliation with the OEE resulted in a modest number of volunteers. The research team revised its recruitment strategy and invitations to participate in the study were issued to academic program chairs and directors to distribute among their faculty (both full-time and part-time). Again, surveying was done during the last few weeks of the course's end date.

Initially, faculty members who came forward to participate were asked about the kind of experiential education (if any) they incorporated into their courses.[4] Following the quantitative data collection, faculty members were contacted again and asked to complete a short survey to clarify the nature of their course and confirm the experiential education groupings for the analysis that would follow. This step proved to be important to ensure consistency in how course pedagogies were classified.

The administration of the survey was done by an institutional researcher who went to each participating class and gave a short introduction to the survey, explaining to students what the study was about and that their participation was voluntary. Paper copies of surveys were distributed along with Scantron forms.

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[4] The present investigation targeted CSL, CBL and ICLA and not other forms of EE like internships or co-op.

The researcher collected the surveys and forms. The study received ethics approval and followed protocols regarding the collection, reporting and storage of information obtained from participants.

Research Question

The quantitative study focused on one main research question: How do students who have taken CBL, CSL and ICLA differ in how they rate their engagement, depth of learning, course environment and educational outcomes? As already described above, CSL requires the greatest amount of time and resources to implement. As such, it is important to know whether it adds value over less resource-intensive methods such as CBL and ICLA.

Participants

Out of a pool of 793 students taking the courses participating in the study, 485 responded to the survey. As can be seen in Table 1, participants came from many years of study and from various class sizes.[5] It is also worth noting that CSL and CBL normally appear in upper-level courses. One class did not fit into any of our groupings as defined in the introduction, so the 21 participants from that class were excluded from the analyses. As a result, a total of 464 participants were included in the analysis.

The overall response rate for the student survey was 82% for the CSL group, 68% for the CBL group and 64% for the ICLA group.[6]

Table 1: Number of Respondents, Class Size and Year Level as a Function of Experiential Education Instructional Approach

	CSL			CBL			ICLA		
	avg. cl. size	# of sections	# of resp.	avg. cl. size	# of sections	# of resp.	avg. cl. size	# of sections	# of resp.
Year level									
1st	--	--	--	--	--	--	115	2	78
2nd	35.5	2	57	--	--		25	1	11
3rd	50	1	41	34.5	4	94	24.8	6	133
4th	10	1	9	20.5	2	27	14	1	14
Totals		4	107		6	121		10	236

Note: avg. cl. = average class, # = number, "--" = no data collected

CBL = community-based learning, CSL = community service learning, ICLA = in-course learning activities

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[5] Note that the class sizes were determined by the number of students registered in the course at the beginning of the semester.
[6] The response rates are calculated based on the initial class sizes, even though the survey was administered during the last two weeks of class. Because students may have dropped the courses in question during the course of the term, the response rates are actually higher.

Analysis

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant effect of EE instructional approach on the various subscales (described below) based on an alpha level of .05. Scheffé post-hoc tests were utilized to determine where the differences occurred between the three EE instructional approaches. Post hoc tests were only interpreted in the case of a significant ANOVA.

Instruments

We constructed a paper-based survey from three instruments, including the 19 questions from the Classroom *Survey* of Student Engagement (*CLASSE*), 10 from the Revised Study Process Questionnaire (RSPQ), 32 from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and four additional items focusing on experiential education outcomes. A copy of this instrument appears in Appendix C.

Classroom *Survey* of Student Engagement (CLASSE): CLASSE is a survey instrument adapted from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) by Bob Smallwood at the University of Alabama. It measures the degree to which students within a particular class participate in educational practices associated with engagement. It has five subscales called *benchmarks of effective educational practice*: 1) active and collaborative learning, 2) level of academic challenge, 3) student-faculty interaction, 4) enriching educational experiences, and 5) supportive campus environment (Smallwood, n.d.).

In this study, we focused on three practices: active and collaborative learning, level of academic challenge and student-faculty interaction.

- *Active and collaborative learning* measures the extent to which students are engaged with the material and their peers inside and outside the classrooms.

- *Student-faculty interaction* examines the level of engagement students have with their professors with respect to discussion of readings, grades, assignment, and feedback on their academic performance inside and outside the classroom.

- *Level of academic challenge* assesses how students demonstrate higher-order cognitive thinking through analyzing experiences, ideas and theories.

Students were asked about the occurrence of these practices within their specified course.

Revised Study Process Questionnaire (RSPQ): Student approaches to learning were assessed through the Study Process Questionnaire as revised by John Biggs (Biggs, Kember & Leung, 2001; Fox, McManus & Winder, 2001; Justicia, Pichardo, Cano, Berben & Fluente, 2008). The RSPQ focuses on deep versus surface approaches to learning. It also has four subscales including deep motive, deep strategy, surface motive and surface strategy (see page 51 of this report) (Justicia et al., 2008).

The internal consistency and validity of the RSPQ subscales have been reported to be adequate (Fox et al., 2001; Wilson & Fowler, 2005). Specifically, the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for deep approach is 0.82, 0.75 for deep motive and 0.66 for deep strategy, respectively (Kember, Biggs & Leung, 2004). Generally speaking, a Cronbach's alpha between 0.6 and 0.7 is considered "adequate" and between 0.7 and 0.9 is considered "good" (George & Mallery, 2003). In the present study, we only assess whether or not our students are engaged in deep approaches to learning. Specifically, we are measuring if CSL, CBL and ICLA have encouraged students to adopt deep motives and strategies.

Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ): Over the last three decades, there has been extensive focus on studying the teaching and learning environment of students and how these impact quality of learning (Brew & Ginns, 2008). Quality of teaching, adequate assessment, clear goals and standards in course

assessment, and sufficient workload have all been known to influence student learning outcomes (Brew & Ginns, 2008). The CEQ is used widely in postsecondary institutions to measure instructional variables associated with teaching and learning effectiveness in a course (Lizzio et al., 2002; Griffin, Coates, McInnis & James, 2003; Coates, 2006; Law & Meyer, 2011). Through performance measurement, the CEQ ensures that the quality of teaching and learning in higher education institutions are sufficiently high (Griffin, Coates, McInnis & James, 2003).

Subscales have been modified since the CEQ was created (Griffin et al., 2003; Kreber, 2003). The most widely used subscales include: quality of teaching, clarity of goals and standards, sufficient workload, appropriate assessment, generic skills (Brew & Ginns, 2008), intellectual motivation, and graduate qualities (Griffin et al., 2003). For the purposes of our study:

- Quality of teaching is measured according to the feedback, motivation and assistance that faculty members provide to students, as well as whether they deliver the material in an understandable and interesting manner.
- Clear goals and standards are measured according to the perception of students about whether faculty members set out unambiguous standards, goals and directional expectations.
- Appropriate workload is assessed according to student perceptions of their workload and its influence on learning.
- The appropriate assessment subscale asks students the extent to which memorization is favoured over understanding in order for students to do well in the course.
- The generic skills subscale examines the perceptual influence of a particular course on general skills such as team work, written communication, working with minimal supervision and linkage of knowledge with work (Wilson, Lizzio & Ramsden, 1999).
- The intellectual motivation subscale measures perceived course influence on inspiring and enabling students (Griffin et al., 2003).
- The graduate qualities subscale assesses outcomes linked to higher-order learning, particularly the relationship between course and lifelong learning (Griffin et al., 2003).

Overall, the CEQ has been found to be adequately reliable and valid (Kreber, 2003).

Reliability of the Subscales utilized in the Present Study

Table 2 lists the scales and subscales that were utilized in the present investigation. In addition to the three aforementioned questionnaires, we also included a questionnaire called "experiential education outcomes" specifically designed for this study. Table 2 also lists the number of items associated with each of the subscales

Table 2: Scales and Subscales and their Reliability as Indicated by Cronbach's Alpha

Scales	Subscale (Number of Items)	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
Student engagement (using Classroom Survey of Student Engagement)	A. Active and collaborative learning (8)	.682
	B. Level of academic challenge (8)	.741
	C. Student/faculty interaction (3)	.597
Depth of learning (using Revised Study Process Questionnaire)	D. Deep motive (5)	.711
	Deep strategy (5)	
		.703
Course environment (using Course Experience Questionnaire)	E. Quality teaching (6)	.865
	F. Clear goals and standards (4)	.773
	G. Appropriate workload (4)	.772
	H. Appropriate assessment (3)	.856
Educational Outcome (using Course Experience Questionnaire)	I. Generic skills (4)	.793
	J. Intellectual motivation (5)	.826
	K. Graduate qualities scale (6)	.839
Experiential Education Outcomes (specifically created for this study)	L. Outcomes such as career development, community awareness, application of theory and practice, and optimism about making future contributions to community/society (4)	.855

For each item, a five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). There were both positive and negative items in our survey, so negative items were reversed for scoring. See Appendix C for a complete listing of the items. Using Cronbach's alpha, we computed the reliability of the subscales because they can vary from sample to sample and are not a fixed property of the scale (Steiner, 2003). As indicated above, a Cronbach's alpha between 0.6 and 0.7 is considered "adequate" and between 0.7 and 0.9 is considered "good" (George & Mallery, 2003). Subscale C – "student faculty interaction" fell below 0.6. This could be attributed to the fact that only three items were used or that the items were not interpreted in the same fashion by the students being surveyed (see Steiner, 2003)

Qualitative Study

Research Approach

We took a *general inductive* approach (cf. Thomas, 2006) to the qualitative portion of this study, deriving interpretations from close reading and inductive analysis of the empirical qualitative data. While similar to the well-known "grounded theory" approach (e.g., Charmaz, 2006), ours was more *pragmatic* (*sensu* Merriam, 1998; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Instead of developing a new theory to explain the phenomena experienced by the qualitative study participants, we aimed to develop insights into the experiences of study participants through a process of analysis and interpretation.

Research Questions

Through a set of interviews with ICLA, CBL and CSL instructors we sought to address the following research questions:

- What motivates course instructors to use or continue to use experiential education approaches?
- How was the course implemented? What challenges, if any, were encountered?
- To what extent do students engage in deep or critical reflection as part of their experiential education course experience and how is this manifest? A complete listing of the interview protocol appears in Appendix D.

Participant Selection

Course directors who permitted their students to be surveyed during class time were also invited to take part in focus group sessions to discuss their experiences with CBL, CSL and ICLA. Five course directors of a total of 17 volunteered to participate in the focus groups. Three taught courses using CSL, one used CBL and one used ICLA.

Data Collection

Given the small number of instructors who volunteered to participate in the focus group sessions, three separate 1.5-hour mini-focus group sessions were held. There were three sessions in total, each facilitated by a moderator: two with two course directors and one with one. The latter became a one-on-one interview.

The moderator used a questioning route to structure discussion during each session (see Appendix D). It was used as a guide only: question wording and follow-up or prompt questions varied between sessions, depending on the nature of the conversation. The questioning route ensured that key topics and sub-topics were discussed in the same order across all sessions, but it was not treated like a standardized questionnaire.

For each session, an audio recording was made and transcribed. Although the audio recordings were consulted on one occasion during the analysis and interpretation phase of the study, the written transcripts served as the main qualitative data set for analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Three researchers were each provided with transcripts from all three sessions. They were asked to code the first transcript independently of one other, constructing initial codes that "stayed close" to the views of the participant. They worked through the transcript line by line, giving special attention to actions or processes present in the data, whether physical, social, psychological or institutional.

All three researchers then worked collaboratively to sort their combined set of codes into clusters and decide upon a name for each cluster. These names served as initial categories that were considered but not necessarily retained as the researchers began to code the second transcript. The second and third transcripts were handled similarly, resulting in a set of codes and categories for each of the three transcripts. The codes generated independently by the individual researchers were quite consistent with each other, even those for the first transcript. As one might expect, the codes of the researchers became increasingly congruent throughout this process.

The lead qualitative researcher took the codes and categories developed for all three transcripts and integrated them into an overall set of five themes. As a check on the validity of the interpretations represented by these five themes, the lead researcher also scanned the transcripts for "signals of meaning", such as oppositional talk, identity framing concepts, saying one thing but doing another, moving back and forth between two positions, and aural but non-textual communication like tone of voice (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). A "light touch" was used at this stage of analysis and interpretation, since it was not possible to re-engage with focus group participants to explore these potential signals of meaning more fully. Finally, some of the key concepts of the research project as a whole – student engagement, deep learning and workload – were used as a screen to judge whether the qualitative research findings were useful within the context of the broader study.

Quantitative Findings

The quantitative study examined whether there differences amongst the three types of experiential education instructional approaches – CBL, CSL and ICLA – on the various subscales. Table 3 depicts the mean and standard deviations of the five-point Likert ratings obtained from students on the various subscales which tapped into four main constructs: student engagement, depth of learning, course environment, educational outcomes and EE outcomes. For the purposes of interpretation, higher scores indicate that students agreed with the statements that comprised the subscale, whereas lower scores indicate disagreement. Additionally the table depicts the significant overall main effect of EE instructional approach on the various subscales. For the purposes of interpretation of the effect sizes, we adopted the convention of .01 as being a "small" effect, .06 as being a "medium" effect and .14 as being a "large" effect **(**Cohen, 1988; Ellis 2010).[7] Scheffé post-hoc comparisons were conducted to determine where differences between the instructional groups occurred.

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[7] Cohen (1992) indicates that a medium effect is "one that is visible to the naked eye of a careful observer", a small effect is "one that is notably smaller than medium but not so small as to be trivial. A large effect is one that is "being the same distance above medium as small was below it."

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviations of Five-Point Likert Scale Ratings on the Various Subscales, Effect of EE Instructional Approach and Scheffé Post-Hoc Comparisons*

Subscales	CSL n=107		CBL n=121		ICLA n=236		Effect of EE		Scheffé Post-Hoc Comparison					
									CSL vs ICLA		CBL vs ICLA		CSL vs CBL	
	M	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*p-value*		*p-value*		*p-value*		*p-value*	
Student Engagement														
Active/collaborative learning	3.70	(.59)	3.70	(.66)	3.42	(.71)	.000	***	.002	**	.001	**	.998	
Higher order cognition	3.36	(.67)	3.41	(.60)	3.26	(.64)	.084		.392		.108		.847	
Student-Faculty interaction	2.93	(.87)	2.77	(.77)	2.77	(.96)	.272		.313		1.000		1.000	
Depth of Learning														
Depth of Learning	3.05	(.83)	3.00	(.81)	3.05	(.74)	.799		.999		.825		.857	
Depth of Learning	3.05	(.76)	3.01	(.76)	3.04	(.69)	.919		.980		.962		.920	
Course Environment														
Quality of teaching	3.20	(.88)	3.28	(.80)	3.42	(.86)	.054		.077		.302		.789	
Clear goals and standards	2.91	(.85)	2.94	(.85)	3.43	(.86)	.000	***	.000	***	.000	***	.000	***
Appropriate workload	2.35	(.81)	2.69	(.87)	3.50	(.82)	.000	***	.000	***	.000	***	.000	***
Appropriate assessment[1]	3.26	(1.08)	3.80	(1.04)	3.64	(1.07)	.001	***	.010	**	.435		.001	
Educational Outcomes														
Generic skills	3.40	(.85)	3.20	(.88)	3.14	(.89)	.037	*	.038	*	.836		.218	
Intellectual motivation	2.88	(.75)	2.77	(.68)	2.92	(.68)	.159		.887		.160		.495	
Graduate qualities	3.59	(.84)	3.49	(.76)	3.49	(.81)	.516		.551		1.000		.637	
EE outcomes	3.84	(.82)	3.61	(.89)	3.36	(.94)	.000	***	.000	***	.050	*	.154	

*Appropriate assessment asks students the extent to which memorization is favoured over understanding. Higher scores indicate agreement that memorization was favoured in the assessment whereas lower scores indicate disagreement

CSL=Community Service Learning; CBL=Community Based Learning; ICLA=In-course learning activities. EE=Experiential Education; η^2=partial eta squared. *p≤.05; **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

Student engagement: As can be seen in Table 3, there was no overall effect of EE instructional approach for higher order cognition, $F(2, 461) = 2.45$, $p = .084$, $\eta^2 = .011$, or student-faculty interaction, $F(2, 461) = 1.31$, $p = .272$, $\eta^2 = .006$, but there was a significant effect for active and collaborative learning, $F(2, 461) = 10.40$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .043$. Although the magnitude of this effect was between the small to medium range it should be noted that comparisons being made amongst teaching approaches that involve some degree of active/collaborative learning, thereby reducing the magnitude of the effect. Scheffé post-hoc comparisons revealed that there was a significant difference between the CSL and ICLA and CBL and ICLA but not between CBL and CSL. These findings are consistent with the notion that EE approaches that involve collaboration with a community partner, lead to greater student engagement behaviours as reported by students.

Depth of learning: There were no significant overall effect of EE instructional approach in terms of deep motive, $F(2, 461) = 0.23$, $p = .799$, $\eta^2 = .001$, and deep strategy, $F(2, 461) = 0.09$, $p = .919$, $\eta^2 = .000$. There are two separate possibilities that could explain these results. First, approaches to learning – whether shallow or deep – may be influenced by students' perceptions of clear goals and standards and perceived degree of workload (see course environment, below). Second, it is possible that these subscales tap into personal approaches to learning that may exist prior to students enrolling in the course and may be resistant to change as function of EE instructional strategy. The present investigation does not adjudicate between the two possibilities.

Course environment: The analysis revealed that there was a significant overall effect of EE instructional approach in terms of clear goals and standards, $F(2, 461) = 19.93$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .080$, and appropriate workload, $F(2, 461) = 82.84$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .264$. Notably the effect size of the EE instructional approach on clear goals and appropriate workload were deemed to be medium and high, respectively. Scheffé post-hoc comparisons revealed that all EE instructional groups significantly differed from one another in terms of students' ratings on clear goals and standards, and appropriate workload. For both these subscales, students in the CSL group had the lowest ratings, followed by students in the CBL group. Students in the ICLA group had the highest ratings. These findings suggests that students who worked with community partners (i.e., CSL or CBL) as part of the EE instructional approach did not have a clear sense of what standard of work that was required or expected. This difference also occurred between CSL and CBL, with CSL having lower ratings. Additionally students who worked with community partners gave significantly lower ratings when queried about appropriate workload compared to students who did not work with a community partner. Furthermore, CSL students gave lower ratings on appropriate workload compared to CBL students. With respect to appropriate assessment – that is, the extent to which the assessment approach favoured memorization over understanding – there was an overall main effect of EE instructional approach, $F(2, 461) = 7.56$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = 032$. Scheffé post-hoc comparison did not reveal differences between CBL and ICLA but did find differences between CSL and ICLA and CSL and CBL. As can be seen from the table, CSL had the lowest level of agreement with the notion that memorization was favoured over understanding. The magnitude of this effect was between the small to medium range. Finally it is important to note that an effect of EE instructional approach was just shy of reaching significance for quality of teaching, $F(2, 461) = 2.94$, $p = .054$, $\eta^2 = .013$. In cases were a community partner was part of the EE instructional approach students gave numerically lower ratings.

Educational outcomes: For the most part, the analysis did not reveal an effect of EE instructional approach for intellectual motivation, $F(2, 461) = 1.85$, $p = .159$, $\eta^2 = .008$, and for graduate qualities, $F(2, 461) = .662$, $p = .516$, $\eta^2 = .003$. However, there was a significant effect for generic skills, $F(2, 461) = 3.32$, $p = .038$, $\eta^2 = .014$. Scheffé post-hoc tests revealed that differences occurred between CSL and ICLA.

Experiential education outcomes: The analysis revealed a significant effect of EE instructional strategy with respect to EE outcomes, $F(2, 461) = 10.95$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .045$. Scheffé post-hoc tests revealed that significant differences occurred between CSL and ICLA and CBL and ICLA but not between CSL and CBL. This pattern indicates that differences on EE outcomes were revealed when the EE instructional approach utilized a community partner but were not apparent when CSL was compared with CBL.

Qualitative Findings

Five themes emerged from the analysis and interpretation of the focus group transcripts:
1) dealing with uncertainty
2) enabling self-awareness and reflection
3) building reciprocity
4) experiencing work overload but also a sense of accomplishment
5) feeling valued/being supported institutionally

The goal of the qualitative study was to develop insight into the experiences of focus group participants, as interpreted by the qualitative researchers, and highlight the institutional implications for advancing experiential education.

Dealing with Uncertainty

Handing over the Reins

Traditional course formats have been conducted in largely the same way for decades. They rely on lectures and memorization, approaches that are familiar to faculty and students alike. Professors are comfortable with the control these formats offer and students are comfortable with the familiarity.

By contrast, experiential education pedagogical formats – particularly those that involve community partners like CSL and CBL – are not fully in the control of the instructor. When an EE project is implemented, the needs, skills, agendas and interrelationships among students, instructors and community partners surface and affect the learning dynamic. The way project plans are implemented and adapted is less predictable, as are the outputs and outcomes of the course.

Focus group participants perceived EE formats as riskier than traditional formats. They spoke about the relative loss of control in experiential education courses compared to traditional course formats. They noted that the loss of control affects the student experience and what students learn, and also can have an impact on community partners. Occasionally the impact is negative.

> *"...we've had disasters. Certainly, I mean I know that we've had damaged relationships as a result of it..."*

It is important to note, however, that course instructors experienced this loss or giving-up of control in dramatically different ways – particularly during the first attempts at delivering an experiential education course. One focus group participant described it as "interesting," while another said:

> *"...it was a bit of uncertainty in terms of assessment and how the community partner plays a role in assessment was a bit… unnerving."*

Yet another described the uncertainty in more dramatic terms:

> *"Well my very first experience... it was terrifying. I felt that there were a lot of things that happened that were outside of my control... there was all this work with the community partners that had to happen before I even got to the course.... The first time – you have course content in the class that you have no control over, you have no idea what the students are going to do with the community partner and you can't control your students, which is fine when they're blowing an essay but it's terrifying when you've sent them out to the community. You don't know the students in advance, and then at the same time you have no control over how that community partner is going to then engage with your students. And as a professor, my whole life has been in my control as a professional.... And it [was] the first time I've ever had to really work with people outside and hand over the reins, and it was pretty terrifying for me."*

The way instructors experience the uncertainty seems to relate to the disciplinary, departmental and institutional context in which they were operating. Where instructors felt assured of peer and institutional support, for example, loss of control was experienced as "interesting" and "somewhat unnerving." Where instructors felt less supported, the loss of control was experienced as "overwhelming" and "terrifying."

Trust the Process

Instructors choose an experiential education pedagogy in order to create a more engaging learning experience, one that supports deep learning and prepares students for success. EE course participants (mainly students and instructors, but perhaps also community partners) intentionally leave their comfort zones and engage in a process in which they must figure things out as they go along. The course itself becomes a journey of discovery in which many different outcomes are possible. Students become explorers of a situation instead of assimilators of information. Ideally students reflect on their experiences along the way and then take the next step in the journey.

> *"So I try to explain this to the students: that their job is to figure out what the project is going to look like, what needs to happen to design it, to implement it. And I'm there and I really am trying to tell the students that they have to trust the process, but at the end of the day they have to trust me.... That was a lot, convincing them to trust the process, convincing them to trust me and convincing them that if the community project blows up and doesn't work that's fine too, that's a learning – you're evaluating them on their learning. You're not evaluating them on the end product so much. So things can go horribly wrong, and when things go horribly wrong part of the project is to deal with it. That's part of the learning and that's part of what's being evaluated. It's not just like an essay where you're looking at the end piece."*

Instructors also engage in reflection and troubleshooting as a course progresses, evolving their experiential education courses over time. In this way, course participants become "experimenters" in a context of uncertain outcomes, rather than knowledge disseminators and memorizers.

> *"So the experiment was about connecting the policy world... with the concrete realities of the people that they're dealing with on a daily basis. So this experiment is not about just understanding my ideas or finding out whether they're valued or not. It is about understanding research from the perspective of the people, from their views. And again this is not something you can conceptualize in one day, in one class setting."*

"So initially I think it was an experiment for us to carry out to see how we can connect the classroom practices of research with the realities on the ground. And we did a bit of experiment with a few things and some of them went well, others didn't really go nearly as well as we had originally anticipated. And as a kind of policy or philosophy I engaged the students in conversations over the course materials, over the things that we do.... So we started learning and it's an evolutionary process, you learn by doing."

Change is Great!

Students and instructors who are involved in experiential education must be flexible and open to the unexpected, particularly if they are involved with community partners. Those who are new to experiential education may experience confusion and anxiety. Instructors must act as guides for students and help them understand that uncertainty is a natural part of the experiential education process.

"...and we come in and say, 'You're going to have to learn how to deal with the unknown, you have to leave some blank space in your planning. When you plan you have to know that this is going to go this way but it may change.' [But they] want control. And so one of my fears is to actually help students understand this thing about control. What control is, how you deal with it. That is one of my fears. How am I going to do it? It worked for most students but some resisted. There was a strong resistance. They say, 'You change that. We change this. The project's changed. It's changed.' They're scared of change. And I keep telling them, 'Change is great!'"

Course instructors participating in the focus groups spoke about the great satisfaction they felt having taken on these roles.

"I certainly felt a sense of accomplishment; I could use the word proud.... It felt like ground breaking because as I said it was the first course in the school that had ever done anything like that. So yeah I think it was – the most prominent feeling was one of pride."

"Well it feels great. You know that you're actually doing something."

Enabling Self-Awareness and Reflection

A Better Version of Themselves

Experiential education instructors try to stimulate "transformative growth" within students through deeper self-awareness. Almost all of the focus group participants described this aspect as one of their key motivations for incorporating experiential education.

Focus group participants talked about their pleasure in seeing students become agents of positive social change and develop greater self-awareness.

"I want students to start thinking about solving problems, rather than just complaining about how bad the world is.... All I care is how they turn out to be a better person because my objective is that when they walk in the door of York and when they walk out – when they walk out they would [have] become a better version of themselves than the version that walked in the door. And actually I feel I have a bit of success.... That I did change their outlook on life, not just think about themselves, for example, but start caring about the well-being of others."

"I'm thinking of the students who came back to me either weeks or months or years after an experience like that: I've never had that feeling; it's really hard to define. It's feeling that I have somehow helped a student be a human being, not just a learner or a competent scholar. What I like is that I feel that they matured through this form of education. I'm hoping that it's true.... One of [my students told me], 'With you, you make me do things I would never do in my whole life!'... I just ask them to go beyond themselves, to just get the best out of who they are and try to push it. Just push it to the limit. My feeling is that that form, I've been doing it for 8 years now; it seems to me that it's the best way to take them there. So I'm hoping to get more students who will be excited about doing it."

Experiencing their Opinions

All focus group participants described how students became more self-aware when they engaged in reflection.[8] By engaging with the course work, students were encouraged to see themselves and their world differently. They learned to challenge their own assumptions about their life and to question their thinking, biases and fears about others.

"...the deep reflection came from a student who actually said, 'I'm kind of nervous of going to [the event]...I've never been to [such an event] where I'm the only white person.'...and in the end she said, 'Why am I thinking that why? Why am I nervous? So she had that questioning on her attitude.... and for me, I was really impressed to see that student courageous enough – because I don't even know if I would have been able to do this in the same situation. It actually takes guts to look at yourself in the mirror and say, 'I'm not that cute.[9] I'm nervous.' And the day after she was actually all excited about what she did because she actually went and met some people, she actually introduced herself to people ...and made friends during [the event]. And she explained that. She said, 'The fact that I questioned my behaviour made me more willing to actually [approach the others].'"

In some cases they were able to challenge themselves to move, at times literally, beyond their current thinking:

"But when they're asked to do something they often find it rather challenging. [They wonder], 'How do I go out and start asking questions involving individuals or participants that are not really known to me?' The starting point is always a very confusing one. But they slowly march and I work with all of them on a one-on-one basis."

In the words of one focus group participant, students learn to avoid uncritical assumptions without regard for their social implications and begin to actually "*experience their opinions.*" This turn of phrase seems to suggest a reflexive examination of one's own assumptions and how they influence the social construction of lived experience.

"And just the feeling that you've made [your students] challenge their assumptions by having them go to the community, even if just [at] the very basic level they realize their privilege. That alone is massive."

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[8] Few instructors actually used the term "reflection" until it was brought into the conversation by the focus group moderator.
[9] Presumably this means in the sense of being special, superior or without fault.

Struggling with the Tools

Facilitating critical reflection for deep learning is not a trivial undertaking for course instructors. For many students, engaging in critical reflection can be difficult and disconcerting.

> *"Some of [the students] get excited: 'This is a kind of one-time opportunity for me to dig deep and learn something that I wouldn't learn otherwise.'... This is not something everyone would be willing to do."*

Even if students are ready for it, reflection is "not always a happy moment." The question of how to reach more students and bring them into engagement with the experiential education courses remained an open question for all focus group participants.

> *"How do you motivate those who are not already motivated? The ones that are already enthusiastic about it, they don't need any guidance or direction. They will probably, but not to the extent the others would need. Motivating the others, it's a big challenge."*

In spite of the fact that course instructors struggle to identify better ways to enable student reflection, they did mention some of the tools they currently use:
- Individual journaling of experiences and reflections on those experiences
- Small and large group debriefing discussions of recent experiences in the course, using these discussions as a platform for troubleshooting and deciding next steps
- Layering or staging tasks and experiences within a course so that reflection on initial tasks prepares students for subsequent tasks
- Role playing and other games that challenged students' assumptions about themselves and others were also used
- One focus group participant talked about supporting deep reflection by creating a *"safe space, an open space"* in the classroom so that students felt more able to communicate openly about their reflections

Another potential difficulty is that reflection ought to have a purpose, otherwise it slips into self-indulgence (Kobayashi, 2003).

> *"If you want to solve the problem, solve the problem, but don't say because I feel this way that's why I think the policy should be this.... I always tell my students, 'We live in a bubble. A lot of people they don't have what we have. They can't flick a switch for electricity, turn on a tap for water. They don't. So we can't just kind of have this indulgence to say I'm suffering [and] that's why we need to make a policy change.' To me that's a non-starter.... Self-centred reflection is equal to shallow reflection."*

Building Reciprocity

Tending to Relationships

CSL/CBL instructors in the focus groups expressed concern about building reciprocity among participants in the experiential education course, including students, instructors and community members. They and their support staff spent a great deal of time and energy establishing, nurturing and maintaining connections with members of the community groups or organizations with whom they worked. Apart from tapping into existing networks developed by themselves and others at the university, they had to focus on personal and careful relationship building.

> *"When you involve communities I think you have to spend a bit more time, if not a lot more time, on understanding some of those issues. You have to be in a community, you have to walk, you have to go*

and talk to literally strangers and build a relationship with people who are not always keen on developing any relationship with strangers. It's a challenging thing."

In addition, they noted, implementing CBL or CSL requires ongoing communication during and after the course to understand and manage the expectations of community partners.

"...and the one thing I really learned out of it was that I had a huge [amount of] support [from] this team: people who set up the relationships with the community partners... At the time I thought that was great. In reflecting back on it, it was terrible. Because I just had no connection, I never really thanked [community partners] property and I don't think if I stayed there that some of those relationships would have continued, partly because of my mistake of not really connecting and doing some of the basic kind of, I called it 'piddly work' at the time and someone called me out on it and said, 'That's not piddly work. That's where community happens.' And ever since that, that's really changed my view of community engagement."

Balance of Power

Focus group participants also tried to build reciprocity through supporting an appropriate balance of power, privilege and agency among all course participants. Community partners drove project topics according to their own issues and needs. Students were directly challenged to question their own assumptions about privilege, skills and resources.

The need to balance power and privilege relations among experiential education participants can contribute to the sense of loss of control that some experiential education instructors experience. On the other hand, actively building reciprocity improves the chances that benefits accrue to everyone and that experiential education activities generate outputs and outcomes that are meaningful to the community. Students experience and understand how their own interests, needs and skills, the resources and needs of their community partners, and the subject matter being taught in the course all relate to each other.

"...it's actually exciting that the course is going to be useful for both the partners and the students. It actually becomes meaningful for everyone."

"But I think at the end what I really wanted was my students to have done something that was productive for the community partner but also connected back with the course material. My real goal was that those pieces were integrated as opposed to, 'Here's my essay for the class, here's my community project. I've kind of done two things and that's it.' But my real goal and hope was that they could see that the theory that we were talking about in the course was connected with their experience in the community partnerships."

You can't just Do Community Engagement and not Show up!

Participants noted that CSL courses can be difficult to implement. There is an ongoing need to balance relations between instructors, community partners and students to ensure the experience is mutually beneficial and not institutionally driven.

"And they [students] look at me and say what projects are we going to do and I say I don't know. I have no idea. You have to meet with the community partners. Because if I tell you what projects you're going to do that's just more university telling the community what you're going to need. If I sit in my room and design projects and say you're going to do these 7 projects and you're going out to the community to do them, that's not really community engagement, because it's just some professor deciding what the community needs."

One focus group participant recounted a comment from a community partner who had previous experience with CSL courses under the banner of community engagement: *"You can't just do community engagement and not show up!"* The remark underscores how important it is for students to get out into the community for course outcomes to be beneficial for all. It also suggests a history of dissatisfaction: of feeling that students and instructors engaged only superficially with communities and of assumptions made that were felt to entrench pre-existing imbalances of power and privilege.

Experiencing Work Overload, but also a Sense of Accomplishment

It's more Trouble...

Focus group participants described devoting much time to additional tasks associated with their experiential education courses, including:

- teaching students about time management and project management
- dealing with course logistics (particularly in the case of CSL courses, since instructors must monitor and manage things like time spent by students in communities, when and where students meet with community partners, how they get there, parking for community partners coming to campus, etc.)
- getting ethics approvals for course research work, troubleshooting group dynamics, and developing robust relations with community partners
- acting as guides for students embarking on an EE journey

Focus group participants admitted that doing experiential education represents a huge additional workload. For an instructor new to experiential education, the work load can be overwhelming. Said one:

> *"I mean, the first time [my hope] was just to survive, I'll be honest."*

Even experienced experiential education instructors are troubled by the demands of the pedagogical format:

> *"...as an instructor I realize on a daily basis that I'm constrained by my time, constrained by my resources, my other commitments. So even if I want to make a big difference I can't always do that. And that remains a major concern for me."*

One focus group participant recounted receiving the suggestion from a peer that that the instructor's level of involvement in an experiential education course amounted to a *"model of self-exploitation."*

But it's worth it

Despite the time commitment and the unpredictable outcomes, focus group participants spoke of experiencing immense satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment and pride doing their experiential education courses.

> *"I didn't come to teaching because it's a job, this is my passion. I could have gone somewhere else. I think the extra effort that you need to make to deliver something different is important for each day."*

> *"Students are our hopes and dreams for a better society... All I care is how they turn out to be a better person because my objective is that when they walk in the door of York and when they walk out – when they walk out they would [have] become a better version of themselves than the version that walked in the door. And actually I feel I have a bit of success."*

"I think it's more trouble than just doing a traditional assignment for sure, but I wouldn't have done it for six years now if I didn't think that it was worthwhile and worth the trouble."

"It has a lot of value in adding richness to my career and if I had to sit around and run those fourth year seminars where a student took a reading a week and I sat there... I couldn't do it."

Focus group participants spoke of the value of challenging students' assumptions, enabling them to see themselves differently, to connect their course work with their professional goals and to facilitate their entry into graduate school or a profession. They also described a sense of pride in exploring a new approach to teaching when they sensed that something more effective might be done.

"It's because it's different from other courses that my kind of student population have done and subversive in the sense that it's so different from a lecture course or a seminar course they do.... it's so different, and counter to the normal knowledge dissemination in the university setting."

Student Workload is an Issue as well

Focus group participants also felt that students found experiential education courses to entail a lot more work relative to traditional format courses, requiring heavier and more inflexible demands on their time. Time management skills became even more critical.

They also noted that students undertake experiential education courses in curricula based on the workloads associated with traditional format courses. Given the pressures from other courses and the extra time and energy demands, the students' motivation for taking an experiential education course is important. Is the student taking the experiential education course only because it is a required, or do they also have a keen interest in the subject matter? Is the student open to working in the midst of uncertainty? Or do they resist or push back against these experiences?

"It is not always easy to know exactly the kind of experience a student is gaining from their involvement. My expectations are high and I would expect them to learn really something significant from their involvement in the research project. Does that happen? No, not always... Some of them get excited, this is a kind of one-time opportunity for [them] to dig deep and learn something that [they] wouldn't learn otherwise. They take it very seriously... It could be a very frustrating experience for them because they have to make extra commitments. This is not something everyone would be willing to do."

"...they had to be flexible enough to not just plan but in the plan to think okay maybe we'll cancel that activity and we'll do something else. The best students were the most resistant to doing that.... The best students in terms of grades, they learn the way we [traditionally] like them to learn: they know how to go to the library or to the bookstores, buy books, whatever. They do good research.... They know how to do this. They don't know how to collaborate, they don't know how to deal with the unknown.... But when we did the research we found out that the more flexible the better for students. And the better level was actually the second-year level. Because third and fourth [year] students want out. They just want out."

Experiential education instructors and their students perceive that experiential education courses demand much time and energy of participants, involve uncertainty and loss of control, attempt something other than the predictable dissemination of knowledge from an instructor to students, and attempt to induce participants to engage in critical reflection. This leads many students and instructors to perceive experiential education courses as chaotic and "nasty" experiences.

"There's two things: one is how nasty it will be. But the more important thing is whether the nastiness

will get in the way of learning. That is, students hate me because of the Socratic method involved in class. They don't like to be asked questions; they don't like to be taken out of their comfort zone to start thinking rather than just texting to their friends. So that's a challenge and some students don't like it in the beginning and they need to warm up to it. And then you're in a race of time. You only have one term, it's three credits, and you don't want that nasty reaction to sidetrack the progress."

Feeling Valued/Being Supported Institutionally

There's Nowhere to Put this on my CV

There was a wide range of opinion among focus group participants about the degree to which they felt their experiential education work was valued by others within the university. All participants expressed that experiential education was considered a non-mainstream activity by their peers, but several of them also noted that the senior administration of the university appeared to value and encourage experiential education. In one case, there was a perceived disconnect between how the focus group participant valued experiential education and how the department and faculty valued it.

"I think it's valued by the university but the university doesn't hire people, my department hires people..."

"[Spending time teaching EE courses] actually de-values my status as an academic, because it looks like I'm not really doing any real work... And then also there's nowhere to put this on my CV, there's no value of it when I apply for jobs. And in fact to the point that I do downplay it because it doesn't make me look like a real scholar. And it's a huge amount of work. To be honest, if I was smart and wanted to further my career I wouldn't do any of this.… So I think that piece is really, really key.... I think if you want more people to do experiential education, it has to be valued."

This contrasts with the comments from another focus group participant who felt that there was at least a conceptual understanding among disciplinary peers about the value of community-based experiential education approaches. In this case, the comment was made that *"...if I were just teaching... for any other disciplines I would focus on some of the abstract, highly theoretical issues."* This seems to suggest that context, and feeling valued for your work – or at least understood – can influence one's decision to deliver experiential education courses.

It Sounds Basic, but really, that's the Kind of Support...

Focus group participants described receiving variable levels of concrete support at the faculty level for experiential education activities over the years, and others voiced the need for faculty-level support. The kinds of support they talked about included help:
- connecting with community partners, developing or tapping into networks of community contacts, and maintaining robust relations with partners
- learning about the language and terminology surrounding EE and how best to communicate with community partners
- with logistical support for off-campus activities
- with ethics review processes related to experiential education research projects

"...finding community partners, helping with the logistics around parking passes, telling them where to go, how to get here, which classroom. Just having a list of community partners, really. That sounds basic but, really, that's the kind of support I need when I'm trying to focus on the pedagogy for the course."

Discussion

Despite a growing body of research affirming that experiential education can be a valuable tool to enhance student learning and enable students to connect theory with practice, there has been little research examining the relative differences between the various experiential education approaches. Implementing experiential education pedagogies requires an investment of time and resources for the institution, community organization and student. This study offers insights into how three approaches to experiential education, namely CBL, CSL and ICLA, compare in terms of their effects on student learning, class experience and educational outcomes, and the challenges involved in their implementation.

There are clear operational and logistical differences between these pedagogies at the outset. In CSL students are embedded in the environment of the community organization, whereas in CBL students serve as consultants and are more peripheral to the organization. Both of these pedagogies entail logistical challenges that are not a factor with ICLA. As the literature review makes clear, CSL is inherently more difficult to implement because the instructor and support staff[10] are involved in locating effective community partners, police checks (for some sites), insurance and other logistical issues. Given those requirements – which take additional instructor time and energy – it is not surprising that the present investigation indicates that CSL is most commonly implemented in smaller classes and that CBL occurs in larger classes. Additionally CBL requires fewer community partners per student than CSL because students work in teams. Despite the logistical differences between CSL and CBL, many of these components rely on the instructor's skill in developing and maintaining relationships.

The present investigation also points to uncertainties associated with implementing CSL and CBL that are not found in traditional courses: they require the instructor to yield some control over the inputs, processes and outcomes of the course to community partners. The findings indicate that this can be an uncomfortable experience for professors and students alike. In some cases it has led to a damaged relationship with the community partner.

In addition, during the research process, it became apparent that the implementation of CSL and CBL does not always follow a path most likely to generate optimal results. Based on Kolb's learning cycle (1984), the ideal experiential education approach involves concrete experience(s), followed by reflection linking the experience with course content or theory. It then culminates in the completion of a final product like a term paper or a report that may inform future action for the student. This description can serve as a heuristic for what should happen within a course. The extent to which these phases occur as a matter of educational practice, however, is an open question.

In our study we worked with enthusiastic, internally motivated instructors who developed their own personal models of EE teaching through their individual efforts. These approaches may not have been theoretically informed. They also may not have incorporated all of the phases of Kolb's learning cycle, including planned and intentional approaches to reflection. Nonetheless, we sought to examine what differences existed amongst three types of experiential education pedagogies in terms of a range of teaching and learning outcomes. These outcomes include written communication, teamwork, the ability to plan work and tackle unfamiliar problems, intellectual stimulation and motivation and a value for other perspectives. It also gives a

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[10] Support staff often includes an EE coordinator, who is responsible for brokering new relationships between community organizations and faculty members. In some cases faculty members may be looking for a project for their particular course. In other cases community organizations may have projects that stem from community needs and are looking for faculty and their students to work on the project. Coordinators are responsible to ensure that faculty members are aware of the logistics that are related to risk management issues, insurance liability and police check procedures. Coordinators can facilitate this aspect. Faculty members are responsible for setting learning outcomes and negotiate with community partners with respect to what can be realistically delivered by students.

broad overview of a profession, which fosters career development, and helps students understand the practical application of theoretical concepts.

What Students Reported

In this study students rated CBL and CSL higher than ICLA on a number of subscales that measure the constructs of student engagement, education outcomes, course environment, depth of learning and outcomes specific to EE. For EE teaching approaches that involved a community partner, such as CSL and CBL, students indicated that they were more engaged in their learning than the ICLA group. There was clear evidence of enhanced active and collaborative learning: students asked questions in class, contributed to class discussions, worked with other students and incorporated ideas from different courses and from outside class. This finding is consistent with the suggestion that CSL contributes to student engagement (Galling & Moely, 2003), and the similar results occur with CBL.

Students in both CSL and CBL gave higher ratings with respect to EE outcomes compared to students in ICLA. Students agreed that they had a greater understanding of their community, were able to apply theory to practice, felt they could make a meaningful contribution to their community or society and found the course helpful for career development. These outcomes suggest that EE strategies like CBL and CSL offer advantages because of the nature of the learning experience: they encourage students to become engaged in their learning and offer them a context in which they can apply what they learn.

In addition, students taking CSL or CBL courses reported that they were less likely to be assessed using methods that were reliant on memorization compared to ICLA. This finding is consistent with the notion that CSL creates a learning environment that encourages higher-order thinking and moves away from surface learning (e.g., see Hall et al., 2004). Indeed, it is interesting to note that both CSL and CBL students had numerically higher ratings for higher-order cognitive thinking that entails analysis, synthesis, making judgments, applying theories and developing their problem-solving skills compared to the ICLA group – though this finding did not reach significance at the .05 alpha level.

No differences were found among the three pedagogies on any comparison involving measures of deep motive and deep strategy. Research has pointed to the fact that students can adapt their approach to learning, whether surface or deep, depending upon the course learning environment (Lizzio, Wilson & Simons, 2002; also see Biggs & Tang 2011). High-quality teaching, clear goals and standards, sufficient workload and appropriate assessment lead students to adopt deeper approaches to learning (Wilson & Fowler, 2005; Baeten et al., 2010). In the present investigation, clear goals and standards and workload were rated lower when the EE instructional approach involved a community partner. Heavy workload can impede students in adopting deep approaches to learning (Lizzio et al., 2002; Hall et al. 2004; Law & Meyer, 2011). This could lead to depressed scores for CBL and CSL relative to ICLA. Alternatively, the null findings could be attributed to the fact that deep motive and deep strategy tap into prior held personal beliefs and attributes which are resistant to change and/or difficult to measure. Indeed all three groups had similar ratings, regardless of the instructional approach. Perhaps we may have been able to detect changes if these measures had been taken both at the beginning of the course and at end of the course, rather than just the latter. Unfortunately the present investigation does not adjudicate between the aforementioned possibilities.

Perhaps the most important findings were that both CSL and CBL students reported that their experiences led to positive education outcomes. Their courses helped them think about their career development and they were better able to apply theoretical concepts. Indeed CBL students had higher ratings for generic skills like teamwork, written communication and their ability to plan their work. These findings highlight the importance of experiential opportunities and their connection to the world beyond the academy.

Both CSL and CBL students indicated that they were better able to understand the issues their communities were facing and make a positive contribution. These outcomes are consistent with the notion that experiential education supports the development of citizenship as described in the introduction.

The one area of concern for students enrolled in CSL and CBL courses appeared to be the course environment. Relative to ICLA, students in CSL and CBL courses reported lower ratings for several measures of course environment, including teaching quality (though this was found to be a marginal level of significance), clear goals and standards, and a higher workload. These findings illustrate the challenge of implementing forms of experiential education which involve community partners.

What Instructors Said

Instructor focus group (FG) participants consistently expressed the view that implementing experiential education was "worth it" and "worthwhile." A key motivator for taking on experiential education was the instructor's conviction that they were helping to facilitate "transformative growth", enabling students to focus on their own beliefs and understanding of a specific topic through the experiential education experience. One instructor noted that experiential education encourages students to see themselves as capable agents of positive social change, and another described the feeling "that I have somehow helped a student be a human being, not just a learner or a competent scholar."

Instructors also recognized the importance of reflection as part of the experiential education process, in accordance with literature that shows that effective implementation of EE requires students to a) learn theoretical context, b) apply the gained knowledge whilst serving a community and c) reflect upon their experiences (Mooney & Edwards, 2001; Strage, 2004). Research demonstrates that CSL students who engage in reflection exhibit higher levels of cognition (like analysis, synthesis, and application of theory) compared to those who do not (Eyler, 2002). Focus group participants, however, admitted that they struggled with ways to get students involved in reflection. While assignments[11] can be created to facilitate reflection, such as observation logs, online and in-class group discussions, and journal writing (Sattler & Peters, 2011), focus group participants noted that motivating unwilling students to participate in reflection was "a big challenge."

Focus group participants also made it clear that implementing experiential education approaches that rely on community partners (like CSL and CBL) effectively involves overcoming other teaching challenges that traditional teaching methods do not face. The involvement of community partners makes experiential education inherently more "risky", they pointed out. The way that project plans are implemented and adapted, and the outputs and outcomes of the course, are not fully in the control of the instructor – a factor that prompted some professors to describe the implementation of experiential education in terms as strong as "terrifying."

Instructors note that implementing such forms of experiential education involves a great deal of work, with additional time devoted to developing and nurturing relationships with community partners, helping students with time management skills and managing course logistics (such as arranging parking passes for community partners). These concerns underscore the importance of logistical support and infrastructure (Abes et al., 2002; Furco & Holland, 2004; Hou, 2010). For example, teaching support centers may have a role in bringing faculty members together to share best practices in managing the workload in the context of CBL or CSL. Instructors note that students face higher workloads too, because CBL and CSL course impose heavier, more inflexible demands on student time. Students may also feel anxious and confused because the unpredictable nature of experiential education takes them outside of their comfort zone.

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[11] Examples of assignments can be found in Kajner et al. (2013).

Perhaps most important of all, instructors expressed a range of opinions regarding the extent to which they felt experiential education was valued by others at the university. They indicated that experiential education is not yet considered to be a mainstream mode of instruction within the university and stated that, while senior administration appeared to value their work in the area of EE, "there's nowhere to put this on my CV." These comments are echoed by the literature. In many universities, CSL is not acknowledged as a "scholarly activity" or rewarded in tenure and promotion assessment (Abes et al., 2002; Hughes & Mighty, 2010; Sattler & Peters, 2011). Thus, faculty members may see little incentive in investing their time and efforts to engage students in CSL (Abes et al., 2002; Hughes & Mighty, 2010). Although CSL requires a higher time commitment compared to traditional teaching, faculty members are willing to invest their time if there are rewarding opportunities available (McKay & Rozee, 2004).

Key Findings

We set out to compare the benefits of three experiential education pedagogies – CBL, CSL and ICLA – with respect to implementation challenges and effects on student learning, class experience and educational outcomes. The process of implementing experiential education does not always go smoothly. The instructors who participated in this study were enthusiasts and early adopters of experiential education sought to benefit their students. Students nonetheless consistently rated the course environment lower in experiential education courses involving community partners.

There may be several explanations for this apparent disconnect. Some instructors pointed out that implementing experiential education courses involving community partners is inherently messy and challenging. Those new to it admitted there had been some "disasters," perhaps contributing to students' negative assessments for teaching quality, course workload and clarity of goals and standards. In addition, instructors noted, students sometimes struggled with the uncertainty associated with CSL and CBL courses, the often unfamiliar format and the amount of work required. Managing a heavier student workload may be exacerbated by other competing priorities in their degree program.

Research about student ratings of teaching performance and course workload reveals a complex picture. Some studies indicate a positive relationship between workload and students' perception of a course – that is more work leads to a better student perception because students have to devote time to the subject matter (Marsh, 1982). In contrast, Centra (2003) reported that courses that were perceived to be less difficult and with lighter course loads tended to be rated higher on clarity and appropriateness of exams, grades and assignments. Similarly Greenwald & Gilmore (1997) reported that courses with a heavier workload will negatively influence teaching ratings. Finally Lizzio et al. (2002) argued that lighter course workloads will allow for more opportunities for students to engage in deeper learning.

The present investigation provides evidence for engaged learning and a high perception of workload. However, one matter of concern is that instructors may be penalized in ratings for using novel and workload-intensive teaching methods like CSL or CBL.

Other findings include:
- Both students and instructors recognized the benefits of CBL and CSL for its ability to improve engagement in learning and generate positive experiential education outcomes.
- Despite the fact that both CSL and CBL had higher ratings compared to ICLA on several subscales meant to measure engagement and educational outcomes, CSL was clearly recognized by students to have a higher workload than CBL. Although both teaching pedagogies support active and collaborative learning there are no differences between CSL and CBL with respect to experiential education outcomes related to the application of theory, career development and the development of citizenship. This null finding will have to be replicated in more studies.

- While EE teaching approaches that involve a community partner such as CSL and CBL have been demonstrated to show a number of positive effects, CBL has the potential to serve a greater number of students while mitigating the drain on time and resources compared to CSL.
- Additionally students report a higher workload, and perceive that they do not have clear goals and standards in CSL courses compared to CBL courses. This may represent a risk for professors in that they may be penalized for incorporating a novel (and unfamiliar) teaching approach, despite the fact that such approaches ultimately benefit students.

Recommendations

This research supports the finding that experiential education activities such as CSL and CBL do enhance the student learning experience. However, if postsecondary institutions wish to make full use of CBL and CSL to enhance student learning, some work will have to be done to ensure the process is successful for both students and instructors. The findings point to a few recommendations:

- Faculty members and the institutional offices supporting experiential education would do well to weigh the benefits of CSL, CBL or even ICLA as they plan courses, experiential education strategies, and the types of resources that are needed to ensure successful student learning experiences. It is clear that CSL and CBL require support for legal considerations, securing and maintaining service opportunities and/or community partners/clients, and faculty development. Some form of training or support is also needed for the community partners especially in regards to expectations and obligations. A consideration is whether these needs might be better met by centralizing the administrative operations or developing Faculty-based experiential education offices.
- Experiential education programs might be better accepted by students if degree programs were structured so that CSL and CBL courses occur in the upper years of the degree, ensuring that students are adequately prepared to work with community partners. It seems likely that when students develop knowledge and skills in the early years of the degree program, it may well ease their anxiety about taking a course involving a community partner. In-class activities might be used in the early years to build students' skills to take on CSL or CBL later in their programs. Alternatively, students need a preparatory workshop or course. In some courses, experiential education mentors have been used in the role of a "teaching assistant" to provide support for the experiential component of the course.
- If experiential education involving community partners is to be expanded beyond early adopters and enthusiasts, faculty members should have access to support and professional development opportunities that can help them develop experiential education courses and determine the most effective ways to structure them. As the qualitative findings indicated, participating instructors who felt assured of peer and institutional support found the process of implementing experiential education "interesting" as opposed to "terrifying." Particular areas of concern include: development and maintenance of community partner relationships; incorporation and assessment of reflection in experiential education courses and recognition of the learning challenges faced by students taking such courses. In addition, previous research indicates promotion and incentive policies often aid faculty members to be receptive towards using CSL or CBL in their curriculum (Furco & Holland, 2004). Although CSL and CBL require greater time commitment compared to traditional teaching, faculty members are willing to invest their time if there are rewarding opportunities available (McKay & Rozee, 2004).
- Finally, given the demands that CBL and CSL place on students and students' lack of familiarity with the approach, it is imperative that course learning conditions support student accomplishment. This can be achieved by:
  - setting clear goals and standards at the start of the course;
  - arranging realistic suitable projects that students are able to deliver given the time constraints;

- o ensuring that instructors and community partners have opportunities to provide formative student feedback;
- o offering students opportunities to clarify any misconceptions and misunderstandings from the instructor and the community partner.

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