

## **ABSTRACT**

WILTSHIRE, DEBORAH SAIN. A Case Study Reflecting Faculty Perceptions on the Implementation of the Learning College. (Under the direction of Don C. Locke.)

This study examined the implementation process of the Learning College concept in a small rural community college through its first nine years. Faculty members at Isothermal Community College completed questionnaires (n=49) and participated in interviews (n=12) designed to measure perceived support for the Learning College concept including both its implementation and its future. The question for the future of the Learning College at Isothermal Community College was whether or not it would become the next academic management fad. Respondents, in aggregate, perceived high levels of support for the Learning College concept, the use of the Learning College concept strategies in the classroom, and that the Learning College concept would not become the next academic management fad.

Perceptions did not vary much regarding the amount of teaching experience, but provided some variance with years of employment at Isothermal Community College. Faculty responses provided similar perceptions between faculty with fewer years of employment at the community college and less teaching experience and faculty with more years of employment at the community college and more teaching experience. Faculty with more years of employment at the community college reported higher levels of overall support for the Learning College concept. Faculty with less employment and less teaching experience were less supportive for the Learning College concept. This lesser support reflected that some areas of implementation could be strengthened for incoming faculty. Study findings were reviewed and interpreted in the context of Birnbaum's Life Cycle of Academic

Management Fads, years of employment at the community college, and years of teaching experience. Recommendations related to enhancing organizational support for the Learning College concept were presented in conclusion.

A Case Study Reflecting Faculty Perceptions  
on the Implementation of the Learning College

By

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## **BIOGRAPHY**

Deborah Sain Wiltshire was born in Morganton, North Carolina. She graduated from Freedom High School in 1974. She began employment at Broughton Hospital as a health care technician in 1974, which led her to pursue a registered nursing degree.

In 1977, Wiltshire completed an Associate in Applied Science degree in nursing at Western Piedmont Community College, at which time she began her tenure at Grace Hospital in Morganton as a staff nurse. Over a period of eight years, she worked as a staff nurse in medical-surgical nursing, postpartum nursing, and newborn nursing. For the next 17 years she worked as a hospital-wide supervisor. During those 25 years of employment, she furthered her education by obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing at UNC-Greensboro in 1990 and a Master of Science degree in nursing administration at UNC-Greensboro in 1993.

In 1993, Wiltshire joined the faculty at Isothermal Community College as the Director of the Practical Nursing Program. Over a tenure of 12 years, she has worked to make the program one of the best in the state by establishing high standards through competency-based education. Her students continue to have a high rate of success on licensing exams and placement in industry. She served as a member of the faculty senate at Isothermal Community College and was elected president of the faculty senate for 1994-1995. She served as president of the North Carolina Council of Practical Nurse Educators in 2000-2001 at which time she became very actively involved in nursing issues at the state level.

In 1997, Wiltshire applied for and was accepted in the doctoral program in Adult and

Community College Education at North Carolina State University. Wiltshire completed the coursework and finals for the educational doctorate in spring of 2001.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to understand the effectiveness of the implementation process through faculty perceptions of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College as related to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. This chapter outlines the problem as follows: (a) statement of the problem, (b) purpose of the study, (c) significance of findings, (d) research questions, (e) assumptions of the study, (f) limitations of the study, and (g) definition of study terms.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Community colleges are adaptable, capable of change in response to new conditions and demands, and operate with a continuing awareness of their communities (Gleazer, 1984). In general, a community college's programs and services tend to reflect the needs and characteristics of the community that it serves (Taber, 1995, p. 35). Community colleges remain close to the customer through extraordinary linkages and networks between and among other college and community organizations (Peters & Waterman, 1982). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, community colleges are at the center of economic workplace development with an increased role as trainer of the masses for immediate employment (Forde, 2002). They are challenged with responding to this role by anticipating necessary workplace changes, creating new economic opportunities in order to remain competitive with other colleges, addressing the shortage of skilled workers, and providing students and employees with the content and tools necessary to interact with diverse populations (Forde, 2002; Forde, 2003; Martin & Flynn, 2003; McCabe & Skidmore, 1989; Templin, 2002). Community colleges now need to position themselves for the future economic upswing when high-skilled,

technical-savvy workers will be in greater demand in order to compete in world markets (Templin, 2002; Vaughn, 2000). One constant problem for community colleges is how to implement increasingly effective levels of education that enable or equip students to compete and succeed in the twenty-first century marketplace when the student population is often under-prepared for college curriculums.

There are several prime elements that shape the context of this problem. Community colleges have participated in many changes since their establishment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Historically, the mission of community colleges was to satisfy the needs of the community (Bailey, 2002; Baker, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 1996). State legislation for curricular functions included academic transfer preparation, vocational-technical education, continuing education, remedial education and community service (Cohen and Brawer, 1996). Furthermore, the decade of the eighties led community colleges to face issues dealing with declining enrollments, changing clientele, reduced resources, imposed regulations by external agencies and public pressures for accountability (Richardson & Rhodes, 1989). As community needs have evolved, the expectations of the community college have increased through the embracement of access and equity issues, community activism, and encouragement of life-long learning (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Phillippe, 1995).

Community colleges have maintained an unwavering commitment to provide educational access to all students including: the at-risk; the have-nots; high school graduates; returning adult learners; and the increasing number of GED recipients (Santos, Santos & Milliron, 2001). In addition, community colleges in the United States continue to be the pathway to higher education for about half of all minority undergraduates through their traditions of open door admissions, low tuition, flexible programming, customized student

services, and quality learning opportunities (Phillippe, 1995; Santos et al, 2001). As community colleges begin their second century of educational service, they will continue to struggle with the recurring issues of securing adequate funding, meeting the needs of public accountability, and identifying their role as part of a seamless education system (Boswell, 2002). Furthermore, issues of national security, diverse populations with varied expectations and learning styles, rapidly evolving workplace needs, changes in demographic trends, the impact of technology, demands from students for a variety of learning options, and a growing emphasis on student learning as an outcome are also challenges that community colleges face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Bellanca, 2002; Levin, 2002; Miles, 2002; Milliron, 2002; Phillippe, 1995). Part of the equation is that community colleges must face many of these challenges for expanded future services at the same time with the same personnel and skill sets of the past (Bellanca, 2002).

Community colleges provide a cost-effective, high-quality education that relates to the needs of an increasingly diverse population (Phillippe, 1995, p. 31). The average age of the community college student is twenty-nine (Phillippe, 1995). Many attend a community college part-time while maintaining full-time employment. According to Phillippe (1995), 57 percent of students between the age of 25 and 34 work full-time and 54 percent of students age 35 and older work full-time, while 12.5 percent of all of these students are full-time students who work full-time. As open-access public institutions, community colleges traditionally admit larger percentages of part-time students, non-traditional students, students in need of remediation, and other high risk students (Baker, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Hoyt, 1999; McGrath & Spear, 1991; Phillippe, 1995; Roueche & Roueche, 1993; Vaughan, 2000; Weiss, 1999). Non-traditional students are classified by their age or life situation. Non-

traditional students are twenty-five years of age or older (Cohen & Brawer, 1996) and typically self-supporting or single parents who due to other life responsibilities are not immersed in the academic environment as their primary life focus (Weiss, 1999). For non-traditional students, college seems to be a place where they do not expect to succeed and where they are repeatedly asked to do activities for reasons they do not quite understand (McGrath & Spear, 1991). The high risk student can be identified as a first-generation college student usually with a lower socioeconomic status, a cultural disadvantage, and/or are low high school achievers who often have low self-esteem and higher expectations for failure (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Roueche & Roueche, 1993).

Community colleges pride themselves as open access institutions that register students with little advance commitment and allow students to enroll in classes without completing a plan of study. In addition, part-time attendance is encouraged and withdrawing from classes without penalty and re-enrolling is typical (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The majority of students who enroll in community colleges will have some basic skills or academic preparation deficiency. According to McGrath and Spear (1991), community colleges need to make education more meaningful, intelligible, and attainable. This can be accomplished by structuring educational activities in which students practice arguing, analyzing, articulating issues, and resolving differences in perspective or fact.

Population trends suggest that by the year 2050, nearly half of the U. S. population will be members of ethnic minorities while four out of five Americans will need some postsecondary education to function successfully in the job market (McCabe, 2003). Minority students are more likely to attend community colleges because they are usually part-time students or from a low-income family, and they begin their education at a point of

lower academic achievement (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). According to Phillippe (1995), every ethnic and racial minority group is represented in community colleges making up more than 26 percent of all U. S. community college students. Although community colleges attempt numerous administrative efforts such as requirements for advanced registration, pre-enrollment counseling, development of matriculation plans, and mandatory testing to tighten requirements, open-access policies still dominate (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Thus, the issue remains, if community colleges are going to continue to provide open access enrollments, they need to create methods for assisting students toward completion of courses of study. This will require community colleges to incorporate new and innovative educational strategies unlike what they have utilized in the past.

Innovations in community colleges previously resulted in expansions of their institution's mission in response to the community needs (Baker, 1998). During the twentieth century, the most common forms of change in the community college were piecemeal changes such as: mandatory assessment and placement; eliminating language requirements; adopting prior learning assessments; revising attendance policies; and creating peripheral changes such as providing alternatives to attending classes on campus (Baker, 1998). In response to the changing student population, colleges will have to implement creative and innovative changes as a way to assist students toward successful completion of their courses of study.

In the United States, the necessity for change in organizations has increased tremendously over the past few decades due to the shifting marketplace demands. Kotter (1996) states, "More organizations will be pushed to reduce costs, improve the quality of products and services, locate new opportunities for growth, and increase productivity" (p. 3).

Furthermore, the pace of organizational change is accelerating, driven by rapid advances in information technology, transportation and logistics leading to radical increases in the rate of globalization (Mariotti, 1999).

The process of globalization in particular is also accelerating organizational change greatly. Globalization represents an expansion of capitalist production, market-based consumption, and western culture along with the opportunity for mitigation of inequality, human rights, environmental values, and feminism (Waters, 2001). With globalization, populations are less regulated and controlled, global corporations reduce their capacity to monopolize markets, worker division becomes problematic as routine and arduous jobs are exported elsewhere, and the internet allows for exchange of commitments and information almost instantaneously (Waters, 2001). Levin (2002) further agrees that globalization includes the domains of economics, social and cultural processes, and the conceptualization of the world as a single place. In the global economy, business and industry is already moving from the United States to countries with lower wages (McCabe, 2003).

For institutions of higher education, the effects of globalization include moving postsecondary institutions toward a more business-like orientation, creating a more corporate environment with training emphases that are being driven by business and industry demands as institutions are being placed in closer proximity to the marketplace (Levin, 2001). In a study of the effects of the global economy on community colleges, Levin (2000) revealed organizational behaviors such as reacting to the demands from students and business leaders for employment skills training and altering curricula to fit marketplace demands. These behaviors suggest that in the 1990s, the mission of the community college shifted by placing less emphasis on education and more on training, less emphasis upon community social

needs and more on the economic needs of business and industry, less emphasis on individual development and more on workforce preparation and training (Levin, 2000).

The workplace of tomorrow will be quite different from that of today. New jobs will require markedly different and higher competencies; existing jobs will continue to evolve, requiring different behaviors and job skills; simple jobs will become high performance jobs; workers will need the capacity to reason through complex processes; and tomorrow's workers will need higher-order information skills as a foundation for life-long learning (McCabe, 2003, p. 15). According to Drucker, schools and universities will change more and more drastically in the next fifty years than they have since they assumed their current forms more than 300 years ago (Drucker, 1992).

O'Banion (1997) and Barr and Tagg (1995) document and describe a Learning Revolution that is spreading throughout North American higher education. The Learning Revolution seems to be a culmination of a series of educational reforms started by the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk: the Imperative for Educational Reform*. This report called for action against a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens the future of the nation (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p.5). This was followed a decade later by *An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education*, a report published in 1993 that focused on higher education. That report states that "society must hold higher education to much higher expectations or risk national decline" (The Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993, p.1). This report further highlights the threats to the United States competitive advantage in a global economy and challenges higher education institutions to review and re-think the way they teach students.

Institutions of higher education are now under pressure to respond to the effects of globalization by becoming more efficient and effective (Birnbaum, 2000b). Administrators of higher education have often employed management techniques as the answer to their problems (Allen & Chaffee, 1981). Many management techniques are identified in the literature that include: a planning-programming-budgeting system (PPBS); costing; strategic planning; benchmarking; management by objectives (MBO); zero-based budgeting (ZBB); total quality management (TQM); continuous quality improvement (CQI); responsibility-centered management (RCM); business process reengineering (BPR); and program evaluation and review technique/critical path system (PERT/CPM) (Allen & Chaffee, 1981; Birnbaum, 2000; Brigham, 1993; Brindle & Stearns, 2001; Bryant, 1998; Cole, 1999; Ewell, 1999; McGill, 1988; Wind & Main, 1998). Previously, management techniques such as these have not stood the test of time as a primary solution for institutions of higher education. For example, according to Matejka and Dunsing (1995), both an incompleteness and basic design flaw doomed MBOs and TQM from the start. Other management techniques are cited by Lander (2001) from a 1999 conference, *Reorganizing Knowledge; Transforming Institutions: Knowing, Knowledge and the University in the XXI Century*. In this conference, management researchers and higher education researchers met in order to look ahead and present their research on the next innovation for transforming higher education. The next innovations identified at this conference were systems thinking, storytelling, the learning organization, and the virtual university. The learning organization or the Learning College concept seems to be the current trend embraced by numerous institutions of higher education (Barr & Tagg, 1995; O'Banion, 1997). Therefore, this study will focus on the Learning College and its application in a community college.

Many reform efforts have been started by community colleges in an effort to become more learning-centered institutions (O'Banion, 1997b). According to O'Banion (1997b) some will extend current efforts in TQM to include more focus on improved and expanded learning for students, while others will use information technology as the catalyst to direct learning efforts. Still others will launch their initiatives with key innovations such as learning communities or classroom assessment. The uncertainty of the future triggers concerns regarding innovation and change (Rogers, 1983). The major challenge for the community college is how to speed the rate of adoption and how to diffuse innovation throughout the organization (Rogers, 1983). Therefore, the concern in adopting the Learning College concept is whether the concept will become a lasting innovation or just another academic management fad.

According to Birnbaum (2000b), the term fad refers to any higher education management practice or interest followed for a time with exaggerated zeal. Management of higher education is susceptible to adopting fads due to the pressure to become more business-like, more rational, and more accountable while dealing with the increasing concern of declining resources (Allen & Chaffee, 1981). The challenge for community colleges that choose to pursue the Learning College concept is to implement the concept so that it becomes part of the institution's mission, values, policies, procedures, and teaching practices. When the concept becomes embedded in the life and practice of the organization, it is less likely to become the next fad. Therefore, this study will focus on implementation outcomes in a Learning College case study.

## **Purpose of the Study**

According to Milliron (2000), many community colleges are tackling the challenge of providing education to an under-prepared student population by embracing a philosophy of “learning first” and by working hard to ensure that their limited energies and efforts are making a difference for learners and learning. Implementing the Learning College concept requires what Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth, & Smith (1999) call “profound change”. Profound change is not just implementing a new concept, but building a capacity for providing services a new way. Indeed, profound change builds the capacity for ongoing change. In implementing profound change, the process requires more than just changing strategies, structures, and systems; it also requires that the thinking that produced those strategies, structures, and systems also has to change (Senge et al., 1999, p. 15).

The purpose of this study is to understand the effectiveness of the implementation process through faculty perceptions of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College as related to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. Has the Learning College concept been implemented in such a manner as to allow it to remain an innovation or will the concept become just another passing fad? According to Birnbaum (2000a), an innovation is not known as a fad until it reaches an adoption peak and then begins to fade. Research implies that many fads begin with enthusiasm and commitment that wavers even though a fad can establish certain elements of behavior to be utilized with the next passing fad (Brindle & Stearns, 2001; Cole, 1999; Hilmer & Donaldson, 1996; McGill, 1988; Wind & Main, 1998). Thus, the ultimate goal of this study is to determine if the Learning College concept has been implemented effectively so as to prevent it from becoming the next academic management fad.

Organizations are a microcosm of the larger society in which they operate, and organizations possess a culture, which reflects structure, patterns of interaction, and people (Brown, 1999, p.6). Patterns of behavior, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, values, norms, and practices represent what is often referred to as the climate or culture of an organization (Baird, 1990; Brown, 1999; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Litwin & Stringer, 1968; Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Tagiuri, 1968; Tierney, 1988). Culture remains an institutional choice, and successful efforts to manage or change organizational cultures are complex (Smart & Hamm, 1992). Organizational leaders need to perform a self-reflection of their own cultures in order to enhance the performance and effectiveness of the institution. According to Tierney (1988), the lack of the leader's ability to grasp the dimensions of organizational culture inhibits the ability of an institution to address the problems and challenges in higher education. Schein (1985) suggests that leadership and culture are two sides of the coin and that the only important action that leaders perform is to create and manage culture (p.2).

Organizations transmit values to employees through training programs, work experiences, and communications (Dailey & Fogel, 1988). Beliefs about how organizational processes and practices work become shared employee expectations and, if accepted by the employees, performance-oriented norms develop in the organization (Dailey & Fogel, 1998). In general, culture originates from management assumptions about what motivates people to work, perform, and demonstrate commitment. Dailey and Fogel (1998) list components of conscious culture development through the use of an awareness checklist, which includes the following: commitment to a common purpose; competence to deliver superior performance; and consistency in perpetuating commitment and competence (p. 436). Leaders who understand and value the cultural aspects of their organization can effectively intervene in the

culture's evolutionary process by consciously working to create a common value and belief system that motivates commitment around a shared vision for the future (Baker, 1992, p. 15).

The leader of an organization has a direct effect on the culture of the organization. Without an effective leader and leadership action, the culture of an organization cannot effectively change. According to Baker (1992), an organization's culture and its leadership are integrally entwined, and organizational effectiveness is linked to the role of leadership in creating and managing culture (p. 15). In discussing the role of the organization's leader as related to its culture, Schein (1996) states, "the leader is the creator of culture because the leader's beliefs, values, and basic assumptions are transferred to subordinates" (p. 59). "Leaders are people who move organizations through their own personal credibility and commitment that develops among those whom they lead" (Richardson & Rhodes, 1989, p. 204). Schein (1996) further implies that the successful leader is an animator and displays an energy born out of strong personal convictions that breathe life into the organization. Leaders who are successful at sustaining a culture through an organizational change have enough personal insight to grow with the organization or change their own outlook and are able to recognize their own limitations, allowing other leaders to emerge (Schein, 1996).

Although the leader is pivotal to the implementation of a successful change strategy, faculty were chosen as the participants for this study. According to Richardson & Rhodes (1989), "The commitment to be gained from faculty, the development of a sense of professional responsibility, and the wealth of enthusiasm and talent that faculty can bring to the implementation of institutional priorities is priceless" (p. 204). Faculty perceptions about implementation of the Learning College were chosen for the following reasons: (1) the transition to a genuine Learning College would be a profound change; (2) leaders are

essential to move an organization in transition; (3) the president is the pivotal community college leader; and (4) faculty have the closest first hand experience of the leader's work. Furthermore, the faculty serve as the bridge between both the leadership and the students in the institution.

Leaders must become managers of their own organizational change in order to make successful transitions. Perspectives related to organizational change continue to recur: no significant change will occur unless it is driven from the top; no point in starting unless the CEO is on board; and nothing will happen without top-management buy-in (Senge, 1996, p. 41). Yukl (1998) states, "leading change is one of the most important, but difficult leadership responsibilities" (p. 438). It takes strong vision, conviction, and energy to create and animate an organization. It also takes great judgment, wisdom, and skill to pull people together as well as personal learning ability and flexibility to evolve and change organizations (Schein, 1996). Change can be a difficult and stressful process, but by accepting it as a natural process and choosing to manage it, the leader can become a creative force in the change process instead of letting it run its own course (Heifetz, 1993).

Major participants for this study are defined as full-time faculty currently employed at Isothermal Community College. This study, through the perceptions of faculty, will attempt to understand the effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College as related to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. Some of the key factors for successful organizational change at Isothermal Community College seem to be a clear vision, consistency of expectations, continuity and stability of leadership, and inclusion of all employees. Although this study is not directly

focused on leadership, it is anticipated that this process will provide some insight regarding the leadership and its effects on the culture of the organization.

### **Significance of Findings**

In U. S. American higher education, numerous colleges are engaged in the innovations of becoming a Learning College. Implementing a Learning College in a traditional educational institution requires what Senge et al. (1999) term a profound change. The impact of innovations in contrast to fads has been studied previously by evaluating the implementation of management techniques. Although The Learning College concept is a type of management technique, it requires a gradual process of modification and experimentation for everyone in the college (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Therefore, the results of this study will help to provide an understanding of how the Learning College concepts are integrated into all aspects of the college through the engagement of all employees. This study will serve to move forward the knowledge of the implementation of the Learning College by providing an in-depth study of one institution in transition and analyzing strategies that could encourage successful transitions to the Learning College implementation in other colleges.

Much literature generated from college presidents throughout the United States reports how the Learning College concept was implemented at their institution (Boggs, 1995-1996; O'Banion, 1997a). Most of that literature indicates a similar but different process of implementation where institutions place more emphasis on certain aspects than on others. However, none of the literature reviewed presents any research on whether the Learning College concept was implemented in a manner that affected profound change to prevent the concept from becoming the latest fad. The information from this study could be useful to other community colleges and their leaders who have implemented the Learning

College concept by assisting them with knowledge regarding possible strategies needed to maintain the concept as an innovation. Educational leaders who start transitions to adopt the Learning College concept could further use this information to gain a greater understanding of how to institute and affect change in their own organizations in order to prevent the Learning College from becoming a fad.

This study will further evaluate the implementation of The Learning College concept as it relates to being an innovation or just another fad. According to Senge (1990), the learning organization is likely to become the next management fad and like all fads the interest will grow rapidly, level off, and then decline. With this study, the results obtained will help to determine if Isothermal Community College has implemented the Learning College in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming a fad. The failure to sustain change occurs again and again despite the commitment of substantial resources and talented people driving the change. Senge et al. (1999) advocates that most learning initiatives deal only with the growth processes and not with the limiting processes, which is the reason so many learning initiatives fail to sustain momentum. Therefore, sustaining any profound change requires a fundamental shift in thinking: to understand the nature of growth processes; to understand the forces and challenges that impede the progress; to develop workable strategies for dealing with these challenges; and to appreciate the interplay between growth processes and limiting processes (Senge et al., 1999, p. 10).

The Learning College concept has many implications for educational practice. The concept influences how teaching and learning occurs, how students learn, and how an institution functions (Barr & Tagg, 1995; O'Banion, 1997a; Senge, 1990; Senge et al., 1999). In The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) by George Kuh (2001) findings

reveal that students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education especially when asked to apply what they are learning in different settings. Empirically the NSSE report determines how well an institution fosters student learning (Kuh, 2003). Furthermore, collaborating with others in problem-solving activities will enhance the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. With the Learning College concept, teachers become facilitators and coaches, students become responsible for their own learning, and institutions become responsible for breaking down institutional barriers and assessing student outcomes. Because this concept represents such a dramatic change from the traditional teaching and learning strategies, it is important to evaluate whether it has been implemented in such a manner as to create a cultural change.

The significance of this study to Isothermal Community College is to gain insight into its process of implementing the Learning College concept. In order for the Isothermal Community College learning initiative or any Learning College initiative to flourish, it should be implemented throughout the institution by weaving the concepts into its mission, policies, and practices. This study is designed to evaluate all aspects of the implementation process and to identify any associated strengths and weaknesses.

## **Research Questions**

### **Research Question One**

What are the faculty perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the implementation process of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College?

### **Research Question Two**

How does the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College relate to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads?

### **Assumptions of the Study**

1. It is assumed that study participants will respond to interview questions openly and honestly without fear of retribution.
2. It is assumed that study participants will answer the questionnaire themselves.
3. It is assumed that most faculty are supportive of the Learning College concept.
4. It is assumed that the Learning College is an effective method for dealing with non-traditional and at-risk students.
5. It is assumed that faculty, administration, and staff are involved in the Learning College concept.
6. It is assumed that key leadership components (stability, collaboration, shared vision, excellence, recognition, and engagement) assisted the transition toward acceptance of the Learning College concept.

### **Limitations of the Study**

1. Due to attrition, the total population surveyed at this time does not represent the total population that began the process at Isothermal Community College eight years ago.
2. Because the participants will be aware that they are part of an organizational study, responses could be affected.
3. The researcher is on the faculty of Isothermal Community College and that connection may introduce unintended bias by some participants to responses.
4. This study represents faculty perceptions of the implementation of The Learning College, eight years after the process began at Isothermal Community College; this, if conducted earlier in the process could provide different results.

## **Definition of Study Terms**

1. Learning-Centered Environment: An atmosphere of learning rather than teaching, in which the most important people are the learners, and everyone else is there to facilitate and support learning (O'Banion, 1997, p. 26).
2. Learning Organizations: Institutions of higher education in which people continually expand their capacity to create the results they desire, new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, collective aspiration is set free, and people are continually learning how to learn together (Senge, 1990, p. 3).
3. The Learning College: An educational concept that places learning first and provides educational experiences for learners any way, any place, and any time (O'Banion, 1999).
4. Innovation: Ideas or practices perceived as new by the adopting organization regardless of whether they are new (Rogers, 1995).
5. Fads: A practice or interest followed for a time with exaggerated zeal (Birnbbaum, 2000b).
6. Profound change: Organizational change that combines inner shifts in people's values, aspirations, and behaviors with outer shifts in processes, strategies, practices, and systems (Senge et al., 1999).
7. Faculty perceptions: The beliefs and values of faculty regarding the implementation of the Learning College concept.
8. Globalization: A social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly (Waters, 1995, p. 5).
9. Community college: Any institution accredited to award the Associate in Arts or the Associate in Science as its highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

10. Isothermal Community College: A small, rural, public community college located in Spindale, North Carolina.
11. Full-time faculty: All faculty at Isothermal Community College with nine to twelve month full-time employment contracts.
12. Non-traditional students: Students who are twenty-five years of age or older and typically self-supporting or single parents not immersed in the academic environment due to other life responsibilities (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Weiss, 1999).
13. Minority students: All students, other than Caucasian, enrolled in community colleges.
14. Organizational culture: Deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior along with shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members of the organization have in common (Brown, 1999).
15. Organizational climate: The qualities of the internal environment of an organization that influence members' behavior as they conform to values and attributes of the organization (Tagiuri, 1968).
16. Organizational leadership: The process wherein an individual member of the organization influences the interpretation of events, the choice of objectives and strategies, the organization of work activities, the motivation of people to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships, the development of skills and confidence by members, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the organization (Yukl, 1998, p. 5).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Introduction to the Review of the Literature**

The purpose of this study is to understand the effectiveness of the implementation process through faculty perceptions of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College as related to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. Understanding the implementation process of the Learning College concept will help to determine if it has been implemented in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming another fad. This chapter outlines the review of the literature as follows: (a) introduction, (b) conceptual framework, (c) innovation versus fad, (d) organizational culture, leadership, and change, (e) concepts relevant to the Learning College, (f) review of related research, and (g) conclusion.

#### **Introduction**

Most community colleges continue to be faced with demands for increased accountability, declines in traditional funding sources, demands for increased services, greater sophisticated competition in the educational marketplace, diverse populations, and a rapidly evolving workplace (Boswell, 2002; Bellanca, 2002; Levin, 2002; McGrath & Spear, 1991; Miles, 2002; Milliron, 2002; Phillippe, 1995; Roueche, Roueche, & Johnson, 2002; Vaughan, 2000). Through reports such as, “A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform” and “An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education”, higher education institutions were challenged to focus on higher educational expectations (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; The Wingspread Group on Higher Education, 1993). This challenge of increasing educational expectations and student outcomes while experiencing an increasingly diverse and under-prepared student population

and responding to an ever changing global marketplace has led to the development of new innovations in community colleges throughout the United States. The focal innovation for this study is the Learning College concept.

Many colleges and universities throughout the United States have developed policies and procedures that incorporate the Learning College concept (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Boggs, 1995-1996; O'Banion, 1997a). Indeed, other non-educational institutions have noted the importance of incorporating learning throughout the organization in order to survive the current global challenges affecting the workplace (Handy, 1995; Kanter, 1995; Kofman & Senge, 1995; Thompson, 1995; Wind & Main, 1998). Even though many indicate that adoption of the Learning College concept can lead to a successful organization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there are no actual guides for its implementation.

If the Learning College concept is one solution to an ever changing global economy, then it becomes important to know if institutions can implement the concept in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming the next academic management fad. Institutions need to implement the concept so that it becomes embedded in the life and practice of the organization, otherwise known as the organizational culture. According to Birnbaum (2000), "even when a fad is temporarily adopted by a university, it is almost never incorporated into the institution's culture, and therefore remains uninstitutionalized" (p. 11). A commitment of this magnitude requires profound change - "a change that combines inner shifts in people's values, aspirations, and behaviors with outer shifts in processes, strategies, practices, and systems" (Senge et al., 1999, p. 15). The organization does not simply do something new; instead, it builds a capacity for ongoing change (Senge et al., 1999).

## **Conceptual Framework**

Many seek to build learning organizations through efforts of responding quickly to external changes, thinking more imaginatively about the future, creating relationships with more trust and openness, unleashing employees' natural talents and enthusiasm, and relating closer to their customers (Senge et al., 1999). The ongoing dilemma for implementing the Learning College concept is how to sustain it and prevent it from becoming just another "flavor of the month" or "passing fad" (Senge et al., 1999). The challenge is to restructure the organization so that the Learning College once implemented is manifest as a profound change of the organization. Profound change requires an investment of time, energy, and resources along with a genuinely committed initial pilot group that supports the change (Senge et al., 1999). Qualities inherent in the most important change initiatives include the following: connection with real work goals and processes; connection with improving performance; involvement of the people with the power to take action; a balance of action and reflection; an opportunity to think and reflect without pressure to make decisions; a method to increase people's capacity, both individually and collectively; and a focus on learning about learning (Senge et al., 1999).

It is unknown how fads are introduced into higher education, but it may be related to the actions of legislators, board of trustees, or institutional presidents (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 145). In addition, as institutional leaders decide whether to adopt a management innovation; their decisions are often influenced by regulatory bodies, professional groups, foundations, businesses, and consultants. As a result, external agency pressure may cause institutions to adopt an inefficient administrative technology or totally reject an efficient one (Birnbaum, 2000).

After forty years of studying innovations, Birnbaum (2000) developed a formal model of the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads from the time they are introduced into the higher education system until the time of their eventual abandonment, reinvention, or partial incorporation. According to Birnbaum (2000) each of the higher education management fads that he studied began in the business sector and was diffused into academia. Fads can be diffused through coercive, mimetic, and normative processes (Birnbaum, 2000). According to Birnbaum (2000), “Coercive processes of diffusion include rules established by government, professional associations, accrediting bodies, or other authoritative groups. Mimetic processes of diffusion are seen when organizations copy routines they learn about through institutional contact, consultants, or the movement of people between institutions. Normative processes of diffusion involve dissemination through publications, experts, and educational activities” (p.146).

After extensive review of seven management fads as separate case studies and then reviewing them using a process of explanation building, Birnbaum’s (2000) analysis led to the development of stages in the life cycle of management fads. The framework developed by Birnbaum (2000) is a consistent and predictable five-stage cycle that describes the trajectory of management fads: creation, narrative evolution, time lag, narrative devolution, and dissonance resolution (See figure 1). This cycle suggests lagged phases through which fads move between the nonacademic and the academic sectors, and discusses some similarities and differences in the fad adoption process in academic and nonacademic systems.

Based on this five-stage cycle by Birnbaum (2000), this study will relate the implementation of the Learning College concept in Isothermal Community College, a rural

community college, to the trajectory of management fads cycle outlined in this model. This five-stage cycle includes both a cycle for management fads in business and a cycle for management fads in academia. However, this study will focus only on the cycle of management fads in academia. By examining the processes involved in the implementation process at Isothermal Community College, this study will examine whether the concept has been implemented in such a manner that will establish it as an innovation or allow it to join the list of previous management and academic fad failures. Even as failures, fads can be important because of what they illustrate about our changing beliefs of what an organization is and how it should function (Birnbaum, 2000a).

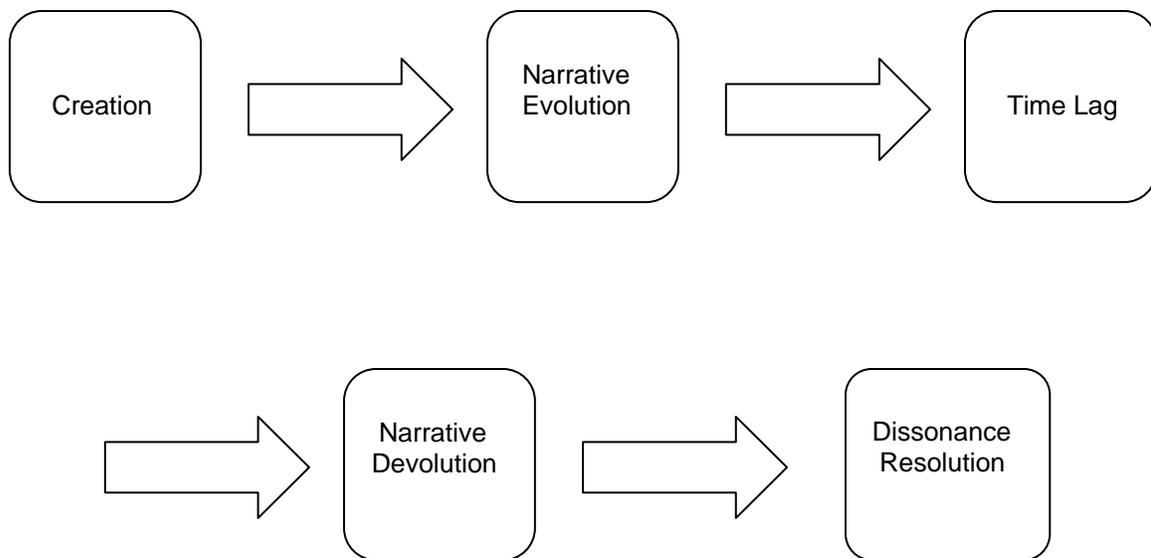


Figure 1: Stages of the Life cycle of academic management fads.

Adapted from: Management Fads in Higher Education: Where they come from, what they do, why they fail (p.126) by R. Birnbaum, 2000, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass. Copyright 2000 by R. Birnbaum.

Stage one of the academic management fad cycle, creation, begins with a crisis that exists in an organizational sector and is usually related to a major change in the larger social system or an organizational subsystem within it (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 126). The problem is that the past operating assumptions no longer apply to this major social, economic, demographic, or technical change. Therefore, the adoption of a new management technique is proposed to solve the problem. This new technique is supported by advocates or consultants, dramatic narratives of success by external champions, and enthusiastic statements of early organizational adopters announcing the technique as a proven concept. The narratives in this creation stage include claims of impressive success and dazzling results (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 128). Based on these claims, organizations are encouraged to adopt the new technique.

The technique is initially presented in simplified, commonsensical terms which make counterarguments difficult. This new technique is presented as, “the answer to all managerial problems that will significantly improve core organizational processes and functions” (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 128). Promises of extraordinary outcomes are made when the technique is presented as a necessary and sufficient organizational transformation. True believers present their views with “messianic zeal” and suggest that organizational success or even survival depends on the adoption of this new management technique (Birnbaum, 2000, p.128).

Stage two of the academic management fad cycle, narrative evolution, begins with elaborate and widely disseminated narratives (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 128). Stories of successful implementation are distributed, and the new technique is hailed as highly effective. The narrative focuses on claimed benefits, with little attention given to potential costs

(Birnbaum, 2000, p. 129). Consultants, champions, and adopters declare this new technique to be the innovation of the decade through written articles and presentations at professional meetings. According to Birnbaum (2000), “organizations adopting the innovation are applauded for acknowledging the existence of serious problems, engaging in efforts to improve and reform, and conceding that system and social benefits outweigh selfish interests of organizational participants; whereas, opponents to this new innovation are identified as resistant to change, conservative, wasteful, and self-interested” (p. 130).

Stage three of the academic management fad cycle, time lag, occurs between the creation and the dissemination of the new technique and the time at which user reactions and independent analyses become widely available (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 130). Stories of successful adoption are written by or about organizational members with vested interests in their association with a successful program. The unavailability of data makes it possible to exaggerate claims and advocate implementation based on theoretical grounds. Stories of unfulfilled promises of previous innovations begin to surface. In addition, analysis of new data not previously available is disseminated. During this time lag, the acceptance of the innovation peaks, and the pace of new adopters slow down (Birnbaum, 2000).

Stage four of the academic management fad cycle, narrative devolution, occurs when overly inflated claims of success encounter widespread signs of disappointment (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 130). Noticeable disenchantment and skepticism evolves. The enthusiasm based on initial reports of success becomes tempered by countervailing reports of failure. Data collected indicates that the new technique failed to produce its promised results. The original claims of success are now seen as either overstated or not sustained, organizational performance was not improved as predicted, and claims of adoption were widely inflated.

Surveys of users reflect increased dissatisfaction (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 131). Acceptance of the new technique diminishes, and the new technique is declared a fad. Through journal and newspaper commentaries, the fad is declared as a fraud that has failed. No new institutions proceed to adopt the fad. However, previous adopters may continue the fad as they discount new information that conflicts with previous beliefs. For true believers, their commitment may increase rather than decrease with the conflicting evidence presented (Birnbaum, 2000).

Stage five of the academic management fad cycle, dissonance resolution, begins as champions and adopters view the demise of the innovation. This acceptance of demise reflects a need to account for its failure in ways that protect both the status of adopters and their ideological credibility (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 131). Rationalizations for failure include poor quality of leadership, intransigence of followers, improper implementation, and lack of resources (Birnbaum, 2000). Fads are reported to have failed because the right methods of structure and process were not followed or not properly implemented. Failure can also be attributed to a “bad” version of the innovation, whereas success would be attributed to a “good” version of the innovation (Birnbaum, 2000, p. 132). The least frequent response to failure is to consider that the new technique may have been based on invalid premises. Identifying the new innovation as a failure sets the stage for reinventing the innovation and recycling it with minor modifications and a major change of name (Rogers, 1995).

### **Innovation versus Fad**

Considerable research is available regarding the latest management fad or the types of management fads prominent in each decade. However, research studies regarding their effectiveness or sustainability are very limited. According to Birnbaum (2000a), there are few empirical studies of academic fads and none that look at their direct and indirect effects.

There seem to be a number of reasons that research may never be readily available regarding management fads (Birnbaum, 2000a). First, fads seldom exist in pure form. They may have looked similar to the adoption processes of other institutions, but institutions generally alter the adopted fad for their own purposes. Furthermore, fads mutate and evolve over time as consultants develop their own proprietary products. In addition, since there is often no agreement on the desired outcomes of fads, they are difficult to measure. Fads promise to make things better, but do not provide prior criteria that would make it possible to examine them later to determine if they worked. Despite the inability to understand fully the consequences of academic fads, it can be confidently stated that (1) all academic management fads fail on their own terms and (2) all academic management fads leave legacies that remain in higher education long after the fad has disappeared (Birnbaum, 2000a).

Management literature continues to present the consistent themes that fads have failed to create the direct effects they claimed (Birnbaum, 2000a). Some of the criticisms made include the following: planning has failed everywhere it has been tried (Wildavsky, 1973); benchmarking failed because managers were trying to compare themselves in too many directions (Birnbaum, 2000a); TQM has failed to produce its promised results (Brigham, 1993) BPR ventures failed because they were short-term and near-sighted (Bryant, 1998) ZBB was time consuming and people ended up making decisions based on last year's budget (McGill, 1988). Not only do fads fail, but their failure gives rise to fads that criticize their predecessors and claim to have corrected their errors (Birnbaum, 2000a). According to Hammer and Champy (1993), "none of the management fads of the last twenty years, not management by objectives, diversification, Theory Z, ZBB, value chain analysis,

decentralization, quality circles, excellence, restructuring, portfolio management, management by walking around, matrix management, entrepreneuring, or one-minute managing, has reversed the deterioration of America's corporate task. These fads have only distracted managers from the real task at hand" (p. 25).

Even though the literature continues to reveal the failures of fads, many corporate executives continue to pursue new management techniques. According to Allen and Chaffee (1981), administrators have often seized management techniques as the answer to their problems. Many organizations are pushed into adopting a new technique because a new board member had a positive encounter with the technique at a previous place of employment (Ewell, 1999). Furthermore, as more partnerships are formed between industry and colleges or universities, corporate partners may strongly suggest that the partnering institution adopt a particular management technique (Ewell, 1999).

The decision to adopt an innovation is difficult due to the lack of valid data. In Bleakley's article (1993), he reports that managers are more likely to overestimate the benefits of adopting a fad. Surveys in the 1990s indicate that executives rated their satisfaction with fads from 35 to 60 percent, while employees and customers rated the effectiveness between 10 and 20 percent. When a new approach does not yield the desired results, management often moves on to another seemingly more promising approach leading employees to adopt a "this too will pass" philosophy (Cole, 1999). Fads can serve as building blocks for future management activities, but not always in a conscious strategic fashion. According to Cole (1999), purposive learning will likely occur at the tail end of a fad when the decision makers realize the limitations of current practices and try to see how much can be salvaged and continued into their new initiative. Cole (1999) further acknowledges that

fads can be deceiving and harmful if they turn out to be “all smoke and mirrors without substance” because they can cast doubt on previous legitimate initiatives. However, the remnants of fads can grow into successful initiatives if their concepts are incorporated into work activities and previous successful initiatives.

McGill (1988) studied the rise and fall of fads over a forty year period. The forties brought about a movement, the profession of management. A number of writers have focused on legitimizing management as a worthy pursuit marketing them as professionals like physicians and lawyers. The fifties seemed to be the era of formulas such as MBOs and PERT/CPM. PERT/CPM was the program evaluation and review technique/critical path management system used by the navy to control the development of the Polaris submarine. MBOs seemed to be the corporate management fix of the fifties and focused on reducing the processes of management to measurable activities. The sixties brought about the human side of management leading to learning activities such as sensitivity training, laboratory training, T-groups, and encounter groups. Also included are strategies such as McGregor’s Theory X and Y, the management grid, participative management, and Matrix management. After the 1960s, managers were disenchanted with the sensitive, people-oriented fixes, and that led to the strategic seventies. The 1970s led to the emergence of ZBB, portfolio management, and the experience curve as well as the promotion of degree-granting MBAs. The 1980s provided management fixes such as Theory Z, excellence, corporate culture, and the one-minute manager. Further study looked at the Japanese promotion of quality products, and thus TQM began to appear (McGill, 1988). Finally, it seems that the 1990s sparked interest with the learning revolution.

Scholars often react negatively to popular management movements and almost gleefully report their demise (Cole, 1999). A related behavior is often found among consultants, who are always looking for the next wave and a way to differentiate their current product from their last one. Much of this marketplace behavior continues based on the lack of empirical evidence to support the fad's contribution.

American higher education experienced pressures during the 1970s and early 1980s created by declining resources and the threat of declining enrollments (Astin, 1985). In response to these pressures, higher education began experimenting with techniques borrowed from the corporate world such as computerized management information systems, program budgeting, and management by objectives (Astin, 1985). According to Matejka and Dunsing (1995) the inherent incompleteness and flaws in their basic design and implementation doomed MBOs, TQM, and other techniques from the beginning of their use in academic settings. During this time, there was considerable talk of making higher education more accountable since higher education was viewed as producing both knowledge and trained manpower.

Businesses often adopt new techniques in an attempt to become a leading-edge company (Birnbaum, 2000a). Institutions of higher education wanting to be on the leading-edge are under pressure to do the same. Colleges and universities have continued contact with businesses and are influenced by businesses in which they purchase supplies, services, or employ their graduates (Birnbaum, 2000a). Part of the impetus for the Learning College is the expectation from businesses that the educational facility has the responsibility to graduate students with the skill and knowledge level to begin work with very little continued training. While this is not an unachievable expectation, students bring many other influences with

them to class that make accomplishing such outcomes an extraordinary challenge. According to Astin (1985), “graduates of institutions have been influenced in certain ways by their educational experiences. Their talents, skills, and abilities have also been influenced by heredity, by early family and school influences, and by the environment. In other words, students are fully functioning organisms before they get to college; therefore, the purpose of college is to enhance the student’s functioning” (p. 15).

Academic institutions are often criticized for both resisting change and being too faddish. These positions are supported based on the loose coupling concept of academia. According to Birnbaum (2000a, 2000b), colleges and universities are organized as loosely coupled organizations where managers with limited authority provide support for relatively autonomous specialists performing complex tasks within relatively stable structures. Because of this loose coupling, control is provided by the routines and culture of the institution and by the professional training and socialization of participants. What happens in one part of a college or university often has little direct or immediate effect on other parts of the institution. This loose coupling leads to the reality that many reforms seldom go beyond getting adopted as policy. However, these reform policies often get implemented in word rather than deed and without altering other cultural aspects of deep structure (Birnbaum, 2000a).

Fads follow a standard sequence in education: (1) the system will be widely acclaimed in the higher education literature; (2) institutions will eagerly ask how to implement it; (3) the publication of a number of case studies will appear, coupled with testimonials to their effectiveness; and (4) both the term and the system will gradually disappear from view (Chaffee, 1985, p. 133). Management fads in higher education are

disseminated in colleges and universities through the development of powerful narratives. They are often adopted in ways that recognize their symbolic importance while minimizing their potential disruption and in practice they are eventually abandoned (Birnbaum, 2000a). On a small number of campuses, the practice or new innovation may take hold and be maintained long after others reject it. If it becomes integrated into an individual institution's culture, it becomes an exception by which the institution differentiates itself from others who have failed (Birnbaum, 2000a). If the success of management fads over the past forty years is measured by the extent of their adoption and maintenance in a recognizable form by institutions of higher education, it can be said that these particular innovations have uniformly failed (Birnbaum, 2000a).

Claims of crises such as financial concerns, slow responses of higher education to unusual turbulence, institutional stagnation and lack of improvement, or teaching that does not improve from one generation to the next all lead to moralistic calls for reform (Birnbaum, 2000a). Institutions that uncritically accept these claims of crises or stagnation become receptive to new innovations as an attempt to satisfy critics and symbolize their intention to reform. Innovations are concepts that promise to affect relationships between actions and outcomes, help the adopter to successfully achieve desired objectives, and reduce uncertainty (Birnbaum, 2000a). Innovations have their own uncertainties: once implemented, the outcomes from innovations are often not clear until the meaning of the innovation is socially constructed by the organizational participants (Rogers, 1995). According to Rogers (1995), innovations are more likely to be adopted when they exhibit five characteristics: relative advantage (more economical, more prestige, and more satisfying); compatibility (consistent with current values and past experience); complexibility (easy to understand

and use); trialability (experimented with on a limited basis); and observability (results can be seen).

A fad is a paradox of complexity and simplicity, yet its central ideas may appear brilliantly original, while at the same time so commonsensical as to make us wonder why we had not thought of it ourselves (Birnbaum, 2000a). Birnbaum (2000a) proposes thirteen descriptions of fads (p. 8-12). First, the fad is a product, a new way of enacting an idea. It is a business product promoted by those with a vested financial, professional, or psychological interest. Second, fads are narratives or stories that attempt to tell a better and more compelling story than the narratives they are trying to replace. This narrative helps people make sense of their organizations and their roles. Third, a fad is a magic procedure for doing things the right way that gives us confidence to take action. The ritual of fads such as planning retreats or visioning exercises bring the group together to help confirm hope for the future. Fourth, a fad is rhetoric, providing a specific language to shape the nature of problems and their solutions. Fifth, a fad is technology transfer, a way of packaging and standardizing a social technology so it can be disseminated among organizations. Management fads that are transferred to higher education involve social and process technologies. Sixth, a fad is a rejected innovation. Since fads by definition are not adopted throughout an organizational system, they may be considered rejected innovations. Seventh, a fad is an un-institutionalized innovation. Even though a fad is temporarily adopted, it almost never becomes incorporated into the institution's culture. Eighth, a fad is a meme, a self-propagating idea that moves through a host population. Management fads are ideas diffused throughout an environment looking for organizations that can serve as their hosts. Ninth, a fad is a political process. The success or failure of an innovation is a consequence of the application of power by various

interest groups at numerous levels. Eleventh, a fad is a placebo, a treatment prescribed to cure an institutional illness. Twelfth, a fad is an alternative to management. Fads do not strengthen the discretion of management: they serve as an alternative to the exercise of managerial judgment. Thirteenth, a fad is a post hoc social construction. Some may diffuse, be adopted rapidly through institutional networks and become accepted as part of the organization. According to Rogers (1995), innovations follow certain paths of diffusion. Some are accepted by most members of an organization, while others are ultimately rejected.

Fads are further defined by different types: old, new; and recycled (Matejka and Dunsing, 1995). Old fads are the ones that were once in vogue and are still being supported. New fads are ideas that appear to be genuine new approaches to improving quality, productivity, and performance. Recycled fads are repackaged ideas. For example, management by walking around used to be getting out in the field and ZBB (doing it right the first time) changed to TQM (doing the right thing right the first time).

Fads may be thought of as proposed solutions to puzzles seen as problems due to the paradigm being used (Birnbaum, 2000a, p. 140). Creators of management fads may claim to reflect a new paradigm, but in reality they reflect the old paradigms of rationality, a problem needing a solution (Birnbaum, 2000a). Institutions are more likely to adopt a fad if they see other similar institutions adopting it; thus, the adoption is reinforced by continual contact with others who share it. Some colleges and universities adopt new innovations or fads and then either isolate them from the core activities or fail to implement them at all (Birnbaum, 2000a). Isolating the innovation from the core activities of the college is one of the biggest reasons most will fail (Birnbaum, 2000a).

Innovations or fads may be originally adopted because they seem reasonable indicating less need to critically analyze or think through their implications. Once initiated, they may continue in the absence of proof that they work because they are undefinable, complex, non-falsifiable, and idealized (Birnbaum, 2000a). Tailoring an innovation to specific institutional needs is highly desirable. However, if the fad cannot be clearly defined or adopted with certainty, it is not possible to study its effects reliably (Birnbaum, 2000a). Even if fads fail to do what they originally claimed, they can still be justified by their claimed secondary benefits.

The failure of fads can be easily rationalized in retrospect. It was too ambitious or not ambitious enough or it gave too much attention to political and cultural elements (Birnbaum, 2000a). Fads are said to fail for a variety of reasons: senior management was not committed, or organizational climate was not congenial (Mitzberg, 1994); it was too ambitious or lacked effort, commitment, and dedication (Wildavsky, 1973); individual campuses have a weak, unsupportive president, limited planning, a traditional administrative climate, or a fearful faculty (Meredith, 1993). Perhaps the innovation was not such a good idea in the first place. When one fad fails to become the ultimate solution to organizational problems, another one takes its place (Birnbaum, 2000a).

After a management innovation is adopted, it can be institutionalized and become accepted as part of organizational routine or it can become hybridized and merge with existing practices to produce a modest change (Birnbaum, 2000a). It can even disappear without a trace. The Learning College concept is the latest academic management technique that continues to be adopted by more colleges and universities, integrating the concepts into their institutional processes and practices. The future will provide an answer to the question,

“Will the Learning College concept last as an innovation or will it become just another passing fad?” Perhaps the focus on assessment practices inherent in the Learning College concepts will provide better future research findings regarding the effectiveness of fads. Perhaps because it was developed in education for education and not imported from the business sector, it will survive the test of time and remain a lasting innovation in the academic setting.

### **Organizational Culture, Leadership, and Change**

America’s community colleges are facing growing challenges in both their external environment relating to global demands from industry (Bellanca, 2002; Forde, 2002; Levin, 2002; Martin & Flynn, 2003; Miles, 2002; Milliron, 2002; Phillippe, 1995; Templin, 2002) and their internal environment relating to a more diverse under-prepared student population (Baker, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Hoyt, 1999; Phillippe, 1995; Roueche & Roueche, 1993; Vaughan, 2000; Weiss, 1999). These challenges represent avenues for creating numerous changes throughout community colleges. Successful change occurs through an understanding of both organizational culture and organizational leadership. According to Schein (1985) culture cannot be discussed without leadership since they are both entwined.

Culture is a learned phenomenon that evolves with new experiences (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989). Researchers, who focus on the dynamics of organizational culture, have devoted numerous articles and books to explorations of the nature, definitions, and the component factors of culture; as well as, discussions of what comprise a culture (Baker, 1992; Brown, 1999; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1992; Schein, 1985). Experts define organizational culture as a system of shared values and beliefs that produce norms for behavior (Dailey & Fogel, 1988). A review of the literature reveals numerous similar

interpretations and definitions. Brown (1999) defines culture as deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior along with shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members of the organization have in common. Schein (1985) explains that culture is formed over decades of experience and includes the basic assumptions and beliefs shared by the organization. Tierney (1992) states that culture exists through shared assumptions of the institution's actors reflected in symbols, myths, histories, and ideologies. While Kuh and Whitt (1988) agree that culture reflects norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions, they further believe it is an interpretive framework for understanding and appreciating events and actions.

Comprehensive studies of institutions suggest that the culture of an institution is pivotal in determining the success of organizational improvement efforts (Schein, 1996; Smart & Hamm, 1992; Tierney, 1988). Schein (1996) identifies three different types of cultures within an organization, Smart and Hamm (1992) identify four dominant traits of organizational culture, and Tierney (1988) identifies two views of culture. Each of these studies present findings about how culture type or cultural trait influences the effectiveness of change within the organization.

Culture remains an institutional choice and successful efforts to manage or change organizational cultures are very complex (Smart & Hamm, 1992). According to Tierney (1988), the lack of differences in grasping the dimensions of organizational culture inhibits the ability of an institution to address the problems and challenges in higher education. Therefore, organizational leaders need to do self-reflection of their own cultures in order to enhance performance and effectiveness of the institution. Schein (1985) suggests that

leadership and culture are two sides of the coin and that the only really important thing that leaders do is to create and manage culture (p.2).

Current research on culture indicates the necessity for leadership to understand the concepts while experiencing organizational changes. In a study of organizational culture, Quintanilla, Schatz, and Benibo (2000) found that following the merger of two higher education institutions; two subcultures developed instead of one. This was due in part to poor planning and insufficient communication. Furthermore, it was noted that new members did not receive information required for assimilation into the culture. The lesson to be learned from this study is that, if an organization wants to maintain its current culture, the concepts of that culture must be considered in the overall change. In addition, formal steps should be taken to ensure that values, beliefs, and assumptions of the culture are taught to new members.

Complex issues such as quality, productivity, accountability, diversity, competition, and accelerating technology require leadership that is adaptable in turbulent times (Biggerstaff, 1992). The management of organizational success is reflected in the understanding, respecting, shaping, and reinforcing of organizational culture (Barber, 1992). When leaders grasp these dynamics of managing culture, external adaptation or internal integration arises and leadership is better positioned to move the culture toward either adaptation or integration. According to Schein (1985), solving the problem of external adaptation and internal integration depends upon the leaders' ability to generate a shared belief system where meaning is communicated and understood by all members of the institution.

Research reveals studies that examine organizational change and organizational culture (Levin, 1994, 2000). Levin (2000) studied the effects of the global economy on the changing missions of urban and rural community colleges. This qualitative study of seven community colleges throughout the United States and Canada revealed a basic denial from leaders that the college mission was changing. Organizational behaviors such as reacting to the demands from students and business leaders for employment skills training and altering curriculums to fit marketplace demands indicated otherwise. According to Levin (2002), in the 1990s, the mission of the community college had less emphasis on education and more on training, less emphasis upon community social needs and more on economic business needs, and less individual development and more workforce retraining (p.1). In essence, the community colleges in the study had become more suited to the demands of the global economy.

The identity of community colleges as organizations was also studied by Levin (1994). Through the use of qualitative research methods, five community colleges in Arizona were examined. Interviews, questionnaires, and reviews of institutional data revealed two categories of change: specific areas of change (student enrollment or finances) and outcomes of change (transfer education, grants, and partnerships). These forces of change were primarily external and community colleges were required to react and adapt (Levin, 1994). Because the community college has become more corporate, it is more likely that these institutions will become imitators of business with an emphasis on action, productivity, and achievement (Levin, 1994). Understanding organizational culture is important when dealing with change. According to Levin (1994), community colleges are subject to both external and internal change. Levin (1994) states, “since community colleges are characterized as being

adaptable, flexible, and agents of change, it is not surprising to consider these institutions as subject to considerable organizational change and as heavily involved in social change”

(p. 3).

Several change theories present in the literature can be applicable to organizational change: Lewin's (1951) force field model of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing; Gibson, Ivancevich, and Donnelly (1997) model for unfreezing old learning, movement to the new learning, and refreezing the learned behavior; and Heifetz's (1993) seven stage change cycle in which each stage has its own purpose and characteristics. According to Gibson et al. (1997), organizations seldom undertake significant change without a strong shock from the environment (p. 460). Triggers that can create this shock include economic forces, technological forces, and social and political forces. Economic forces can be seen as new products, advertising, or customer service. Technological forces include computer technology and automation that is continuously changing. Social and political forces stem from international markets and great movements. Furthermore, internal organizational forces such as breakdowns in communication, poor decision-making, low morale, high absenteeism and turnover can all constitute an impetus for change (Gibson et al., 1997). Sometimes the need for change goes unrecognized until some major catastrophic events occurs (Gibson et al., 1997). Furthermore, if the rate of change increases, perpetual learning and change is the only constant (Schein, 1996).

Organizational change can occur in a variety of approaches: application of power, application of reason, and application of re-education (Gibson et al., 1997). Managing change through power implies the use of coercion. Autocratic leaders, through their use of power, can control direction, rewards, conditions of employment, and influence in an organization.

This method of applying power is not a favored approach for bringing about positive change (Gibson et al., 1997). The process of applying reason regarding organizational change provides information prior to the intended change with an underlying assumption that reason will prevail. While reason is good in theory, reality indicates other factors also have to be taken into consideration: individual motives and needs, group norms and sanctions, and organizations as social work units. Finally, managing change through re-education implies that a particular set of targeted activities is required to bring about change. When change is not managed successfully, it sometimes proceeds to repeated failure. Often, the failure of organizations to reform leads to a sense of stasis and cynicism (Tierney, 2001).

The critical element to understand when considering organizational transitions is that leaders cannot arbitrarily change culture in the sense of eliminating dysfunctional elements, but they can evolve culture by building on its strengths while letting go of its weaknesses (Schein, 1996).

Schein (1996) states,

If the leader of the organization understands cultural dynamics, he or she will reward individuals for contributions and for helping others, broaden the concept of individual competence to include working with others, build trusting relationships, and open up communication across boundaries. These behaviors will provide a cognitive redefinition by broadening perceptions and developing new standards...thus, enlarging culture. Such transformations occur through a genuine change in the leader's behavior and the embedding of new definitions in processes and routines (p.64).

Organizations that have survived the economic and social pressures of the global transition of the 1990s seem to have a cultural core which includes the following characteristics: a commitment to learning and change; a commitment to its people and to all of the stakeholders; and a commitment to building a healthy, flexible organization (Schein, 1996).

The successful organization has one major attribute that sets it apart: dynamic and effective leadership (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 1996). Yukl (1998) states, “leading change is one of the most important, but difficult leadership responsibilities” (p. 438). It takes strong vision, conviction, and energy to create and animate an organization. It also takes great judgment, wisdom, and skill to pull people together as well as personal learning ability and flexibility to evolve and change organizations (Schein, 1996). For successful implementation of change, the leader has to understand resistance to change, the phases of the change process, and the different strategies of change.

Yukl (1998) identifies the following nine reasons why people are resistant to change. The first reason is a lack of trust in the people who propose the change. Subordinates may resist if they believe there are hidden agendas. Second, the subordinates may believe that change is unnecessary. This resistance is felt when people know that the current way of doing things is working without any evidence of problems. Belief that change is not feasible is the third resistance. Making a change that is radically different will appear impossible, and failure of previous changes will stimulate cynicism. Fourth, economic threats are a concern. Subordinates who stand to suffer personal loss of income or benefits could resist. The relative high cost of implementing change is the fifth resistance of change, and it poses a threat based on changing resource allocations or routines. Sixth, the fear of personal failure makes some persons, especially those who lack self-confidence, more reluctant to accept

change. The seventh resistance to change is fear of the loss of status or power. Sometimes a restructuring of positions is necessary to accommodate the change being proposed. The eighth resistance to change occurs when the proposed change appears to be inconsistent with values that are embedded in a strong culture. Finally, the interference or control of others will elicit resentment and hostility because some subordinates do not wish to be controlled by others. Yukl (1998) states, “resistance to change is a natural reaction by people who want to protect their self-interests and sense of self-determination” (p. 440).

According to Schein (1985), there are two options for change: transformation or decline. With transformation, culture change is necessary but not all elements of the culture can or must be changed. When culture becomes dysfunctional, it is the role of leadership to assist the organization in unlearning some cultural assumptions and learning new assumptions (Schein, 1985). The flexibility, collaboration, integrative thinking, individualized consideration and insight into the needs and values of followers are leadership behaviors of transformation (Barber, 1992).

A review of the literature reveals two views of leadership that are important when implementing organizational change: exemplary leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1995); and transformational leadership (Baker, 1998; Barber, 1992; Bass, 1985; Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989). Each of these views of leadership has aspects that are important in dealing effectively with organizational change. The exemplary leader searches for opportunities, takes risks, inspires shared vision, fosters collaboration, creates standards of excellence, and recognizes individual accomplishments (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The transformational leader allows recognition and engagement of followers (Baker, 1998; Barber, 1992; Bass, 1985; Roueche et al., 1989). Leadership is viewed broadly as the process in which an

individual influences: (1) the interpretation of events; (2) the choice of objectives and strategies; (3) the organization of work activities; (4) the motivation of people to achieve the objectives; (5) the maintenance of cooperative relationships; (6) the development of skills and confidence by members; (7) and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization (Yukl, 1998, p.5). Within this process, the leader plays a pivotal role in successful implementation of innovative changes.

Further research reveals leadership qualities that are important for organizations striving to become learning organizations (Boggs & Michael, 1997; Senge, 1990). According to Boggs and Michael (1997), providing leadership to refocus on learning is not an easy task. It requires leadership using the attributes of a transformational leader. The transformational leader can move followers to transcend their own self-interest for the good of the group or organization by motivating them to do more than was originally expected. Bass (1985) investigated the nature and effects of two types of leaders: transformational and transactional. Transformational leaders inspire others to excel, give individual consideration to others, and stimulate people to think in new ways. Transactional leaders resemble the traditional manager by maintaining a steady-state and offering rewards for performance. The results of Bass' investigation found that while both types were effective, transformational leaders were more often linked to satisfaction and effectiveness (Bass, 1985).

The role of executive leadership is to create organizational environments that inspire, support, and allow imagination and initiative to exist at all levels (Senge et al., 1999, p. 566). Senge (1990) identifies three key roles that executive leaders meet to fulfill this role in a learning organization. These roles are to become a designer, a teacher, and a steward. As a designer, the leader creates the infrastructure to support the change. This means to create an

architecture that supports people and learning by changing the organizational structure, relationships, rewards, and training. As a teacher, the leader designs learning processes where people throughout the organization can deal productively with issues and develop their mastery in the learning disciplines. As a steward, the leader empowers people, serves people, becomes a partner, and is willing to be accountable to a larger body other than themselves.

The transformation of becoming a learning organization requires what Senge et al. (1999) term a profound level of change. Change which is driven by authority is more efficient to organize, often more effective in the long run, and more immediately comfortable for people in many organizations (Senge et al., 1999, p. 41). If all goes well, great results may occur, productivity will increase, and morale will get better. But, change that is authoritarian driven is powerful only so long as it is pushed. According to Senge et al. (1999), most change initiatives fail. The change initiatives come up against issues embedded in the prevailing system of management such as: managers' commitment to change as long as it does not affect them; undiscussable topics that seem risky to talk about; and the ingrained habit of attacking symptoms while ignoring deeper systemic causes of problems (Senge et al., 1999). Success depends on the leaders' continued effort to feed the system with enthusiasm, ideas, and initiative.

However, if the change initiative is driven by learning, groups of people would articulate the goals that they would like to achieve, experiment with projects, learn from their successes and mistakes, and talk candidly with each other about the results (Senge et al., 1999). This type of change process would be self-perpetuating, building commitment and participation through shared values and aspirations. A learning-oriented strategy such as this

produces self-sustaining change and operates as a “virtuous reinforcing cycle” (Senge et al., 1999, p. 41).

This review of the literature reveals that organizational culture cannot be separated from organizational leadership. Through an understanding of organizational culture, a leader can effectively implement cultural change. Leadership is pivotal to organizational change and change is best accomplished through the efforts of a transformational leader. Research reveals that the transformational leader displays qualities that can assist the transition of an organizational change such as the Learning College. Furthermore, transformational and exemplary leadership promote shared values, collegial decision-making, innovative strategies, and a customer orientation that promote the development of effective organizational change.

### **Concepts Relevant to the Learning College**

The world in which we live is very different from that of the early 1900s. The students are more diverse, many speak different languages, work full or part-time, become single parents, change careers due to layoffs, and are unprepared to succeed academically in college-level courses (Baker, 1998; Boggs, 1995-1996; Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Levin, 2002; Roueche & Roueche, 1993; Weiss, 1999). Social and political pressures include: reductions in funding for educational institutions; high rates of defaults on student loans; increases in campus violence; low percentage of students completing programs; and employers complaining about inadequate training (Boggs, 1995-1996). For community colleges to survive the changing conditions, they must respond to these student circumstances plus the social and political pressures.

Many community colleges are responding by changing their methods of instruction and operating processes. Barr and Tagg (1995) reflect on this change as a shift from the “Instruction Paradigm” where a college exists to provide instruction to a “Learning Paradigm” where a college exists to produce learning. The Learning Paradigm involves changing the mission of the college from an instruction paradigm to producing learning with every student by whatever means work best (Barr & Tagg, 1995). The Learning Paradigm encourages whatever approaches prompt learning by the student rather than just using traditional lecture. Further, the Learning Paradigm purports that each graduating class learns more than the previous one and that the institution continuously learns how to produce greater learning with each graduating class and with each entering student (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

In the Learning Paradigm, boundaries are determined by: student learning and success; the college mission changing to produce learning through both the institutional outcomes and individual student outcomes; experiences to help students construct knowledge for themselves; the aim for higher graduation rates and increasing learning standards; and the production of learning outcomes (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Achievement of these boundaries requires the need for a radical change in the organizational structure of an institution. Structures are the features of an organization that are stable over time and that form the framework for activities and processes through which the purposes of the organization are achieved (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Structure includes features such as: the organizational chart; reward systems; role systems; technologies and methods; facilities and equipment; decision-making, communication and feedback; institutional finances; and state-funding (Barr & Tagg, 1995). According to Senge (1990), institutions rarely focus their attention on altering

systemic structures to improve organizational performance. However, without a change in structure, the new-paradigm thinkers become frustrated as they try to implement new ideas and innovation under the old governing structure (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

Although many institutions of higher education are pursuing the “Learning Paradigm” or the Learning College concept, there is no empirical evidence in the literature to support the changes that they propose. Much more research will have to be conducted to assess the strengths or weaknesses of the Learning College concept. Perhaps as institutions involved in the Learning College concept establish their assessment programs, studies on student outcomes will provide some insight into the usefulness of the concept.

Many institutions of higher education are striving to become learning organizations, although the methods of implementation that each uses will vary. Senge (1990) indicates that building a learning organization depends on five disciplines and O’Banion (1999) identifies six principles for implementation of the Learning College (p. 5). The five disciplines that Senge (1990) advocates include: personal mastery or a clarification of personal vision; mental models or images that influence our understanding of the world; building shared vision or shared pictures of the future that foster genuine long-term commitment; team learning or a greater perspective that involves trust and common goals; and systems thinking. Systems thinking is the fifth discipline because it integrates the other disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice. It prevents them from being separate gimmicks or the latest organizational change fad (Senge, 1990). Without a systemic orientation, there is no motivation to examine how the disciplines interrelate. Systems-thinking is a framework for seeing interrelationships and patterns of change (Senge, 1990). Furthermore, systems-thinking needs the other four disciplines to realize its potential (Senge, 1990).

The six key principles of learning institutions identified by O’Banion (1999) include the following: (1) to create substantive change in individual learners; (2) to engage learners in the learning process as full partners who assume primary responsibility for their own choices; (3) to create and offer as many options for learning as possible; (4) to assist learners to form and participate in collaborative learning activities; (5) to define the roles of learning facilitators in response to the needs of the learners; and (6) to document improved and expanded learning. These principles are not intended to be the final answer and will need to be tailored to the specific needs and resources of the institution (O’Banion, 1999). According to Senge (1990), “at the heart of a learning organization is a shift of mind, from seeing ourselves as separate from the world to connected to the world, from seeing problems as caused by someone or something to seeing how our own actions create the problem we experience; a place where people are continually discovering how they create their reality and how they can change it” (p.12).

A learning organization is conceived as a strategic commitment to capture and share learning in the organization for the benefit of students, the organization, and society. Watkins and Marsick (1993) define a learning organization as one that learns continuously and can transform itself (p. 8). They emphasize that there is no single formula for creating a learning organization. However, several characteristics are present as prerequisites for a learning organization. The characteristics include the following: (1) leaders who model calculated risk taking and experimentation; (2) decentralized decision making and employee empowerment; (3) skill inventories and audits of learning capacity; (4) systems for sharing learning and using it in the business, (5) rewards and structures for employee initiative; (6) consideration of long-term consequences and impact on the work of others; (7) frequent use of cross-

functional work teams; (8) opportunities to learn from experience on a daily basis; and (9) a culture of feedback and disclosure. Watkins and Marsick's (1993) description of the learning organization is "sculpting" with the idea that the knowledge and learning lies within the organization and must be drawn from within.

Active learning is a concept that must be present in any attempt at creating a Learning College. The underlying concept of active learning is that human beings learn best by doing (O'Banion, 1997a). Students must become active discoverers and constructors of their own knowledge and be fully responsible for their own choices and activities (Barr & Tagg, 1995). In other words, students become more responsible for their own learning. Learning environments and activities become more learner-centered and learner-controlled and may even be "teacherless" (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Learning environments support learning that produces learning outcomes through constant searching for new structures and methods that work better for student learning and success. Ideally, teachers become facilitators and guides who establish learning environments conducive to learning and who guide students toward expected outcomes; nonetheless, it is the active involvement of the student that makes the difference.

Cooperative learning is one method for changing teaching practices that encourages active learning activities for the student. Cooperative learning is a teaching/learning strategy that creates a learning climate in which understanding, caring, and stimulation allow students to respond with an avid interest in learning while growing in self-confidence, independence, and creative energy (Rogers, 1969). Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) provide information about changing the nature of college teaching. Through research and study on cooperative learning, they have developed methods to move from the old paradigm of teaching as

imparting knowledge to the new paradigm of teaching that places the responsibility for learning on the student (Johnson et al., 1991). The principles in the new paradigm on teaching include: (1) knowledge that is constructed by the students and faculty; (2) students who are active constructors of their own knowledge; (3) faculty who develop students' competencies and talents; (4) education that occurs as a personal transaction both between students and between students and faculty; (5) and learning that is done within a cooperative context (Johnson et al., 1991).

Cooperative learning provides the means of operationalizing the new paradigm of teaching and provides the context for the development of student talent (Johnson et al., 1991). Cooperation is the act of working together toward a common purpose, and learning is the act of gaining or comprehending knowledge. Cooperative learning is usually conducted in small group settings. In a synthesis of group learning, Imel (1999) examined the history of groups and their resulting perspectives. Her findings distinguished between three different types of groups: cooperative; collaborative; and transformative. Cooperative group learning is the use of small groups of students working together to maximize each other's knowledge (Johnson et al., 1991) with a focus on subject matter, strengths, experiences, and expertise of the group (Imel, 1999). Collaborative group learning is based on communicative knowledge where process is emphasized and participants exchange ideas, feelings, and information. Transformative group learning occurs when members engage in critical reflection to examine expectations, assumptions, and perspectives. According to Glaserfeld (1995b), putting students into groups of two or three and designating the "weakest" to report on their results compels them to explain their thoughts to one another. He further states there are several

advantages: “Verbalization requires reflection upon one’s own thoughts as well as others, and students tend to listen more openly with a greater interest to their fellow students” (p. 190).

There are five basic elements of cooperative learning (Johnson et al., 1991). The first element is positive interdependence. It is here that students develop “the sink or swim together” mentality, in which one cannot succeed without the whole group. Instructors structure the group activities so that each student has a role. Astin (1993a) suggests that the composition of the student’s peer group has important implications for how students are affected by their peers. Most models of cooperative learning recognize the importance of group composition by attempting to distribute the highest and lowest achieving students proportionately across all learning groups (Astin, 1993a). The second element is face-to-face promotive interaction. Learning is promoted through orally explaining to one another how to solve problems or by discussing concepts. Individual accountability is the third element, in which each student is responsible for his or her own learning. Activities are structured so that any student at any time can be responsible for providing information that will result in a grade for the entire group. The fourth is the development of social skills including leadership, decision-making, trust building, communication, and conflict-management. The instructor must define the skills and rotate the roles each day so that everyone can learn the roles. Finally, groups need to process how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships.

There is considerable research demonstrating that cooperative learning produces higher achievement and positive outcomes. Astin (1993a) found that curricular planning will reap much greater student outcomes if the focus is less on formal structure and content and

more on pedagogy and other types of delivery. Constructing student knowledge in an active way while working cooperatively with classmates motivates students to exert extraordinary effort to learn, grow, and develop (Johnson, et al., 1991). Through research efforts with cooperative learning, the learning outcomes that are promoted include: (a) higher achievement and increased retention; (b) more frequent higher-level reasoning, deeper-level understanding, and critical thinking; (c) more “on task” and less disruptive behavior; (d) greater achievement motivation and intrinsic motivation to learn; (e) greater ability to view situations from others’ perspectives; (f) more positive, accepting, and supportive relationships with peers regardless of ethnic, sex, ability, social class, or handicap differences; (g) greater social support; (h) more positive attitudes toward teachers, principals, and other school personnel; (i) more positive attitudes toward subject areas, learning, and school; (j) greater psychological health, adjustment, and well-being; (k) more positive self-esteem based on basic self-acceptance; and (l) greater social competencies (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

The Learning College concept includes many methods for addressing the changing student population and improving learning outcomes. Some of the concepts include active learning, group activities, less direct lecture, teacher facilitation, variety in class schedules, and a variety of class activities to address different learning styles (Barr & Tagg, 1995; O’Banion, 1997a). Research on learning outcomes in relation to group and cooperative learning indicate positive student outcomes. However, future research will need to be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Learning College concept.

## **Review of Related Research**

Numerous studies have been conducted to evaluate the ever-changing student population. Some areas of study include: learning outcomes (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Astin, 1985, 1993b; and Kuh, 2001, 2003); retention (Ashar & Skenes, 1993; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Bers & Smith, 1991; Tinto, 1987; Windham, 1995); remedial education in community colleges (Roueche & Roueche, 1999; Shults, 2004); the at-risk student (Roueche & Roueche 1994); and minority students (Aragon, 2000; Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993; Yang, Rendon, & Shearon, 1994). All of the studies document findings related to the at-risk, under-prepared, or non-traditional student. At the post-secondary level, the majority of these types of students attend community colleges, so it becomes imperative for community colleges to re-evaluate their services and policies in order to best accommodate its changing student population. According to VanDerLinden (2002), even with multiple reasons for attending community colleges, students are reporting positive experiences and are successfully combining their occupational needs and educational intentions with personal responsibilities and other demanding life circumstances.

The underlying impetus for the development of the Learning College concept stems from several areas of research: learning outcomes; cognition and development; and constructivism (Cross, 1998). Extensive research on the impact of learning outcomes exist which support methods to improve teaching and learning: educational benefits and how they relate to talent development (Astin, 1985); the impact of student interactions (Astin, 1993a); student outcomes and the college environment (Astin, 1993b); seven principles of good practice for faculty (Chickering & Gamson, 1987); the impact of college on students through

assessment of skills, talents, and attitudes (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969); the impact of learning outcomes and student engagement (Kuh, 2001, 2003); twenty years of study reflecting the impact of college on students from freshman to senior year (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991); and student transition to college (Terenzini, 1992).

All of these studies reflect the positive outcomes that college imparts on students. However, the studies of Astin (1993a, 1993b) and Kuh (2001, 2003) will be presented since they are the most recent studies and they demonstrate a positive relationship to the Learning College concept. Astin (1993b) examined student outcomes and how they are affected by the college environment. In this study, more than 200 four-year colleges and universities were sampled using entering freshmen and then surveying them again four years later. The first set of findings examined student involvement, the amount of physical and psychological time and energy the student invests in the educational process. Their findings revealed that the number of hours spent studying positively related to nearly all academic outcomes: retention; graduating with honors; enrollment in graduate school; standardized test scores; and increases in cognitive and affective skills. Other forms of academic involvement that had beneficial effects on student learning and personal development include the following: taking honors courses; participating in study abroad programs; participating in racial and cultural awareness workshops; participating in independent research projects; presenting material in class; and taking essay exams. Academic development was also negatively affected by multiple choice exams. In this study, Astin (1993a) found that the number of hours spent each week studying and doing homework has significant implications for cooperative learning. According to Astin (1993a), cooperative learning works because of two things: students are held accountable by their peers for achieving certain learning outcomes; and

students assume a certain degree of responsibility for assisting their peers in achieving the same learning goals. These two areas serve to motivate the student to invest additional time and energy in the learning process.

Further studies reveal information based on the impact of student interaction. The single most powerful source of influence on the student's academic and personal development is the peer group (Astin, 1993a, 1993b). Interactions with peer groups include the following: discussing course content; working on group projects; tutoring other students; developing leadership potential through campus sports and activities; increasing academic development; growing in problem-solving skills; and developing critical thinking skills and cultural awareness. In the area of peer group effects, students tend to change their values, behavior, and academic plans in the direction of the dominant orientation of their peer group (Astin, 1993b).

Differences were also noted in the areas of gender and race as related to peer group effects. The strongest gender effects were noted in the area of psychological well-being. Women were more likely to feel depressed and overwhelmed, whereas men were interested in obtaining status and leadership. Men were proficient test takers, but women got better grades. Women were stronger in interpersonal skills, job-related skills, cultural awareness, and foreign language ability, whereas men were stronger in public-speaking ability. A particular race effect was that white students tend to become more politically conservative, whereas black students tend to become more politically liberal. Further findings based on socioeconomic status (SES) indicated that students from high SES families could look forward to more positive outcomes in college, regardless of their abilities or academic preparation.

Furthermore, Astin (1993b) indicated that faculty represented the most significant aspect of the student's development. Student-faculty interactions included the following: being a guest in a faculty's home; working on a professor's research project; assisting faculty in teaching a class; and talking with faculty outside of class. Student-faculty interaction was positively correlated with satisfaction with faculty, the quality of instruction, the overall college experience, and academic attainment (college GPA, degree attainment, graduating with honors, and enrollment in graduate school).

One of the most recent researchers who studied the impact of learning outcomes is George Kuh. Kuh (2001) uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) instrument to assess student learning and improve quality of undergraduate education. The results of the survey provide benchmarks for determining how effectively colleges are contributing to learning in five areas: (1) level of academic challenge; (2) active and collaborative learning; (3) student-faculty interaction; (4) enriching educational experiences; and (5) supportive campus environment. The combined measurement of these five areas is known as student engagement. Some of the most promising aspects of this report are that more students are getting experience with collaborative and active learning and that most students viewed their campus as supportive and responsive. A less promising aspect is the frequency of student-faculty interaction shown to be much less than what is considered to be optimal. First-year students and seniors at doctoral-extensive universities reported only occasional contact, once or twice a month. Furthermore, the amount of time students spend preparing for class is about half of what is expected; 56% of all full-time students spent 15 hours or less preparing for class, while 10% spent five or fewer hours in preparation (Kuh, 2001). The areas of promising performance can be directly influenced by academic policy

features of a curriculum, such as requiring capstone courses, creating higher expectations, or enhancing student satisfaction with the college environment. However, the day-to-day behaviors such as student-faculty contact and active and collaborative learning require changes in the campus cultures, thus making them more difficult to change.

With three years of NSSE results, major patterns of student engagement have emerged (Kuh, 2003). Smaller schools generally engage students more effectively and are more academically challenging. Student engagement differs more within a given school than between schools. Full-time students and students who live on campus are more engaged since they take more classes, read and write more, spend more time preparing for class, have better access to institutional resources, and tend to have fewer obligations such as family or work. Commuter students may have constraints on their time due to work and family responsibilities, but they put forth just as much effort as other students in areas related to the classroom (Kuh, Gonyea, & Palmer, 2001). In a study regarding learning communities and student engagement by Zhao and Kuh (2003), learning communities were positively linked to engagement, student self-reported outcomes, and overall satisfaction with college.

Student retention has been the focus of educational research for many years. Tinto's (1987) student departure model indicates that a student's academic and social integration at an institution play a major part in their decision to stay or leave. The model has been tested and supported in previous studies (Asher & Skenes, 1993; Mutter, 1992; Pascarella, 1985; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980). Mutter (1992) found that persisting students were more integrated academically and more dedicated to the institution and to the goal of graduating than were non-persisting students.

In Tinto's (1987) theory of student departure, he proposes that a student enters college with varying patterns of personal, family, and academic characteristics and skills. These patterns are subsequently modified and reformulated on a continuing basis through interactions between the student and the structures and members of the academic institution. Satisfying and rewarding encounters with the institution are presumed to lead to greater integration and student retention. Integration is the extent to which the student shares attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution and abides by structural requirements for membership in that community. An institution's capacity to retain students is directly related to its ability to reach out and make contact with students and integrate them into the social and intellectual fabric of institutional life (Tinto, 1987, p. 180). This view argues that leaving is affected by all institutional actions rather than one action or set of actions. Institutions have a responsibility for student retention; since they accept them for admission, they accept a responsibility to ensure that all students have sufficient opportunities and resources to complete their courses of study.

Ashar and Skenes (1993) used Tinto's model to study retention in the non-traditional student based on two variables: social integration and class size. The purpose of the study was to find out if the structural conditions of academic integration promote retention with traditional students and adult learners. Their results partially supported Tinto's (1987) claim that social integration has a significant and positive effect on retention (Ashar & Skenes, 1993). Findings revealed no relationship between academic integration and retention that turned out to be population specific and that the learning needs of the adult learner might be strong enough to attract students to educational programs but not sufficient to maintain them in programs of study.

Bean and Metzner (1985) further studied student attrition through their development of a conceptual model of non-traditional undergraduate students. Their model was based on four sets of variables and two sets of outcomes that underlie the decision to drop out (Bean & Metzner, 1985). The four sets of variables are academic variables, intent to leave, background and defining variables, and environmental variables. The two sets of outcomes are: academic including the college GPA; and psychological including utility, satisfaction, goal commitment, and stress. All of these variables affect a student's intent to leave. The educational experiences of utility, satisfaction, and goal commitment were predicted to decrease the student's intent to leave, while stress was predicted to increase the student's intent to leave (Bean & Metzner, 1985).

Retention was studied by Bers and Smith (1991) in a study of the persistence of community college students based on social and academic integration, student educational objectives, and student intent to re-enroll. The findings revealed that student characteristics, objectives, and their subjective experiences are all important factors affecting persistence. Results support the utility of students' educational objectives, intent to enroll, and academic and social integration in predicting persistence (Bers, & Smith, 1991).

In a study by Windham (1995), on factors affecting retention in a community college, she found that the students most likely to remain enrolled are the traditional students. These are the young students, usually right out of high school who are not working full-time and have a high school diploma. They attend college on a full-time basis and earn good grades. In addition, the students most likely not to re-enroll are older, work full-time, attend college part-time and take remedial education classes.

Remedial education classes continue to be offered in community colleges to assist the under-prepared student toward successful completion of their educational goals. Research revealed several studies related to remedial education: a study revealed that over half of the students dropout in a college where about half of the students need remediation (Hoyt, 1999); how to make remediation work (Roueche & Roueche, 1999); practices and policies regarding remedial education in community colleges (Shults, 2004). In a study by Hoyt (1999), he attempted to understand why over half of the students drop-out of college without attaining their degree in a college where about half of the entering freshmen require remedial education. His research supported the findings of most other studies showing that academic performance, minority status, work, and other outside commitments significantly related to student retention (Hoyt, 1999).

In a study through the American Association of Community Colleges, Shults (2004) examined the practices and policies regarding remedial education in community colleges. All community colleges in the study offered at least one remedial course with math, reading, and writing offered by 96 percent of the institutions. Half of the institutions in large cities had at least 27 percent of their student population enrolled in remedial education classes. In 1998, 36 percent of new students were enrolled in at least one remedial course. Roueche & Roueche (1999) believed that institutions should be flexible in their remedial course offerings to best serve students. One way to respond with this flexibility could be to offer open-entry; open-exit courses (Shults, 2004).

The at-risk student has been the subject of discussion for many researchers who studied retention in college classes (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Hoyt, 1999; Roueche & Roueche, 1994). According to Cohen and Brawer (1996), students drop out for a variety of

reasons, many of which are out of the college's control. Many leave because they attain their objective, experience a change in work schedule, develop health problems, experience problems with child care, experience financial burdens, or experience a change in residence. The at-risk term describes the reality of today's students who possess a collage of academic, social, and economic problems that challenge their success in college (Roueche & Roueche, 1993). These students possess family and employment responsibilities, financial needs, poor academic backgrounds, low self-concept, limited world views, and an absence of role models or mentors for the college experience, and they are usually first-generation college attendees (Hoyt, 1999; Roueche & Roueche, 1993; Roueche & Roueche, 1994). Hoyt (1999) further describes them as older working adults pursuing a second career or updating their knowledge and skills for the changing work environment. According to Roueche and Roueche (1994), the at-risk population can no longer be ignored. "The gap between existing skills and skills required for employability continue to widen, contributing to a growing underclass of individuals who cannot escape a permanent condition of poverty and dependence on a society that is less and less able to bear its weight. The future of society depends on an ability and willingness to recognize the seriousness of the skills gap in order to mobilize and prevent the gap from widening, and to work toward its closure" (Roueche & Roueche, 1994, p.2, 3). In their study, Roueche & Roueche (1994) sought responses to eight questions from twelve community college programs recognized for their success with at-risk students. Their findings supported the fact that community colleges must recognize the need for administrative support by policy and a clear structure by procedure for addressing the needs of the at-risk student population. Further findings revealed that: pre-enrollment activities should be proactive; orientation should be required; late registration should be abolished;

basic skills assessment and placement should be mandatory; dual enrollment in basic skill and regular academic courses should be eliminated; working students should be encouraged to reduce academic loads; financial aid programs should be more comprehensive; faculty mentors and peer support should be established; problem-solving and literacy activities should be required in all courses; and student and program outcomes should be regularly evaluated. Colleges must address the needs of a larger diverse and under-prepared population of students who will not be successful in any academic arena unless the colleges change their policies and procedures to address these concerns (Roueche & Roueche, 1994).

Concerns relating to minority students continue to be addressed in the research literature: differences among minority and non-minority regarding educational choices (Laanan, 2000); relationship between a students' cultural background and their preferred learning styles (Sanchez, 2000); the relationship of student stresses and adjustment of minority freshman (Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993); incongruence and isolation among the first-year minority student (Allen, 1996; Hurtado, Carter, and Spuler, 1996; Steele, 1992); perceptions of prejudice and discrimination (Nora & Cabrera, 1996); and a profile of Asian students and their adjustment to college (Yang, Rendon, & Shearon, 1994). Each of these studies represents major factors that affect the adjustment of minority students to college. For the community college, minority research is important since the student population will include an increasing number of minority students in the future.

In 1998, ethnic minorities represented 28 percent of the population and by 2050 minorities are projected to represent 47 percent of the population (Aragon, 2000). During the 1970s, following affirmative action programs, minority students enrolled in predominately white colleges in increasing numbers (Smedley et al., 1993). However, since the 1980s, some

disturbing trends in enrollment, academic performance, and retention have developed. African-American and non-Asian-minority students, while attending predominately white colleges are less likely to graduate within five years, have lower grade point averages, experience higher attrition rates, and matriculate into graduate programs at lower rates than white students (Smedley et al., 1993). These trends and the increased diversification of the student population of community colleges present many challenges concerning educational attainment and retention.

In a study by Laanan (2000), only slight differences were noted between minority and non-minority students regarding educational choices. Minority students were more likely to report the following factors as important reasons for college attendance: parental influence; inability to find a job; desire to gain a general education; desire to improve reading and study skills; desire to become more cultured; and the desire to learn things that interested them (Laanan, 2000). The desire for getting a better job and making more money as reasons for attending a community college was similar among white and minority students.

Research indicates a close association between students' cultural background, preferred learning styles, and active learning in the classroom. According to Sanchez (2000), students' individual learning preferences are typically accompanied by culturally determined tools that influence the way they process information and based on the fit between teaching and learning styles which facilitate or hinder their educational achievement. In comparison to white students, both Hispanic and Native American students enjoy participation in active, concrete learning experiences, cooperative situations, and elaborative processing (Sanchez, 2000). In addition, African-American students' achievement is positively related to oral experiences and interpersonal relationships (Palma-Rivas, 2000). Furthermore, in a study

of student transition to college by Terenzini (1992), students experienced some feelings of self-doubt, but their experiences inside and outside of the classroom reinforced their self-esteem and perceptions of themselves as learners. It was further reported by Terenzini (1992) that the community college students in this study became involved in and excited about learning when they participated in class activities. Since the concepts of the Learning College include active and cooperative learning, the Learning College concept should be one successful strategy toward addressing the increasing diversity needs of the student population.

Research reveals that minority students continue to be faced with issues that keep them from progressing and succeeding in college. Prejudice and isolation (Nora & Cabrera, 1996), incongruence and isolation (Allen, 1996; Hurtado et al., 1996; Steele, 1992), and academic aptitude (Smedley et al., 1993) continue to add to the psychological stresses affecting minority students. In a study by Nora and Cabrera (1996) it was found that perceptions of prejudice and discrimination over-shadow their academic ability regarding decisions to persist in college. Steele (1992) believes that feelings of incongruence and isolation are more likely because blacks remain devalued in American schools and they continue to fight against negative stereotypes related to their intellectual ability. Allen (1996) also concluded that isolation and alienation are serious problems for black students at predominately white colleges. Furthermore, Hurtado et al. (1996) report that Hispanic students face similar feelings as they make their transition to college. In their study of Hispanic students in four-year colleges, Hispanic students were more likely to feel like they did not fit in at a college where they perceive a climate in which the majority of students think all minorities are special admits (Hurtado et al., 1996, p. 152). However, in a study of

Asian students by Yang et al. (1994), he found that they seemed to have fewer adjustment difficulties and typically included more high school graduates with an A or B average while 57 percent of the curriculum students had the primary goal of obtaining an associate or bachelor's degree.

In an effort to understand the impact of adult learning theories on the current development of learner-centered education, different orientations to learning (behaviorism, humanism, cognitivism, and socialism) were explored in this literature review. Behaviorists such as J. B. Skinner and B. F. Watson define learning as a change in behavior and focus their research on overt behavior, a measurable response to environmental stimuli (Merriam & Cafarella, 1991). The humanistic orientation to learning places emphasis on human nature, human potential, human emotion, and human affect (Merriam & Cafarella, 1991). Humanist theorists such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers believe that learning is a function of motivation involving choice and responsibility. Much of adult learning theory, especially andragogy and self-directed learning, are based on the concepts of humanism.

The concept of facilitation is relatively new, though the activities inherent to it have been discussed over the last century. Rogers (1983) is the person most credited with the view that educators function as enablers or facilitators of learning. Facilitators of learning possess the skills of genuineness and empathy. They differ from the traditional teacher in that they structure learning based on the student's needs. Facilitators of learning see themselves as resources for learning. They stress being engaged in a democratic, student-centered enhancement of individual learning and that responsibility for setting the direction and methods of learning rests as much with the learner as with the educator (Brookfield, 1986).

It is quite evident from the review of the literature that Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Roger's principles of learning have been integrated into theories of adult learning.

The third orientation to learning is cognitive development. In Gestalt psychology, a form of cognitive theory, learning is a cognitive phenomenon (Merriam & Cafarella, 1991). The individual ponders about a problem, identifies all the pieces necessary to solve it and then, using different solutions, solves the problem. Cognitive theorists stress the importance of an orderly climate, clearly defined goals, careful explanations of expectations, open inspection and questioning, and honest, objective feedback (Knowles, 1973). They further encourage experimentation and are tolerant of mistakes, provided something is learned from the process. According to Merriam and Cafarella (1991), the control of learning lies within the learner.

This focus on internal cognitive processes was further clarified by Jean Piaget. Piaget (1966) developed a cognitive theory of learning based on four stages of development that included age-related functions. It is generally agreed among researchers that the sensorimotor, preoperational, and concrete operations are reached and mastered by children before reaching puberty (Moran, 2001). The fourth stage, formal operations is achieved by the age of fifteen. The impression is that cognitive development is complete at the start of adulthood and that adult education should focus on the acquisition of skills, knowledge, self-actualization, and personal growth (Moran, 2001).

Cognitive development as a goal of adult education has received less attention due to the fact that a comprehensive account of adult cognitive development does not equal Piaget's account of development in children (Moran, 2001). On the other hand, others, such as Knowles and Mezirow, have expressed ideas that appear consistent with the idea of cognitive

development as a goal of adult learning (Merriam, 1987). Knowles (1980) examined learning activities that address the developmental tasks of adulthood and encourage learners to become independent thinkers. Within this viewpoint, the assumption is that adults should be encouraged to learn and think differently than children.

Mezirow, an advocate of transformational learning, believes that asking questions, discovering problems, and noting contradictions become the bases of learning for adults (Merriam, 1987). He further believes that these activities constitute distinct adult ways of thinking and should be promoted by the educational process. Mezirow (1985) believes that educators have a responsibility to help learners make explicit, elaborate assumptions upon which their performance, achievement, and productivity is based. Learning in adulthood is not just for adding to what we already know; it is for transforming existing knowledge into a new perspective (Mezirow, 1981). Ausubel (1968), a pioneer in the study of transformational or meaningful learning said, “Find out what a student knows and teach accordingly. Meaningful learning involves the acquisition of new meanings; and new meanings are the products of meaningful learning” (p. 37). In other words, the meaningful learning process maintains that expressed ideas are related in some fashion to what the learner already knows. According to Ausubel (1968), the excitement of learning occurs when new connections are made while pulling apart some old connections and making new ones. Meaningful learning results when it connects with what already exists in the mind of the learner (Ausubel, 1968).

Contributions to the learning theory from the social sciences include the teachings of Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic approach and Carl Jung’s holistic human consciousness approach (Knowles, 1973). Freud’s major contribution was identifying the influence of the subconscious mind on behavior. On the other hand, Jung advanced a more holistic

conception of human consciousness (Knowles, 1973). His idea was that the human possesses four functions or methods of extracting information from experience and achieving internalized understanding which are sensation, thought, emotion, and intuition. His plea for the development and utilization of all four functions in balance provided the groundwork for the concepts of a balanced personality and a balanced curriculum (Knowles, 1973). Much research has been done on models and theories of adult learning indicating what is important for adults to learn; however, there is little evidence on measuring cognitive development as it relates to these theories.

Many scholars of adult education have dealt with the problem of learning by trying to adapt theories about child learning with differences in degree among adults (Knowles, 1973). Cyril Houle (1961) performed a study of in-depth interviews of a small sample of adults who were identified as continuing learners. His study was primarily designed to discover why adults engage in continuing education, but it also revealed some information on how they learn. He identified three categories in which the subjects could fit. The first category was the goal-oriented learner; those who use education to accomplish clear cut objectives. The second category was the activity-oriented learner; those who take part in learning, but without any connection except for the social contact. The last category was the learning-oriented learner; those who seek knowledge for its own sake. They are avid readers, join groups or classes for educational reasons, and make life decisions based on the potential for growth. Houle (1996) reports that education is fundamentally the same wherever and whenever it occurs, dealing with the nature of the learner, the goals sought, the social and physical milieu in which instruction occurs, and the techniques of learning or teaching used (p. 29-30).

Allen Tough (1971) continued these studies trying to determine how adult learners learn and what help they obtain for learning. Tough found that his subjects organized their learning efforts around projects defined as related episodes. In each episode more than half of the person's total motivation was to gain and retain knowledge and skill or to produce some other lasting change in his or her self. Tough was interested in determining what motivated adults to begin a learning project, and his conclusion was that the adult learner proceeds through several phases. The first phase is deciding to begin by setting a goal, seeking information, choosing the most appropriate knowledge and skill, and estimating the cost and benefits. The second phase is choosing a planner, which may be himself, an object (text), a learning consultant (instructor or counselor) or a group while working proactively and collaboratively. Finally, the learner engages in learning episodes using the critical elements of variety and richness of the resources, their availability, and the learner's skill in using them. These studies that relate to behaviorism, humanism, cognitivism, and socialism have contributed to the development of the adult learning theory or andragogy.

Adult education is a distinctive field of study. Andragogy, self-directed learning, and transformational learning have been promoted by adult educators interested in differentiating adult learning from the learning of children. One of the best known theories in adult education begins with the assumption that learning for an adult (andragogy) is basically different from learning for children (pedagogy). According to Knowles' (1975, 1980) theory of andragogy, as learners mature, they become increasingly self-directed. Knowles (1975) developed a five-step andragogical model of instruction based on self-directed learning that consists of diagnosing learning needs, formulating learning goals and objectives, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning

strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (p. 18). He further stressed that self-directed learning is not an isolated process and it often calls for collaboration and support among learners, teachers, resource people, and peers. The key distinction of this model is that the learner is viewed as a mutual partner in each step.

Adult education has been developed and studied by many educators and theorists. The purpose of adult education, which is to create a self-directed learner, has been proposed by educators for more than eighty years (Lindeman, 1926; Rogers, 1969; Knowles, 1975, 1980). Lindeman believed that adult education was a process and that the group was the primary method for connecting experience and social action (Imel, 1999). He further advocated the use of facilitation and discussion as part of the group process. Lindeman (1926) believed that adult learners should be involved at all stages in the teaching-learning process and be allowed to assume control for the evaluation of their learning. Malcolm Knowles (1980), influenced by the teachings of Lindeman and Carl Rogers, is generally credited with the term andragogy and defines it as the art and science of helping adults learn. Houle (1996) believed that andragogy is the most learner-centered of all patterns of adult educational programming. It has alerted educators that they should involve learners in as many aspects of their education as possible in a climate most conducive to learning (Houle, 1996, p. 30). According to Knowles (1980), andragogy is based on four critical assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners (p. 39). These assumptions are that as a person matures (1) his self-concept moves from a dependent personality to a more self-directing person; (2) he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that serves as a resource for learning; (3) his readiness to learn becomes oriented to the developmental tasks of his social roles; and (4) his time perspective changes from postponed application of

knowledge to immediacy of application and his orientation toward learning shifts from subject centeredness to problem centeredness (p. 39).

Using the research and teachings of the behaviorists, cognitivists, humanists, and adult learning studies, Cross (1983) developed a self-directed learning model to accommodate what is known about adult learners. Her model, Characteristics of Adults as Learners (CAL), was developed to distinguish differences between adults and children as learners and to suggest how teaching adults should differ (Cross, 1983). Some of the assumptions of andragogy can be incorporated in the model. For example, readiness (a function of the sociocultural/life phase) implies that educators should capitalize on the “teachable moments” (Cross, 1983). When adults can assume increasing responsibility for their learning activities, they have reached higher levels of developmental maturity; thereafter, their self-concept includes a perception of themselves as self-directing adults. Thus, the CAL model implies considering self-concept as a function of developmental growth rather than childhood versus adulthood. The role of the educator in the CAL model is that of a challenger: to help each individual develop to the highest possible level. Cross (1983) states, “The same educator might create a warm and accepting environment on the physiological dimension; a cooperative, adventuresome environment on the life-phase dimension; and a challenging environment for stimulating developmental growth on the developmental-stage dimension; the problem for implementation is that the same educator must consider all three dimensions at once for a diverse group of adult learners” (p. 240).

Clearly, the research literature describing the relationship between adult development and adult learning is in its early stages, but it is advanced enough to imply guidelines for promoting development through education. Moran (2001) presents a six step model for

promoting adult cognitive development as a goal of education. The first step is to identify an area for study that is within an appropriate domain for the learner. Second, learning activities are selected for their potential to promote development; providing the learner with a dilemma to solve. Third, the facilitator would provide instruction in formal and post-formal modes of thought. Fourth, the learner operates independently of the facilitator to gather information pertaining to the dilemma to allow the learner to promote new modes of thought. The fifth step is collaborative learning, which allows opportunities for the learner to comprehend the need for post-formal modes of thought. Sixth, the learning activities would be managed so that the learners would frequently re-think their efforts in order to become more proficient, post-formal thinkers. According to Knowles (1980), having the learner select the topic of study, gather information, and suggest a resolution to a problem in their area of expertise are quintessential elements of self-directed learning.

The major learning theories and concepts of adult learning represent the background for the development of the most prominent learning theory today, which is constructivism. According to Cross (1998), constructivism provides the foundation for the current forms of learning that are labeled as “student-centered” and “learner-centered”, wherein the learning activity is moved away from teacher authority toward student construction of knowledge. The research and teachings of Piaget (1966), Vygotsky (1978, 1987), and Dewey (1966) helped to shape learner-centered education into constructivism. Constructivism contends that to learn anything, each learner must construct his or her own understanding by tying new information to prior experiences. According to Glaserfeld (1995a), constructivism is a way of thinking about knowledge and the act of knowing. There are two facets of the constructivist model that help to establish the fact the learning is a constructive activity (Glaserfeld, 1996).

First, meaning is constructed from knowledge provided through an environment of curricula, textbooks, didactic props, and teachers. However, students perceive their environments in ways that may be very different from the educators. Second, the notion that conceptual knowledge can be transferred from teacher to student by the use of words does not allow for the transport of meanings or concepts. Therefore, the task of the educator is not to dispense knowledge but to provide students with opportunities and incentives to build knowledge (Glaserfeld, 1996).

The fact that knowledge has an adaptive function is the key idea that sets constructivism apart from other theories of cognition, and that idea was started about 60 years ago by Jean Piaget (Glaserfeld, 1996). Piaget's theory states that what we see, hear, and feel is the result of our own perceptual activities and that knowledge arises from actions and the agents' reflections on them. The actions take place in an environment and are grounded in and directed at objects that constitute the persons' experiential world (Glaserfeld, 1996). The interaction of knowledge, action, and reflection deals with previously constructed perceptual and conceptual structures related to a cognitive subject. From Piaget's point of view in the constructivist model, environment has two distinct meanings (Glaserfeld, 1996). The first meaning occurs when we speak of ourselves. At that moment the environment refers to the totality of permanent objects and their relations that we have abstracted from our experience. The second meaning occurs when we focus our attention on a particular item. At that moment, the environment refers to the surroundings of the item and we tend to forget that both the item and its surroundings are parts of our own experiential world. According to Glaserfeld (1996), this distinction is crucial if teaching and education is to be considered from the constructivist position.

Piaget, a nontraditional philosopher, was not the first to suggest that we construct our concepts and our world, but no thinker before him had taken a developmental approach (Glaserfeld, 1995b). To Glaserfeld (1995b) it seems obvious that the best and perhaps only way to find out how knowledge is built up is to observe how children do it. However, for traditional philosophers, this is committing an unforgivable sin because to justify knowledge through its development rather than by a timeless logic is what they term a “genetic fallacy” (Glaserfeld, 1995b, p. 13). While most of Piaget’s work was based on the study of children, his main focus was on the learner as an individual (Henson, 2003). His work consisted mainly of giving his students problems to solve, not written problems, but problems that encouraged them to manipulate concrete objects. He watched the ways they manipulated the objects, made assumptions, and drew right or wrong conclusions about the objects (Henson, 2003).

Elaborating on the works of Piaget, Glaserfeld (1995a, 1996) has particularly focused on individual self-regulation and the building of conceptual structures through reflection and abstraction. According to Glaserfeld (1995a, 1996), “authentic learning” depends on seeing a problem as one’s own problem and as an obstacle that obstructs one’s progress toward a goal. It starts from the assumption that knowledge, no matter how it be defined, is in the heads of persons, and that the thinking subject has no alternative but to construct what he or she knows on the basis of his or her own experience (Glaserfeld, 1995b). In other words, when we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. This way of thinking makes us active creators of our own knowledge. In the classroom, this may mean encouraging the students to use more active techniques such as experiments, case

studies or real-world problem solving. According to Glaserfeld (1995b), students will be more motivated to learn something if they can see why it would be useful to know it. To put it simply, radical constructivism has little to do with the traffic of knowledge, but rather it fosters the art of learning (Glaserfeld, 1995b).

Educational theories provide a conceptual framework for us to explain how and why we learn and are based on beliefs that each theorist proposes. The sociocultural theory or the Zone of Proximal Development of Lev Vygotsky (1978) was developed by exploring how students construct meaning. Vygotsky (1978) believed that developmental learning was achieved through both spontaneous and scientific concepts. The spontaneous concepts are those that the child develops naturally in the process of construction whereas scientific concepts originate in the structured activity of classroom instruction. In his zone of proximal development, Vygotsky (1978) proposed that scientific concepts work their way down imposing their logic on the child and that spontaneous concepts work their way up meeting the scientific concept, thus allowing the learner to accept its logic. Within this zone, the teacher acts as a facilitator activating the learner's zone when he/she teach concepts just above the student's current skill and knowledge level, thus motivating them to excel. The group is vital to the learning process for all initiates who learn from more knowledgeable peers and adults through the construction and transfer of language. Through this process, the learner constructs knowledge using prior experiences, mental structures, and beliefs. According to Jaramillo (1996), in order to learn concepts, the learner must experience them and socially negotiate their meaning in the authentic context of the learning environment through active, hands-on activities structured just above their current level of competence.

Constructivism was further supported by the earlier concepts of John Dewey's progressive education. In his works, he recognized the psychological and social dimensions of children indicating that education must begin with understanding how the child's capabilities, interests, and habits can be directed to help them succeed in the community (Henson, 2003). In other words, the goal of education should be the growth of the child in all aspects of their life. He urged educators to think of education as "development from within" because learners must actively construct their own knowledge (Dewey, 1966). Dewey believed that a child could only develop their potential in a social setting with experiences that are both problem-based and fun (Henson, 2003). Learning is best accomplished through experience; therefore subject matter of education should consist of the meanings which supply content to existing social life (Dewey, 1966). Many of these meanings are then contributed to present activity by past collective experience. According to Dewey (1966), "if you give a student something to do, not something to learn, the doing requires thinking or making connections, and then learning naturally results" (p.154). Each new experience should come from within each individual learner leaving them motivated to seek new information about the topic. This is otherwise known as incremental experience (Dewey, 1966). Constructivism contends that for learning to occur in the classroom, the experience of the learner must be considered (Shapiro, 1994). Constructivist teaching focuses on learner's views and new ways of thinking about things, for it is the learner who must integrate new ideas into his or her own thinking (Shapiro, 1994). In order to accomplish this new way of thinking, learners must become active agents in their own learning.

Constructivism research includes learning environments where knowledge is constructed and meaning is created (Shapiro, 1994; Spivey, 1997; Vygotsky, 1962). In order

to accomplish this construction of knowledge, students must become active learners who are collaboratively involved in their own learning as they bring with them individual experience and creative inquiry (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Dewey, 1966; Glaserfeld, 1995b; Johnson et al., 1991; Marlowe & Page, 1998; O'Banion, 1997a; Spivey, 1997; Terenzini, 1992).

Constructivist teaching practices help learners to internalize, reshape, or transform new information (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). Transformation occurs through the creation of new understandings. In the constructivist approach, learning occurs not from what students can repeat, but from what they can generate, demonstrate, and exhibit. Therefore, deep understanding, not imitative behavior is the goal. Deep understanding occurs when the presence of new information prompts the emergence or enhancement of cognitive structures that enable students to rethink prior ideas (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. 15).

The main proposition of constructivism is that learning means constructing, creating, inventing, and developing our own knowledge (Marlowe & Page, 1998). Constructivism focuses on in-depth understanding, not regurgitating and repeating back and on being active, not passive learners (Marlowe & Page, 1998). In a constructivist classroom, a teacher does not stand and deliver most or even much of the content. According to Marlowe and Page (1998), “the student uncovers, discovers, and reflects on content and their reflections of content through inquiry, investigation, research, and analysis in the context of a problem, critical question, issue, or theme” (p. 11). Through this process, students are encouraged to develop their critical thinking abilities.

Constructivism provides the foundation for the development of the Learning College concept that continues to be promoted in higher education during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the Learning Paradigm, Barr and Tagg (1995) identify key aspects of learning theory that relate

to constructivism: (1) knowledge exists in each person's mind and is shaped by individual experience; (2) knowledge is constructed and created; (3) learning is student centered and controlled; (4) an active learner is required; and (5) learning environments and learning are cooperative, collaborative, and supportive. According to Barr and Tagg (1995), "the learning paradigm frames learning holistically, recognizing that the chief agent in the process is the learner" (p, 21). Students become active discoverers and constructors of their own knowledge in learning environments that are designed to promote activities that are learner-centered and learner-controlled. When the classroom environment is organized so that student-to-student interaction is encouraged, cooperation is valued, assignments and material are interdisciplinary, and the students' freedom to chase their own ideas is abundant.

Furthermore, students are more likely to take risks and approach assignments with a willingness to accept challenges to their current understanding (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

Constructivism implies building or constructing knowledge with each learner constructing meaning as he or she learns. In order to construct this meaning, the learner has to be engaged in some form of active learning activity and be able to relate it to previously learned information. According to Marlowe and Page (1998), "active learning is guaranteed to expand the brain. Constructivist theory proposes that: students learn more when they are actively engaged in their own learning; students build their own knowledge structures by investigating, discovering, creating, and interacting with the environment; students develop an ability to think critically and to solve problems when actively engaged; and students learn content and process at the same time through an active learning approach" (p. 16).

Constructivism further requires that the teacher function in the role of a facilitator to plan and guide the learning activity. In the constructivist view, the teacher's responsibility is to create

educational environments that allow students to assume responsibility for their own learning (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. 49). The teacher's ability to foster collegial interaction among students, to mediate the emergence of relevance, and to match curricular questions to the student's present beliefs encourage the student to search for understanding (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. 58).

The current Learning College concept clearly reflects the teachings of constructivism and is based on several propositions: that students need to be engaged, active learners; that teachers need to be facilitators of the learning environment and learning activities; that learning activities need to be structured using interactive, collaborative groups; and that students need to be able to relate previous experience to current knowledge (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Marlowe & Page, 1993; Shapiro, 1994; Spivey, 1997).

Because community colleges today are faced with overwhelming challenges - globalization; demands from industry; and a very diverse mix of students - their leaders continue to search for the next management technique to help address the challenges. The Learning College concept is viewed as the current leading solution for dealing with these challenges.

Therefore, this study will investigate the effectiveness of the implementation process of the Learning College in order to determine whether it will become a lasting innovation or just another passing fad.

### **Conclusion**

This review of the literature provides an in-depth review of the challenges and concerns relating to students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through an examination of organizational culture, leadership, and change, it is evident that leadership in an organization plays a pivotal role for managing change. Key leadership components stem from both the teachings of

transformational leadership (Baker, 1998; Barber, 1992; Bass, 1985; Roueche, et al, 1989) and exemplary leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). An assumption is made by the researcher that some of these key components were in place as Isothermal Community College began the journey toward becoming a Learning College. Along with a background of stable leadership, the concepts of collaboration, shared vision, excellence, recognition, and engagement of employees served to begin the development phases of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College.

The focus of this study is to determine whether the Learning College concept has been implemented in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming just another academic management fad. The manner in which change is introduced and implemented can help to determine whether it will last as an innovation or become the next academic management fad. Therefore, through the framework of the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads by Birnbaum (2000), this study will relate the implementation of the Learning College concept to these life cycle stages as Isothermal Community College proceeds with a transformation toward becoming a Learning College.

Numerous studies have been presented which relate to the ever-changing student population, especially in community colleges. Through legislative mandates and industry demands, community colleges are pressed to deliver positive student outcomes (Baker, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The issue of student retention relates back to the changing student population and to the challenges associated in working with under-prepared students. Furthermore, studies of the at-risk and minority students provide evidence of the challenges that face community colleges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Learning College concept was

established as one attempt to meet the challenges and concerns associated with the increasing numbers of at-risk, minority, non-traditional, and under-prepared students.

This literature review, through the examination of behaviorism, humanism, cognitivism, socialism, and andragogy, demonstrates the development of constructivism. Constructivism, the most prominent learning theory known today, serves as the basis for the development of the teachings associated the current Learning College concept. These teachings include: active learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Cross, 1998; Dewey, 1966; Glaserfeld, 1995b; Johnson et al, 1991; Knowles, 1980; Marlowe & Page, 1998; Moran, 2001; O'Banion, 1997a; Spivey, 1997; Terenzini, 1992); facilitation (Glaserfeld, 1995b; Rogers, 1983); application and transformation of knowledge (Ausubel, 1968; Knowles, 1975, 1980; Mezirow, 1985); collaborative learning through group activities Lindeman, 1926; Vygotsky, 1978); experiential learning (Dewey, 1966; Henson, 2003); self-directed learning (Cross, 1983) and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975, 1980).

Clearly, community colleges have a difficult and challenging road ahead. Responding to the diverse populations of students and their special needs, and the global demands of industry will cause community colleges to re-examine their own policies and practices. This in turn will cause their leaders to look for new and innovative practices for dealing with the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, the Learning College concept is the current innovation being implemented throughout numerous institutions of higher education in the United States as an attempt to address these challenges and improve student learning.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Introduction to the Research Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to understand the effectiveness of the implementation process through faculty perceptions of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College as related to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. Understanding the implementation process of the Learning College concept will help to determine if it has been implemented in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming another academic management fad. This chapter outlines the research methodology as follows: (a) introduction (b) Isothermal Community College, (c) research design, (d) site and sample selection, (e) data collection, (f) data management, (g) data analysis, (h) the investigative plan/timeline, and (i) conclusion.

#### **Introduction**

Community colleges continue to be faced with the challenges of diverse populations, under-prepared students, economic demands for skilled workers, and demands for increased accountability (Boswell, 2002; Bellanca, 2002; Forde, 2002, 2003; Levin, 2002; Martin & Flynn, 2003; McGrath & Spear, 1991; Miles, 2002; Milliron, 2002; Phillippe, 1995; Roueche, Roueche, & Johnson, 2002; Templin, 2002; Vaughan, 2000). Implementing the Learning College concept is one strategy to meet these challenges and demands. For the implementation of the Learning College concept to become a profound change, the institution must embed the concepts into its institutional policies and practices. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the effectiveness of the implementation process through faculty perceptions of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College as related to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads.

Understanding this process will help to determine if it has been implemented in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming the next academic management fad.

### **Isothermal Community College**

Isothermal Community College, a member of the North Carolina Community College System, is a comprehensive, two-year, open-door, public institution that primarily serves individuals in Rutherford and Polk Counties. The college offers individual courses and certificate, diploma, and degree programs that enable students to transfer to four-year institutions or to acquire skills for new or continued employment. The college further provides training for area business and industry, personal enrichment courses, remedial and developmental educational courses, and community service activities.

The college was chartered on October 1, 1964, and began operation with 66 students, some of whom received the first diplomas awarded. Under the leadership of only three presidents in 40 years, the college has grown tremendously in facilities, students, and programs. The college in 2004 serves an equivalent of about 1,600 full-time credit students, offering 545 credit classes leading toward 41 certificate, diploma, and/or degree programs.

According to 2003 data, 51 percent of students attend part-time, 64 percent are female, 57 percent are 29 or younger, and 93 percent reside in the service area. The distribution of ethnic and minority students includes: two-tenths of one percent Asian; 14 percent black; one and three tenths percent Hispanic; three-tenths percent American Indian; one percent other; and 83 percent white. A survey of Isothermal Community College students assessed why students leave early and listed the top reasons that students do not obtain their goals. These reasons are work conflicts, finances, family circumstances, and personal reasons. Further information regarding Isothermal Community College students was

obtained from the records of performance measures which are mandated by the North Carolina Community College System. In 2003, 69 percent of the students received passing grades in developmental courses, and the college had a 71 percent student retention rate.

Isothermal Community College has been involved in the implementation of the Learning College concept since March 1996. With the help of outside consultants and expertise within the college, the concepts of the Learning College are becoming an increasing part of the routines of the college for faculty, staff, and administration. Faculty and administrators are involved in learning team activities and workshops throughout each year. Student participation through cooperative learning groups and learning communities is increasing each year.

### **Research Design**

This qualitative study will be conducted in an exploratory manner using a descriptive case study design. According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), a case study is conducted to shed light on a phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon is the Learning College concept, the case is Isothermal Community College, the focus is faculty perceptions of the implementation of the Learning College concept, and the unit of analysis is the faculty at Isothermal Community College. The purpose of this study is to understand through faculty perceptions the outcomes of the implementation process of the Learning College concept as it relates to the life cycles of management fads. Has the Learning College concept been implemented in such a manner as to prevent it from becoming the next academic management fad?

Many colleges and universities are implementing the Learning College concept (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Boggs, 1995-1996; O'Banion, 1997a) but there are no consistent methods for

implementation. Some placed more emphasis on developing a vision, while others placed more emphasis on technology. All of the institutions created teams, but none of them were structured exactly the same. Therefore, I chose only to examine the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College because comparing it to another college would not provide the comparable and controlled outcomes needed for a verifiable study.

The role of the researcher is pivotal to the success of any qualitative study. According to Marshall and Rossman, “The researcher must develop roles that ease entry, facilitate receptivity of environments and participants, and offer rewards or benefits of some sort to motivate participant’s cooperation” (1989, p.63). Formal entry has been obtained through visits to the President of Isothermal Community College to explain the study as proposed. The President has provided a permission letter to proceed with the study. As the study progresses and the researcher moves around in various settings throughout the organization, further issues relating to entry may arise (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The researcher will address any further issues of entry with the leadership of the college as new issues occur throughout the study.

The researcher, an employee of the facility for 11 years, has served in numerous capacities with faculty and administrators throughout the campus. The researcher has previously served as both a member and president of the Isothermal Community College faculty senate as well as a member on numerous other interdepartmental committees at Isothermal Community College. The researcher also served as one of three initial participants in the Hewlitt Initiative, one of the first Isothermal Community College initiatives toward becoming a Learning College. Although, the researcher does not know each faculty on a

personal basis, the researcher knows them on a collegial basis by name and position of employment. It is anticipated that the researcher's previous contacts with other faculty will help to provide an environment of cooperation, trust, openness, and acceptance.

Furthermore, the researcher has been a registered nurse for 27 years and has spent many hours interviewing patients, which should assist the researcher during the interview process. Participation by faculty in the study will be voluntary, especially since it requires extra time and a change in routines for persons involved (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Participants in the study will be sent a letter explaining the study and requesting their participation in the study. The letter will further include a detailed description of the purpose of the research, who will be involved, and how the data will be managed. In addition, the aspect of reciprocity will be addressed by offering a copy of the results of the study to each participant once the study is published. Because interviews will be conducted, anonymity cannot be provided, but confidentiality of the responses will be maintained throughout data reporting.

### **Site and Sample Selection**

The site and sample selection chosen for this study was done through purposive sampling consistent with scholarship on qualitative research (Berg, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Mason, 1996; Maxwell, 1996). According to Mason (1996) theoretical or purposive sampling is concerned with constructing a sample that is meaningful theoretically, because it builds in certain criteria that help to develop and test your theory or explanation. The site chosen for this study is a small, rural community college that has been in the implementation phase of the Learning College concept for eight years. Only one site was chosen because this study is not attempting to make comparisons, but rather seeks to

understand a process. As an employee of the facility, the researcher is attempting to understand if the Learning College concept has been incorporated throughout the college in its policies, procedures, and practices.

Faculty, with various years of employment were chosen as the main participants in this study because of their close involvement with students and the leadership of the college, and their participation in most aspects of the implementation of the Learning College concept. According to Birnbaum (2000), a change in higher education should be measured not from the top of the organization as in business, but from the bottom; innovation is not institutionalized in the hierarchical structure of colleges and universities as much as in the work of academic departments. Therefore, through faculty perceptions, the researcher is attempting to develop explanations that provide a detailed scrutiny of how the Learning College concept has been implemented through the evaluation of several contexts. The contexts for this study are: (1) college policies, procedures, and practices; (2) team involvement; and (3) classroom techniques.

According to Mason (1996) purposive samples are created to constitute a range of the units chosen in order to allow for data generation to explore processes and their similarities or differences. Based on this description, the faculty chosen will represent a range that reflects the number of years involved in the implementation process – from newly hired faculty up to faculty that have been involved in all eight years of the process. Only full-time faculty at Isothermal Community College will be considered for the sample, since not all part-time faculty are involved as deeply in the process. The college is divided into four main faculty divisions: Applied Sciences and Technology; Arts and Sciences; Business Sciences;

and Developmental Education and Academic Support. Based on the employment records, a representative sample will be obtained from each division.

From the qualitative literature, there seems to be no fixed number of participants to include in the sample (Berg, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Mason, 1996; Maxwell, 1996). “It depends only on what a meaningful set of comparisons would look like in relation to the research project, research questions, intellectual puzzle or context, and the kind of explanation you are striving to produce” (Mason, 1996, p. 98). Therefore, the researcher has decided that the sample size will include all 60 full-time faculty employed at Isothermal community College. All 60 of the full-time faculty will be requested to participate in the completion of a questionnaire, and 12 of the faculty will be selected by a stratified random sample to participate in an interview. Part of the rationale for the stratified random sample is to understand the different perceptions from each group based on their level of involvement. Another rationale is to understand the level of involvement and level of understanding of newly hired faculty members. Sample size for the interviews will need to be re-evaluated and/or increased until the responses obtained become redundant. According to Mason (1996), sampling is done until the point of “theory-saturation” is reached; that is, until the researcher knows that he or she has a picture of what is going on and can generate an appropriate explanation for it (p. 97).

### **Data Collection**

Qualitative studies often include a variety of field notes, document analysis, interviews, observations, questionnaires, and conversations (Berg, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Mason, 1996; Maxwell, 1996). For this study, I have chosen three methods: document analysis; a questionnaire that is completed by each full-time faculty; and an

interview that is conducted with selected full-time faculty. Both the questionnaire and the interview questions were developed using information obtained through the review of the literature. The use of multiple methods reflects what the qualitative literature references as triangulation. Triangulation is methodological in that it uses different methods to corroborate findings (Mason, 1996). Therefore, documents will be reviewed for policy and procedure changes (see appendix A), a questionnaire was devised for simple yes or no responses with brief comments (see appendix B), and interview questions were created to include questions that require more in-depth responses (see appendix C).

The process involves three phases: document analysis; questionnaire completion; and a qualitative interview. First, several documents will be reviewed to evaluate if policies, procedures, and practices have been changed to include the Learning College concept. These documents will include, but not be limited to: the college mission vision statement; the advancement of a Learning College timeline for Isothermal Community college; the Learning College Primer; the Community of Learners Brochure; the learning team's membership lists; the assessment plan; and the technology plan. The minutes of team minutes will also be reviewed for their purpose, goals, and interaction between teams and the leadership team.

Second, a letter requesting the participation of the faculty in this study, along with an informed consent to participate form will be mailed to each full-time faculty. The participants will be asked to sign a form indicating their agreement to participate. When the researcher has received acceptance responses from invited participants, a questionnaire will be mailed to the participants. A questionnaire will be mailed to each participant along with a cover letter explaining the study, time frame for returning the questionnaire, and information about the

interview. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), in deciding to administer a questionnaire, researchers make one critical assumption that the characteristic or belief can be described or measured accurately through self-report. Participants will be asked to complete the questionnaires before the interviews are conducted. This is to allow the researcher time to review the questionnaire responses to see if further clarification on any of the questions is needed. If so, this can be done during the interview process.

Third, a qualitative interview will be conducted with each participant. According to Mason (1996), qualitative interviews are “conversations with a purpose” (p. 43). The interview will last approximately one hour. The date, time, and place of the interview will be negotiated with the interviewee. Faculty schedules can be very demanding, so it is necessary to arrange the interview so that it does not conflict with other responsibilities. During the interview, the researcher will be listening, responding to the interviewee, taking notes, and audio-taping the session. The session will be audio-taped to use as a comparison to the notes taken. Furthermore, the audio-taped session will be transcribed to a hard document to assist in the comparison process. Interviews provide a method for obtaining large amounts of data quickly and allow for immediate follow-up and clarification (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Although a set of questions has been created, the researcher retains the flexibility to refine them to some degree as the interviews proceed.

### **Data Management**

The Learning College concept is a type of profound change that has been implemented at Isothermal Community College. Senge et al. (1999) identified numerous strategies for meeting profound change. Acknowledging the challenges and incorporating the strategies identified will help to prevent the management innovation from becoming the next

fad. Therefore, the data management of this study will study the implementation process through faculty perceptions to identify strategies and outcomes that have been implemented toward the development of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College.

Data management is an ongoing process and will be conducted daily during the investigation process. Each type of data will be thoroughly analyzed to identify codable topics, themes, and issues (Berg, 1989). A cross-sectional indexing system will be used for managing the data. According to Mason (1996), cross-sectional indexing of data involves devising a consistent system for indexing the whole of a data set according to categories. The researcher needs to make sure that the categorization process will produce the right kinds of data slices from the data set (Mason, 1996). Indexing categories should be developed through the process of interaction between the purpose of the study, the research questions used, and the data obtained (Mason, 1996). This indexing system of categorizing the data should reflect the research questions created for the study (Mason, 1996). The data for this study will be organized according to the five stages of the life cycle of academic management fads, levels of faculty employment, levels of faculty teaching experience, and themes generated from questionnaire and interview comments.

The management of data will include assigning a number to each participant. This number will be placed on each corresponding document (questionnaire, transcribed interview, or field notes). As each document is reviewed and categorized, the number, type of document, and the relating comments will be listed on the categorization sheets. These sheets will then be analyzed for both similar and dissimilar recurring patterns and themes (Berg, 1989). In addition, the document reviews will be named and numbered with identification themes placed on the categorization sheets.

Many qualitative researchers make readings of their data in three ways: literally; interpretively; and reflexively (Mason, 1996). Reading literally means to examine their literal form, context, structure, style, and layout. The researcher will monitor words and languages, the sequences of interactions, the form and structure of the dialogue, and the literal content of the interview transcripts in this study (Mason, 1996). With document analysis, the researcher will be interested in literally “what is there” (Mason, 1996). An interpretive reading of the data will involve constructing or documenting what the data means or what can be inferred from the data (Mason, 1996). Because the researcher has been involved in the implementation process as an employee, a reflexive reading of the data will be performed. A reflexive reading will place the researcher as part of the data generated and seek to explore the researchers’ role in the process of generation and interpretation of data (Mason, 1996). Furthermore, the researcher will be considered a participant observer and will maintain a journal throughout the entire data gathering process.

### **Data Analysis**

Producing a convincing argument or explanation of results includes a successful presentation and dissemination of the data analysis (Mason, 1996). Social explanations or arguments can be performed through comparing, developing, tracing, describing, predicting, and theorizing (Mason, 1996). Because this study is attempting to understand a process of institutional change, the explanation used for this study will be one of description. According to Mason (1996), a descriptive explanation may involve an explanatory account of what is going on in a particular social location or process. Mason (1996) further warns that if this descriptive focus is chosen, the researcher must be clear about which “hooks” or “pegs” the description will hang on (p. 137).

This descriptive analysis will attempt to describe how faculty perceptions relate to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads during the implementation process of the Learning College at Isothermal Community College. Further analysis of the data will require an examination of the data slices to determine relevance to the descriptive explanation – is it integral to, or constitutive of the explanation (Mason, 1996). Data obtained will be assembled according to how it supports the descriptive explanation.

Data analysis will further include the areas of: (1) reliability and accuracy of method; (2) validity of data, and (3) generalizability of data (Mason, 1996). Reliability is sometimes measured by observing the consistency with which the same methods of data collection produce the same results (Mason, 1996). Reliability further looks at how reliable, accurate, and precise the research tools are and by the consistency with which the instruments can produce certain measurements (Mason, 1996). With qualitative research, data generated does not take the form of a clearly standardized set of measurement, so the researcher cannot perform simple reliability tests (Mason, 1996). Therefore, the researcher must provide an account of exactly how the degree of reliability and accuracy was achieved or that the research claims to provide (Mason, 1996).

With this study, the researcher will demonstrate reliability through the use of criteria of selection. Berg (1989) describes criteria of selection as an explicit rule for an objective analysis of messages that is formally established before the actual analysis of data is performed. This objective analysis accounts for each variation of message content and is rigidly and consistently applied so that other researchers looking at the same messages would obtain comparable results (Berg, 1989). The categories that emerge should reflect the various messages and retain, if possible, the exact wording used in the statements themselves. In this

manner, analysis criteria are connected to the data and are not merely an arbitrary or superficial application of irrelevant categories (Berg, 1989). For each of the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads, a criteria of selection will be developed to allow for consistency of content analysis.

Included in the area of reliability is the issue of accuracy of method. This is accomplished by observing the consistency through which the same methods of data collection produce the same results (Mason, 1996). Reliability is therefore conceptualized in terms of how reliable, accurate, and precise the research tools are and is in turn judged by the consistency with which the known instruments produce certain measurements (Mason, 1996). The accuracy of method will be monitored during the interview process where questions will be modified as new themes or concepts arise. According to Marshall and Rossman (1989), qualitative research demands flexibility in the overall design so that site and sample selection can respond to increasingly refined research questions. Since relevant concepts are most likely developed during the research process, research proposals can only suggest possible themes and foci (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

The second area of data analysis involves the validity of data. Judgments of validity are judgments about whether the researcher is measuring or explaining what he/she claims to be measuring or explaining (Mason, 1996). Validity of method and analysis should be performed in at least two areas: validity of data generation methods and validity of interpretation (Mason, 1996). The first area is validity of data generation methods in relation to what the data sources and generation methods can tell the researcher. This was attempted through the design of the three methods of data collection (document analysis, interviews, and questionnaires) for this study. In the development phase of the design of this study, it

was determined by the researcher what questions would best be addressed and by which method. Items that required an in-depth response were identified as interview questions, where as items that required a simple yes or no or minimal response, were identified as questions for the questionnaire. Further, in areas where it was necessary to identify where a strategy was implemented into policy or procedure, document analysis was decided.

The second step is to determine how well matched the logic of the method is to the kinds of research questions asked and to the kind of social explanation the researcher is intending to develop (Mason, 1996). As a qualitative researcher, it is the intent of this research to pursue an explanation from a detailed and close-up analysis of the implementation process of the Learning College concept. According to Mason (1996), if conducting interviews or analyzing documents, the researcher needs to reflect on how effectively these methods can illuminate the concepts in the study, but also to reflect on the capacity of the interviewee, the documents, or sets of questions to do the same. The participants in this study will be faculty members that represent various levels of involvement in the implementation process of the Learning College concept at ICC. Levels of involvement are significant because responses of participants with two years of involvement will most likely be different from those with eight years of involvement. This can provide a reflection of how well the concept has become embedded into the policies and practices of the institution. With document analysis and examination, the related strategy will either be there or not.

The second area of validity of method and analysis is validity of interpretation. This examines the validity of data analysis and the interpretation on which it is based (Mason, 1996). It is dependent on validity of method, since the interpretation cannot be valid unless

the methods or sources used have enabled the researcher to address the concepts in the research (Mason, 1996). Mason (1996) further states, “That validity of interpretation directs attention to the quality and rigor that the researcher has used to interpret and analyze the data in relation to the proposed study” (p. 149). The researcher will provide an explanation that will trace the route by which an interpretation was reached. The explanation will further describe how the researcher was able to interpret a piece of dialogue from an interview or a section of a document as reflecting upon a particular set of issues (Mason, 1996). Furthermore, the researcher will explain how the data sections have been woven together, through cross-sectional identification of how specific instances in the data reveal something about the social processes (Mason, 1996) as they relate to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads.

The final step in data analysis is generalizability. According to Marshall & Rossman (1989), a qualitative study’s transferability or generalizability to other settings can be problematic. However, the researcher can refer back to the original theoretical framework to show how data collection and analysis will be guided by concepts or models (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). In doing this, the researcher states the theoretical parameters in the research. According to Mason (1996), theoretical generalization is more productive to qualitative researchers. Theoretical generalization represents a range of strategies based on differing logics (Mason, 1996). One strategy the researcher can use is to compare the characteristics of the interviews, of settings, of documents, or whatever to the wider population in which they are drawn in order to identify some dimensions on which the study sample is atypical. Another strategy looks at analysis of processes in a specified setting that demonstrates that it is possible for such processes to work in a specified way.

“By establishing what is possible (this can happen) and having an explanation of how and why it happened in this setting (key explanatory factors) the researcher can try to widen the resonance of explanations by asking questions about the lessons for other settings” (Mason, 1996, p. 154). A third strategy includes producing an explanation of an extreme or pivotal case or set of processes in tandem with the sampling strategy. In this strategy, the researcher is attempting to generalize through a common thread which indicates that the researchers’ explanation sheds light on processes or issues that are pivotal or central to some wider body of knowledge (Mason, 1996). Whatever strategy is chosen, the researcher must be able to make some claims for generalizability of explanations based on the rigor of analysis (Mason, 1996). The researcher must be able to demonstrate reliability or accuracy of method and validity of method and interpretation in order to have anything meaningful to generalize (Mason, 1996, p. 154). Mason (1996) further explains that it is very important that numbers, aggregation and quantification be used in ways that are sensitive to the type and form of data, to the context of their productions, and ways to complement other methods of achieving theoretical generalizability. In most cases theoretical generalizations are supported by theoretical and strategic purposive sampling (Mason, 1996). Since this study is based purposive sampling, the researcher will attempt to present a case for theoretical generalization.

### **The Investigative Plan/Timeline**

This study will involve three phases: document analysis; interviews; and a questionnaire. The proposed time line for the data gathering of this study will span across five months. The document analysis will begin in November 2004. The request for participation letters and informed consent will be mailed in January 2005 along with

questionnaires to each of the 60 full-time faculty members. Faculty will be asked to return the questionnaires within two weeks. At that time, the researcher will follow-up with a phone call to the faculty not returning the questionnaire requesting their consent to participate. Interviews will begin in February 2005. The analysis and completion of the report will be conducted following the completion of the interviews.

### **Conclusion**

Through the design and methods outlined in this chapter, this study will follow the guidelines of qualitative research (Berg, 1989; Gall et al., 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Mason, 1996; Maxwell, 1996). This study is designed to obtain information from faculty perceptions and documents in an attempt to understand the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College. It is anticipated that information obtained from this study will contribute to a larger body of knowledge related to organizational change.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Data Description and Analysis**

The purpose of this study is to understand the implementation process of the Learning College concept as it relates to life cycles of academic management fads through faculty perceptions. Faculty perceptions are important since developmental needs are different among all faculty including the novice, mid-career, and senior faculty (Baldwin, 1984; Claxton & Murrell, 1984; McKeachie, 1983). Faculty careers evolve over time as faculty mature, gain experience, and revise their interests and professional objectives which challenge colleges and universities to assist college faculty to age successfully in their careers (Baldwin, 1984). This chapter presents an analysis of the research findings as follows: (a) cumulative faculty responses to the individual questionnaire items; (b) faculty responses to the individual questionnaire items based on years of employment at Isothermal Community College; (c) faculty responses to the individual questionnaire items based on years of teaching experience; (d) questionnaire themes based on faculty responses as related to Birnbaum's Life Cycle of Academic Management Fads; (e) interview themes based on faculty responses as related to Birnbaum's Life Cycle of Academic Management Fads; and (f) document analysis as related to the reflection of the Learning College concept throughout institutional policies and procedures. In addition to providing a comparison of faculty perceptions to Birnbaum's life cycle of academic management fads, the researcher will also provide a comparison of faculty perceptions based on developmental needs.

### **Research Questions**

This study is based on the following two research questions that address both faculty perceptions and relationship to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads.

### **Research Question One**

What are the faculty perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the implementation process of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College?

### **Research Question Two**

How does the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College relate to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads?

### **Respondent Characteristics**

Sixty full-time faculty were identified by the administration office at Isothermal Community College as of October 2004. This full-time faculty population (n = 60) reflected 62 % female, 38 % male, and 5 % minority. Useable data were retrieved from 49 full-time faculty, which provided an 82 % questionnaire response rate. In addition, the researcher examined the cumulative responses to the questionnaire statements based on years of employment at ICC and years of teaching experience. It was assumed that both of these criteria, employment and teaching experience, would provide varying faculty responses.

In addition to the questionnaire, 12 of the 60 faculty were selected to participate in an interview process. Interviewees were selected through a stratified random sampling process. In order to obtain a representative sample, the 60 faculty were placed in seven groups according to their years of employment at ICC. Then, using a table of random numbers, 12 faculty were chosen to participate in a one-hour interview process. The researcher was focused on the implementation process of the Learning College concept, which had been in process since 1996 at ICC. Therefore, it was assumed that faculty who had been employed longer than eight years could respond to the questions more knowledgeably than those employed less than eight years (see Figure 2). It was further assumed that the researcher

would obtain a more representative sample using this selection process. During the initial interviewee phone contacts, two of the selected faculty declined to participate. Therefore, the table of random numbers was utilized a second time in order to obtain input from the faculty as indicated in Figure 2.

Years of employment at Isothermal Community College	Number of faculty selected
Less than two months	1
One to two years	1
Three to five years	2
Six to nine years	2
Ten to twenty years	2
Twenty-one to thirty years	2
Thirty plus years	2

Figure 2 Faculty selection for the interview process. This process was based on years of employment at Isothermal Community College.

The majority of the faculty interviewees (67%) were chosen based on their employment status of six years or more at Isothermal Community College. The researcher assumed that this selection process provided a representative sample of the 60 full-time faculty based on employment status. Furthermore, the randomly chosen sample of interviewees (58 % female, 42% male, and 8% minority) reflected the previously mentioned faculty population (62 % female, 38 % male, and 5 % minority).

### **Responses to the Questionnaire by all Faculty Participants**

Upon the completion of data collection procedures and the construction of data analysis files, data analyses were completed as follows: (1) descriptive statistical analysis of the 49 faculty responses to the 40-item questionnaire, (2) identification of implementation themes based on faculty responses from both the questionnaire and the interviews, and (3) analysis of Isothermal Community College documents to examine the inclusion of the Learning College concepts in the policies and procedures of the institution.

In designing the questionnaire and the interview sessions, views of Birnbaum (2000a), Senge et al. (1999), and Rogers (1995) on fads and innovations, and Gibson et al. (1997), Schein (1996), and Tierney (1988) on culture change were especially considered. Participants were given an explicit choice: to participate or not to participate; 18 percent of the faculty chose the latter. To minimize any risk to participating faculty, limited information was sought as to their personal profiles. Confidentiality was assured throughout with only the researcher and the interview transcriptionist having access to the completed instruments.

The questionnaire had a Likert-scale format with a series of statements to indicate faculty perceptions toward the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College. The sample for participation in the questionnaire consisted of all full-time faculty at Isothermal Community College ( $n = 60$ ), whereas the sample for the interview process was determined through a randomly selected process designed to yield a predetermined representative number of faculty ( $n = 12$ ).

The discussion of the questionnaire findings is based on Birnbaum's life cycle of academic management fads (see Figure 3) and the cumulative responses of the faculty (see Table 1). The researcher chose to analyze the questionnaire responses first, through an overall review of faculty responses, and second, through a comparison of faculty responses to an instrument developed by the researcher from Birnbaum's life cycle of academic management fads. The first review of responses included an overall analysis of the faculty responses to the 40-item questionnaire statements. A comparison of the 40-item questionnaire item statements to Birnbaum's life cycle of academic management fads led to the following findings (see Figure 3).

Table 1

## Responses of 49 faculty to the Individual Questionnaire Items

Item	<u>Response</u>											
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>		<u>Not Applicable</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. A clear authentic, convincing rationale was presented.	16	32.65	27	55.10	1	2.04	2	4.08	0	0.0	3	6.12
2. The LC concept was promoted by administration to improve student outcomes.	22	45.83	22	45.83	1	2.08	2	4.17	0	0.0	1	2.08
3. I believe in the strategies of the LC concept.	22	44.90	23	46.94	4	8.16	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
4. I encourage students to understand the LC concept.	9	18.37	28	57.14	8	16.33	4	8.16	0	0.0	0	0.0
5. I have read about the LC in higher education institutions.	6	12.24	18	36.74	7	14.29	11	22.45	4	8.16	3	6.12
6. The LC was promoted as a new innovation in higher education.	13	27.08	21	43.75	9	18.75	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	10.42
7. The LC leaders present sound rationale about LC importance.	17	34.69	24	48.98	6	12.24	2	4.08	0	0.0	0	0.0
8. The LC was promoted as a way to address the changing student population.	6	12.50	20	41.67	10	20.83	8	16.67	2	4.17	0	4.17
9. I participated in planning the development of the LC concept.	7	14.29	10	20.41	6	12.24	11	22.45	6	12.24	9	18.37
10. I include LC terminology in my teaching practices.	8	16.33	28	57.14	9	18.37	4	8.16	0	0.0	0	0.0
11. I participated in the new vision mission statement for the LC.	9	18.37	10	20.41	5	10.20	9	18.37	7	14.29	9	18.37
12. The LC concept was presented to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems.	6	12.50	20	41.67	12	25.00	8	16.67	0	0.0	2	4.17
13. I received sufficient background on the LC concept.	12	24.49	21	42.86	10	20.41	6	12.24	0	0.0	0	0.0
14. The LC concepts are threaded throughout college policies and procedures.	18	36.74	23	46.94	7	14.29	1	2.04	0	0.0	0	0.0
15. ICC is experiencing a culture change with the LC concept.	8	16.33	20	40.82	14	28.57	5	10.20	0	0.0	2	4.08

Table 1 (continued)

16. The LC concept was driven the administration of ICC.	10	20.41	19	38.78	10	20.41	6	12.24	1	2.04	3	6.12
17. The benefits of the LC outweigh the costs incurred.	7	14.29	20	40.82	16	32.65	1	2.04	0	0.0	5	10.20
18. I have experienced problems with the LC concept.	3	6.12	11	22.45	7	14.29	23	46.94	5	10.20	0	0.0
19. I have experienced positive student outcomes with the LC concept.	10	20.41	26	53.06	11	22.45	1	2.04	0	0.0	1	2.04
20. I have knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the LC concept.	5	10.42	20	41.67	7	14.58	12	25.00	2	4.17	2	4.17
21. The LC concept was driven by the faculty of ICC.	7	14.58	18	37.50	12	25.00	6	12.50	0	0.0	5	10.42
22. I am familiar with the LC claims of success.	4	8.33	23	47.92	9	18.75	9	18.75	1	2.08	2	4.17
23. There is a learning crisis with students at ICC.	5	10.64	20	41.55	15	31.91	6	12.77	0	0.0	1	2.13
24. The LC concept was developed to improve the learning crisis at ICC.	2	4.17	15	31.25	19	39.58	7	14.58	1	2.68	4	8.33
25. Leaders of the LC concept are seen as carriers and coaches.	9	18.75	22	45.83	13	27.08	3	6.25	1	2.08	0	0.0
26. The LC concept was presented as a way to improve organizational processes and functions.	6	12.50	28	58.33	9	18.75	3	6.25	0	0.0	2	4.17
27. I have participated in all levels of the implementation process.	3	6.12	18	36.74	5	10.20	13	26.53	3	6.12	7	14.29
28. I believe that the LC concept can create the success claimed at ICC.	12	24.49	26	53.06	9	18.37	1	2.04	1	2.04	0	0.0
29. I am satisfied with the progress of the implementation of LC.	6	12.24	28	57.14	12	24.49	3	6.12	0	0.0	0	0.0
30. Employees of ICC have written articles affirming the LC concept.	8	16.33	20	40.82	17	34.69	1	2.04	0	0.0	3	6.12
31. There is published evidence of faculty satisfaction with the implementation of LC concept.	0	0.0	10	20.83	32	66.67	3	6.25	0	0.0	3	6.25
32. The LC concept has not produced the results as promised.	0	0.0	4	8.16	20	40.82	20	40.82	4	8.16	1	2.04
33. The LC concept will remain as a lasting innovation at ICC.	11	22.45	28	57.14	7	14.29	3	6.12	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 1 (continued)

34. I am still committed even though the LC concept has not produced the success claimed.	3	6.52	14	30.43	16	34.78	6	13.04	2	4.35	5	10.87
35. There is published evidence of improved student outcomes since the LC concept.	2	4.08	6	12.24	32	65.31	4	8.16	0	0.0	5	10.20
36. The LC concept was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence.	0	0.0	7	14.29	18	36.74	16	32.65	4	8.16	4	8.16
37. I have changed my teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities.	20	40.82	26	53.06	1	2.04	1	2.04	1	2.04	0	0.0
38. Employees of ICC have conducted state and national workshops about the LC.	17	34.69	23	46.94	7	14.29	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	4.08
39. The LC has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time to try and develop new teaching methods.	3	6.12	18	36.74	15	30.61	11	22.45	1	2.04	1	2.04
40. The LC concept at ICC is just another academic management fad.	0	0.0	5	10.20	15	30.61	13	26.53	16	32.65	0	0.0

Note: Several questions (2,6,8,12,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,31,34) included unmarked responses which left the total number of responses for that question less than 49. Totals do not always equal 100 because of rounding of numbers.

During the analysis, the researcher assumed that strongly agree responses would indicate a stronger level of support for the Learning College concept. However, there were only seven questions (1, 2, 3, 7, 14, 37, and 38) where approximately one-third or more of the participating faculty (16 or more faculty responses) strongly agreed. According to Birnbaum (2000) the new innovation should be presented in simplified, commonsensical terms and according to Senge et al. (1999) the new innovation should be presented in a clear and authentic manner. Three of the questionnaire items (#1, #2, and #7) examined the presentation and promotion of the Learning College concept. For questionnaire item # 1, the Learning College concept was perceived by the faculty (88 % agreement) to be presented in a clear, authentic, and convincing manner. The only strongly agree response with a comment

includes the following, “The concept was communicated convincingly and backed by research.” Other responses revealed that some faculty had previous knowledge and that there were numerous meetings and training sessions. For questionnaire item # 2, the Learning College concept was promoted to improve student outcomes, the faculty responded with a substantial 92 % agreement. However, there was an equal number of responses for both strongly agree (22 faculty or 46 %) and agree (22 faculty or 46 %). The written comments from faculty who strongly agreed indicated that the Learning College concept was a way to promote and improve student learning. In questionnaire item # 7, a sound rationale for the importance of the Learning College concept was endorsed by the faculty through an 84 % agreement, even though only 17 faculty (35 %) strongly agreed. Written comments from the faculty affirmed that the rationale was based on a book by Terry O’Banion, “A Learning College for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” In the very beginning of the implementation process, all faculty were given a copy of the O’Banion book; however, the new faculty did not receive a copy of the book.

Responses to the questionnaire items # 3 and # 37 indicate that the faculty affirmed the Learning College concept strategies and that they have changed their teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities. Faculty responded to questionnaire item # 3, I believe in the Learning College strategies, with a 92 % agreement, although there were only 22 faculty (45 %) who strongly agreed. Written comments from faculty who strongly agreed indicated that there was a focus on student learning and that many effective Learning College strategies can be used. Faculty responded to questionnaire item # 37, I have changed my teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities, with a substantial 94 % agreement or 46 of the faculty; however, only 20 of the faculty (41 %) strongly agreed.

Written comments from faculty who strongly agreed include the following: “These are just several new tools added to what I do;” and “I continually seek new ways to implement this concept in my class.”

Faculty responses for the last two questionnaire items (#14 and #38) further demonstrated their affirmation of the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 14, Learning College concepts are threaded throughout the policies and procedures, 41 of the faculty (84 %) were in agreement; however, only 18 of the faculty (37 %) were in strong agreement. Written faculty comments affirmed that the college has done an excellent job and that the Learning College concept is a campus-wide effort. The last questionnaire item # 38, employees of ICC have conducted state and national workshops regarding the Learning College concept, included an 82 % faculty agreement, although only 17 of the faculty (35 %) were in strong agreement. Written comments from faculty who strongly agreed include the following: “I have presented at the League of Innovation Conference;” and “Most recently at the NCCCC in October 2004.”

There were also nine questionnaire items (5, 9, 11, 18, 20, 27, 32, 36, and 40) where approximately one-third or more of the faculty were in disagreement. The first two items (# 5 and # 20) of disagreement examined faculty knowledge of the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 5, I have read about the Learning College in higher education institutions, 15 of the faculty (31 %) disagreed; however, only four of the faculty (8 %) strongly disagreed. Written faculty comments to support this disagreement include the following: “I have not read any literature aside from the primer that I was given when hired;” and “I have read about the concept, but not many case studies.” In questionnaire item # 20, I have knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the Learning College

concept, 13 of the faculty (29 %) disagreed; however, only two of the faculty (4 %) strongly disagreed. Written faculty comments to support this disagreement include the following: “I am not familiar with any, though I seem to remember some responses about other institutions in the past” and “I know of none locally that I have contact with.”

The next three items (# 9, # 11, and # 27) of disagreement examined planning and development of the Learning College concept. Faculty responses to questionnaire item # 9, I participated in the planning and development of the Learning College concept, affirmed that 17 of the faculty (35 %) disagreed; however, only 6 of the faculty (12 %) strongly disagreed. In questionnaire item # 11, I participated in the development of the new mission/vision statement, 16 of the faculty (33 %) disagreed; however, only seven of the faculty (14 %) strongly disagreed. In questionnaire item # 27, I participated in all levels of the implementation process, 16 of the faculty (33 %) disagreed; however, only three of the faculty (6 %) strongly disagreed. Written faculty comments that support this disagreement include the following: “I am not sure what the levels are;” “I have not been here very long;” and “Not all levels, but most levels.” Written comments from the faculty who disagreed to planning and development affirmed that they were not present at the beginning of the Learning College concept implementation.

The next questionnaire item (# 18) of disagreement examined whether or not faculty had experienced problems with the implementation of the Learning College concept. Twenty-eight of the faculty (57 %) disagreed to experiencing problems; however, only five of the faculty (10 %) strongly disagreed. In comparison, only 14 or 29 % of the faculty affirmed experiencing problems, while 46 of the faculty or 94 % affirmed that they have changed their teaching methods. Only one written faculty comment supported this

disagreement regarding experiencing problems, “I feel comfortable here and I think the college’s goals are reasonable.”

According to Birnbaum (2000a), most fads fail on their own terms, but leave remnants behind. Therefore, two of the questionnaire items (# 32 and #40) of disagreement reflect the success of the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 32, the Learning College concept has not produced the results as promised, 24 of the faculty (49 %) disagreed; however, only 4 of the faculty (8 %) strongly disagreed. While there were no written comments associated with the strongly disagreed responses, the written faculty comments to support this disagreement include the following: “We have made progress;” “It is too soon to expect all of the results” and “I think students have benefited a lot, but I do not know what we are claiming.” Twenty-nine of the faculty (60 %) disagreed that the Learning College would become a fad; however, only 16 of the faculty (33 %) strongly disagreed. Written comments from faculty who strongly disagreed include the following: “Based on feedback from students, I believe the Learning College is on target, not just a fad;” and “NEVER! It is a very good thing. It has helped our students and improved our work environment. I love coming to work at a place where everyone has the student’s learning as their number one priority. It involves much more than the classroom, it affects how we do business from the business office to the admissions office to the president’s office to the classroom and everywhere in between.” In questionnaire item # 36, the Learning College concept was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence, 20 of the faculty (41 %) disagreed; however, only four of the faculty (8 %) strongly disagreed. There was only one written comment to support the strongly disagree responses, “There were supportive data.” Written faculty comments that support this disagreement include the following: “Terry

O'Banion and others have had great success which was proven;" and "We have had speakers say stuff and I took them at their word."

There were also five questionnaire items (17, 24, 31, 32, and 35) that had a high percentage of undecided responses. According to the research on change, most change initiatives develop as a result of a crisis (Birnbaum, 2000a; Senge et al., 1999) or a strong shock from the environment (Gibson et al. 1997). Faculty responses to the questionnaire did not affirm that the Learning College concept was implemented based on a crisis. In questionnaire item # 24, the Learning College concept was developed to improve the learning crisis at ICC, 19 of the faculty (40 %) were undecided, even though 25 of the faculty (52 %) affirmed that there was a learning crisis among the students at ICC. Written faculty comments to support the undecided responses include the following: "Only in part, because it was implemented to help improve learning for all students;" and "This does give more students the capability of earning a degree."

The next two questionnaire items (#17 and #32) examine whether or not the results of the Learning College implementation have been successful and beneficial. In questionnaire item # 17, faculty were undecided (16 or 33 %) whether or not the benefits of the Learning College concept outweigh the costs incurred. Written faculty comments supporting the undecided responses included the following: "I am waiting to see the results;" "I think it is very beneficial, but it is difficult to see the economic benefits;" and "We cannot claim benefits until they are realized and they are determined to be the results of the Learning College initiative." In questionnaire item # 32, the Learning College concept has not produced the results as promised, 20 of the faculty (41 %) were undecided. Written faculty comments to support the undecided responses include the following: "It is too soon for me to

assess results;” and “I think students have benefited a lot, but I do not know what we are claiming.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), unavailable data allows the supporters and adopters to exaggerate claims of success. Therefore, the researcher sought to determine whether or not any data had been published to support the Learning College concept. Faculty responses to questionnaire item # 31, there is published evidence of faculty satisfaction with the implementation of the Learning College concept, affirmed that 32 of the faculty (67 %) were undecided. Written faculty comments to support the undecided responses include the following: “I do not know;” and “I believe there is, but I am not sure how it is published.” In questionnaire item # 35, there is published evidence of improved student outcomes with the Learning College concept, 32 of the faculty (65 %) were undecided. Written faculty comments to support the undecided responses include the following: “It is still relatively early to see results on a clear scale;” “We are still working on it;” “not systemic evidence;” and “I do not know what has been published.” If there is any published information about the success of the Learning College concept, most of the faculty did not affirm it.

According to Birnbaum (2000), there are five stages in the academic management fad cycle: (1) creation; (2) narrative evolution, (3) time lag; (4) narrative devolution; and (5) dissonance resolution. The first stage of the cycle, creation, begins with a crisis that exists in an organizational sector. A new technique is proposed to solve the problem and successful narratives of supporters and consultants announce it as a proven concept. The concept is presented in simplified terms with promises of extraordinary outcomes. Eleven statements on the questionnaire were designed to address the cycle of creation (see Figure 3). These eleven

statements addressed the areas of how the concept was presented and how it was promoted, as well as identifying the driving forces behind the change.

Birnbaum's Life Cycle of Academic Management Fads	Questionnaire statement numbers
Creation	1, 2, 7, 8, 12, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26
Narrative Evolution	5, 6, 13, 20, 22, 30, 36, 38
Time Lag	3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 27, 37
Narrative Devolution	17, 18, 19, 28, 29, 31, 35, 40
Dissonance Resolution	32, 33, 34, 39

Figure 3 A comparison of the 40-item questionnaire statements to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads.

The Learning College concept was perceived to have been presented by the administration of ICC in a clear, authentic, convincing manner (88 %), and it was presented by the leaders and promoters to improve student outcomes (92 %) and organizational processes and functions (71 %). In addition, 41 of the faculty (84 %) affirmed that the leaders presented a sound rationale for the importance of the Learning College concept and 31 of the faculty (65 %) saw leaders as carriers of new ideas and coaches who presented research findings. However, the faculty were unclear as to who was driving the Learning College implementation process at ICC (59 % chose administration, and 52 % chose faculty). Written faculty comments to support this indecision include the following: "It was driven by administration and faculty;" "It was not driven by administration, but assisted, directed, or supported by our administration;" "It was driven by faculty, but supported by administration;" and "It was faculty driven for the most part, although administration wanted it, too." Furthermore, six of the faculty (13 %) disagreed and 15 of the faculty (32 %) were undecided whether or not there was a learning crisis with students at ICC. Written faculty comments to support their indecision include the following: "It depends on how you define

crisis;” “I do not feel it is a crisis, just something to deal with;” “Replace learning crisis with problem, and I would agree;” “There are problems, but a crisis. That is a strong word;” “The majority of students should not be labeled as at-risk;” and “There is always a crisis with under-prepared and at-risk students. It simply changes with demographics and other affective factors.”

According to Birnbaum (2000) the second stage, narrative evolution, begins with elaborate narratives of successful implementation followed by consultants and adopters who declare this new technique to be highly effective through written articles and presentations. Eight questionnaire statements were developed to address this cycle. These eight statements addressed faculty knowledge of the Learning College concept, the success of the concept and its use in other institutions (see Figure 3). Faculty affirmed (43 or 71 %) that the Learning College concept was promoted as a new innovation in higher education, and that they received sufficient background information regarding the Learning College concept (33 of the faculty or 68 %). The faculty acknowledged that employees of ICC have conducted state and national workshops supporting the Learning College concept (40 of the faculty or 82 %). Faculty further indicated that employees of ICC have written articles affirming the LC concept (28 of the faculty or 57 %). Faculty comments supported that articles were written in the following publications: *The Mentor* (an ICC campus publication); and ERIC (a national database). However, there was less faculty agreement regarding knowledge about the Learning College concept (49 %), being familiar with the Learning College concept claims of success (56 %), and having knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the concept (52 %). Written faculty comments to support this level of agreement include: “I have read about the Learning College concept, but I have not read many case studies;”

“I have no personal knowledge of other institutions;” “I am vaguely familiar with the claims of success;” and “I am not sure, but I believe we are successful.”

The third stage of Birnbaum’s life cycle of academic management fads, time lag, appears to be the longest stage where much of the implementation and evaluation of the Learning College concept takes place. According to Birnbaum (2000), time lag, occurs between the creation and the dissemination of the new technique in which organizational members with vested interests provide stories of successful adoption without data to support the exaggerated claims or to advocate implementation. In addition, stories of previous unsuccessful innovations appear, new data surfaces, the innovation peaks, and the pace of new adopters slow down. Nine statements on the questionnaire were designed to address this cycle (see Figure 3). These nine statements addressed the areas of planning and development, classroom use of the strategies, and published evidence.

Faculty affirmed the Learning College strategies (92 %) and that they have changed their teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities (96 %). The faculty acknowledged that they encouraged students to understand the Learning College concept (75 %) and that they included the Learning College terminology in their teaching practices (74 %). Furthermore, the faculty affirmed that the Learning College concepts were threaded throughout the college policies and procedures (84 %).

There was low faculty agreement in the three areas of planning and development: (1) participation in planning the development of the Learning College concept (35 %); (2) participation in the development of the new mission/vision statement (39 %); and (3) participation in all levels of the implementation process (43 %). These responses are a reflection of the fact that 25 of the 49 faculty participants (51 %) have been employed at ICC

five years or less that resulted in an inability of all faculty to participate fully in the development of the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to support this low agreement included the following: “I was not here in the beginning;” “I did not participate as much in the beginning, but more as time passed;” “The mission statement was in place when I arrived;” and “I did participate in all levels, but most levels.”

Fifty-seven percent of the faculty agreed that ICC was experiencing a culture change, although only 16 % of the faculty were in strong agreement. In addition, 14 of the faculty (29 %) were undecided, and 5 of the faculty (10 %) disagreed. According to Quintanilla et al. (2000), in order to assimilate into a culture, new members must receive the information needed. With 19 of the 49 respondents (39 %) unclear whether a culture change was occurring, the researcher assumed that the new faculty received insufficient information to assist with their own assimilation into the culture at ICC. Faculty responses provided a range of variation for how they perceived that a culture change was occurring. Written faculty comments to support a culture change at ICC included the following: “Our focus is more directed toward student learning, rather than our teaching;” “We changed our classroom expectations;” “There is increased communication across campus;” “We have a more student friendly atmosphere;” and “The Learning College terminology is used in everyday talking, meetings, and college documents.”

There was positive agreement among the faculty for the use of the Learning College concept in their classrooms. A substantial number of faculty (92 %) indicated that they believe in the strategies of the Learning College concept and have changed their teaching methods (96 %) as a result of this implementation process. Furthermore, 76 % of faculty indicated that they encourage students to understand the LC concept, while 73 % of faculty

included the Learning College concept terminology in their teaching. Questionnaire and interview responses affirmed supportive statements for classroom use of Learning College concept strategies in which faculty report using Learning College concepts daily through classroom group activities, curriculum design, and syllabi construction.

According to Birnbaum (2000), the fourth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative devolution. Narrative devolution occurs when there is widespread disappointment, disenchantment, and skepticism through reports of failure and unsustained claims of success. Eight statements on the questionnaire were designed to address this fourth cycle of fads (see Figure 3). These eight statements addressed the areas of satisfaction with the implementation, problems or positive student outcomes, and the Learning College concept as a fad. Faculty affirmed that they are satisfied with the progression of the implementation of the Learning College concept (69 %). The faculty also affirmed that the Learning College concept can create the success claimed at ICC (78 %). Furthermore, 36 of the faculty (73 %) affirmed that they have experienced positive student outcomes with the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments included the following positive outcomes: “There is increased cooperation among students;” “There is increased learning with engagement in classes;” “There is increased student responsibility;” “There is increased retention of information;” and “Teaching in general is more enjoyable.”

In order to assess for any disappointment or skepticism regarding the Learning College concept implementation, the researcher asked faculty about problems with the Learning College concept and continued commitment. Fourteen of the faculty (29 %) agreed to experiencing problems with the concept. Given the fact that 94 % of the faculty report changing their teaching methods, it was surprising to note that only 29 % report having

experienced problems with the Learning College concept. Problems or challenges identified by faculty included the following: “Student resistance to group activities;” “There is a lack of student participation in group activities;” “Not all students are responsive to this type of teaching;” and “Faculty experience difficulties applying the concepts in the classroom.”

Twenty-seven of the faculty (55 %) acknowledged that the benefits of the Learning College concept outweigh the costs. Written faculty comments regarding the benefits versus costs included the following: “I agree the benefits outweigh the costs, but I am not sure we are done with the implementation process. I am not sure you can ever be done;” “Absolutely! Students and all of us have benefited;” and “I do not know.” There was low faculty agreement with both, published evidence of faculty satisfaction (10 of the faculty or 20 %) and published evidence of improved student outcomes (8 of the faculty or 18 %). Responses from both the questionnaires and the interviews indicated that ICC was currently in the process of collecting data to assess student outcomes through the use of Rubrics and a database created named Penelope. In addition, 29 of the faculty (59 %) disagreed and 15 of the faculty (32 %) are undecided whether the Learning College concept at ICC was just another academic management fad. Written faculty comments supporting the disagreement that the Learning College concept will become a fad included the following: “I believe that the Learning College concept is on target, not just a fad;” “I feel the Learning College concept has great potential;” “I disagree, though many of my peers at other colleges think so;” and “Never! It is a good thing.”

The final stage of Birnbaum’s (2000) life cycles of academic management fads is dissonance resolution. This stage begins as adopters view the demise of the new innovation and they begin to provide rationalizations for failure. Four statements from the questionnaire

were designed to address this stage of the fad cycle (see Figure 3). These statements addressed the areas of commitment, results produced, whether the Learning College has met its potential and whether the Learning College will remain a lasting innovation.

Faculty affirmed that their available time was a major factor for successful implementation of the Learning College concept. Twenty-one of the faculty (43 %) were in agreement and 15 of the faculty (32 %) are undecided whether the Learning College has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time. Written faculty comments to support the issue of time available included the following: “We could do more with less load, but I do what I can;” “Administration must provide adequate time and appropriate resources if this is to be a reality;” and “I am sure that this is part of the problem since curriculum development is time-consuming.” Written faculty comments to support the undecided responses included the following: “I believe there is a gap between implementation of the concept and faculty preparedness to fully reach the ideal;” “I am not sure what the potential is;” and “We need more time to develop these. We spend too much time in meetings.”

Thirty-nine of the faculty (78 %) affirmed that the concept will remain a lasting innovation (78 %) and 17 of the faculty (37 %) were in agreement that they are still committed to the Learning College concept even though it has not produced the success claimed. There was some difficulty for faculty in responding to the statement regarding remaining committed even though the Learning College concept has not produced the results as claimed. Written faculty comments supporting this difficulty included the following: “I am committed and it does meet the claims;” and “It has produced many good things, but I do not know what the literature proclaims.” Other supportive statements include the following: “It does not need to be perfect to be good and useful;” and “It is a goal to strive toward.”

Lastly, 24 of the faculty (49 %) are in agreement and 20 of the faculty (41 %) are undecided whether the Learning College concept has produced the results promised. Written faculty comments to support results promised included the following: “We have made progress”: “It is too soon to assess results;” “We have not been moving long enough in the direction of the LC concept to expect all of the results;” and “Not all factors are taken into consideration.”

### **Responses from the faculty with five years or less employment at ICC**

The next two tables examined the effects that different levels of employment at ICC had on the questionnaire statement results. According to Claxton and Murrell (1984) younger faculty are in a major transition, adjusting to a new role in a familiar environment. The faculty task in this transition is to establish their identity as a faculty member in a familiar environment as compared to their role as a student. Furthermore, faculty have a need to connect and form meaningful relationships in order to feel a sense of belonging to the institutional milieu (Claxton & Murrell, 1984). The researcher assumed that especially in the areas of planning, the responses between the two groups would be different.

The first table regarding years of employment was made up of responses from faculty with five years or less of employment at ICC (see Table 2). The researcher continued to compare responses of faculty with five years or less employment at ICC (see Table 2) to Birnbaum’s life cycle of academic management fads (see Figure 3) as well as to the developmental level of the faculty. According to Birnbaum (2000), the first stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is creation. Eleven statements on the questionnaire were designed to address the academic management fad cycle of creation (see Figure 3). These eleven statements addressed how the concept was presented, how it was promoted, and who was the driving force behind the change.

Table 2

Responses to the Questionnaire Items from 23 of the faculty with five years or less employment at ICC

Item	<u>Response</u>											
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>		<u>Not Applicable</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. A clear authentic, convincing rationale was presented.	7	30.43	10	43.47	1	4.35	2	8.70	0	0.0	3	13.04
2. The LC concept was promoted by administration to improve student outcomes.	11	50.00	7	31.82	1	4.55	2	9.09	0	0.0	1	4.55
3. I believe in the strategies of the LC concept.	11	47.83	10	43.47	2	8.70	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
4. I encourage students to understand the LC concept.	5	21.74	10	43.47	5	21.74	3	13.04	0	0.0	0	0.0
5. I have read about the LC in higher education institutions.	4	17.39	4	17.39	3	13.04	7	30.43	2	8.70	3	13.04
6. The LC was promoted as a new innovation in higher education.	4	18.18	8	36.36	6	27.27	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	18.18
7. The LC leaders present sound rationale about LC importance.	9	39.13	8	34.78	5	21.74	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
8. The LC was promoted as a way to address the changing student population.	4	18.18	10	45.45	4	18.18	1	4.55	1	4.55	2	9.09
9. I participated in planning the development of the LC concept.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	13.04	5	21.74	6	26.09	9	39.13
10. I include LC terminology in my teaching practices.	3	13.04	9	39.13	8	34.78	3	13.04	0	0.0	0	0.0
11. I participated in the new vision mission statement for the LC.	2	8.70	0	0.0	2	8.70	4	17.39	6	26.09	9	39.13
12. The LC concept was presented to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems.	2	9.09	9	40.91	7	31.82	2	9.09	0	0.0	2	9.09
13. I received sufficient background on the LC concept.	3	13.04	8	34.78	7	30.43	4	17.39	1	4.35	0	0.0
14. The LC concepts are threaded throughout college policies and procedures.	4	17.39	13	56.52	5	21.74	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
15. ICC is experiencing a culture change with the LC concept.	0	0.0	8	34.78	10	43.47	3	13.04	0	0.0	2	8.70

Table 2 (continued)

16. The LC concept was driven the administration of ICC.	4	17.39	7	30.43	7	30.43	2	8.70	0	0.0	3	13.04
17. The benefits of the LC outweigh the costs incurred.	2	8.70	7	30.43	9	39.13	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	21.74
18. I have experienced problems with the LC concept.	0	0.0	4	17.39	4	17.39	13	56.52	2	8.70	0	0.0
19. I have experienced positive student outcomes with the LC concept.	4	17.39	11	47.83	6	26.09	1	4.35	0	0.0	1	4.35
20. I have knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the LC concept.	2	8.70	5	21.74	5	21.74	8	34.78	1	4.35	2	8.70
21. The LC concept was driven by the faculty of ICC.	3	13.04	5	21.74	7	30.43	3	13.04	0	0.0	5	21.74
22. I am familiar with the LC claims of success.	2	8.70	9	39.13	4	17.39	5	21.74	1	4.35	2	8.70
23. There is a learning crisis with students at ICC.	3	13.04	13	56.52	5	21.74	1	4.35	0	0.0	1	4.35
24. The LC concept was developed to improve the learning crisis at ICC.	1	4.35	9	39.13	8	34.78	2	8.70	0	0.0	3	13.04
25. Leaders of the LC concept are seen as carriers and coaches.	5	21.74	8	34.78	7	30.43	2	8.70	1	4.35	0	0.0
26. The LC concept was presented as a way to improve organizational processes and functions.	1	4.35	12	52.17	7	30.43	1	4.35	0	0.0	2	8.70
27. I have participated in all levels of the implementation process.	0	0.0	3	13.04	3	13.04	9	39.13	3	13.04	5	21.74
28. I believe that the LC concept can create the success claimed at ICC.	5	21.74	14	60.87	4	17.39	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
29. I am satisfied with the progress of the implementation of LC.	3	13.04	10	43.47	9	39.13	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
30. Employees of ICC have written articles affirming the LC concept.	2	8.70	5	21.74	12	52.17	1	4.35	0	0.0	3	13.04
31. There is published evidence of faculty satisfaction with the implementation of LC concept.	0	0.0	2	8.70	18	78.26	1	4.35	0	0.0	2	8.70
32. The LC concept has not produced the results as promised.	0	0.0	3	13.04	12	52.17	7	30.43	0	0.0	1	4.35
33. The LC concept will remain as a lasting innovation at ICC.	6	26.09	10	43.47	5	21.74	2	8.70	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 2 (continued)

34. I am still committed even though the LC concept has not produced the success claimed.	3	13.04	8	34.78	7	30.43	1	4.35	1	4.35	3	13.04
35. There is published evidence of improved student outcomes since the LC concept.	1	4.35	1	4.35	16	69.57	2	8.70	0	0.0	3	13.04
36. The LC concept was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence.	0	0.0	3	13.04	12	52.17	3	13.04	1	4.35	4	17.39
37. I have changed my teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities.	8	34.78	12	52.17	1	4.35	1	4.35	1	4.35	0	0.0
38. Employees of ICC have conducted state and national workshops about the LC.	5	21.74	10	43.47	6	26.09	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.70
39. The LC has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time to try and develop new teaching methods.	2	8.70	9	39.13	8	34.78	3	13.04	0	0.0	1	4.35
40. The LC concept at ICC is just another academic management fad.	0	0.0	2	8.70	11	47.83	3	13.04	7	30.43	0	0.0

Note: Several questions (2, 6, 8, and 12) included unmarked responses which left the total number of responses for that question less than 49. Totals do not always equal 100 because of rounding of numbers.

Faculty with five years or less employment affirmed (17 or 74 %) that a clear, authentic, convincing rationale was presented and that it was promoted as a way to improve student outcomes (18 or 82 %). The faculty in this group were less clear in agreement regarding how the Learning College concept was promoted: (1) as a way to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems (11 or 50 %); (2) as a way to improve organizational processes and functions (13 or 57 %); and (3) as a way to address the changing student population (14 or 64 %). Written faculty comments to support the promotion of the Learning college concept included the following: “I was unaware of a focus on a particular set of demographics;” “I am not sure why it was promoted, because I thought everyone was an active learner;” and “There was some mention of organizational processes at the beginning.”

In addition, this group of faculty affirmed (17 or 74 %) that the leaders presented a sound rationale for the importance of the Learning College concept. Faculty with five years or less employment at ICC affirmed (16 or 70 %) that there was a learning crisis among students at ICC, but they were less clear whether or not the Learning College concept was developed to improve this learning crisis (10 or 43 %). Written faculty comments to support the existence of a learning crisis included the following: “There is a learning crisis, and some changes need to be made to address this even though ICC has made an effort in some areas;” “Many of our students are not aware and/or capable of handling the demands of a college education;” “Many students lack basic math, reading and writing skills;” and “It depends on how you define crisis.” Finally, the faculty with five years or less employment were undecided whether the concept was driven by administration (48 %) or faculty (35 %) or whether the leaders of the Learning College concept were seen as carriers and coaches (30 %). Written faculty comments to support this indecision included the following: “It was driven by faculty, supported by administration;” “It was driven by administration from what I have heard;” “I do not know who the leaders are, and I see new ideas being looked at with skepticism by some;” “I have not really developed a complete understanding of who does what regarding this issue;” and “I do not think that I have seen a convincing presentation on research findings, always vague remarks.”

The second stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative evolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Eight of the questionnaire statements were developed to address this cycle (see Figure 3). The eight statements addressed faculty knowledge of the Learning College concept, the success of the concept, and its use in other institutions. Knowledge of the Learning College concept among faculty with five years or less employment at ICC was

limited. There was low faculty agreement regarding knowledge about the Learning College concept (35 %), receiving sufficient background information (48 %) having knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the Learning College concept (31 %), and having read about the Learning College concept in other higher education institutions (35 %). In addition, 12 of this group of faculty (54 %) acknowledged that the Learning College concept was promoted as a new innovation in higher education. Eleven of the faculty (48 %) with five or less years of employment were familiar with the Learning College claims of success, and 15 of the faculty (66 %) agreed that employees of ICC had conducted state and national workshops about the Learning College. Furthermore, the faculty with five years or less employment were undecided whether or not the Learning College concept was based on stories of success without supporting evidence (12 or 52 %). Written faculty comments to support this indecision included the following: “I have no idea, but I doubt it;” and “I do not know.”

The third stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is time lag (Birnbaum, 2000). Nine statements on the questionnaire were designed to address this cycle (see figure 3). These nine statements addressed the areas of planning and development, classroom use of the strategies, and published evidence. Faculty with five or less years of employment affirmed the Learning College concept strategies (21 or 92 %) and affirmed that they have changed their teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities (20 or 87 %). However, there was less affirmation among the faculty that they encouraged students to understand the Learning College concept (15 or 66 %) or that they included the Learning College concept terminology in their teaching practices (12 or 52 %).

Furthermore, the faculty in this group affirmed (17 or 74 %) that the Learning College concepts were threaded throughout college policies and procedures.

As the researcher expected, there was more disagreement among faculty with five years or less employment for the areas of planning and developing: (1) participated in planning and developing the Learning College concept (11 or 48 %); (2) participated in the development of the new mission/vision statement (10 or 43 %); and (3) participated in all levels of the implementation process (12 or 52 %). Written faculty comments to support this disagreement with planning and development included the following: “I was not here;” “I was not employed at the time;” and “The mission statement was in place when I was hired.” In addition, faculty in this group were also undecided whether ICC was experiencing a culture change (10 or 44 %) with the implementation of the Learning College concept or whether the benefits of the Learning College concept outweigh the costs (9 or 39 %). Written faculty comments to support a culture change included the following: “As a newcomer, I am unfamiliar with the previous culture at ICC, so it is hard to make a comparison;” “I do not see ICC being any different from other colleges;” and “Ideally we would, but many of my students barely have the reading, writing, and math skills to get through class.” Written faculty comments to support that the benefits outweigh the costs of implementing the Learning College concept included the following: “We cannot claim benefits until they are realized and determined to be the results of the Learning College initiative;” and “I know nothing about the costs.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), the fourth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative devolution. Eight statements on the questionnaire were designed to address this fourth cycle of fads (see Figure 3). These eight statements addressed

the areas of satisfaction with the implementation, problems or positive student outcomes, and the Learning College concept as a fad. Faculty with five years or less employment affirmed (15 or 65 %) that they have experienced positive student outcomes with the Learning College concept. On the other hand, they disagreed (15 or 65 %) to having experienced problems with the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to support positive outcomes with the use of the Learning College concept included the following: “I received feedback from students based primarily on my experience at my last college as an instructor, so I know it works;” “It is hard to say without a control group whether the positive experiences are due to the Learning College techniques or if other techniques would produce the same results;” and “Some activities have worked really well.” Written faculty comments to support the issue of experiencing problems with the use of the Learning College concept included the following: “Not all students are responsive to this type of teaching;” “There is a focus on one direction rather than on-going true exchange of ideas and continual growth, including a continued focus on cooperative learning;” and “At times, I am asked to put professional development ahead of meeting with scheduled classes.”

Faculty with five years or less employment remain undecided whether they are satisfied with the progression of the implementation of the Learning College concept (59 % agree, 39 % undecided). Written faculty comments to support this indecision included the following: “I have not been here long enough to see the progression;” “I do not have a good basis of comparison with where we are and where the college has been;” and “It seems satisfactory to me, but I have not been here long enough to say.” In addition, the faculty were much undecided as to whether there was published evidence of both faculty satisfaction with the implementation process (18 or 78%) or improved student outcomes (16 or 70 %).

Written faculty comments to support published evidence included the following: “I do not know;” “I have not seen any;” and “I believe it is too early and lacks sufficient data collection to claim scientifically.” Finally, 11 of the faculty affirmed (48 %) that they are still committed even though the Learning College concept has not produced the success claimed. Analysis concluded that the faculty continued to have difficulty in responding to this questionnaire item. Written faculty comments to support their commitment included the following: “This is the best question of the survey. It does not need to be perfect to be good and useful;” “This is an approach that I adopted years ago, and I still think it has merit;” and “I am not sure how to answer this question. To say I am still committed seems to say I do not think it has been successful. If I think that it may be successful, how do I answer the question?”

Faculty with five or less years of employment are undecided (11 or 48 %) whether or not the Learning College is just another academic management fad. Written faculty comments to support this indecision included the following: “Based on the feedback from students, I believe that the Learning College is on target, not just a fad”: “I agree if by the Learning College we are only including cooperative learning, but the Learning College is the direction most community colleges are heading or have already gone;” and “This statement is true, but I do not think that it necessarily will fade away like other concepts.”

The fifth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is dissonance resolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Four statements from the questionnaire were designed to address this fifth stage (see Figure 3). These statements addressed the areas of commitment, results produced, whether the Learning College has met its potential and whether the Learning College will remain a lasting innovation. Faculty with five years or less

employment affirmed that the Learning College concept can create the success claimed at ICC (19 or 82%) and that the Learning College concept will remain a lasting innovation (16 or 70 %). In addition, 12 of the faculty in this group affirmed (52 %) that the Learning College concept has produced results as promised. Written faculty comments to support results produced included the following: “It is too soon for me to assess the results;” “I think the results have been slower than expected, but I believe improvements are occurring. In short, nothing works exactly as advertised;” and “It can not have results if students do not have basic skills required to pass college courses.” Eleven of the faculty affirmed (48 %) that the Learning College has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time. Written faculty comments to support whether the Learning College concept has met its potential included the following: “I am not sure what the potential is;” “I am sure that this is part of the problem, because curriculum development is time-consuming;” “I believe there is a gap between implementation of the concept and faculty preparedness to fully reach the ideal;” “Administration must provide adequate and appropriate time and resources if this is to be a reality;” and “This is a slightly difficult question to answer. It presupposes that the concept has not met its potential, but I disagree with both parts of the sentence.”

#### **Responses from the faculty with 6 or more years of employment at ICC**

Faculty in this group belong to categories of faculty that Baldwin (1984) identifies as mid-career faculty and senior faculty nearing retirement. Mid-career faculty have been teaching for ten to twenty years and are recognized as competent in their disciplines. Senior faculty are usually over the age of fifty and are regarded as the elder statespersons of the college or university. According to Baldwin (1984), both mid-career faculty and senior

faculty have different developmental needs. The researcher assumed that responses from both mid-career and senior faculty would yield different responses from the younger faculty.

The third table is made up of responses from faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC (see Table 3). An analysis of the findings of this group of faculty yielded three significant findings. Findings of 100 % agreement were noted in three areas with this group of faculty: (1) a clear, authentic, convincing rationale was presented; (2) the LC concept was promoted by administration to improve student outcomes; and (3) teaching methods were changed to include group and cooperative learning activities.

The responses of faculty with six or more years of employment to the 40-item questionnaire were compared to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads (see Table 3) and the developmental levels of the faculty. According to Birnbaum (2000), the first stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is creation. Eleven statements on the questionnaire were designed to address the first cycle of creation (see Figure 3). These eleven statements addressed the basic areas of how the concept was presented and promoted, as well as who were the driving forces behind the change. In support of the stage of creation, this group of faculty affirmed (100 %) that both a clear, authentic, and convincing rationale was presented and it was promoted to improve student outcomes (100 %). In addition, the faculty affirmed that the leaders presented a sound rationale about the Learning College importance (24 or 92 %). Furthermore, the 12 of the faculty affirmed (48 %) that the Learning College concept was promoted to address the changing student population, and 15 of the faculty (58 %) affirmed that it was promoted to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems. However, there was stronger affirmation that the Learning College concept was promoted as a way to improve

Table 3

Responses to the Questionnaire Items from 26 of the faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC

Item	<u>Response</u>											
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>		<u>Not Applicable</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. A clear authentic, convincing rationale was presented.	9	34.62	17	65.38	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
2. The LC concept was promoted by administration to improve student outcomes.	11	42.31	15	57.69	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
3. I believe in the strategies of the LC concept.	11	42.31	13	50.00	2	7.70	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
4. I encourage students to understand the LC concept.	4	15.38	18	69.23	3	11.54	1	3.85	0	0.0	0	0.0
5. I have read about the LC in higher education institutions.	2	7.70	14	53.85	4	15.38	5	19.23	1	3.85	0	0.0
6. The LC was promoted as a new innovation in higher education.	9	36.00	13	52.00	3	12.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
7. The LC leaders present sound rationale about LC importance.	8	30.77	16	61.54	1	3.85	1	3.85	0	0.0	0	0.0
8. The LC was promoted as a way to address the changing student population.	2	8.00	10	40.00	6	24.00	7	28.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
9. I participated in planning the development of the LC concept.	7	26.92	10	38.46	3	11.54	6	23.08	0	0.0	0	0.0
10. I include LC terminology in my teaching practices.	5	19.23	19	73.08	1	3.85	1	3.85	0	0.0	0	0.0
11. I participated in the new vision mission statement for the LC.	7	26.92	10	38.46	3	11.54	5	19.23	1	3.85	0	0.0
12. The LC concept was presented to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems.	4	15.38	11	42.31	5	19.23	6	23.08	0	0.0	0	0.0
13. I received sufficient background on the LC concept.	9	34.62	13	50.00	2	7.70	2	7.70	0	0.0	0	0.0
14. The LC concepts are threaded throughout college policies and procedures.	14	53.85	10	38.46	2	7.70	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
15. ICC is experiencing a culture change with the LC concept.	9	34.62	11	42.31	4	15.38	2	7.70	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 3 (continued)

16. The LC concept was driven the administration of ICC.	6	23.08	12	46.15	3	11.54	4	15.38	1	3.85	0	0.0
17. The benefits of the LC outweigh the costs incurred.	5	19.23	13	50.00	7	26.92	1	3.85	0	0.0	0	0.0
18. I have experienced problems with the LC concept.	3	11.54	7	26.92	3	11.54	10	38.46	3	11.54	0	0.0
19. I have experienced positive student outcomes with the LC concept.	6	23.08	15	57.69	5	19.23	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20. I have knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the LC concept.	3	12.00	15	60.00	2	8.00	4	16.00	1	4.00	0	0.0
21. The LC concept was driven by the faculty of ICC.	5	20.00	12	48.00	5	20.00	3	12.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
22. I am familiar with the LC claims of success.	2	8.00	14	56.00	5	20.00	4	16.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
23. There is a learning crisis with students at ICC.	2	8.33	7	29.17	10	41.67	5	20.83	0	0.0	0	0.0
24. The LC concept was developed to improve the learning crisis at ICC.	1	4.00	6	24.00	11	44.00	5	20.00	1	4.00	1	4.00
25. Leaders of the LC concept are seen as carriers and coaches.	4	16.00	14	56.00	6	24.00	1	4.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
26. The LC concept was presented as a way to improve organizational processes and functions.	5	20.00	16	64.00	2	8.00	2	8.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
27. I have participated in all levels of the implementation process.	3	12.00	15	60.00	3	12.00	4	16.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
28. I believe that the LC concept can create the success claimed at ICC.	7	26.92	12	46.15	5	19.23	1	3.85	1	3.85	0	0.0
29. I am satisfied with the progress of the implementation of LC.	3	11.54	18	69.23	3	11.54	2	7.70	0	0.0	0	0.0
30. Employees of ICC have written articles affirming the LC concept.	6	23.08	15	57.69	5	19.23	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
31. There is published evidence of faculty satisfaction with the implementation of LC concept.	0	0.0	8	33.33	14	58.33	2	8.33	0	0.0	0	0.0
32. The LC concept has not produced the results as promised.	0	0.0	1	3.85	8	30.77	13	50.00	4	15.38	0	0.0
33. The LC concept will remain as a lasting innovation at ICC.	5	19.23	18	69.23	2	7.70	1	3.85	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 3 (continued)

34. I am still committed even though the LC concept has not produced the success claimed.	0	0.0	6	27.27	9	40.91	5	22.73	1	4.55	1	4.55
35. There is published evidence of improved student outcomes since the LC concept.	1	4.00	5	20.00	16	64.00	2	8.00	0	0.0	1	4.00
36. The LC concept was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence.	0	0.0	4	15.38	6	23.08	13	50.00	3	11.54	0	0.0
37. I have changed my teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities.	12	46.15	14	53.85	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
38. Employees of ICC have conducted state and national workshops about the LC.	11	42.31	14	53.85	1	3.85	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
39. The LC has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time to try and develop new teaching methods.	1	3.85	9	34.62	7	26.92	8	30.77	1	3.85	0	0.0
40. The LC concept at ICC is just another academic management fad.	0	0.0	3	11.54	4	15.38	10	38.46	9	34.62	0	0.0

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Note: Several questions (6, 8, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, 34, and 35) included unmarked responses which left the total number of responses for that question less than 49. Totals do not always equal 100 because of rounding of numbers.

organizational processes and functions (21 or 84 %). Written faculty comments to support the promotion of the concept included the following: “I never understood the concept to be the way to fix a problem, but rather an opportunity to continue improvement;” “It was to address the changing student population, but more importantly it was to educate students how to learn and that learning is a lifelong need;” and “Yes, as a way to improve processes and functions, because it permeates all that we do.”

The faculty with six or more years of employment were undecided whether there was a learning crisis with the students at ICC (38 % agreed, 42 % undecided, 21 % disagreed) or whether the Learning College concept was developed to improve the learning crisis (28 % agreed, 44 % undecided, 20 % disagreed). Written faculty comments to support this

indecision relating to a learning crisis included the following: “Replace learning crisis with problem, and I would agree;” “Maybe crisis is a strong word, but we are dealing with large numbers of under-prepared and at-risk students;” and “It is so much bigger and broader than this. We can even elevate well-prepared students to new levels of learning.” In addition, the faculty with six or more years of employment are unclear who was driving the Learning College implementation (69 % affirmed that it was administration and 68 % affirmed that it was faculty). Written faculty comments to support these two positions included the following: “It was driven by administration and faculty;” “Administration and some faculty, others resisted it;” “Not driven by administration, but assisted, directed, or supported by our administration;” “We the faculty were given a choice, and we could have turned our backs to the concept;” and “It was driven by the faculty, they have all utilized these concepts to improve what they do.” Finally, the faculty affirmed (18 or 72 %) that the leaders were seen as carriers of new ideas and coaches presenting research findings. Written faculty comments to support carriers and coaches included the following: “Coaches-yes, presenting research findings-to a lesser degree, new ideas-yes;” and “Yes, but most of us fall into this category, especially with the TALC groups.”

The second stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative evolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Eight questionnaire statements were developed to address this cycle (see Figure 3). These eight statements addressed faculty knowledge of the Learning College concept, the success of the concept and its use in other institutions. Faculty with six or more years of employment affirmed (22 or 88 %) that the Learning College concept was promoted as a new innovation in higher education and that they received sufficient background information on the Learning College concept (22 or 85 %). Furthermore, 16 of

the faculty (61 %) in this group affirmed that they have read about the Learning College in other higher education institutions. Written faculty comments to support the issue of reading about the Learning College concept included the following: “Yes, in research for SACS;” “Terry O’Banion articles and videos;” “Yes, but some studies are very abstract and ambiguous. I prefer evidence of classroom activities and valid, supportable data;” and “I have read about the Learning College concept, but I have not read many case studies.”

Faculty with six or more years of employment disagreed (16 or 62 %) that the Learning College was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence. Written faculty comments to support this disagreement included the following: “Terry O’Banion and others have had great success which was proven;” “I do not know how much supportive data there was. This was a new cutting edge concept. We were trying new stuff;” and “There was supportive data.” In addition, 16 of the faculty (64 %) affirmed that they were familiar with the claims of success related to the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to support the claims of success related to the Learning College concept included the following: “I am aware of Vanguard colleges;” “I am not sure, but I believe we are successful;” and “I am vaguely familiar with the claims of success.” Furthermore, faculty with six or more years of employment affirmed that employees of ICC have conducted both state and national workshops (25 or 96 %) and that employees of ICC have written articles about the Learning College concept at ICC (21 or 81 %). Written faculty comments to support articles written included the following: “The Mentor is an example;” and “Yes, in The Mentor and ERIC.”

The third stage of the life cycles of academic management fads is time lag (Birnbbaum, 2000). Nine questionnaire statements were designed to address this cycle (see

Figure 3). These nine statements addressed the areas of planning and development, classroom use of the strategies, and published evidence.

Faculty with six or more years of employment affirmed the strategies of the Learning College concept (24 or 92 %) and they affirmed that they have changed their teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities (26 or 100 %). Written faculty comments to support changing teaching methods included the following: “Yes, but I am pulling back a bit on this;” “Just several new tools added to what I do! They are great tools;” and “Programs in our area have been utilizing these techniques forever. I felt that I was not necessarily learning new teaching methods, but I was learning what to call them. I have, however, honed some skills and modified some assignments and I do believe that both I and my students have benefited from some new techniques that I have learned about.” In addition, faculty affirmed that they include the Learning College terminology in their teaching practices (24 or 92%), that they encourage students to understand the Learning College concept (22 or 85 %), and that the Learning College concepts are threaded throughout the college policies and procedures (24 or 92 %). Written faculty comments to support Learning College concepts in college policies and procedures included the following: “The College has done an excellent job here;” and “We are doing a good job of making the Learning College concept a campus-wide effort.”

Three specific statements on the questionnaire address the area of planning and development of the Learning College concept. Faculty with six or more years of employment affirmed their participation in planning the development of the concept (17 or 65 %); they affirmed their participation in all levels of the implementation process (18 or 72%); and they affirmed their participation in the development of the new mission/vision statement

(17 or 65 %). Written faculty comments to support the issues of planning and development of the Learning College concept included the following: “All of us did in a way, some more than others;” “Not at the very top, however, I am a cooperative learning trainer;” and “I have been involved in the PEW roundtables, mission statement, general education competencies, writing, cooperative learning training, the student portfolio, and SACS.”

The majority of faculty with six years or more employment affirmed (20 or 77 %) that ICC was experiencing a culture change related to the implementation of the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to support a culture change included the following: “Definitely, but it was not overnight, but over several years;” “It is on-going;” “Our culture is more directed toward student learning, rather than our teaching;” and “Sure it is a change, but it is an exciting journey away from so much emphasis on the traditional teacher-centered philosophies of the old school thinking.”

The fourth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative devolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Eight statements on the questionnaire were designed to address this fourth cycle of fads (see figure 3). These eight statements addressed the areas of satisfaction with the implementation, problems or positive student outcomes, and the Learning College concept as a fad.

Faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC affirmed the progression of the implementation of the concept at ICC (21 or 81 %) and that the Learning College concept can create the success claimed at ICC (19 or 73 %). Written faculty comments to support this affirmation of success claimed included the following: “I am not sure what success ICC has claimed. I have not read this anywhere;” “Accenting student responsibility-yes, enforcing student responsibility-no;” and “Yes, but we are still learning how to crawl, however, we

continue to move ahead.” In addition, faculty affirmed (21 or 81 %) that they have experienced positive student outcomes with the Learning College implementation. Written faculty comments to support positive student outcomes included the following: “I have mixed results. I have a higher confidence in work done for class, but lower confidence in ability to do work in the real world;” “Yes, I have seen changes in the way students learn;” and “Because students are actively engaged, they learn more and enjoy the classroom.”

The faculty with six or more years of employment affirmed that the benefits of the Learning College implementation outweigh the costs incurred (18 or 69 %). Written faculty comments to support that the benefits outweigh the costs included the following: “I agree that the benefits outweigh the costs. I am not sure we are done with the implementation process. I am not sure you can be done;” “Absolutely, students and all of us have benefited;” and “Wow, this is a guess, but I believe that we all hope that this statement is going to be true. It is too soon to know yet.” Furthermore, faculty with six or more years of employment are undecided regarding published evidence of both faculty satisfaction (14 or 58 %) with the Learning College concept and improved student outcomes (16 or 64 %). Written faculty comments to support faculty satisfaction included the following: “I do not know what has been published;” “In certain disciplines;” and “I believe there is, but I am not sure how it is published.” Written faculty comments to support student outcomes included the following: “I believe we are at the point now where we are beginning to see documented evidence, but to my knowledge it has not been published;” “Of retention-yes, of standard scores-no;” “Still relatively early to see results on a clear scale;” and “In portfolios.”

In an attempt to address the disenchantment and disappointment of this stage of narrative devolution, faculty were asked about problems. Thirteen of the faculty (50 %)

disagreed that they experienced problems. Written faculty comments to support problems experienced included the following: “Some, but only as we worked to learn how to do it and now we are dealing with the problem of how to assess it, but we have worked through all the problems;” “Definitely, as faculty members we have to take risks and try new methods in the classroom. Some work very well the first time tried and some do not;” “More challenges than problems;” and “Committee assignments involving a significant amount of work without consideration for release time.”

Faculty with six or more years of employment disagreed (19 or 73 %) that the Learning College concept is just another academic management fad. Written faculty comments to support this disagreement about fads included the following: “I do not think so, even though many of my peers at other colleges and universities think so;” “Never, it has helped our students and improved our work environment where everyone has the students’ learning as their first priority;” “I feel the Learning College concept has great potential. We have had some training but we need more with more focus and fine tuning and time to implement properly;” and “I really think it works.”

The fifth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is dissonance resolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Four statements from the questionnaire were designed to address this cycle (see Figure 3). These four statements addressed the areas of commitment, results produced, whether the Learning College has met its potential and whether the Learning College will remain a lasting innovation. Faculty responded to the statement, the Learning College concept has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time to try and develop new methods, with minimal variation in agreement (10 or 38 %), undecided

(7 or 27 %), and disagreement (9 or 35 %). Written faculty comments to support whether or not the Learning college has met its potential included the following: “We could do much more with less load, but I will do what I can under the six class plus load that we have;” “Time is always an issue, we could probably do more, but we are doing a lot;” and “It does take more time to explore new methods and develop new plans.”

Faculty with six years or more employment disagreed (17 or 65 %) that the Learning College concept has not produced results as promised. Written faculty comments to support this disagreement included the following: “I think students have benefited a lot, but I do not know what we are claiming;” “We have made progress;” and “I do not believe we have been moving in the direction of the Learning College long enough to expect all of the results.” In addition, 9 of the faculty (42 %) were undecided regarding their continued commitment even though the Learning College concept has not produced the success claimed. Written faculty comments to support to their indecision included the following: “I am committed and I do think it has produced many good things, but I do not know what the literature proclaims;” “Many of the claims do not take student attitude into account;” and “I am committed to most of it, certainly to the learner-centered concept.” Finally, faculty affirmed (23 or 89 %) that the Learning College concept will remain a lasting innovation. Written faculty comments to support a lasting innovation included the following: “Yes, I believe it is currently part of our culture;” “I am not sure any innovation ever lasts forever, but this one will be long-lived;” and “I feel it will continue, but will change as other good ideas are implemented.”

#### **Responses from the faculty with one month to 15 years of teaching experience**

The last two tables were designed to examine the effects that teaching experience of the faculty at ICC had on the questionnaire statements. Rather than have many groups with

only a few faculty in each, the researcher chose to create only two groups (26 faculty with one month to 15 years of teaching experience and 23 faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience) in order to have better statistical evidence. The researcher assumed that levels of teaching experience would yield different responses from the faculty. Accordingly, responses from the faculty with both less employment at ICC and less teaching experience provided similar findings and the responses from the faculty with more employment at ICC and more teaching experience provided similar findings.

The fourth table is comprised of responses from faculty with one month to 15 years of teaching experience (see Table 4). The faculty questionnaire responses based on one month to 15 years of teaching experience were compared to the other four tables and to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads (see Figure 3). According to Baldwin (1984) mid-career faculty have been teaching for ten to twenty years and are recognized as competent in their disciplines. Mid-career faculty need to remain challenged and engaged in their work including opportunities to identify new professional endeavors, to experiment with new roles, and to generally expand their overall career horizons (Baldwin, 1984). The researcher assumed that because mid-career faculty need to remain challenged, this group of faculty with one month to 15 years of teaching experience would be more supportive of the Learning College concept. However, the comparison of the tables yielded very few significant findings related to teaching experience. Therefore, the main focus of this section will include a comparison of faculty responses based on one month to 15 years of teaching experience to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads.

According to Birnbaum (2000), the first life cycle of academic management fads is creation. For most of the questionnaire items (1, 2, 7, 8, 16, 24, 25, and 26) that relate to

Table 4

Responses to the Questionnaire Items from 26 of the faculty with one month to 15 years of teaching experience

Item	<u>Response</u>											
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>		<u>Not Applicable</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. A clear authentic, convincing rationale was presented.	7	26.92	15	57.69	1	3.85	1	3.85	0	0.0	2	7.70
2. The LC concept was promoted by administration to improve student outcomes.	10	40.00	12	48.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	0	0.0	1	4.00
3. I believe in the strategies of the LC concept.	11	42.31	12	46.15	3	11.54	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
4. I encourage students to understand the LC concept.	3	11.54	14	53.85	8	30.77	1	3.85	0	0.0	0	0.0
5. I have read about the LC in higher education institutions.	3	11.54	6	23.08	3	11.54	8	30.77	3	11.54	3	11.54
6. The LC was promoted as a new innovation in higher education.	5	20.00	11	44.00	6	24.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	12.00
7. The LC leaders present sound rationale about LC importance.	10	38.46	10	38.46	5	19.23	1	3.85	0	0.0	0	0.0
8. The LC was promoted as a way to address the changing student population.	3	11.54	10	38.46	5	19.23	5	19.23	1	3.85	2	7.70
9. I participated in planning the development of the LC concept.	1	3.85	4	15.38	4	15.38	6	23.08	4	15.38	7	26.92
10. I include LC terminology in my teaching practices.	5	19.23	11	42.31	7	26.92	3	11.54	0	0.0	0	0.0
11. I participated in the new vision mission statement for the LC.	0	0.0	3	11.54	3	11.54	7	26.92	5	19.23	8	30.77
12. The LC concept was presented to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems.	1	3.85	10	38.46	8	30.77	6	23.08	0	0.0	1	3.85
13. I received sufficient background on the LC concept.	4	15.38	9	34.62	8	30.77	5	19.23	0	0.0	0	0.0
14. The LC concepts are threaded throughout college policies and procedures.	7	26.92	13	50.00	6	23.08	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
15. ICC is experiencing a culture change with the LC concept.	2	7.70	12	46.15	7	26.92	3	11.54	0	0.0	2	7.70

Table 4 (continued)

16. The LC concept was driven the administration of ICC.	4	15.38	9	34.62	7	26.92	3	11.54	0	0.0	3	11.54
17. The benefits of the LC outweigh the costs incurred.	3	11.54	8	30.77	11	42.31	1	3.85	0	0.0	3	11.54
18. I have experienced problems with the LC concept.	3	11.54	5	19.23	3	11.54	14	53.85	1	3.85	0	0.0
19. I have experienced positive student outcomes with the LC concept.	3	11.54	12	46.15	9	34.62	1	3.85	0	0.0	1	3.85
20. I have knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the LC concept.	2	7.70	7	26.92	5	19.23	8	30.77	2	7.70	2	7.70
21. The LC concept was driven by the faculty of ICC.	4	16.00	8	32.00	7	28.00	2	8.00	0	0.0	4	16.00
22. I am familiar with the LC claims of success.	0	0.0	11	44.00	5	20.00	6	24.00	1	4.00	2	8.00
23. There is a learning crisis with students at ICC.	4	16.00	12	48.00	5	20.00	3	12.00	0	0.0	1	4.00
24. The LC concept was developed to improve the learning crisis at ICC.	1	4.00	8	32.00	10	40.00	4	16.00	0	0.0	2	8.00
25. Leaders of the LC concept are seen as carriers and coaches.	6	24.00	8	32.00	8	32.00	3	12.00	0	0.0	0	0.0
26. The LC concept was presented as a way to improve organizational processes and functions.	2	7.70	15	57.69	6	23.08	2	7.70	0	0.0	1	3.85
27. I have participated in all levels of the implementation process.	0	0.0	6	23.08	2	7.70	11	42.31	2	7.70	5	19.23
28. I believe that the LC concept can create the success claimed at ICC.	5	19.23	14	53.85	5	19.23	1	3.85	1	3.85	0	0.0
29. I am satisfied with the progress of the implementation of LC.	2	7.70	15	57.69	7	26.92	2	7.70	0	0.0	0	0.0
30. Employees of ICC have written articles affirming the LC concept.	3	11.54	8	30.77	12	46.15	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	11.54
31. There is published evidence of faculty satisfaction with the implementation of LC concept.	0	0.0	4	15.38	19	73.08	1	3.85	0	0.0	2	7.70
32. The LC concept has not produced the results as promised.	0	0.0	3	11.54	13	50.00	8	30.77	1	3.85	1	3.85
33. The LC concept will remain as a lasting innovation at ICC.	4	15.38	13	50.00	6	23.08	3	11.54	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 4 (continued)

34. I am still committed even though the LC concept has not produced the success claimed.	3	12.00	5	20.00	11	44.00	3	12.00	0	0.0	3	12.00
35. There is published evidence of improved student outcomes since the LC concept.	0	0.0	1	3.85	19	73.08	3	11.54	0	0.0	3	11.54
36. The LC concept was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence.	0	0.0	5	19.23	13	50.00	5	19.23	0	0.0	3	11.54
37. I have changed my teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities.	8	30.77	17	65.38	1	4.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
38. Employees of ICC have conducted state and national workshops about the LC.	6	23.08	15	57.69	3	11.54	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	7.70
39. The LC has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time to try and develop new teaching methods.	1	3.85	11	42.31	9	34.62	4	15.38	0	0.0	1	3.85
40. The LC concept at ICC is just another academic management fad.	0	0.0	3	11.54	11	42.31	5	19.23	7	26.92	0	0.0

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Note: Several questions (2, 6, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 34) included unmarked responses which left the total number of responses for that question less than 49. Totals do not always equal 100 because of rounding of numbers.

creation, there was minimal variation of responses as compared to the other four tables.

However, two of the questionnaire items (12, 23) yielded different responses from the other four tables. Sixteen of the faculty (64 %) with one month to 15 years of teaching experience affirmed that there is a learning crisis among students at ICC. Written faculty comments to support a learning crisis included the following: “Many students lack basic math, reading, and writing skills;” “Maybe crisis is a strong word, but we are dealing with large numbers of under-prepared and at-risk students;” and “We cannot go back and fix the past, but we can certainly meet the needs of most of our students where they are.” Furthermore, 11 of the faculty (42%) affirmed that the Learning College was promoted to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems. Written faculty comments reflecting learning problem

solutions included the following: “I am not sure how the Learning College addresses remedial skill levels;” “I do not think that the Learning College focuses on a particular group;” “Only in part, because it was implemented to help all students;” and “It is so much bigger and broader than just this; we can even elevate well-prepared students to new levels of learning.”

The second stage of Birnbaum’s life cycle of academic management fads is narrative evolution (Birnbaum, 2000). In two of the questionnaire items (6, 38) that relate to narrative evolution, there was minimal variation of responses as compared to the other four tables. However, six of the items (5, 13, 20, 22, 30, and 36) yielded different responses from those of faculty in the other tables. The first four items (5, 13, 20, and 22) addressed knowledge about the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 5, faculty were undecided (9 or 35 % agree, 3 or 12 % undecided, 11 or 42 % disagree) whether or not they had read about the Learning College concept in other colleges. Written faculty comments to support reading about the concept included the following: “I have not done this;” “I have not read anything about the Learning College aside from the primer I was given when I was hired;” “Only through work on committees;” and “Some studies are very abstract and ambiguous. I prefer evidence of classroom activities and valid, supportable data.” In questionnaire item # 13, half of the faculty (13 or 50 %) affirmed that they received sufficient background information regarding the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to support background information included the following: “Adopting the Learning College concept has been a process that has required learning along the way;” “I need more information, sometimes I am confused;” “I would like to have had more information up front;” and “Great training.” In questionnaire item # 20, faculty were undecided (9 or 35 % agree, 5 or 19 % undecided,

10 or 39 % disagree) whether or not they had knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to support knowledge of other institutions included the following: “I do not have first hand knowledge;” “Not right off hand, but I seem to remember some responses in the past;” and “I wish we would hear more about what other learning-centered colleges are doing.” In questionnaire item #22, 11 of the faculty (44 %) affirmed that they were familiar with the Learning College claims of success. Written faculty comments to support claims of success included the following: “Somewhat, but not enough;” “Maybe, vaguely;” and “Not any specific claims in the literature.”

The next two questionnaire items were designed to address the promotion of the success of the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item #30, faculty were undecided (12 or 46 %) whether or not employees of ICC have written affirming articles regarding the Learning College concept at ICC. Written faculty comments to support this indecisiveness to articles written included the following: “See the Mentor;” and “Not that I am aware of.” In questionnaire item #36, faculty were undecided (13 or 50 %) whether or not the Learning College was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence. Written faculty comments to support stories of success included the following: “I do not know how much supportive data there was, but this was a new cutting edge concept-we were trying new stuff;” “I have no idea, but I doubt it;” and “It sounds like it.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), the third stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is time lag. For five of the questionnaire items (3, 4, 14, 15, and 37) that relate to time lag, there was minimal variation of responses as compared to the other four tables. However, four of the questionnaire items (9, 10, 11, and 27) yielded different

responses from those of the faculty in the other tables. In questionnaire item # 10, faculty affirmed (16 or 61 %) that they included Learning College terminology in their teaching practices. Faculty responses related to terminology included the following: “I try to stay away from jargon, especially with students;” “I continually ask myself, how will this decision impact learning;” and “I hand out material on rubrics in every class I teach at the beginning of the class.”

The next three items address the area of planning and development of the Learning College concept. Faculty responses affirmed disagreement to all three items: (item # 9) I participated in planning the development of the Learning College concept at ICC (10 or 38 %); (item # 11) I participated in the revision of the new mission/vision statement (12 or 46 %); and (item # 27) I participated in all levels of the implementation process (13 or 50 %). Written faculty comments to support planning and development included the following: “Not so much as a leader, because my class load has been too much to allow me enough time to take on any leadership roles;” and “Not all levels, but most levels.”

In questionnaire item # 40, faculty disagreed (12 or 46 %) that the Learning College concept at ICC is just another academic management fad. However, compared to both faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC (73%) and the faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience (74 %), these results yielded much less disagreement. Written faculty comments to support this disagreement regarding just another fad included the following: “No, though many of my peers at other colleges and universities think so;” “I believe the Learning College is on target, not a fad;” “It certainly seems possible;” and “This statement is true, but I do not think that it will necessarily fade away like other concepts.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), the fourth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative devolution. For five of the questionnaire items (18, 28, 29, 31, and 35) that relate to narrative devolution, there was minimal variation of responses as compared to the other four tables. However, three of the items (17, 19, and 40) yielded different responses from those of the faculty in the other tables. In questionnaire item #17, faculty were undecided (11 or 42 %) whether or not the benefits of the Learning College concept outweigh the costs incurred. Written faculty comments to support whether the benefits outweigh the costs included the following: “Absolutely, students and all of us have benefited;” “We cannot claim benefits until they are realized and determined to be the results of the LC initiative;” and “I am still waiting to see the results.” In questionnaire item # 19, 15 of the faculty (58 %) affirmed that they had experienced positive student outcomes with the Learning College concept. However, as compared to the other four tables, this group with less teaching experience was more undecided (9 or 35 %) regarding experiencing positive student outcomes. Written faculty comments showing differing views on student outcomes included the following: “Some activities have worked well;” “I do not have a good basis for comparison;” “Yes, I have seen changes in the way students learn;” and “New students are somewhat reluctant or hesitant in the beginning, but only a very, very few hold on to those attitudes very long.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), the last stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is dissonance resolution. There was minimal variation among three questionnaire items (32, 33, and 34). However, in questionnaire item # 39, 12 of the faculty (46 %) affirmed that the Learning College has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time to develop and try new teaching methods. Written faculty comments to support whether the

Learning College has met its potential include the following: “I am sure that this is part of the problem, because curriculum development is time consuming;” “I believe there is a gap between implementation of the concept and faculty preparedness to fully reach the ideal;” “Time is always an issue. We could probably do more, but we are doing a lot;” and “It does in fact take more time to explore new methods and develop new plans.”

### **Responses from the faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience**

In the last of the five tables, faculty questionnaire responses based on 16 to 37 years of teaching experience were compared to the other four tables and to Birnbaum’s life cycles of academic management fads (see Table 5). According to Baldwin (1984), senior faculty are usually over the age of fifty and are regarded as the elder statespersons in college or university settings. They have a strong sense of loyalty and want to leave behind a meaningful and lasting legacy (Baldwin, 1984). As indicated previously, responses from both the faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC and the faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience yielded similar results. Therefore, the main focus of this section will include a comparison of faculty responses based on 16 to 37 years of teaching experience to Birnbaum’s life cycle of academic management fads.

According to Birnbaum (2000), the first stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is creation. For nine of the questionnaire items (1, 2, 7, 8, 16, 21, 24, 25, and 26) that relate to creation, there was minimal variation of responses as compared to the other four tables. However, two of the items (12, 23) yielded different responses from those of the faculty in the other tables. In questionnaire item # 23, faculty were undecided (11 or 48 %) whether or not there was a learning crisis among students at ICC. Written faculty comments addressing a learning crisis included the following: “Yes, and some

Table 5

Responses to the Questionnaire Items from 23 of the faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience

Item	<u>Response</u>											
	<u>Strongly Agree</u>		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		<u>Strongly Disagree</u>		<u>Not Applicable</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. A clear authentic, convincing rationale was presented.	9	39.13	12	52.17	0	0.0	1	4.35	0	0.0	1	4.35
2. The LC concept was promoted by administration to improve student outcomes.	12	52.17	10	43.47	0	0.0	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
3. I believe in the strategies of the LC concept.	11	47.83	11	47.83	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
4. I encourage students to understand the LC concept.	6	26.09	14	60.87	0	0.0	3	13.04	0	0.0	0	0.0
5. I have read about the LC in higher education institutions.	3	13.04	12	52.17	4	17.39	4	17.39	0	0.0	0	0.0
6. The LC was promoted as a new innovation in higher education.	8	36.36	10	45.45	3	13.63	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.55
7. The LC leaders present sound rationale about LC importance.	7	30.43	14	60.87	1	4.35	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
8. The LC was promoted as a way to address the changing student population.	3	14.29	10	47.62	5	23.81	3	14.29	0	0.0	0	0.0
9. I participated in planning the development of the LC concept.	6	26.09	6	26.09	2	8.70	5	21.74	2	8.70	2	8.70
10. I include LC terminology in my teaching practices.	3	13.04	17	73.91	2	8.70	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
11. I participated in the new vision mission statement for the LC.	9	39.13	7	30.43	2	8.70	2	8.70	2	8.70	1	4.35
12. The LC concept was presented to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems.	5	22.73	10	45.45	4	18.18	2	9.09	0	0.0	1	4.55
13. I received sufficient background on the LC concept.	8	34.78	12	52.17	1	4.35	1	4.35	1	4.35	0	0.0
14. The LC concepts are threaded throughout college policies and procedures.	11	47.83	10	43.47	1	4.35	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
15. ICC is experiencing a culture change with the LC concept.	7	30.43	7	30.43	7	30.43	2	8.70	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 5 (continued)

16. The LC concept was driven the administration of ICC.	6	26.09	10	43.47	3	13.04	3	13.04	1	4.35	0	0.0
17. The benefits of the LC outweigh the costs incurred.	4	17.39	12	52.17	5	21.74	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.70
18. I have experienced problems with the LC concept.	0	0.0	6	26.09	4	17.39	9	39.13	4	17.39	0	0.0
19. I have experienced positive student outcomes with the LC concept.	7	30.43	14	60.87	2	8.70	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20. I have knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the LC concept.	3	13.04	13	56.52	2	8.70	5	21.74	0	0.0	0	0.0
21. The LC concept was driven by the faculty of ICC.	4	17.39	9	39.13	5	21.74	4	17.39	0	0.0	1	4.35
22. I am familiar with the LC claims of success.	4	17.39	12	52.17	4	17.39	3	13.04	0	0.0	0	0.0
23. There is a learning crisis with students at ICC.	1	4.35	8	34.78	11	47.83	3	13.04	0	0.0	0	0.0
24. The LC concept was developed to improve the learning crisis at ICC.	1	4.35	7	30.43	9	39.43	3	13.04	1	4.35	2	8.70
25. Leaders of the LC concept are seen as carriers and coaches.	3	13.04	14	60.87	5	21.74	0	0.0	1	4.35	0	0.0
26. The LC concept was presented as a way to improve organizational processes and functions.	4	17.39	13	56.52	4	17.39	1	4.35	0	0.0	1	4.35
27. I have participated in all levels of the implementation process.	3	13.04	12	52.17	3	13.04	2	8.70	1	4.35	2	8.70
28. I believe that the LC concept can create the success claimed at ICC.	7	30.43	12	52.17	4	17.39	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
29. I am satisfied with the progress of the implementation of LC.	4	17.39	13	56.52	5	21.74	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
30. Employees of ICC have written articles affirming the LC concept.	5	21.74	12	52.17	5	21.74	1	4.35	0	0.0	0	0.0
31. There is published evidence of faculty satisfaction with the implementation of LC concept.	0	0.0	6	27.27	13	59.09	2	9.09	0	0.0	1	4.35
32. The LC concept has not produced the results as promised.	0	0.0	1	4.35	7	30.43	12	52.17	3	13.08	0	0.0
33. The LC concept will remain as a lasting innovation at ICC.	7	30.43	16	69.57	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 5 (continued)

34. I am still committed even though the LC concept has not produced the success claimed.	0	0.0	9	42.86	5	23.81	3	14.29	2	9.52	2	9.52
35. There is published evidence of improved student outcomes since the LC concept.	2	8.70	5	21.74	13	56.52	1	4.35	0	0.0	2	8.70
36. The LC concept was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence.	0	0.0	2	8.70	5	21.74	11	47.83	4	17.39	1	4.35
37. I have changed my teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities.	12	52.17	9	39.13	0	0.0	1	4.35	1	4.35	0	0.0
38. Employees of ICC have conducted state and national workshops about the LC.	10	43.47	9	39.13	4	17.39	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
39. The LC has not met its potential due to lack of faculty time to try and develop new teaching methods.	2	8.70	7	30.43	6	26.09	7	30.43	1	4.35	0	0.0
40. The LC concept at ICC is just another academic management fad.	0	0.0	2	8.70	4	17.39	8	34.78	9	39.13	0	0.0

Note: Several questions (6, 8, 12, 31, and 34) included unmarked responses which left the total number of responses for that question less than 49. Totals do not always equal 100 because of rounding of numbers.

changes need to be made to address this even though ICC has made an effort in some areas;”

“Students cannot move smoothly through our programs, but most of their needs are met

through developmental education;” “I do not feel it is a crisis, just something to be

addressed;” “There are problems, but crisis, that is a strong word;” and “The majority of

students should not be labeled as at-risk.” Responses to questionnaire item #12, the Learning

College concept was presented to help identify and provide solutions to learning problems,

yielded higher agreement among faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience (15 or 68

%) than faculty responses from the other four tables. Written faculty comments related

learning problems included the following: “It is just another observation tool that helped;”

“I am not sure that its role exactly is to identify;” and “I do not know. I did not get a presentation.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), the second stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative evolution. For two of the questionnaire items (6, 38) that relate the narrative evolution, there was minimal variation of faculty responses as compared to the other four tables. However, six of the questionnaire items (5, 13, 20, 22, 30, and 36) yielded different responses from those of the faculty in the other tables. The first four questionnaire items (5, 13, 20, and 22) examined knowledge about the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 5, faculty affirmed (15 or 65 %) that they had read about the Learning College concept in other colleges. Written faculty comments to support their reading on the Learning College concept in other institutions included the following: “I read a few when I was applying for employment here;” “Terry O’Banion’s articles and videos;” and “In library reserves for SACS.” In questionnaire item # 13, faculty affirmed (20 or 87 %) that they received sufficient background information regarding the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 20, faculty affirmed (16 or 70 %) that they had knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to support knowledge of other institutions included the following: “I cannot remember any;” “Through research on student portfolio development and assessment in general;” “I have worked for many schools that use this concept;” “None locally that I have contact with;” “Not personal knowledge;” and “Some knowledge, but it is minimal.” In questionnaire item # 22, faculty affirmed (16 or 70 %) that they were familiar with the Learning College concept claims of success. Written faculty comments to support claims of success included the following: “I did a little bit of research when I was applying for this

job;” “I am not sure, I believe we are successful;” and “I have been reading this literature for some time.”

The next two questionnaire items (30 and 36) relate to promotion of the Learning College success. In questionnaire item # 30, faculty affirmed (17 or 74 %) that employees of ICC had written articles affirming the Learning College concept. However, in questionnaire item # 36, faculty disagreed (15 or 65 %) that the Learning College concept was promoted based on stories of success without supporting evidence. Written faculty comments related to stories of success included the following: “Terry O’Banion and others have had great success which was proven;” “We have had speakers say stuff. I took them on their word;” and “There was supportive data.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), the third stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is time lag. For four of the questionnaire items (3, 4, 14, and 37) that relate to time lag, there was minimal variation of responses as compared to the other four tables. However, five of the questionnaire items (9, 10, 11, 15, and 27) yielded different responses from those of the faculty in the other tables. The first three questionnaire items (9, 11, and 27) addressed the areas of planning and development of the Learning College concept. Faculty responses yielded the following examples of agreement to these three items: (item # 9) I participated in planning the development of the Learning College concept at ICC (12 or 52 %); (item # 11) I participated in the revision of the mission/vision statement (16 or 70 %); and (item # 27) I participated in all levels of the implementation process (15 or 65 %). Written faculty comments to demonstrate participation in planning and development included the following: “I participated in the creation of the new mission statement, and I teach cooperative learning;” “I participated in PEW roundtables, mission

statement, general education competencies, writing, cooperative learning training, the student portfolio, and SACS;” and “Not in the beginning, but more as time passed.”

The last two questionnaire items (10 and 15) that related to time lag addressed the use of the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 10, faculty affirmed (20 or 87 %) that they included Learning College concept terminology in my teaching practices. In questionnaire item # 15, faculty affirmed (14 or 60 %) that ICC is experiencing a culture change through the implementation of the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to support a culture change included the following: “Yes, in addition to other influences;” “Definitely, not overnight, but over several years;” “It is on-going;” and “I do not see ICC as being different from other colleges.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), the fourth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative devolution. For five of the questionnaire items (18, 28, 29, 31, and 35) that relate to narrative devolution, there was minimal variation of faculty responses as compared to the other four tables. However, three of the items (17, 19, and 40) yielded different responses from those of the faculty in the other tables. The first two of these questionnaire items (17 and 19) addressed benefits and positive outcomes associated with the implementation of the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 17, faculty affirmed (16 or 69 %) that the benefits of the Learning College concept outweigh the costs incurred. Written faculty comments related to the benefits outweighing the costs included the following: “Yes, but the implementation is not complete;” “I think so;” “I know nothing about the costs;” and “I think it is very beneficial, but it is difficult to see the economic benefits.” In questionnaire item # 19, faculty affirmed (21 or 91 %) that they had experienced positive student outcomes with the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments to

support positive student outcomes included the following: “Mixed results. Higher confidence in work done for class, but lower confidence in ability to do work in the real world;” “Yes, but these are ideas I have been implementing for several years;” and “Yes, because students are engaged, they learn more and enjoy the classroom more.”

The last questionnaire item examined whether or not this group of faculty perceived the Learning College concept to be the next academic management fad. In questionnaire # 40, faculty disagreed (17 or 74 %) that the Learning College concept at ICC is just another academic management fad. Written faculty comments on the issue of academic management fad included the following: “Unfortunately, at times I feel this way;” “Yes, if by the LC we are only including cooperative learning but the LC is the direction most community colleges are heading or have already gone;” “I feel the Learning College has great potential. We have had some training but we need more and more focus and fine tuning and time to implement properly;” and “No, I think it really works.”

According to Birnbaum (2000), the last stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is dissonance resolution. Only four questionnaire items (32, 33, 34, and 39) relate to this stage, and these items were designed to address the success of the Learning College concept. In questionnaire item # 32, faculty disagreed (15 or 65 %) that the Learning College concept has not produced the results as promised. Written faculty comments on this issue included the following: “We have made progress;” “I do not notice a big difference from other institutions and I think ICC is behind in many areas;” “I think students have benefited a lot, but I do not know what we are claiming;” and “Not all factors are taken into consideration.” In questionnaire item # 33, faculty affirmed (100 %) that the Learning College concept will remain a lasting innovation at ICC. In questionnaire item # 34,

9 of the faculty (43 %) affirmed that they were still committed even though the Learning College concept has not produced the success claimed. Written faculty comments on their commitment included the following: “I am still committed, but I disagree with the second part;” “I am committed. I always was even before the 1996 event;” “I am committed, and I feel it does meet the claims;” “This is an approach that I adopted years ago and I still think it has merit;” and “It is a goal to always strive for.” In questionnaire item # 39, faculty were undecided (9 or 39 % agree, 6 or 26 % undecided, 8 or 35 % disagree) whether or not the Learning College concept had met its potential due to lack of faculty time to try and develop new teaching methods. Written faculty comments to illustrate their opinions included the following: “We could do much more with less load, but I will do what I can under the six plus class load that we have;” “Administration must provide adequate and appropriate time and resources if this is to be a reality;” and “We need more time to develop these; we spend too much time in meetings.”

The findings from all five tables represented a variety of faculty perspectives. Responses to a majority of the questionnaire items were found to support Birnbaum’s stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. The researcher found varying results when comparing the five tables. Although most of the faculty responses to the questionnaire items yielded similar results, several findings were significant. First, the responses of the faculty with five years or less employment at ICC yielded similar results to the faculty with one month to 15 years of teaching experience. Second, the responses of the faculty with six years or more employment at ICC yielded similar results to the faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience. Third, the faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC were in 100 % agreement regarding how the Learning College concept was presented, why it was

presented, and that they changed their teaching methods. Fourth, the faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience were in 100 % agreement that the Learning College would remain a lasting innovation.

### **Questionnaire Themes**

The next section of research focused on an analysis of qualitative data gathered through both faculty responses on the 40-item questionnaire and the faculty interviews. Themes were created, which reflected interrelated concepts from both the questionnaire responses and the interview responses. In both cases, the themes were analyzed using Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. The identification of themes yielded insight into the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College.

According to Birnbaum (2000), the first stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is creation. Creation is related to the first two identified themes: (1) promotion of the Learning College concept and (2) faculty and administration involvement in the implementation process (see Figure 4). Responses from the questionnaires reflected perceptions from 49 of the 60 full-time faculty (82 % of the faculty). These responses were analyzed and categorized into 13 themes. The discussions of the questionnaire themes based on faculty responses are reflected in the following narrative.

*Promotion of the Learning College concept.* Several of the faculty participants provided opposing viewpoints regarding how the Learning College concept was introduced and promoted. In order to maintain the confidentiality of all faculty participants, responses were grouped under related areas that provided insight for each identified theme. For the theme, promotion of the Learning College concept, the following areas are discussed: (1)

presentation of the Learning College concept; (2) promotion of the Learning College concept; and (3) identification of a crisis. Faculty responses from the questionnaire relating to how the Learning College concept was presented are listed below. Presenting the Learning College concept in a clear and meaningful manner was an important step toward gaining

<b>Birnbaum's Stages of the Life Cycle of Academic Management Fads</b>		<b>Questionnaire Themes</b>
Creation	1. 2.	Promotion of the Learning College concept Faculty and Administration involvement in the implementation process
Narrative Evolution	3. 4.	Learning College concept in other higher education institutions Faculty awareness of the Learning College concept
Time Lag	5. 6. 7.	Implementation and development of the Learning College concept Classroom use of the Learning College concept Culture change at ICC based on the Learning College concept
Narrative Devolution	8. 9. 10. 11.	Benefits obtained with implementation of the Learning College concept Challenges associated with implementation of the Learning College concept Published evidence of successful implementation of the Learning College concept Learning College as another Academic Management Fad
Dissonance Resolution	12. 13.	Learning College as a successful and lasting innovation Rationalizations for failure of the Learning College concept

Figure 4 Questionnaire themes. A comparison of the questionnaire responses to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads

faculty buy-in and support for the change (Senge et al., 1999). Faculty responses regarding the presentation of the Learning College concept included the following:

It was communicated convincingly and backed by research...I am not sure how “clear” the rationale, but I believe we are continually discovering new elements of what a “Learning College” is and can become...Numerous meetings and training sessions were used to communicate and train on the Learning College.

Faculty responses on the questionnaires included a variety of rationales for how the Learning College concept was promoted. Promotions of the Learning College concept based on faculty responses include the following:

The Learning College concept was a way to promote learning...I never understood the concept to be a way to fix a problem, but rather an opportunity to continue improvement. I did not view this model as a problem-solving model, but rather a way to support continuous improvement...There was some mention of improving organizational processes and functions.

According to Senge et al. (1999) most change occurs as the result of a crisis. Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not the Learning College concept was implemented due to a crisis. Identification of a crisis based on faculty responses included the following:

It was promoted to help the under-prepared and at-risk student, but it can even help to elevate well-prepared students to new levels of learning... Maybe crisis is a strong word, but we are dealing with large numbers of under-prepared and at-risk students... I do not recall “crisis” being used in the early years.

*Faculty and administration involvement in the implementation process.* Faculty responses for this theme were compiled into two areas: (1) how the concept was driven and (2) whether the leaders served as carriers and coaches of the idea. According to Senge et al. (1999), change driven by authority is effective in the short run and remains powerful only so long as it is pushed. Faculty responses on the questionnaire items included indecision regarding whether administration or faculty were the drivers of the Learning College concept. Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine who the drivers of the Learning College implementation were. Faculty responses on the questionnaire items affirmed an indecision regarding whether administration or faculty were the drivers of the Learning College concept. Faculty responses related to how the concept was driven included the following:

It was assisted, directed, and supported by our administration...It was driven by faculty, but supported by administration...It was faculty driven for the most part, but administration wanted it too... Faculty were given a choice-we could have turned our backs to the concept.

In order to sustain change, the leader must continually feed the system with enthusiasm, ideas, and initiative (Senge et al., 1999). Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine if the leaders continued to provide the enthusiasm and ideas needed for the success of the Learning College implementation. Faculty responses for whether the leaders served as carriers and coaches of the Learning College concept included the following:

I do not know who the leaders are, but I see new ideas being looked at with skepticism by some...I am not really sure “who does what” regarding the LC...

As coaches-yes, carriers of new ideas-yes, presenting research findings-lesser degree.

The second stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative evolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Narrative evolution is related to two identified themes: (1) the Learning College in other higher education institutions and (2) faculty awareness of the Learning College concept.

*The Learning College concept in other higher education institutions.* Faculty responses for this theme were compiled into two areas: (1) the Learning College concept in other higher education institutions and (2) stories of success in other higher education institutions. According to Birnbaum (2000), stories of successful implementation are presented to gain support for the new change. Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine if stories of success were presented as part of the implementation of the Learning College concept. Faculty responses from the questionnaire relating to the Learning College concept in other higher education institutions included less awareness from the faculty with less teaching experience and less years of employment at ICC. Faculty responses included the following:

I have read about the Learning College concept but I have not read many case studies... I have worked for many schools that use this concept... Terry 'Banion's articles and videos... I wish we would hear more about what other colleges are doing about "learning-centered."

Stories of success are important to gain support for the change (Birnbaum, 2000; Senge et al., 1999). Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether stories of success were presented as part of the promotion process. Questionnaire responses yielded

minimal knowledge of stories of success in other higher education institutions. Faculty responses regarding awareness of stories of success included the following:

Reports from other institutions were few... It is a “cutting edge” trend in higher education with the emphasis being placed on student’s learning... O’Banion’s book, “A Learning College for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” provided some stories... I have been reading this literature for some time.

*Faculty awareness of the Learning College concept.* The implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC has been in process since 1996. Based on the increase in faculty turnover since the implementation process began, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine the Learning College concept knowledge level of the current faculty. Faculty responses for this theme were compiled into three areas: (1) sufficient background information on the Learning College concept; (2) employees of ICC who have conducted presentations about the implementation process; and (3) employees of ICC have written articles about the Learning College concept. Faculty responses relating to having sufficient background information on the Learning College concept include the following:

I was aware of concept before being hired, but I did not receive sufficient information after being hired... Adopting the LC concept has required learning all along the way... All of us struggled at first as we worked to learn exactly what the Learning College is and how to apply those concepts.

Birnbaum (2000) indicated that it was important to provide success stories. Again, due to the increase in faculty turnover, the researcher tried to determine if success stories were being passed on to the new employees in order to gain their buy-in and support. Faculty responses

from the questionnaire regarding having knowledge of employees of ICC conducting presentations about the Learning College implementation process included the following:

I am familiar with some who have given presentations at the state level... I have presented at the League for Innovation Conference... I am aware of a few faculty members speaking at conferences.

According to Birnbaum (2000), stories of successful adoption are written by organizational members with vested interests. Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not the faculty had knowledge of articles that had been published by employees of ICC. According to the faculty responses, there was minimal knowledge of published articles. Faculty responses from the questionnaire relating to the issue of whether employees of ICC have written articles about the Learning College concept included the following:

I would guess they have, but I do not know for sure... They have in the Mentor and ERIC.

The third stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is time lag (Birnbaum, 2000). The researcher assumed that this was the stage where most of the implementation of the new technique occurred. Time lag was related to the following three themes: (1) the implementation and development of the Learning College concept, (2) classroom use of the Learning College concept, and (3) culture change at ICC based on the Learning College concept.

*Implementation and development of the Learning College concept.* Faculty responses for this theme were compiled in two areas: (1) planning and implementation of the Learning College concept and (2) inclusion of the Learning College concepts in the policies and

procedures. Half of the faculty (51%) who responded to the questionnaire have been employed less than five years, and therefore have not participated in the implementation process from the beginning. The researcher designed questionnaire items to determine the level of faculty involvement in order to gain a better understanding of the implementation process. Faculty responses from the questionnaires relating to the planning and implementation of the Learning College concept included the following:

Mission statement was in place when I was hired...I am a cooperative learning trainer...I am just getting started...I was heavily involved in all levels... I was involved, but not so much as a leader...I was involved, but not in all levels.

Many of the policy and procedural changes took place in the first few years of the implementation of the Learning College concept. Therefore, since 51 % of the faculty who responded to the questionnaire were employed at ICC less than five years, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not the policy and procedure changes were known by all faculty, especially the newest members. Faculty responses from the questionnaires related to the inclusion of the Learning College concept in the policies and procedures at ICC included the following:

Just claiming to be a “student-centered” college does not make a college a “learner-centered” college...The College has done an excellent job...Good job of making the concept “campus-wide”...There is a definite focus on the Learning College development.

*Classroom use of the Learning College concept.* Faculty responses for this theme were compiled in two areas: (1) the use of Learning College concept strategies in the classroom and (2) the introduction of the concept to the students. The researcher designed

questionnaire items to determine whether the Learning College concept strategies were actually being utilized by the faculty and not just written on paper as policy and procedure. Faculty responses relating to the use of Learning College concept strategies in the classroom included the following:

I am sometimes unclear about how to put the concepts into action... I include them in my course outlines and course plans...I use portfolios, cooperative learning groups and problem based learning...I include the new assessment techniques... I have changed very little...We have been using these techniques forever. Now, I am learning what to call them and I have honed my skills and made some modifications.

Because the use of Learning College concept strategies required the faculty to change some of their methods of teaching, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine how much the students were being informed of the changes that affected them in the classroom. Faculty responses from the questionnaire relating to the introduction of the Learning College concept to students included the following:

At the beginning of the semester, my students examine the list of expectations from the Learning College brochure... I do not on a regular basis discuss the Learning College concept with students... Probably in a more indirect way rather than a direct way...I hand out rubric information at beginning of every course.

*Culture change at ICC based on the Learning College concept.* Research indicates that for change to occur, some of the culture must change (Schein, 1985). Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not the culture at ICC had changed. Responses from faculty affirmed many different perspectives regarding how the

culture had changed at ICC. Some of the faculty related their responses to students, while others related their responses to the college environment. Faculty responses from the questionnaire related to whether or not ICC is experiencing a culture change with the implementation of the Learning College concepts included the following:

It is on-going...I do not see ICC as different from other colleges...It is a change, but an exciting journey away from so much emphasis on the traditional “teaching-centered” philosophies of the “old school thinking”... Yes, our culture is more directed toward student learning, rather than our teaching.

The fourth stage of the life cycles of academic management fads is narrative devolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Narrative devolution was related to four of the themes identified, which included the following: (1) benefits obtained with implementation of the Learning College concept; (2) challenges associated with implementation of the Learning College concept; (3) published evidence of successful implementation of the Learning College concept; and (4) the Learning College as another academic management fad (see Figure 3).

*Benefits obtained with implementation of the Learning College concept.* In order to determine the level of support for the Learning College concept and its utilization, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not faculty had experienced benefits with the use of the Learning College concept. Responses from the faculty affirmed various perspectives relating to benefits obtained. Faculty responses related to the benefits obtained with the implementation of the Learning College concepts included the following:

Being engaged, students learn more and enjoy the class more... It is hard to say without a control group-are the positive experiences due to the Learning College

techniques or would other techniques produce the same results...I do not have a good basis for comparison.

*Challenges associated with the implementation of the Learning College concept.*

Because change is often very time consuming and includes many challenges, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not faculty had experienced challenges with the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC. The challenges affirmed by the faculty associated with the implementation of the Learning College concept involved both issues with the students as well as issues with the faculty. Faculty responses related to the problems or challenges associated with implementation of the Learning College concept included the following:

There are many committee assignments that involve a significant amount of work without consideration for release time...At times I am asked to put professional development ahead of scheduled classes...Some-but only as we worked to learn how to do it and now we are dealing with the problem of how to assess it, but we have worked through all of the problems...Not all students are responsive to this type of teaching.

*Published evidence of successful implementation of the Learning College concept.*

Faculty responses for this theme were compiled into three areas: (1) employees of ICC who have written articles; (2) published evidence of faculty satisfaction; and (3) published evidence of improved student outcomes. According to Birnbaum (2000), published evidence of data collected is important to determine success or failure. Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not research had been published that

related to the Learning College concept. Faculty responses related to the issue of published evidence of faculty satisfaction included the following:

I do not know...I have not seen any...Yes, in certain disciplines...I believe there is, but I am not sure how or where it is published... I do not know what has been published.

Many of the faculty responses in the questionnaire indicated that the use of the Learning College concept was beneficial to students; however, there was little evidence to prove it. Faculty responses related to the issue of published evidence of improved student outcomes included the following:

Portfolios are one example... I believe we are at the point where we are beginning to see some documented evidence-to my knowledge, it has not been published... I believe it is too early and we lack sufficient data collection to claim scientifically...Of retention-yes, of standard scores-no.

*The Learning College as another academic management fad.* The second theme based on the stage of narrative devolution is whether or not the Learning College is another academic management fad. While Senge et al. (1999) asserts that many items have to be in place for successful change to occur and that most change initiatives fail, Birnbaum (2000) asserts that all academic management fads fail on their own terms and leave legacies that remain long after the fad has disappeared. The researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not the faculty thought the Learning College concept would become the next academic management fad or whether the concept would endure for years to come. Faculty responses revealed opposing perspectives relating to whether or not the Learning

College concept will become another fad. Responses related to this theme included the following:

Based on feedback from students, the Learning College concept is on target... Yes, if we only include cooperative learning strategies... Yes, but it will not fade away like other concepts ...Never! It is a good thing. It has helped our students and improved our work environment as well.

The fifth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is dissonance resolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Dissonance resolution was related to the following two themes: (1) the Learning College as a successful and lasting innovation; and (2) rationalizations for failure of the Learning College concept (see Figure 3).

*Learning College as a successful and lasting innovation.* Faculty responses from the questionnaire affirmed opposing viewpoints. For the theme, the Learning College as a successful and lasting innovation, the following areas were discussed: (1) can the Learning College create the success that it claims; (2) are faculty satisfied with the progression of the implementation; (3) will the Learning College remain a lasting innovation; and (4) do the benefits outweigh the costs of implementation. According to Birnbaum (2000), the fifth stage reflects rationalizations for failure. Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not the faculty viewed the Learning College innovation as a success or failure. Faculty responses based on whether the Learning College can create the success it claims included the following:

Yes, within fiscal limitations...Yes-if truly implemented and constantly monitored and changed as necessary... It cannot succeed if students do not have the basic skills...The results have been slower than expected...I am still

committed, but unsure with the success... I do not think it has been successful...

I am committed to most of it; certainly the learner-centered concept.

Time is a major factor with the successful implementation of the Learning College concept.

Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine if faculty were content with the progress of the implementation of the Learning College concept or whether the faculty thought more should be done to facilitate the implementation process. Faculty responses from the questionnaire relating to whether the faculty were satisfied with the progression of the implementation of the Learning College concept included the following:

Yes. But at times it was too fast, and there were too many meetings without significant new findings to report...No. The Learning College concept allows more students without motivation to float through the system...We need a wider range of strategies presented.

The researcher designed questionnaire items to examine whether or not faculty affirmed that the Learning College would become a lasting innovation and to determine what faculty thought could be done to help ensure it would become a lasting innovation. Faculty responses to whether the Learning College will remain a lasting innovation included the following:

The Learning College will remain a lasting innovation... It is currently part of our culture...I am confident that elements of the Learning College will endure, but time changes everything.... It will as long as we recruit and hire new individuals who are sold on the idea...I am not sure any innovation ever lasts forever, but this one will be long-lived.

Over the years, some of the faculty responses have been related to the amount of money spent on implementing the Learning College concept. Therefore, the researcher designed

questionnaire items to determine whether or not the faculty thought the benefits to the students and the institution outweighed the costs incurred. Faculty responses to whether or not the benefits of the implementation of the Learning College concepts outweigh the costs included the following:

The implementation is not complete. I am not sure you can ever be done...It is too soon to know yet...I am still waiting to see results...It is very beneficial, but difficult to see the economic benefits... Absolutely! Students and all of us have benefited.

*Rationalizations for failure of the Learning College concept.* Throughout the implementation process, faculty have commented about how much time is required to attend meetings, to attend professional development activities, and to plan classroom activities that reflect the Learning College concept. Therefore, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine how faculty time related to the Learning College concept implementation. Faculty responses from the questionnaire related to whether the Learning College has met its potential based on the lack of faculty time to try and develop new methods included the following:

Administration must provide adequate and appropriate time and resources if this is to be a reality...There is a gap between implementation of the concept and faculty preparedness to fully reach the ideal...It takes more time to explore new methods and develop new plans ... We need more time to develop the new methods. We spend too much time in meetings

## Interview Themes

Faculty interviews were conducted with twelve full-time faculty members (20 % of the ICC faculty), who were selected through a stratified random sampling procedure.

Each interview lasted approximately one hour and provided informative responses from

<b>Birnbaum's Stages of the Life Cycle of Academic Management Fads</b>		<b>Interview Themes</b>
Creation	1. 2.	Promotion of the Learning College concept Successful claims for the Learning College at ICC
Narrative Evolution	3. 4.	Successful promotion of Learning College concept in other higher education institutions Faculty awareness of the Learning College concept
Time Lag	5. 6. 7. 8.	Use of the Learning College concept in the classroom Success stories written about the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC Culture change at ICC based on the implementation of the Learning College concept Effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC
Narrative Devolution	9. 10. 11.	Benefits obtained with implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC Challenges associated with implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC Learning College concept as another Academic Management Fad
Dissonance Resolution	12. 13.	Learning College concept as a successful and lasting innovation Rationalizations for failure of the Learning College concept

Figure 5 Interview themes. A comparison of interview responses to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads

each faculty member. According to Mason (1996), interviews should be conducted until no new information is obtained. When the researcher finished the 12 interviews, the results obtained provided no new information. The interview responses were analyzed and categorized into 13 themes according to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads (see Figure 5). The interview themes based on the faculty responses are reflected below.

The first stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is creation (Birnbaum, 2000). In this analysis, two themes reflecting the stage of creation emerged: (1) promotion of the Learning College concept and (2) successful claims for the Learning College at ICC. Faculty responses from the interviews revealed affirmative statements for both.

*Promotion of the Learning College concept.* The promotion of the Learning College concept was presented during the first few years of the implementation process. Since 51 % of the faculty who responded to the questionnaire were employed less than five years, the researcher designed questionnaire items to determine whether or not both the long-term and the new faculty were aware of how the Learning Concept was promoted. Faculty responses related to the promotion of the Learning College concept included the following:

It was a response to a need-the changing demographics of students including the under-prepared student and dislocated worker...It was implemented to remain current with trends in education... It provides a focus; a common vocabulary.

*Successful claims for the Learning College concept at ICC.* Faculty were reminded that ICC had been engaged in the implementation of the Learning College concept for nine years and were asked if they thought ICC could create the success that the Learning College concept claims. Faculty responses related to the claims of success included the following:

We can accomplish the success claimed because ICC is a small institution and students have more one-to-one contact... Not really. I'm still waiting to see some evidence...I think the assessment practices we are beginning to use (Penelope-a database to use rubrics) will prove or disprove our success... Yes, it can be successful, but we have to continue to make it available to new faculty and refresh ourselves from time to time.

The second stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative evolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Two themes were identified from the faculty responses for this stage: (1) successful promotion of the Learning College concept in other higher education institutions and (2) faculty awareness of the Learning College concept (see Figure 5).

*Successful promotion of the Learning College concept in other higher education institutions.* Responses from the questionnaire items indicated that faculty had differing levels of knowledge regarding the use of the Learning College in other higher education institutions. Therefore, the researcher designed questions to clarify these differences during the interviews. However, responses from the faculty interviews continued to indicate that faculty had little knowledge of the Learning College concept in other higher education institutions. Faculty responses related to the theme of successful promotion in other higher education institutions included the following:

Articles were provided in workshops and professional development training...A few colleges and universities were cited... I know that others are doing this, but I do not know of their successes...Others who talked about incorporating the concept stated that it would increase student learning.

*Faculty awareness of the Learning College concept.* Questionnaire responses indicated various levels of knowledge regarding the Learning College concept. Therefore, the researcher designed questions to determine why the levels of knowledge were different. Responses from the interviews continued to reveal differing levels of knowledge regarding the Learning College concept. Faculty responses related to faculty awareness of the Learning College concept included the following:

I did some reading on the assessment task force... I had only read about the concept through information provided at seminars...It is a new name to an old way of doing things... In my bachelor's program they proposed different techniques on how to improve the educational experience. The Learning College was one of the techniques. It is more of an outcomes-based concept.

The third stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is time lag (Birnbaum, 2000). Faculty were asked how the Learning College had impacted them personally in their academic area especially in the areas of the classroom, implementation, and culture change. This third stage when compared to the interview responses revealed the following themes: (1) use of the Learning College concept in the classroom; (2) success stories written about the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC; (3) culture change based on the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC; and (4) effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC (see Figure 5).

*The use of the Learning College concept in the classroom.* For the theme, the use of the Learning College concepts in the classroom, the following areas were presented: (1) the impacts of the Learning College on my teaching;(2) the improvement of my teaching with the use of the Learning College concept strategies; (3) time related to the use and

development of the Learning College concept strategies; and (4) the observation of other faculty in their classroom use of the Learning College concept strategies. In the questionnaire items, faculty indicated that they did use the Learning College concept strategies in their classroom, but failed to elaborate on how and when they used the strategies. Therefore, in the interviews the researcher designed questions to clarify how the Learning College concept strategies were used. Faculty responses relating to the impacts of the Learning College on their teaching included the following:

I use cooperative learning about 20 % of the time, and I hope to increase it to 50 %...My classes are structured with 10 % lecture, 40 % students working together, 40 % students writing, and 10 % in conference with the teacher...I do not use much lecture-maybe once a week for 30 minutes. Most of our activities are hands-on...I use group activities with clear tasks and facilitation

In the questionnaire, 94 % of the 49 faculty who responded affirmed that they had changed their teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities. Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine how the Learning College concept had affected the faculty's teaching. Faculty responses related to the improvement of my teaching with the use of the Learning College concept included the following:

Sure, by trying more methods, I am reaching more students... I am not one to agree with everything, but I am open to all sorts of new and different techniques...I moved a little more away from lecture and tried new approaches... I am more open to students. I listen more to what they have to say. I give them more time to talk.

Responses from the questionnaires indicated that many of the faculty thought that time was an issue as it relates to the implementation of the Learning College concept. In the interviews, the researcher designed questions to determine faculty allotment of time to develop and use Learning College concept strategies. Faculty responses related to faculty time to use and develop the Learning College concept strategies included the following:

I spend more time in preparation outside of class... With Learning College activities, I am constantly changing how things are done... What really takes time is trying to determine if the students are getting what I want them to get from the project... Now that I've gotten more comfortable with it, it actually makes me more flexible. I can go in what ever direction I need to and change my methods immediately.

Some of the questionnaire responses indicated that the faculty had some difficulty applying what they had learned in workshops to their own classroom. Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine whether or not the faculty had spent time in classrooms of other faculty to see how the Learning College concept strategies were implemented. Faculty responses related to the observation of other faculty in their classroom use of the Learning College concept included the following:

Yes I have, but only in my own area of teaching... Yes, I have gotten some really good ideas. We also complete observational instruments on each other to supplement our portfolios... I would like to have time to do more... I would like to observe faculty in other divisions.

*Success stories written about the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC.* Success stories represent the second theme that was identified from Birnbaum's third

stage, time lag, of the cycle of academic management fads. General responses were presented in the questionnaires regarding success stories written. Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine if the faculty knew about specific publications written by employees of ICC. Faculty responses related to their knowledge of success stories written by employees of ICC included the following:

Dr. Lewis, and Dr. Johnson's dissertation...Johnson and Gold presented at conferences along with Womack and Jeremiah Council...The Mentor...Research for degrees...An article on the internet by Dr. Johnson.

*Culture change based on the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC.*

In the questionnaire, 28 of the 49 faculty (58 %) affirmed that a culture change had occurred at ICC. "Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine how the faculty concluded that there was a culture change. Culture change based on the implementation of the Learning College concept, was examined in the following two areas: (1) assessment of a culture change; and (2) assessment of a community awareness of the Learning College change at ICC. Faculty responses related to whether ICC is experiencing a culture change with the implementation of the Learning College concept included the following:

Definitely a change in classroom expectations, namely trying to get the student to be more responsible...The main place that I see the difference is campus climate. There is very little animosity between divisions, faculty, and administration... Faculty have a more open attitude toward new ideas, concepts, and change in instructional techniques... Class is more active and student friendly. The college has a more student friendly atmosphere... The Learning College terminology is used in talking, meetings, and documents.

The second area examined for culture change was based on the faculty's responses regarding the community's knowledge of the Learning College concept at ICC. Faculty responses related to whether the community is aware of the Learning College concept included the following:

I think the people in the community are aware of what we are doing, just not what to call it...Through advisory committees, we get feedback that everyone is happy with what we are doing here at ICC...We get some calls from industry about the good changes they see...Not in the geographical community, but from the academic community.

*Effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC.*

Effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept was the fourth theme identified. For this theme, the effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept, the following areas were examined: (1) the effectiveness of the training and (2) the effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept. Faculty responses from the questionnaire items indicated that not all faculty were satisfied with the training that they had received. Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine what aspects of both the training and the implementation were effective. Faculty responses related to the effectiveness of the training aspect of the Learning College concepts included the following:

We need more in problem based learning... It is always helpful to get more exposure to more strategies, more methods, more concepts. We have had all the Johnson and Johnson we need... The training books are outstanding.

In the questionnaire, 34 of the faculty (68 %) affirmed the effectiveness of the implementation process of the Learning College concept. However, there were few written comments to support their affirmation. Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine what effectiveness meant to the faculty. Faculty responses relating to the effectiveness of the implementation process of the Learning College concept included the following:

We are on an incline that is still evolving... At the beginning, I thought we were spending too much time on it. Now, I am seeing the benefit and the willingness to move on... It was not intrusive, not disruptive, but troubling at times regarding “what are they talking about now and how can I incorporate it into my class”... The first two years were very calculated. Since then, it has become more fragmented with plenty of focus on professional development, less focus on the Learning College basics, and more focus on assessment, processes, and cooperative learning.

The fourth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is narrative devolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Three themes were identified from the interview responses that relate to this stage: (1) benefits obtained with the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC; (2) challenges associated with implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC; (3) the Learning College as another academic management fad (see Figure 5).

*Benefits obtained with the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC.* In the questionnaire the faculty indicated that benefits had been obtained, but they provided few responses to support their responses. Therefore, in the interviews the researcher designed

questions to determine how the faculty experienced benefits with the implementation of the Learning College concept. Faculty responses related to benefits obtained with the implementation of the Learning College concept included the following:

There is increased cooperation and better retention of information among students...There is increased student involvement and responsibility... Teaching is more enjoyable, exciting, flexible, and interactive... Students have become more verbal with improved interpersonal skills and they are more willing to be team participants.

*Challenges associated with implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC.*

In the questionnaire, 14 of the 49 faculty (29 %) affirmed that they had experienced problems with the implementation of the Learning College concept. Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine what type of problems the faculty had experienced. Challenges identified from the interviews included difficulties related to both faculty implementation and student acceptance. Faculty responses related to the challenges or problems associated with student acceptance with the implementation of the Learning College concept included the following:

It is hard to get cooperation among all students...Some students try to control in group work, while others do nothing... There is confusion for students since some faculty use the concepts and some do not...When students work together, they understand the concepts better and I have less failures

Faculty responses related to the challenges or problems associated with faculty implementation of the Learning College concept included the following:

There is fracturing and campus-wide fragmentation as more committees are

added...The most difficult part is trying to implement it in on-line classes... The hardest part is narrowing down exactly what you need to do and how and then, how to assess it... I have difficulty fitting what is needed into the structured activities...Biggest challenge is time to really structure the activities correctly

*Learning College as another academic management fad.* In the questionnaire, 29 of the 49 faculty (59 %) disagreed that the Learning College concept would become another academic management fad. Furthermore, as a faculty employed at ICC, the researcher had heard comments early in the implementation process such as “this too shall pass.” Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine whether or not the Learning College concept would become another academic management fad. Faculty responses related to whether or not the Learning College will become another academic management fad included the following:

If you look at the history of management and the history of education, education is usually lagging behind a few years of what is tried...The concept is one of many similar ideas resurfacing every 30 years or so... I think that everything has the potential to remain for awhile, then leave parts behind...Wow, I guess it could become a fad, but I have done a lot of things in my life and this is the best.

The fifth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is dissonance resolution (Birnbaum, 2000). The researcher assumed that ICC was not in this stage of the fad cycle. Nonetheless, the following two themes were identified for this stage: (1) the Learning College as a successful and lasting innovation; and (2) rationalizations for the failure of the Learning College concept (see Figure 5).

*Learning College concept as a successful and lasting innovation.* Questionnaire responses indicated some disappointment and disillusion with the Learning College concept. Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine whether or not the faculty thought the Learning College concept would be a successful and lasting innovation. Faculty responses related to whether or not the Learning College will remain a lasting innovation included the following:

I think we are headed on the right track. I just wish we could sit down in groups and say this is the project we are going to do and actually have a day to do it... We are moving at a good pace, but we have temporarily lost focus due to other pressing issues... Communication is not done very well... It moved slowly because people needed time to change.

*Rationalizations for the failure of the Learning College concept.* Faculty responses from the questionnaire items revealed a variety of perspectives regarding whether or not they thought the Learning College concept could fail. Therefore, the researcher designed interview questions to determine why some of the faculty thought the Learning College could fail. Faculty responses related to the rationalizations for failure of the Learning College concept included the following:

I know it works when implemented the right way... It will be successful if people follow the concepts... It works when implemented the right way... It is obviously not going to work if you do not want it to. Some faculty retired and never changed, and others do not intend to change; any framework can become a fad if the idea becomes too dogmatic... I think we will never get "there" with new faculty coming in.

## **Review of the Learning College documents**

Isothermal Community College is a comprehensive, two-year, open-door, public institution that serves the individuals of both Rutherford and Polk Counties in North Carolina. The college offers individual courses and certificates, diplomas, and degree programs. In the spring of 1996, Isothermal Community College (ICC) began a journey toward the development of a Learning College “to address issues that would have or were having a substantial impact on the college” (Johnson, 2001, p. 2).

According to Johnson (2001), the learning initiative was the culmination of three significant events: (1) ICC’s Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) self-study in 1993-95; (2) participation in the PEW education roundtables in January to April 1996; and (3) a workshop on diversity facilitated by Dr. James Anderson, Vice Provost of Undergraduate Affairs at North Carolina State University in March 1996. The SACS self-study, conducted during 1993-95 began the focus on the future direction of the ICC. Faculty, staff, and administration participated in the SACS self-study, which provided a comprehensive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of ICC (Johnson, 2001). This self-study produced a list of issues facing ICC.

According to Johnson (2001), the PEW Higher Education Roundtable that works to identify best practices for academic restructuring, was the most critical aspect for stimulating the Learning College initiative. The results of the PEW Higher Education Roundtable led to several campus roundtable discussions at ICC from January to April 1996, which focused on general issues and challenges facing higher education (Johnson, 2001). The list of issues raised during the SACS self-study guided the roundtable discussions. Based on the SACS

self-study and the ICC roundtable discussions, according to Johnson (2001) “The following list of issues was established to address the direction the ICC should take:

- Maintaining a student-centered vision
- Training/development technology and activities to support the understanding and dissemination of a shared vision
- Developing curriculum/continuing education linkages through the educational programs
- Structuring a strategy for change
- Providing an opportunity for participation in the planning process by the College campus community as a whole” (pp. 3-4).

The third impetus for the Learning College initiative at ICC was the result of a visit by Dr. James Anderson in March 1996, which led to a discussion on diversity within the context of teaching and learning (Johnson, 2001). Dr. Anderson reported on institutions that were on the cutting edge of becoming learning institutions. He presented a challenge regarding becoming a cutting edge learning institution to the ICC faculty and staff who attended the workshop in which the overwhelming majority (85 %) responded “yes” (Johnson, 2001). From that point on, the Learning College journey began at ICC.

Soon after the Learning College process began, it became necessary to create taskforces or teams to monitor the progress and to involve faculty. The first team established was the leadership team, Team for the Advancement of a Learning College (TALC), formerly called the committee on learning (Johnson, 2001). This first leadership team, the committee on learning, was formed in September 1997. In January 1998, this committee on learning led an active learning workshop for faculty to identify barriers at ICC toward

becoming a Learning College. From the list of barriers that participants created in that workshop, four other teams or taskforces were created at ICC: (1) professional development for faculty; (2) professional development for staff; (3) technology; and (4) cooperative learning (Johnson, 2001). Over the years, the teams have changed names, merged, or were dissolved resulting in the current 2005 leadership team and eight learning taskforces. From the ICC website as of November 7, 2005, the learning team (TALC) and the eight taskforces along with their established dates include the following:

- Team for the Advancement of a Learning College (TALC) (Leadership Team)
- Taskforce on Professional Development for Faculty (September 1998)
- Taskforce on Professional Development for Staff (September 1998)
- Taskforce on Assessment (October 1998)
- Enhancing Systems and Processes Taskforce (ESP) (January 1999)
- Institutional Effectiveness Taskforce (July 2001)
- Learning Strategies Taskforce (October 2001)
- Campus Life Taskforce (July 2002)
- Business and Industry Taskforce (December 2004).

According to the ICC website as of November 7, 2005, the TALC leadership team guides the college's efforts toward becoming a Learning College by supporting all taskforces and assisting with developing learning activities. The Taskforce on Professional Development for Faculty determines faculty needs and explores the best resources for addressing those needs. The Taskforce on Professional Development for Staff determines staff activities based on identified needs that will enhance the journey toward becoming a Learning College. The Taskforce on Assessment participates in the ongoing development of

an assessment plan that will focus on measuring learning outcomes and competencies. The Enhancing Systems and Processes Taskforce (ESP) reviews institutional processes and policies to support learning, and it identifies methods to enhance student success and staff effectiveness. The Institutional Effectiveness Taskforce assists in college-wide planning and evaluation. The Learning Strategies Taskforce explores strategies for improving learning in the classroom, which includes these two areas: (1) cooperative learning and (2) learning communities. According to Johnson (2001), “Learning communities were piloted in the fall of 2000 with limited success; and they were piloted again in fall of 2001 with substantial student enrollment” (p. 11). The Campus Life Taskforce explores activities that promote morale and a sense of community among ICC employees. The final taskforce, the Business and Industry Taskforce was created to enhance ICC support for potential, new, and existing community businesses.

In reviewing a sampling of the minutes from each taskforce and the TALC leadership team, the researcher determined that each taskforce included both faculty and administrative involvement, and each included a focus on the Learning College initiative. Most of the taskforces, along with the TALC leadership team, are chaired and co-chaired by faculty with the exception of the assessment taskforce and the learning strategies taskforce. Each taskforce is comprised of voluntary membership across campus and each makes recommendations from their findings to the TALC leadership team (ICC Website, November 7, 2005). According to Johnson (2001), in addition to the taskforce accomplishments, “the pursuit of the Learning College concept has provided the following benefits:

- Enriched professional development opportunities
- A compelling vision for the College

- A clarification of values
- A clear set of expectations for faculty, staff, and students
- An organizational umbrella to encompass Learning College goals
- Efficiency and consistency in applying technology to learning
- A sense of empowerment for those participating in the initiative
- Broad-based involvement across the College
- A willingness to take risks and think and act outside of the box” (p. 16-17).

Further information obtained from the ICC website on November 7, 2005 includes an Advancement of a Learning College Timeline for ICC. Included in this document are: (1) the three main events which helped establish the Learning College initiative; (2) professional development activities for both ICC faculty and staff; (3) state and national presentations by faculty and staff; and (4) national speakers who led workshops at ICC toward the development of the Learning College concept. The last update for this timeline was June 2004.

Publications reviewed by the researcher that were created at ICC based on the Learning College concept include: (1) A General Competencies brochure that lists expectations of ICC graduates; (2) A Community of Learners brochure; and (3) A Learning College Primer booklet. The General Competencies brochure provides a list of general competencies expected of each student in order for the student to be successful either getting a job or transferring to another college or university. In the brochure, A Community of Learners, students are given a list of expectations, both from the student and from the faculty. Also included in this brochure is a brief list of the general competencies as well as the mission/vision statement of ICC.

From the ICC website as of November 7, 2005, the ICC mission/vision statement that was developed in 1998 demonstrated evidence to support the Learning College initiative and it is listed below:

**Mission statement** - ICC exists to improve life through learning.

**Vision Statement** - To transform ICC into a preeminent center recognized nationally for excellence in learning and services.

**Vivid Description** - Includes the following four statements:

- Learning outcomes will be monitored and documented for student credentials
- Learning facilitators will remove barriers and guide learners as they connect with resources, experts and learning experiences
- Options for learners will accommodate varying needs and abilities and will provide choices in support services and a variety of delivery methods any time, any place
- All employees will be involved in ongoing professional development in support of the College mission

**Values** - In improving life through learning, we embrace the following values:

- A commitment to excellence
- Nurturing an organizational climate of integrity, care and respect for individuals
- Innovation, evaluation and informed change
- Elimination of barriers to learning
- Self-directed learning and critical thinking
- The preservation and perpetuation of our diverse cultural heritage
- Serving as a catalyst for positive community growth

The third college publication, *A Learning College Primer*, provides a variety of information including descriptions or write-ups on the following topics: (1) a definition of the Learning College; (2) brief information on the TALC leadership team and the taskforces; (3) outcomes assessment; (4) active and cooperative learning; (5) learning styles; (6) learning communities; (7) technology and support services; (8) developmental education; (9) economic development; and (10) diversity. Each section provided a brief narrative of each topic based on information obtained through both the literature and ICC.

Another document reviewed was the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that included information regarding assessment. Assessment is the current challenge related to the Learning College concept at ICC as discussed in the QEP. According to Lewis, Johnson, Womack, and Quinley (2005), “Since the fall of 1998, ICC has engaged in an assessment initiative that includes the development of general education competency statements and rubrics, a mapping analysis of the curriculum, a student portfolio emphasis, and the implementation of a program-based assessment system” (p. iii). In 1999-2000, faculty and staff worked together to establish rubrics for the general education competencies. According to Lewis et al (2005), “The general education competencies include the following:

- To communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and through the demonstration of information literacy
- To analyze problems and make logical conclusions
- To demonstrate positive interpersonal skills through cooperative learning and group interaction
- To demonstrate basic computer skills

- To demonstrate technical skills in the student's chosen field of study (Applied Science and Technology and Business Sciences only)
- To demonstrate awareness and the appreciation of diverse cultural and historical perspectives (Arts and Sciences only)" (p. 5).

Curriculum matrices compiled by faculty and deans illustrate how these competencies were incorporated into courses of the various programs offered by the college (Lewis et al., 2005). The next stage of the assessment journey as outlined in the QEP includes three interrelated initiatives: (1) general education learning outcomes assessment plans for each academic area; (2) portfolio development for the collection of student artifacts and student reflections on the learning process; and (3) the implementation of a software program to serve as a tool for analyzing assessment data, Project Penelope (Lewis et al., 2005).

According to Lewis et al. (2005), "The purpose of Project Penelope is to improve the curriculum, instruction, and student learning in academic programs by developing a rubric-based database that will record rubric-based scores from a representative sample of students, classes, and assessment methodologies" (p. 7).

Further information obtained from the QEP indicated that ICC has made a commitment to address three goals: (1) program assessment; (2) student involvement; and (3) a capstone portfolio initiative(Lewis et al., 2005). The first goal, program assessment, includes a process where each academic program will address general education student learning outcomes. Student artifacts will be selected through a randomly selected process and assessed using the accompanying rubrics. Then, data will be entered into a software program called Project Penelope.

With the second goal, student involvement, students are involved in both self-assessment and peer-assessment (Lewis et al., 2005). Activities designed through cooperative learning training will help to address both areas. The last goal, a capstone portfolio initiative, will include the development of student portfolios. According to Lewis et al. (2005),

“Through the use of portfolios, students will:

- Develop a view of themselves as learners
- Develop a better understanding of expected learning outcomes as stated in the general education competencies
- Understand more deeply what they have learned and not learned
- Develop a better understanding of how they learn
- Gain feedback for improving their learning
- See the value of writing as it relates to learning
- See relationships among courses
- See the values of what they are learning as it relates to their career goals
- Develop a sense of learning as on-going through life
- Become self-directed learners.” (pp. 34-35)

The final document examined in the review of the ICC learning documents is the Technology Plan. When ICC began the journey to becoming a Learning College in 1996, it was clear that the need to remain current with technology was an issue. Both the 2002-2004 Strategic Plan Update and the Technology Plan Update provide numerous ways that the Information Systems Technology (IST) department personnel have improved the technology services at ICC. The IST department has demonstrated their commitment to become a Learning College through their continued effort to raise the technology standards at ICC. A

small sampling of their efforts include the following: (1) increased technology in the classrooms; (2) created a plan to keep faculty computers current; (3) assisted with the addition of more computer labs for students; (4) offered technology training to faculty and staff; (5) improved network security; (6) added a student information Kiosk in the library; (7) made major changes to the college website; and (8) assisted with new software program implementation.

From the review of the Learning College documents, the researcher determined that all of the information contained in these documents supports the development and implementation of the Learning College. But, as one faculty indicated, “Just saying you are student-centered does not make you a Learning College.” While this faculty member is correct, many of the responses from faculty through both the interviews and the questionnaires provide support for the validity that the information obtained in these documents reflected Learning College work in process throughout the ICC campus and classrooms.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Discussion and Interpretation of findings**

The purpose of this study was to understand the implementation process of the Learning College concept through faculty perceptions as related to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. Faculty perceptions were important as “colleges and universities realize that their future depends on how well they prepare the next academic generation and on how well they maintain the vigor and productivity of current faculty members” (Baldwin, 1984, p. 45). This chapter includes an interpretation of the research findings as follows: (a) context for change; (b) interpretation of findings; (c) summary of recommendations; (d) recommendations for future research; and (e) conclusions.

#### **Context for Change**

Community colleges continue to be faced with demands for increased accountability, declines in traditional funding sources, demands for increased services, greater and more sophisticated competition in the educational marketplace, diverse populations, and a rapidly evolving workplace (Boswell, 2002; Bellanca, 2002; Levin, 2002; McGrath & Spear, 1991; Miles, 2002; Milliron, 2002; Phillippe, 1995; Roueche, Roueche, & Johnson, 2002; and Vaughan, 2000). In addition to these demands, higher education institutions were challenged through national reports, “A Nation at Risk” and “An American Imperative” to focus on higher education expectations. The challenge for higher education institutions of focusing on higher educational expectations and student outcomes while experiencing an increasingly diverse and under-prepared student population and an ever changing global marketplace has led to the initiation of new innovations in community colleges.

Implementing a new innovation in the culture of an organization is no easy task. It requires leadership that will inspire, support, and allow imagination and initiative to exist at all levels (Senge et al., 1999). Leadership is pivotal to organizational change, and change is best accomplished through the efforts of an exemplary or transformational leader. According to numerous scholars, transformational and exemplary leadership promote shared values, collegial decision-making, innovative strategies, and a customer orientation that promotes the development of effective organizational change (Baker, 1998; Barber, 1992; Bass, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; and Roueche, Baker & Rose, 1989).

Organizational change usually occurs from the result of either internal or external forces that can occur in response to a strong shock from the environment (Gibson et al., 1997) or a type of crisis (Birnbaum, 2000). In many higher education institutions throughout the United States, leaders are responding to the crises through the planning and development of a major organizational change. The focus of this case study was to assess and analyze the implementation of the Learning College concept in a small, rural community college, Isothermal Community College in Spindale, NC. According to Johnson (2001), Isothermal Community College began its journey toward becoming a Learning College in the spring of 1996 based on three events. These three events represent internal forces, SACS self-study and PEW roundtable discussions and external forces, the National PEW roundtable for issues in higher education and a challenge from a conference presenter.

Management of an organizational change of this magnitude required both the acceptance and the participation of the organizational members. According to Gibson et al. (1997) change which is authority driven does not produce positive change. Therefore, the leadership at Isothermal Community College began the Learning College

journey through voluntary faculty participation in a series of workshops. For any change to be successful, the leadership must transform the organization through a culture change (Schein, 1985). While not all elements of the culture can or must be changed, there has to be some evidence that the new movement or technique has become embedded into the organization through new definitions in processes and routines (Schein, 1996). Through faculty, administration, and staff participation, the Learning College concept has been in the process of becoming embedded in the culture at Isothermal Community College since 1996.

Isothermal Community College began the process by creating a leadership team to guide the process. Taskforces were established to address barriers to becoming a Learning College that were identified by the faculty. The college mission/vision statement was changed to reflect the new learning paradigm. A new focus began to permeate all activities of the college including policy and procedure development. This prompted employees at ICC to ask, "How is this going to affect learning?" The ICC Learning College movement continued with the development of learner expectations, general competencies for students, cooperative learning training for faculty and rubrics for assessment.

As a faculty member of Isothermal Community College, the researcher became interested in the implementation process of the Learning College concept, especially what was good, what needed improvement, and whether or not the innovation would last. Because faculty are the middle level between administration and students and they are responsible for implementing the Learning College concept in the classroom, the researcher chose only to assess faculty perceptions. All full-time faculty were asked to participate by completing a 40-item questionnaire and a stratified random sample of faculty were invited to participate in a one-hour interview session.

This study was designed to assess the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College through faculty perceptions using Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. Because all innovations have the potential to become fads, the researcher's questions were designed to see if the concept had been implemented in such a manner that would prevent it from becoming just another academic management fad. Based on the research of Birnbaum (2000), Chaffee (1985), Cole (1999), and Senge et al. (1999), fads seem to follow a standard sequence in education, and certain implementation processes need to occur to prevent the innovation from becoming a fad.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The focus of this study was to determine how faculty perceptions relating to the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College conform to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. Through analysis and interpretation, the researcher determined how both faculty responses on the questionnaire and faculty responses in the interviews relate to three factors: Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads; years of faculty employment at ICC; and years of faculty teaching experience. The researcher assumed that faculty responses based on years of employment at ICC would yield different results especially in the areas of promotion, presentation, and planning and development, especially since 51 % of the 49 faculty participants had been employed five years or less at ICC.

Based on the research regarding novice, mid-career, and seasoned faculty, the researcher further assumed that years of teaching experience among faculty would yield different results. However, the research affirmed minimal variation in the faculty responses

based on years of teaching experience. It appeared that some of the less experienced faculty were familiar with the techniques based on their recent academic involvement with their own college degrees, whereas some of the more experienced faculty were familiar with the techniques through both reading and trial and error in the classroom.

As indicated previously, the five stages of Birnbaum's life cycle of academic management fads include the following: (1) creation, (2) narrative evolution, (3) time lag, (4) narrative devolution, and (5) dissonance resolution (Birnbaum, 2000). Part of the difficulty relating the questionnaire responses to Birnbaum's stages of the life cycle of academic management fads lies with the fact that within the explanation of each cycle, many of the explanations seem to overlap into the adjacent cycles. In essence, some of the questionnaire items could fit into two of the cycles instead of just one. However, the researcher related each questionnaire item to only one stage of the academic management fad cycle based on the primary emphasis of the question (see Figure 2).

## **Research Question Conclusions**

### **Research Question One**

What are the faculty perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the implementation process of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College?

All participating faculty affirmed the following items at a response rate of 60 % and higher. Faculty affirmed that a clear, authentic, convincing rationale for the Learning College concept was presented and that the Learning College concept was promoted as a method to improve student outcomes and to improve organizational processes and functions. Faculty affirmed that they were satisfied with the progression of the implementation and that the leaders of the Learning College concept were seen as carriers and coaches who present new

ideas and research findings. Faculty further affirmed that they received sufficient background information, that they believe in the Learning College concept strategies, that they have changed their teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities, and that they have experienced positive student outcomes from using the Learning College concept. In addition, faculty affirmed that they encourage students to understand the concept and that they include the Learning College terminology in their teaching practices. Faculty also affirmed that the Learning College concept was promoted as a new innovation in higher education and they affirmed that it will remain a lasting, successful innovation at ICC. Furthermore, faculty affirmed that the Learning College concepts are threaded throughout college policies and procedures and that employees of ICC have written articles and conducted workshops about the Learning College concept at ICC.

Faculty with five years of less employment at ICC were not at 100 % agreement on any one questionnaire item. This group of faculty affirmed that there was a learning crisis among students at ICC, although they did not affirm that the Learning College concept was developed to improve the crisis. Faculty affirmed that the Learning College concepts were threaded throughout college policies and procedures, but they did not affirm their participation in the planning and development of the Learning College concept. Furthermore, they affirmed that the Learning College concept will remain a lasting innovation at ICC, but they were unsure whether or not a culture change had occurred

Faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC were in 100 % agreement that a clear, authentic rationale for the Learning College concept was presented and that it was promoted as a way to improve student outcomes. This group of faculty affirmed their participation in the planning and development of the Learning College concept. In addition,

the faculty affirmed that they believe in the Learning College concept strategies and that they had changed their teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities. The faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC affirmed that they had experienced positive student outcomes, but they were undecided whether or not they had experienced problems. Furthermore, the faculty affirmed that the Learning College concepts were threaded throughout college policies and procedures and that ICC had experienced a culture change. The faculty also affirmed the progression of the implementation of the Learning College concept and that it will remain a lasting innovation at ICC and not become just another academic management fad.

There was minimal variation in the faculty responses related to teaching experience. However, the faculty with less teaching experience and less employment at ICC had similar responses to the individual questionnaire items and the faculty with more teaching experience and more employment at ICC had similar responses to the individual questionnaire items. According to Baldwin (1984), new faculty are overwhelmed with learning how to balance the demands of teaching, scholarship, and service. Responses from the faculty with less teaching experience affirmed their lack of time to try and develop new teaching methods. In addition, a comparison of the four tables of faculty responses affirmed that both faculty with five years or less employment at ICC and faculty with one month or 15 years of teaching experience had less knowledge of the Learning College concept than faculty with more employment at ICC and more teaching experience.

Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that overall the 49 participating faculty were satisfied with the Learning College concept implementation, that they affirmed the Learning College concept strategies, and they affirmed that they had changed their

teaching methods accordingly. However, they were unclear who is driving the change or whether or not any research had been done or published. Furthermore, the faculty affirmed that the Learning College concept will remain a lasting innovation and not become just another academic management fad.

### **Research Question Two**

How does the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College relate to the stages of the life cycle of academic management fads?

According to Birnbaum (2000), the first stage of the life cycle of academic management fads is creation. While Birnbaum indicated that this stage begins with a crisis that exists in an organizational sector, the research from the questionnaire and the faculty responses did not support this statement as their view of the Learning College creation at ICC. However, from the review of the documents, Johnson (2001) indicated that there were several outside issues that were discussed at ICC prior to implementing the Learning College concept. Furthermore, the three major events that served as the driving force for the Learning College implementation at ICC represented both internal and external forces. Faculty, in general, did not affirm that the Learning College was implemented due to a learning crisis with students at ICC.

Secondly, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that this first stage of creation is related to a major change in the larger social system or organizational subsystem. The review of the documents and the faculty responses from both the questionnaires and the interviews supported this statement. Through the review of the documents and faculty responses, the researcher determined that the Learning College concept implementation at ICC was based on three major events that were from both internal and external forces. According to Gibson

et al. (1997), organizations seldom undertake significant change without a strong shock from the environment that includes both internal and external triggers.

Thirdly, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that this first stage of creation includes the introduction of a new technique that is supported by advocates or consultants and is proposed to solve the problem. The research affirmed the introduction of the new technique by advocates or consultants; however, it did not affirm that the Learning College concept was presented as a proposal to solve a problem. In addition, the faculty did not view the Learning College concept as a problem solving tool, but rather an organizational tool.

Fourthly, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that this first stage of creation is promoted through enthusiastic statements and dramatic narratives of success. The research did support this statement; however, there were varying responses among the faculty based on employment and teaching experience. Faculty as a whole referred to Terry O'Banion's book, "A Learning College for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" as a resource for promoting the success of the Learning College concept. In the beginning of the implementation process, all faculty members were given a copy of this book. The faculty further mentioned workshop presenters who promoted the success, and "the faculty took them at their word."

Finally, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that this first stage of creation includes a presentation of the new technique in simplified, commonsensical terms with promises of extraordinary success and that organizational survival depends on the adoption of this technique. The research partially supported this view of creation. First, in general, the faculty affirmed that the administration presented a clear, authentic, and convincing rationale for the Learning College concept and that it would improve student outcomes. However, because there was no agreement that there was a crisis at ICC, there was no urgency that the Learning

College would solve the problems and thus help with the survival of the organization.

Furthermore, the faculty in general affirmed that the leaders of the Learning College journey at ICC were seen as carriers of new ideas and coaches presenting new research findings.

However, the less experienced and less employed faculty were unsure “who does what” with the Learning College concept.

The second stage of the life cycle of academic management fads, according to Birnbaum (2000) is narrative evolution. According to Birnbaum (2000), this stage of narrative evolution begins with elaborate and widely disseminated narratives. The research partially supported this statement; however, there were varying responses among the faculty based on years of employment and years of teaching experience. As indicated previously, the faculty with five years or less employment and one month to 15 years of teaching experience affirmed a limited knowledge of other institutions’ implementation of the Learning College concept. The faculty with 6 or more years of employment and 16 to 37 years of teaching experience affirmed more knowledge of other institutions implementation of the Learning College concept. While most of the faculty in general affirmed that they received sufficient background information regarding the Learning College concept, faculty with less years of employment and less years of teaching experience affirmed this less strongly.

Secondly, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that the second stage of narrative evolution includes stories of successful implementation where the new technique is hailed as highly effective. The research partially supports this statement regarding stories of success. While more than half of the faculty affirmed that employees of ICC have written articles affirming the Learning College concept, faculty with less years of employment and less years of teaching were less sure that articles had been written. Furthermore, the faculty did not affirm

that the Learning College concept was based on stories of success without supporting evidence. While the researcher found numerous articles and books about the Learning College concept, these contained minimal information regarding supportive evidence of its success.

Finally, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that the second stage of narrative evolution includes declarations from champions, consultants, and adopters of the new technique as the innovation of the decade through both written articles and presentations. The research did support this statement. Overall, the faculty affirmed that the innovation was promoted as a new innovation in higher education and that employees of ICC have conducted state and national workshops about the Learning College concept. In addition, the review of the learning documents affirmed many faculty and administrative presentations. However, written faculty responses provided minimal confirmation.

The third stage of Birnbaum's (2000) life cycle of academic management fads is time lag. According to Birnbaum (2000), time lag occurs between the creation and the dissemination of the new technique and the time at which user reactions and independent analysis become widely available. The researcher concluded that this was the stage where most of the ICC experience of the implementation of the Learning College concept occurred. Therefore, according to the researcher, most of the information in this stage at ICC is related to planning and development, classroom use, and culture change. First, the research did not support universal involvement in the planning and development of the Learning College concept. Most of the faculty did not participate in planning and developing the concept, the creation of the new mission/vision statement, or in all levels of the implementation process. Secondly, the research did support the faculty's use of the Learning College concept

strategies in the classroom. Faculty affirmed using Learning College terminology in their teaching practices, and they affirmed that they have changed their teaching methods to include group and cooperative learning activities.

Thirdly, there were mixed responses among each group of faculty regarding a culture change. Schein (1996) indicated that a culture change occurs through embedding new definitions in processes and routines. According to Schein (1985), a culture change is necessary with any transformation, but not all elements of the culture can or must be changed. The review of the documents and faculty responses affirmed that ICC has included the Learning College concepts in their policies and procedures. However, there was less affirmation among the faculty groups that a culture change was occurring. The faculty with six or more years of employment at ICC affirmed that a culture change was occurring. Faculty supporting the culture change reported the following: more communication among faculty, staff, and administration; less animosity across the college divisions; and more involvement and more responsibility among the students in the classroom. In addition, the faculty with five or less years of employment did not affirm that a culture change was occurring. Faculty with less employment at ICC did not participate in the entire implementation process, therefore they were undecided whether the Learning College concepts were in all of the policies and procedures or if there had even been a culture change. According to Claxton and Murrell (1984), the receiving of information is crucial to younger faculty since they need to develop a sense of belonging to the institution milieu.

The fourth stage of Birnbaum's (2000) life cycle of academic management fads is narrative devolution. According to Birnbaum (2000), narrative devolution occurs when widespread disappointment, disenchantment and skepticism evolves, and data collected

indicates the new technique has failed to produce results. According to Birnbaum (2000a), fads are originally adopted because they seem reasonable but once initiated, they may continue in the absence of proof that they work because they are undefinable, complex, non-falsifiable, and idealized. The research partially supported the issue of disappointment and skepticism. Overall, the faculty affirmed that they have experienced positive student outcomes with the Learning College concept; however, the faculty with more teaching experience and more years of employment affirmed this more strongly. Written faculty comments indicated that ICC students were more involved in classroom activities and that they retained more information with the use of the Learning College concept strategies. Faculty responses further affirmed that the faculty with five years or less employment had more problems with the implementation of the Learning College concept, including the lack of understanding the concept and the lack of time to develop and try new methods.

Secondly, according to Birnbaum (2000), narrative devolution includes claims of success that are not sustained. The research did support this statement. Overall faculty affirmed that the Learning College concept at ICC can create the success claimed. However, responses revealed that faculty were undecided regarding what results were claimed. Furthermore, the longer employed and more experienced faculty affirmed that the benefits of the implementation of the Learning College concept outweigh the costs.

Thirdly, according to Birnbaum (2000), narrative devolution includes surveys of increased dissatisfaction. The research partially supported this statement. According to Birnbaum (2000a), fads promise to make things better, but provide no criteria to make it possible to examine them later to see if they worked. Overall, the faculty affirmed satisfaction with the progression of the implementation of the Learning College concept.

Most of the faculty remained unaware of any published research regarding both faculty satisfaction and improved student outcomes regarding the Learning College concept. The longer the faculty had been employed at ICC, however, the more likely they were to know of some research publication, even though their knowledge was limited. The review of both the documents and faculty responses affirmed that ICC is currently working on assessing student outcomes.

Finally, in narrative devolution, the fourth stage of the life cycle of academic management fads, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that the acceptance of the new technique diminishes and it is declared a fad. The research did not support this statement. Faculty with six or more years of employment and 16 to 37 years of teaching affirmed that the Learning College concept at ICC was not just another academic management fad. Furthermore, the faculty affirmed that the Learning College had produced positive results both with the institution and the students.

The fifth stage of Birnbaum's (2000) life cycle of academic management fads is dissonance resolution. According to Birnbaum (2000), dissonance resolution begins as champions and adopters view the demise of the new innovation. The research did not support this statement. Overall faculty affirmed that the Learning College concept at ICC would remain a lasting innovation, especially the faculty with 16 to 37 years of teaching experience who were in 100 % agreement.

Secondly, Birnbaum (2000) believes that dissonance resolution includes a need to account for failure as well as rationalizations for the failure. The research did support the rationalizations for failure. According to Birnbaum (2000a), fads fail on their own terms and leave legacies that remain in higher education long after the fad has disappeared. Faculty

responses affirmed that the Learning College concept was like other techniques that resurface in education every 30 years or so and leave remnants behind. Faculty with less employment at ICC and less teaching experience affirmed that the Learning College concept had not met its potential due to lack of faculty time to develop and to try new methods. In addition, the faculty with more employment at ICC and more teaching experience either did not affirm that the Learning College had met its potential or they disagreed as to time available being an issue in meeting that potential.

Thirdly, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that dissonance resolution includes structure and processes that were not properly implemented or followed. The research did not support this statement. Faculty with more years of employment at ICC and more years of teaching affirmed that the Learning College concept had produced the results as promised. Written faculty comments indicated, however, that some faculty were unsure what outcomes or results were promised.

Finally, Birnbaum (2000) indicated that identifying the innovation as a failure sets the stage for reinventing the innovations and recycling it with minor modifications and a major name change. The research did not support this statement. Faculty with five years or less employment at ICC affirmed more commitment to the Learning College concept. However, faculty with more employment at ICC and more experience teaching were unsure about whether they were still committed to the Learning College concept as well as whether or not the Learning College had produced the success claimed. Written faculty comments affirmed that the faculty were not sure what success if any is claimed at ICC.

Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC had proceeded according to Birnbaum's stages of the life

cycle of academic management fads. According to the review of the Learning College documents, as well as faculty perceptions, the Learning College concept had been embedded in the policies, procedures, and teaching practices at ICC. However, there was still indecision among the faculty of whether or not a culture change had occurred. While the implementation of the Learning College concept involved a major organizational change, there was no faculty support to confirm that the change was due to a crisis.

The questionnaire responses and the interview responses along with the Learning College documents all relate to the five stages of the life cycle of academic management fads. It is the conclusion of the researcher that ICC is still in the third stage of the life cycle of academic management fads which is time lag. This conclusion is based on the fact that the organization is just beginning to gather evidence to see if the Learning College concept is making a difference.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

This research implied several recommendations based on conclusions of faculty perceptions of the implementation of the Learning College concept. First of all, the process was not touching everybody with the same depth of knowledge, involvement, commitment, understanding, cultural critique, educational critique or focus on outcomes. This became apparent through the review of all five tables, questionnaire responses and interview responses.

The researcher's first recommendation based on practice implications was to restructure the new faculty orientation process to include more about the Learning College concept and its claims. Many of the more recently employed and less experienced faculty affirmed that they lacked knowledge about the Learning College concept and would have

appreciated more background information. A lack of knowledge led the newer faculty members to be unclear about what results could be obtained or if they have been produced. In addition, the newer faculty were unsure whether or not a culture change was occurring. In a study by Quintanilla et al. (2000), poor planning and insufficient communication and deficits in new members receiving of information prevents their assimilation into the culture (Quintanilla et al, 2000). The faculty with less employment needed to understand more clearly about the vision for the Learning College concept and how they can be part of creating the new culture.

The researcher's second recommendation based on practice implications was to engage older faculty members (faculty that have been through the entire implementation process) to serve as mentors to new faculty members to assist with background knowledge as well as the implementation of the Learning College concept strategies in the classroom. The less employed faculty members indicated that they struggle with lack of time and knowledge about how to implement the Learning College concept strategies into the classroom.

According to Baldwin (1984), novice and veteran professors possess complimentary needs in the higher education workplace. Mentoring allows the infectious enthusiasm of new faculty to rub off on senior faculty, leaving them infused with renewed interest and energy for their remaining years in higher education (Baldwin, 1984). Older faculty can assist new faculty to ease into a successful academic career by helping them learn to balance the demands of teaching, scholarship, and service (Baldwin, 1984). Furthermore, this mentoring process could help to fill in the gaps for the new faculty who were not present from the beginning of the implementation of the Learning College concept.

The researcher's third recommendation based on research was to provide faculty development that includes a variety of teaching strategies that provide support for the Learning College concept. Written faculty comments affirmed that ICC had too much reliance on cooperative learning and was not offering enough variety of teaching strategies. While studies revealed that student learning outcomes are increased with cooperative learning (Johnson et al, 1991; Austin 1993a) because students are held accountable by their peers and because students assume responsibility for assisting their peers, Baldwin (1984) asserts that a variety of activities and responsibilities are essential to enhance the productivity and renewal of seasoned faculty.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The review of the literature provided many claims for the success of the Learning College concept, but there was little empirical evidence to support those claims. Therefore, the following recommendations for future research include the development of studies that will provide evidence of outcomes produced.

The first recommendation was to develop more studies to determine the effectiveness of the Learning College concept once it is implemented. In this study, the implementation process had been in place for almost nine years, and faculty affirmed that the Learning College concept would remain a lasting innovation and not become just another academic management fad. Therefore, the researcher concluded that an effectiveness study should be conducted in five to ten year intervals to determine whether or not the Learning College concept continued to remain a lasting innovation and if the new faculty had begun to become acculturated at ICC.

The second recommendation was to develop studies relating to student outcomes in order to provide insight into the usefulness of the concept. Educational research claims that the Learning College concept yields positive student outcomes (Johnson et al, 1991; and Astin, 1993a). However, there are limited studies available for review. In this study, faculty reported the need to see results. The review of the literature provided much discussion and support about the theories that support the Learning College concept, but provided very little empirical research. In addition, the faculty in this study indicated that possibly other techniques could produce the same results and wondered how results could be proven without control groups to compare the findings. According to Birnbaum (2000), narratives of success are often promoted without empirical evidence.

### **Conclusion**

Community colleges continue to be faced with challenges associated with the diversity of students, globalization of industry, and faculty development. Based on the effects of globalization and a need to remain current in educational trends, community colleges are continually challenged to anticipate necessary workplace changes, create new economic opportunities, address the shortage of skilled workers, and provide student and employees with the content and tools necessary to interact with diverse population (Forde, 2002; Forde, 2003; Martin & Flynn, 2003; McCabe & Skidmore, 1989; Templin, 2002). These changes leave many community colleges searching for the next innovation that will help address the challenges. Innovations have previously resulted in expansions of the institution's mission in response to the community needs (Baker, 1998). However, the Learning College concept seems to be the current trend embraced by numerous institutions of higher education (Barr & Tagg, 1995; O'Banion, 1997).

This case study is an assessment of a small rural community college, Isothermal Community College that implemented the Learning College concept. The implementation of the Learning College concept is a process that requires a major organizational change. According to Schein (1985), with transformation a culture change is necessary, but not all elements can or must be changed.

The Learning College concept is based on a new way of teaching in which faculty become facilitators and guides rather than lecturers who simply provide information. The development of the Learning College concept is based on the learning theories related to constructivism (Dewey, 1966; Glaserfeld, 1995b; Vygotsky, 1962). Constructivism contends that for students to learn, they must construct their own learning. According to Barr and Tagg (1995), the Learning College concept encourages whatever interactive approaches prompt learning by the student rather than just traditional lecture. Students become active discoverers and constructors of their own knowledge and become more responsible for their own learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Included in the Learning College teaching techniques are both active learning and cooperative learning components.

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## APPENDICES

## **Appendix A**

Document Analysis for the Implementation of The Learning College concept

## **Review of Learning College Documents**

A review of the Learning College documents generated at Isothermal Community College (ICC) will provide answers to the following questions. This list of documents and questions will be revised as necessary during the review process. Documents to be reviewed include the following:

- Mission/vision statement
- Advancement of a Learning College Timeline for ICC
- Learning College Primer
- Community of learners brochure
- Learning team membership list
- Assessment plan
- Technology plan

1. How long has ICC been involved in the Learning College initiative?
2. What is the current mission/vision statement and how does it reflect the Learning College concept?
3. What Learning College workshops have been offered to the faculty at ICC?
4. What are the divisions of learning teams and their stated purpose?
5. How are general and program outcomes for students assessed?
6. Are learning communities being utilized at ICC? How?
7. What changes have been made in technology to accommodate the Learning College initiative?

## **Appendix B**

### A Questionnaire for the Implementation of the Learning College

## Questionnaire for the Implementation of the Learning College

My name is Deborah Wiltshire. I have been employed at Isothermal Community College (ICC) for eleven years as the Director of the Practical Nursing Program. In my doctoral studies at North Carolina State University, I am studying the effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept as a case study for my dissertation.

As a member of the full-time faculty at ICC, I am requesting your input regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC. My main focus is on faculty perceptions of the implementation of the Learning College concept.

Please answer the following questions as they relate to the implementation of the Learning College concept from March 1996 until now. Your responses will be reported in an aggregate form to protect the confidentiality of each person.

### Background

- a. How long have you been teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. How long have you been employed at Isothermal Community College?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Questionnaire Instructions

- **Please use the Likert scale listed below to answer the following statements.**
- **In the comment section, I encourage you to record a phrase or sentence that supports or provides further insight on your responses. If more space is needed, comments may be written on back of the page or attached as a separate sheet.**
- **If any statement does not apply to you please mark N/A in the comment section.**

strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
5	4	3	2	1

		<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
1.	A clear, authentic, convincing rationale for the relevance of the Learning College concept was presented by administration in 1996 or in the beginning of my faculty service.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
2.	The Learning College concept was promoted by administration and faculty colleagues as a solution to improve student outcomes.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
3.	I believe in the teachings and strategies of the Learning College concept.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
4.	I encourage students to understand what the Learning College concept includes.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
5.	I have read case studies about the implementation of the Learning College concept in other higher education institutions.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1

		<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
6.	The Learning College concept was promoted at ICC as a new innovation in higher education based on reports from other colleges and universities.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
7.	The learning initiative leaders frequently present sound rationale about why the Learning College concept is important.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
8.	The Learning College concept at ICC was promoted by administration as a possible solution to address the changing student population.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
9.	I participated in planning the development of the Learning College concept at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
10.	I include the Learning College concept terminology in my teaching policies and practices.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1

		<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
11.	I participated in the development of the new mission/vision statement that supports the Learning College concept at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
12.	As presented, the Learning College concept offered a specific language that helped to identify learning problems at ICC and provide solutions to those problems.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
13.	I received sufficient background information on the Learning College concept to help me adopt its strategies.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
14.	Learning College concepts have been threaded throughout the college policies and procedures.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
15.	ICC is experiencing a culture change through the implementation of the Learning College concept.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1

		<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
16.	The Learning College concept was driven by the administration of ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
17.	The benefits of the Learning College concept outweigh the costs incurred to ICC during the implementation process.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
18.	I have experienced problems related to the Learning College initiative.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
19.	I have experienced positive student outcomes with the Learning College concept.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
20.	I have knowledge of other higher education institutions implementing the Learning College concept.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1

		SA	A	U	D	SD
21.	The Learning College concept was driven by the faculty at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
22.	I am familiar with the claims of success reported in the Learning College literature.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
23.	There is a learning crisis associated with under-prepared and at-risk students at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
24.	The Learning College concept was implemented to help address and improve the learning crisis associated with under-prepared and at-risk students at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
25.	Leaders of the Learning College concept at ICC are seen as carriers of new ideas and as coaches presenting research findings to the entire college.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1

		<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
26.	The Learning College concept was presented by administration and faculty supporters of ICC as a way to improve core organizational processes and functions.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
27.	I have participated in all levels of the implementation process of the Learning College concept at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
28.	I believe that the Learning College concept can create the success that it claims at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
29.	I am satisfied with the continued progression of the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
30.	Employees of ICC have written articles and stories in affirmation of the Learning College implementation.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1

		<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
31.	There is published evidence of ICC faculty satisfaction with the implementation of the Learning College concept.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
32.	The Learning College concept at ICC has not produced the results as promised in the Learning College literature.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
33.	The Learning College concept will remain as a lasting innovation at ICC.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
34	I am still committed to the Learning College concept even though it has not produced the success that the Learning College literature proclaims.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
35.	There is published evidence of improved student outcomes at ICC since the implementation of the Learning College concept.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1

		<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
36.	The Learning College concept at ICC was promoted by administration and faculty supporters based on stories of success without evidence of supportive data.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
37.	I have changed the teaching methods that I use to include more cooperative and group and activities.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
38.	Employees of ICC have presented state and national workshops about the implementation of the Learning College concept.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
39.	The Learning College concept at ICC has not met its potential based on the lack of faculty time available to develop and try the new methods of teaching.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1
40.	The Learning College concept at ICC is just another academic management fad.  <b>Comments:</b>	5	4	3	2	1

## **Appendix C**

### Interview Questions for the Implementation of the Learning College

## **Interview Questions for the Implementation of the Learning College**

(Introduction). I am studying the effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community college (ICC). You are one of faculty chosen through a stratified sampling process to provide your perceptions.

My main focus is faculty perceptions of the effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC. Please answer the following questions as they relate to the implementation process from March 1996 until now. Your responses to these questions will be reported in an aggregate form to protect the confidentiality of each person.

1. Explain the Learning College concept as it has been implemented at ICC.
2. How has your opinion of the Learning College concept changed since the beginning?
3. How has the Learning College concept impacted you personally in your academic area at ICC?
4. How has the Learning College concept impacted the ICC culture and community?
5. To what degree are you using active learning or hands-on learning activities in your classroom?
6. How would you rate the effectiveness of the implementation of the Learning College concept at ICC?

## **Appendix D**

Permission letter to perform the study at Isothermal Community College

# ISOTHERMAL

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Office Of The President

Willard L. Lewis

December 16, 2003

Ms. Deborah Wiltshire, RN, MSN  
Director, PNE Program  
Applied Sciences & Technology

Dear Debbie:

This is to reaffirm the oral commitment I made to you in the Fall of 2001, when you informed me of your intent to focus your doctoral dissertation on the progress of the learning college at Isothermal. I wish you the very best in that endeavor and look forward to receiving a copy of your proposal in early January.

As you initiate the activities that involve our faculty and staff I ask you to be sensitive to the fact that another dissertation, parallel in time and related in concept, is already in progress. From the very brief synopsis given me in your letter of December 12, 2003, I do not believe that there is serious overlap. I merely raise this issue so that concurrent information gathering does not take you by surprise.

Best wishes as you undertake this critically important challenge.

Sincerely,



Willard L. Lewis

gs

pc: Dr. Don C. Locke, Committee Chair  
Dr. Robert Harrison  
Mr. Bruce Waddingham

SPINDALE CAMPUS  
P.O. BOX 804  
SPINDALE, N.C. 28160-0804  
828/286-3636

[www.isotheermal.cc.nc.us](http://www.isotheermal.cc.nc.us)

POLK CAMPUS  
1255 WEST MILLS STREET  
COLUMBUS, N.C. 28722-9445  
828/894-3092

• An equal opportunity, learning centered institution •

## **Appendix E**

Letters and informed consent to faculty requesting their participation in the study

January 27, 2005

Dear fellow faculty member,

I am a doctoral student in the Adult and Community College Education Program at North Carolina State University. As part of the requirement for completion of my degree, I must complete a doctoral dissertation. The dissertation topic that I have chosen relates to the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College.

I am requesting participation from you and all 60 full-time faculty members to evaluate the implementation of the Learning College concept. I would very much appreciate your participation in this study. Your participation would involve the completion of a questionnaire. Some of you will also be chosen through a stratified random sampling procedure and asked to participate in an interview. The time involved is approximately one hour to complete the questionnaire. For those of you who do participate in an interview, the time involved will require approximately one hour as well. Your responses will be kept confidential and reported only in an aggregate form.

Dr. Lewis has granted me permission to perform the study at Isothermal Community College. His letter of December 16, 2003 granting permission is available if you would like to read it.

Please complete and return the questionnaire by February 11, 2005. I will contact each of you who are invited to participate in the interview by phone to request your permission and to arrange an appropriate time and place for the interview.

Thank you for your time and assistance. If I do not receive a response from you by February 11, 2005, I will contact you by phone.

Sincerely,

Deborah S. Wiltshire RN, MSN  
Doctoral Student, NCSU

North Carolina State University  
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

A Case Study Reflecting Faculty Perceptions on the Implementation of the Learning College concept

Deborah Wiltshire, Principal Investigator

[Dr. Don C. Locke, NCSU Faculty Sponsor]

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I am asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the implementation process of The Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College through faculty perceptions as related to the life cycles of academic management fads. This research study is essential in my doctoral studies at North Carolina State University.

**INFORMATION**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire regarding the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College. The questionnaire will take approximately one hour to complete.

**RISKS**

As a faculty member and full-time employee of Isothermal Community College, you may experience some hesitation to provide honest feedback to the questions ask in the questionnaire. I will treat all the feedback that I receive with the highest standards of professional confidentiality. Any information obtained will only be handled by ma as the researcher and your identity will not be used in the report.

**BENEFITS**

As a participant, there are no tangible benefits to be obtained. The intangible benefits to you include the opportunities to advance the positive development of the institution in which you work and to assist in the promotion of Isothermal Community College in the organizational change literature.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in files located at the researcher's home. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you and your feedback in the study.

**CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Deborah Wiltshire, at 90 Jonestown Road, Asheville, N.C. 28804, or 828-252-3063 (home) or 828-286-3636, ext. 254 ( work). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)

**PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and I very much hope that you will agree to participate; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

**CONSENT**

If you agree to participate, please complete and return the attached questionnaire.

March 23, 2005

Dear fellow faculty member,

I am a doctoral student in the Adult and Community College Education Program at North Carolina State University. As part of the requirement for completion of my degree, I must complete a doctoral dissertation. The dissertation topic that I have chosen relates to the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College.

Through a stratified random sampling procedure, you have been selected to participate in an interview. I would very much appreciate your participation in this study. Your participation would involve an interview with me that would take approximately one hour of your time of which will be scheduled at your convenience. I would appreciate your assistance with the scheduling of the interview before April 25, 2005, as I will be on medical leave beginning that date. Your responses will be kept confidential and reported only in an aggregate form.

Dr. Lewis has granted me permission to perform the study at Isothermal Community College. His letter of December 16, 2003 granting permission is available if you would like to read it.

Please read and sign the consent form and return it to me by April 6, 2005. I will contact each of you who are invited to participate in the interview by phone to request your permission and to arrange an appropriate time and place for the interview.

Thank you for your time and assistance. If I do not receive a response from you by April 6, 2005, I will contact you by phone.

Sincerely,

Deborah S. Wiltshire RN, MSN  
Doctoral Student, NCSU

North Carolina State University  
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

A Case Study Reflecting Faculty Perceptions on the Implementation of the Learning College concept  
Deborah Wiltshire, Principal Investigator [Dr. Don C. Locke, NCSU Faculty Advisor]

I am asking you to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the implementation process of The Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College through faculty perceptions as related to the life cycles of academic management fads. This research study is essential in my doctoral studies at North Carolina State University.

**INFORMATION**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview process regarding the implementation of the Learning College concept at Isothermal Community College. The interview process will take approximately one hour to complete.

**RISKS**

As a faculty member and full-time employee of Isothermal Community College, you may experience some hesitation to provide honest feedback to the questions ask in the interview. I will treat all the feedback that I receive with the highest standards of professional confidentiality. Any information obtained will only be handled by me as the researcher and your identity will not be used in the report.

**BENEFITS**

As a participant, there are no tangible benefits to be obtained. The intangible benefits to you include the opportunities to advance the positive development of the institution in which you work and to assist in the promotion of Isothermal Community College in the organizational change literature.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

The information in the study records will be kept strictly confidential. Data will be stored securely in files located at the researcher's home. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you and your feedback in the study.

**CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Deborah Wiltshire, at 90 Jonestown Road, Asheville, N.C. 28804, or 828-252-3063 (home) or 828-286-3636, ext. 254 ( work). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Matthew Zingraff, Chair of the NCSU IRB for the Use of Human Subjects in Research Committee, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-1834) or Mr. Matthew Ronning, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research Administration, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/513-2148)

**PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and I very much hope that you will agree to participate; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed at your request.

**CONSENT**

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of the form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time."

Subject's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_