Outcomes-Based Learning in an Interdisciplinary Humanities Model

Jill Scott

In recent decades, there has been a great deal of debate surrounding outcomes-oriented curriculum development in post-secondary education. The Ontario Council of Universities, for example, has developed a framework for designing and evaluating curricula, University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UUDLEs), which sets out criteria for learning outcomes, such as knowledge acquisition, methodologies, application, skills development, awareness of limitations, and professional preparation.[1] Understandably, this proposal has been met with skepticism by some faculty, who fear that such quality assurance frameworks erode academic freedom and move toward a managerial style of post-secondary education. This paper will bring the work of Claire Kramsch et al (2007) on bridging the gap between Bildung and Ausbildung into dialogue with outcomes-oriented approaches and inquiry-learning methodologies[2]—which involve the learner as participant and co-researcher—in an effort to stretch the disciplinary frontiers of German Studies. With specific reference to my own learning models in interdisciplinary humanities teaching, I will argue that, when combined with inquiry-learning models, outcomes-based approaches are compatible with and complementary to the aims and values of (multi)culturally complex humanistic education.

Learning to Learn

The post-secondary landscape is changing at a rapid pace, much of it due to fiscal pressures and student (and parent) demands for relevant and applicable programs. The humanities in general and German Studies in particular need to work hard to carve out a new place in our institutions of higher learning. This is why it is so important to be clear about learning priorities. For me, the first is the question of *value*[3]; our teaching will support and confirm these values only to the extent that we can articulate what we value. It is especially important to acknowledge that values are never free from ideology or bias, and that we need to be vigilant in questioning the assumptions we make because of the values we hold. The second is *passion*[4]; those of us who are passionate about teaching and learning want to foster the same passion in our students. Lastly, there is *learning*[5]; we often get so caught up in our enthusiasm for teaching and our desire to be good teachers that we forget that the main goal is in fact learning. *Learning to learn* should be one of our highest aspirations.[6]

Outcomes-oriented curricula are fundamentally different from traditional approaches to program design, which have tended to focus on input: delivery of material based on the core values of the discipline, starting with the courses we should teach and what content should be included. Assessment criteria such as UUDLEs encourages an approach based on learning outcomes, placing more emphasis on what knowledge and abilities students should have upon completion of their degree. In an effort to forestall a government imposed quality assurance plan, the Council of Ontario Universities developed the Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations rubrics, which are aimed at ensuring quality and consistency across Ontario universities. That said, each university will be interpret the guidelines and tailor a process that aligns to their particular institution. The goal of the quality assurance framework is not to impose strict guidelines or to quantify success, but rather to help faculty and students to become conscious of and better articulate learning goals. That said, it is important to fiercely defend the importance of vibrant, diverse and continually evolving curricula. Discipline experts, not administrators, must be permitted to freely interpret the framework to best suit the particular student body and learning context.

Professional programs have been at the forefront of these changes, largely in reaction to the regulatory bodies that monitor them and provide accreditation. Medicine, Engineering, and Law were among the first to adopt assessment rubrics, which specify expectations in terms of competencies, roles and responsibilities. Whether motivated by such guidelines or by student demand or our own desire to sharpen the focus of learning, there has been a noticeable shift in recent decades toward the development of transferable skills in many disciplines, including German Studies, skills such as cultural competence, intercultural communication, oral and written communication skills (whether in the second language or the native language), critical thinking, as well as analysis, interpretation and argumentation.

These kinds of innovations are critical for the renewal of our discipline. German Studies has clearly been designing curriculum developing these competencies in the past. But becoming conscious of their value and clearly articulating these goals and objectives to students is a vital part of the process. We need to be able to promote our discipline based on the valuable transferable skills our programs offer. Similarly, students need to be able to clarify to themselves and future employers the

specific skills they offer, and to recognize the value of their studies.

The focus on outcomes in post-secondary education, especially quantifiable outcomes, has recently come under fierce attack, especially in the UK, where educational reforms have been tightly controlled by government policy. Michael Apple (2001) argues that neo-liberal policies lead to a marketization of education, and that neo-conservative policies for national curricula, national standards, and national testing do not lead to an increase in quality of education. On the contrary, he worries that this top-down approaches to education policy has led to increased inequalities. Furthermore, the introduction of what he calls "thin" curricula has led to content reflecting a certain set of largely conservative ideological commitments, which perpetuate the social privileges for select socio-economic groups, while lower socio-economic groups and minority groups of all kinds are excluded (ibid, p. 103). In the 1960s in particular, student movements led to broader and more inclusive curricula, but such gains, says Apple, have been largely eroded in recent years. Such buzzwords as accountability, performance objectives, point to a kind of managerialism that promotes a simplistic linear model of policy formation, distribution, and implementation (ibid, p. 113). Apple concludes: "It is our task to collectively help rebuild it by re-establishing a sense that `thick' morality, and a `thick' democracy – a democracy that includes everyone – are truly possible today" (ibid, p. 117). While his criticisms are hard-hitting, Apple does not provide a counter-framework to the British government's current educational policies.

Mark Olssen and Mike Peters (2005) similarly focus their critique on measured outputs, such as on strategic planning, performance indicators, quality assurance measures, and academic audits. They point to governments' concerns to remain competitive in a global market, where the knowledge economy is viewed as the means to ensure economic sustainability and prosperity for its citizens. Governments, say Olssen and Peters, have invested far too heavily in building links between industry and post-secondary education, compromising both the quality of a liberal education and academic freedom. Employing both economic theory and political philosophy, Olssen and Peters critique educational policies, which seek to "promote greater entrepreneurial skills" and "develop new performative measures" with the view to enhancing output and achieving recognizable targets (ibid, p. 313). Their analysis of the short-comings of policies in post-secondary education in the UK is thorough and persuasive, although, like Apple, they are short on realistic measures to reverse or ameliorate the situation.[7]

Given the potential for heavy-handed government intervention with managerial models, outcomes-oriented models of post-secondary education ought to be approached with healthy skepticism. My own view is that when they are driven by faculty rather than administrators and grounded in strong pedagogical frameworks, including inquiry-based learning, a focus on outcomes can lead to quality curricular decisions. Students benefit when they are able to articulate the skills they have gained and how they are transferable to a range of occupations, and disciplines, which are under threat, including German Studies, can revitalize their programs. A further consideration is that university rankings, both nationally and globally, are increasingly requiring post-secondary institutions to document the educational successes of their programs and students. Some universities have chosen to opt out of these rankings, and yet the push to compete internationally for the best students in emerging economies, such China, India and Brazil, make opting out of such assessment exercises a less desirable route.

Outcomes-oriented approaches typically fall squarely in what has been framed as an economic utilitarian mentality designed to develop market-oriented skills. Kramsch et al (2007, p. 158) write: "There is an assumption that the teaching of German as a functional tool for communication is incompatible with the more humanistic study of German intellectual-literary tradition." I could not agree more with this statement, and yet I want to complicate the dichotomy of skills vs. content somewhat by distinguishing between different kinds of skills sets in the German Studies curriculum. Kramsch et al refer primarily to courses taught in German that work on developing linguistic competencies in the target language through treatment of literary and cultural texts. The courses I will be referring to are taught in English and *focus on skills and communication development through the lens of (multi)culturally complex and intellectually rich materials*.

If the divide between language and knowledge occupies Kramsch et al (2007), they are equally worried about cultural materials being introduced in reductive ways, leading students to perpetuate stereotypes about others and ourselves.[8] They argue persuasively that skills development needs to be informed by and imbedded in engaging content that challenges students' assumptions: "By ignoring how culture is produced and reproduced by language, language instruction merely puts German labels on a dominant American ideology" (ibid, p. 171). There is always a risk of reproducing stereotypes, and every instructor must not simply remain on the alert for possible misunderstandings, but develop learning strategies that actively confront the tendency to see other worlds through our own eyes.

The Learning Sandwich

Kramsch et al warn us of the risks in putting too much emphasis on outcomes. It is a fact that the focus can swing rapidly from input and content to assessment-driven, or even market-oriented and consumer-driven models, putting enormous pressure on both learners and teachers for evidence of success with potentially unrealistic performance expectations. It is easy to place too great an emphasis on quantifying results.[9] In other words, courses and programs can become obsessed with the end *product*. If we present a series of projected outcomes, we potentially set ourselves up for failure.[10] This is why it is so important to

a) differentiate between *objectives*, *outputs* and *outcomes*;[11]

b) define these categories and provide clear assessment criteria; and

c) develop strategies to facilitate inquiry-based learning: *process*.

If we think of the *input/objectives* and *output/outcomes* as being the bread for the learning sandwich, then *inquiry* and *discovery* have to be the yummy filling in the middle—whether peanut butter and jelly, or *Wurst und Käse*. But in this special *learning sandwich*, the filling–inquiry–must expand and permeate all aspects of learning: input/objectives; inquiry; and output/outcomes. In other words, no distinctions can be made between product and process. There is no outside to inquiry.

Inquiry-based learning acknowledges the fundamental importance of student involvement. Inquiry-learning researcher, Colin Beasley (1997, p. 21) cites the old adage: "Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand," illustrating that inquiry learning is an authentic pedagogy, something humans are hardwired to do. Inquiry can be understood as seeking knowledge by questioning, thus inquiry-learning involves students as participants in knowledge creation and architects of their learning. Content becomes a vehicle for learning and students model themselves as researchers and engage in problem-based learning activities. Well-designed inquiry-learning activities embed content in a conceptual context, including the broader community. Inquiry learning enhances skills in coordination, cooperation, and effective communication, and ultimately acts as a bridge to help students become responsible, self-directed, life-long learners, who can transfer their learning to life outside the classroom and future professional engagements (Barell, 2007, p. xi).

If transferable skills are important, learning to learn must come first (see footnote 11). Our highest aspiration as teacher-learners must surely be to enable our students to become independent, responsible, life-long learners. This is why objectives and outcomes need to be carefully framed by an inquiry or discovery-based model of teaching and learning.[12] The building blocks of learning are curiosity and creativity, and it is only when students have the opportunity to engage in playful ways with knowledge that they will begin to generate both knowledge and skills. When presented with activities and tasks that peak their curiosity and harness the imagination, learners become more sophisticated and self-directed.[13] In other words, they move through the stages of *collecting* ideas (information) to connecting ideas (analysis, synthesis) and eventually *extending* ideas (new knowledge).[14] When we generate new knowledge, we call it research. We often assume that research begins when a student enrolls in a graduate program. Yet this assumption limits learning for both student-learners and teacher-learners. By considering both students and teachers as *learner-researchers* at different stages of development, we incorporate both input and outcomes into process.[15] Goals neither hinder nor compete with inquiry. And content becomes a vehicle for discovery.[16]

Risky Business

In order to maximize learning, students and teachers need to *take risks*. For students, playing it safe means memorizing information and repeating it on the exam. For teachers, playing it safe means giving lectures and setting assignments and tests with pre-determined answers. A recent review of post-secondary education laments the fact that, despite decades of empirical research that demonstrates categorically the failings of the lecture as a vehicle for effective learning, the frontal monologue dominates university teaching.[17] University teachers report that they lecture to save time in preparation and marking, but I would say that fear is an equally important factor. Instructors often hide behind a shield of knowledge—lecture notes, a lectern, and powerpoint slides, hoping not to have their gaps in knowledge exposed.

Only by positioning ourselves as *co-learners*, who do not have all the answers, will we cajole students into taking the risks necessary for deep, transformative learning, including questioning the wholesale adoption of a loaded word such as

"*Multikulturalismus*" as if it were equivalent to the English "multiculturalism."[18] Together, co-learners need to step into the unfamiliar and even uncomfortable territory of the unknown if we want to maximize learning. In order to get students to agree to jump off the edge of the knowledge cliff, teachers need to provide appropriate supports, such as interactive lecture, directed discussion, team-building activities, case-based or project learning, service-learning, peer-mentoring, self-evaluation opportunities, timely feedback, and scaffolded assignments.

We especially need to provide well-defined and clear assessment rubrics.[19] Transparency and effective communication of expectations and evaluation criteria reduce stress-levels for students and encourage effective learning. By adopting such measures, we break down the boundaries between teachers, learners and researchers and foster a community of learner-researchers. By positioning ourselves as curious and creative learner-researchers, teachers reframe input/outcome assessment-driven models as inquiry opportunities and promote passionate learning (Ascough, 2010).

Summary of learning priorities:
Establish the value of learning; foster passionate learning;
Learning to learn => self-directed, responsible, life-long learner-researchers;
Articulate transferable skills;
Reframe skills development through (multi)culturally complex and intellectually rich materials;
Use "contextual scaffolding" to ensure students grasp the specificity of cultural knowledge;
Distinguish between and clearly define objectives, outputs, and outcomes (see footnote 11);
Specify expectations and assessment criteria;
Develop strategies to support transformative learning / inquiry-based learning (curiosity, creativity, play, discovery);
Encourage risk (jumping off the knowledge cliff!);
Teachers and students become a community of learner-researchers;
Inputs => Inquiry <= Outcomes (learning sandwich);
Product (Knowledge) => Process (Doing) => Knowledge Creation / Transformative Learning.

Intercultural Complexities in German Studies Curricula
In an environment of declining enrolments for German majors and minors and increasing competition for scarce resources, we have had to think differently about how we deliver programs and in what those programs should consist. Rather than lamenting the decline in concentrators, my colleagues and I have tried to find creative ways to reinvigorate the curriculum, such as interdisciplinary humanities courses grounded in German content – including literature, which emphasize transferable skills and broadly applicable outcomes.[20] These courses are thematically oriented and embed German content in ways that highlight intercultural complexities and contradictions in a global world. These interdisciplinary humanities courses are listed under the International Studies umbrella and we have partnerships with other disciplines, such as Political Studies, Geography, Film Studies and English, which enable students to earn credit toward a program in those fields. The mix of students from diverse programs offers further opportunities to challenge disciplinary assumptions about learning.[21] The courses have been highly successful – enrollments are between 30 and 100 and demand is high.

One such example is a second-year course entitled "Conflict and Culture: From Nietzsche to 9/11" (see Appendix 1). The thematic focus is on conflict resolution and reconciliation and I use primarily German-language literary and cultural texts. Students read a wide variety of works, such as Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (excerpts), Franz Kafka's *Letter to his Father*, Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader*, and Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *The Bridge of the Golden Horn*. But the course also includes film, poetry, and theatre. The thematic frame is supported by scholarly articles in the areas of conflict resolution and reconciliation. The course description is as follows:

Conflict is central to human experience, but we also need to find creative ways to resolve conflict. This course will look at German literature and culture from 1900 to the present and ask how works of fiction and film contribute to contemporary debates on reconciliation, forgiveness, and justice. Students can expect to develop transferable skills through an interactive classroom and inquiry-based assignments.

Objectives, outputs, and outcomes (see footnote 5)

Objectives:

To develop a critical vocabulary for conflict resolution and reconciliation;
To develop a general awareness of twentieth-century German history, literature, and culture;
To consciously engage with questions of diversity and inclusivity (equity-seeking groups as well as differences of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, sexual-orientation, (dis)ability, socioeconomic status and marginal voices of all kinds)
To develop transferable skills in critical thinking, oral and written communication, interpersonal relations (teamwork), intercultural communication, cultural competence, close reading (comprehension), analysis, interpretation, and argumentation, and project management

Outputs:
The Sound of Music Reflection (mini-essay)
Kafka's dad writes back - fictional letter project
Poetry mindmap
Group Presentation
Paper / creative project
Exam
Outcomes:
Learning to learn => becoming a community of self-directed, responsible, life-long learner-researchers
To foster curiosity, creativity, imagination, passion, humour and play as primary modes of learning
To begin deep, transformative reflection on conflict resolution as a living practice
To begin to develop a listening for the humanity of the other and our interconnectedness (starting with the people in the room)[22]
These are ambitious—and maybe even lofty—goals and it is important to bear in mind that not all students really want to engage in transformative learning. However by aiming high, we do achieve more. In informal polls, students agreed or strongly agreed that their learning was enhanced by the inquiry-learning approach and the focus on well-defined inputs, outputs and outcomes.

Cultural complexities in action: The Example of *The Sound of Music*
Kramsch et al (2007, p. 173) warn against simplistic interpretations of complex cultural, social and political issues: "Without an attention to how language as discourse produces and reproduces the social and political realities we call culture, there can be no meaningful link between the study of language and the study of literature/culture in German Studies." In my own courses, I go to great lengths to expose assumptions about cultural difference. For example, on the first day of "From Nietzsche to 9/11," I show excerpts from *The Sound of Music* and encourage students to reflect on their memories of seeing the film for the first time and the associations and assumptions it invokes. Next, we analyse representations and stereotypes of Germans, Austrians, and Swiss, e.g. Germans as Nazis, Austrians as innocent victims—reinforced by the wholesome well-blended and morally upstanding family that likes to sing together, and Switzerland as a breathtakingly beautiful landscape—majestic mountains and a safe, neutral territory (allied with the utopia of American-style freedom and democracy).

We next consider the context of enunciation—the musical premiered in 1959 and the film was released in 1965—and the backdrop of Cold War America, with its particular post-war political agenda aimed at framing and reframing enemies and allies. We further examine our own reception of *The Sound of Music* in a contemporary context, acknowledging our conscious and unconscious stereotypes about World War II, Cold War America, and the complexities of global politics in the age of the "War on Terror."

Finally, we discuss the revival of the musical in the 2000s and the consequences of its appropriation and reframing with a queer, camp-inspired aesthetic. Students work together in groups to come to their own conclusions, and I as instructor/facilitator help them to expand their thinking in summary discussions. Students then write a brief reflection (mini-essay, due the next class), in which they draw conclusions and comment on the ways, in which the activity may have shifted, expanded or complicated their thinking about culture and representation.

The aim of this inquiry-based learning activity is to help students to develop skills in critical thinking, group interaction, oral communication, and academic writing, while acknowledging the multiple, overlapping, and even contradictory frameworks for cultural content. *Bildung* and *Ausbildung* are integrated, enabling students to experience Humboldt's goal of "self-organization as self-formation as a recursive process" in "constant engagement with the plurality of the [globalized] world" (Kramsch et al,

2007, p. 155), while simultaneously fostering skills and competencies that will enable them to communicate with others.

It is easy to talk about the "crisis" in German Studies, but I prefer to see this challenge as an opportunity to reframe our thinking on curricular choices.[23] While I firmly acknowledge the concerns around outcomes-based approaches to post-secondary educational models, especially those that are too closely tied to quality assurance frameworks, I contend that outcomes-oriented curricula, when coupled with an inquiry-learning methodologies, are indeed compatible with—and complementary to—the aims and values of culturally relevant humanistic education. While the methodological examples discussed here are taken from an interdisciplinary culture and literature course taught in English, my hope is that some of the learning approaches are more broadly applicable within a German Studies context. German Studies curricula will continue to evolve and our discipline will remain vibrant when we work together to identify creative solutions and employ these consciously and critically—harnessing the spirit of inquiry to achieve outstanding outcomes for all.

Appendix 1
GRMN 252* Conflict and Culture: From Nietzsche to 9/11

Conflict is central to human experience, but we also need to find ways to resolve conflict. This course will look at German literature and culture from 1900 to the present and ask how works of fiction and film contribute to contemporary debates on reconciliation, forgiveness, and justice. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) thought forgiveness was a sign of weakness, and the German political theorist Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) said it was barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz. This course will question both of these statements. Rather than turn away from art and literature (before or after Auschwitz), this course will consider what it can teach us about resolving our differences, historically and in the present. With this question in mind, we will discuss different periods of conflict--World War One, the Third Reich, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and 9/11--in works by Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Mann, Franz Kafka as well as contemporary fiction, film, and theatre. The course seeks to make connections between German cultural history and aspects of current global conflicts.

Mark Break-down
Reflection **due** … 10%
Kafka letter project **due** … 15%
Poetry mindmap **due** … 15%
Group Presentation **assigned date** 15%
Paper/project **due** … 20%
Exam see **exam schedule** 25%

Date	**Lectures**	**Readings**	**Student**
W 1 6:30-9:30	Introduction: Nation and Psyche -German literature and conflict (ir)resolution *The Sound of Music* (clips)		*reflection:* Cultural stereotypes in *The Sound of Music*
W 2	Nietzsche, Freud and other dead dudes: Philosophy, psychology and philology	-Nietzsche *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (excerpt) -Freud *The Interpretation of Dreams* (excerpt)	**DUE …: "reflection" from W 1**
W 3	Writing back to the Father(land): Fiction and fact in Kafka's *Letter to his Father*	-Franz Kafka *Letter to His Father* -Hannah Arendt *The Human Condition* (excerpt)	*presentation:* Kafka's dad writes back
W 4	Austria's Habsburgian Dream	Arthur Schnitzler *Dream Story*	*presentation:* map Fridolin's travels through Vienna
W 5	6:30-8:00 p.m. Atrocity and Forgivability 8:15-10:15 p.m. Screen *Inglourious Basterds*	-Simon Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower* -Conflict Resolution Definitions	In-class debate
W 6	Representing Representations of the Holocaust in Quentin Tarantino *Inglourious Basterds*	-"*Shoah* as Cinema." Florence Jacobowitz	**DUE …:** **Dad writes back**

			presentation: representing representations of trauma and violence
	R e a d i n g	**W e e k**	
W 7	Screening *The Reader*		
W 8	Guilt and Shame: The Ambiguities of Responsibility	Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader*	*presentation (x2):* ethics, law, and justice
W 9	6:30-8:15 Theodor Adorno and poetry after Auschwitz 8:30-10:30 Screening *The Lives of Others*	-Paul Celan "Death Fugue" -Sylvia Plath "Daddy"	
W 10	The wall in my head: divided Berlin	Florian Henckel von Donnersmark *The Lives of Others*	**DUE ... :** **Poetry mindmap** *presentation:* secrets, lies, and truths
W 11	Trans-identities: East, West, Queer **Guest artist: local actor, who was the lead in the one-person show: "I am my own Wife."**	Doug Wright *I am my own Wife*	
W 12	Migrants and multiculturalism: Foreigners or New Germans	Emine Sevgi Özdamar *The Bridge of the Golden Horn*	**DUE ...** **Paper/project** *Presentation:* The migrant Imagination

Essay topics:

Compare Schlink's *The Reader* and Ruzowitzky's *The Counterfeiters* and how each work complicates the victim/perpetrator dynamic and addresses issues of personal responsibility and survival.

Compare the politics of exclusion and the creative responses to oppression in von Donnersmark's *The Lives of Others* and Doug Wright's *I am my own Wife*

Compare the politics of sexuality and gender in Doug Wright's *I am my own Wife* and Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *The Bridge of the Golden Horn*

Compare the role of reading and writing in *The Reader* and *The Lives of Others*.

Comparison of the role of film, visual culture and "watching/looking" in *Ingourious Basterds* and the movie version of *The Reader*.

Compare the use of Holocaust metaphors and the politics of representation in Celan's "Death Fugue" and Sylvia Plath's "Daddy."

or

Project: As an alternative to a research paper, you may develop a creative project in consultation with the instructor. The format is open: journal, video, web-media, dramatic presentation, creative writing, visual art. For the creative project, please provide an annotated bibliography of works consulted and a 500-word reflective commentary on process.

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Notes

[1] UUDLEs were developed by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV). See the full document at www.cou.on.ca.

[2] Inquiry-based approaches involve the learner, so that the student becomes a learner-researcher. I will discuss this concept in more detail in the pages that follow.

[3] I define value in a sociological sense, as a set of ideas or beliefs that we hold to be important, that shape us as human beings and have an impact on our behaviour. I also recognize the importance of acknowledging the cultural specificity of value, which is determined by categories of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, socioeconomic circumstances as well as the various communities with which we associate.

[4] Here, passion refers to an exceptional exuberance and enthusiasm for an activity or cause. If teachers enable their students to become passionate about their studies, then not only will students' learning be enhanced but they will thrive as human beings as well.

[5] Learning here is understood to mean acquiring, synthesizing, comprehending and modifying knowledge or creating new knowledge. Learning is also an integral component in personal growth and extends beyond institutional or professional learning to include the entirety of human experience.

[6] Learning to learn is a concept that comes from metacognitive sciences. Originating from traditional machine learning algorithms, the field has evolved to encompass a range of applications (Thrun and Lorien p. 8). It implies becoming conscious of one's learning objectives, one's own particular learning style, and the strategies that enable successful learning. Students are encouraged to consider whether they learn best by reading, problem-solve, memorize, interpret, synthesize, through oral presentation, through brief or longer study periods, etc. Further, students are encouraged to document the evolution of their study habits and learning strategies. Ultimately, students should be able to articulate their strategies for success and to continually adjust their learning objectives and goals.

[7] There are significant differences between Canada and the UK in terms of the administration of post-secondary educational institutions and policies. Both countries are dominated by public institutions, and yet in the UK, education is a federal concern and faculty are civil servants and treated as employees of the state. The situation in Canada is somewhat more nuanced. Education is a provincial affair and, while universities are subject to government policies, faculty are not direct employees of the state, ensuring a modicum of independence.

[8] Kramsch et al (2007) conduct an in-depth study of several popular first and second-year German textbooks, concluding that "American textbooks teaching German in the United States represent an American view of German multiculturalism that replicates the American way of dealing with linguistic and cultural minorities" (165-170). While I'm impressed with the thorough investigation of textbooks, I will say that it is infinitely easier to critique them than it is to write a good textbook. The article's main conclusion that learning in the German classroom needs to be reframed around context and how discourse is produced is very convincing. But I would have liked to hear more about how they propose to do this with concrete examples from the FL classroom.

[9] Richard Ascough (2010, p. 1) notes the tendency for cynicism with regard to outcomes-oriented approaches and a drift toward corporate language, but he encourages teachers to embrace the potential gains of this approach.

[10] Amy Driscoll and Swarup Wood (2007) acknowledge the worry about outcomes-oriented curricula. It can be inflexible, mechanistic and reductionist; it can privilege measurable knowledge and skills; it can be unresponsive to diverse learning styles (p. 8). That said, Driscoll and Wood advocate for good outcomes approaches because it forces us all to think beyond material and shifts the focus from teaching to learning (p. 6).

[11] Richard Ascough (2010) defines objectives as "what the instructor is responsible to do in the course"; "outputs are what the student is responsible for doing in the course"; "outcomes encompass the deeper learning that the objectives and the outputs are intended to produce – the overall impact of the course. The outcomes define the attitudes and abilities that should result from the course but which are not necessarily measurable in the short term" (p. 6).

[12] Vicki Remenda, Professor of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering and Chair for Teaching and Learning at Queen's University, formed "Inquiry@Queen's," a project to foster inquiry- and discovery-based learning throughout the curriculum. I had the good fortune to be on the steering committee for the first two years of this project.

[13] Tim Bryant, Professor of Mechanical and Materials Engineering at Queen's University, speaks about learners moving along a continuum from novice to more sophisticated learners as they develop strategies for knowledge creation. He breaks down the dichotomy between teachers and students and insists we are all learners at different stages of development. Similarly, he makes no distinction between teaching and researching – they are different modes of learning.

[14] Fostaty-Young and Wilson (2000) developed a model of assessment based on incremental stages of learning: ideas (the basic building blocks of knowledge – information), connections (concepts, models, frameworks involving a combination of information and ideas) and extensions (stretching existing frameworks to critique knowledge systems and create new knowledge). Fostaty-Young and Wilson create rubrics to assess learning based on this model.

[15] I credit Tim Bryant, Professor of Mechanical and Materials Engineering at Queen's University, for the term learner-researcher.

[16] Inquiry-based learning (IBL, or inquiry-guided learning) is not a new phenomenon. The initiative for IBL at the North Carolina State University began in 1996, and now is spread throughout 60 academic and administrative units (V. S. Lee, 2004, p. ix).

[17] Julia Christenson-Hughes and Joy Mighty (2010, p. 4) lament the slow change in teaching practices in higher education and describe tools such as the lecture as "practices of convenience." They ask why, given the decades of empirical research that proves that deep and transformative learning, these methods persist.

[18] Kramsch et al (2007) give several examples of how textbooks allow students to fall into this trap: "Whether these courses are taught in German or in English with readings in German, the terms multiculturalism and *Multikulturalismus* are usually taken to be equivalent" (p. 166). They go on to say that, "because German Studies courses do not focus on language but on content, they do not explicitly address differences between American and German concepts" (p. 166). I my own German Studies courses taught in English, I go to great pains to use "contextual scaffolding" to make the students aware of subtle and not-so-subtle differences. I also note that Kramsch et al (2007) speak of the American context with no acknowledgement that Canada's use of multiculturalism is different again from either the American or German.

[19] Fostaty-Young and Wilson (2000) have developed an assessment rubric framework grounded in the Ideas Connections Extensions method of teaching and learning (see footnote 13). Their approach emphasizes clear and differentiated learning objectives that enable students to effectively break down learning into pragmatic steps. While originally developed for K-12 educational models, it is easily applicable to post-secondary learning objectives.

[20] I should also note that the Department of German at my university (Queen's University, Kingston) has joined forces with other language units to create a new Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, which will include Chinese,

German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Linguistics (and possibly Arabic, Hebrew, and Mohawk in the near future). This new institutional framework provides the opportunity to rethink our offerings and develop new, interdisciplinary humanities programs, that will include courses such as the two I discuss in this paper.

[21] For example, students in Political Studies are introduced to literary texts and the importance of interpretation and rhetorical analysis; students in Applied Science help humanities students to understand the dynamic of problem solving projects; Commerce students and Humanities students encounter differences in perspective that enrich the intellectual exchange.

[22] Linda Nilsen (2007, p. 62) suggests proving a graphic outcomes map for students to make clear objectives and how they are connected to the material and activities of the course. She says that doing this "displays the reasoning for students to see and follow."

[23] Kramsch et al (2007, p. 158) refer not just to the "crisis in teaching of German at American Universities" but also to "Germany's current educational crisis." It seems crisis is on-going. By reframing crisis as challenge and opportunity, we increase out potential to come up with creative solutions.