The Implementation of a Peer Observation of Teaching Initiative at a Dubai-based College’s Faculty of Dental Medicine.

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Abstract

This change initiative involved the inception of a trial involving peer observation of teaching (POT), executed solely by the writer who received facilitative aid from a corresponding team on the trial site. The rationale for selecting this project was the impetus for developing augmented quality assurance in teaching and learning at a higher education medical organization in the Middle East. The highest aim of this impetus was to ensure that education be offered to the ultimate standards, evaluated over a continuum, preferably by POT. In this instance, developments were in the preliminary burgeoning stage. The HSE’s change model and the CIPP evaluation model were employed to furnish the project with direction. Prior to its implementation, a survey was transmitted to 15 faculty volunteers, to evoke their perceptions and attitudes of POT. A proper training tutorial was then provided to volunteers, coaching them through both the observation and feedback processes. Subsequently, they underwent one actual POT session, in which the 9 participants, bar one, assumed both observer and observee roles. Next, focus group interviews were carried out with the participants (n=9). Analysis of both data sets yielded consistent results with each other and the literature, indicating strong favourable responses for the implementation of POT with a formative, developmental approach using a systematically precise observation instrument. Lastly, the evaluation of this change initiative simultaneously substantiated the benefits of POT and enabled the devising of a bespoke model with the capacity for its complete embedding within the organization.
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Chapter 1

Introduction
1.1 Introduction
The renowned Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, once said that change is the only constant. This implies that nothing in life is constant except change; it is inevitable, unpredictable, profound and most definitely, necessary. The process of bringing about change can be quite complex, and though various approaches exist, the HSE model of effecting change in organizations is perhaps one of the best around. It will also form the basis of the writer’s soon-to-be-explained change project, alongside the CIPP model of evaluation, a Daniel Stufflebeam concept linking evaluation to program decision-making and enhancement. The following chapter will first summarize the change project and its inner workings. Next, detailed explanations of the project’s rationale, the organizational context of the change and its aims and objectives will be provided. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a synthesis of all facets discussed thus far.

1.2 Inner workings of the change
The change project entails the execution and evaluation of a quality assurance initiative in teaching and learning in higher education (HE). Specifically, it involves the launch of a pilot program of peer observation of teaching, otherwise known as POT.

The launching of POT was an extensive and detail-oriented process. To begin, an elaborate literature review was carried out, to provide the foundation of POT, as well as to create a comprehensive understanding of its relevant tools, facilitators, impediments and overall usefulness. Subsequently, a survey was distributed to all volunteers, to pre-determine their foreknowledge, if any, of POT and to highlight their perceptions, later followed by a POT training tutorial. Next, the trainees participated in one actual POT session, whereby the roles of observer and observee were allocated and acted upon. Once complete, it was necessary to ascertain the participants’ viewpoints and attitudes towards POT by conducting focus group interviews, hence helping to assess the initiative’s impact by tracking all experiences of the observers and observees. Lastly, it is pertinent to mention that the HSE model and the CIPP evaluation model were applied throughout the process, to assist in achieving the project’s ultimate goal: to institutionalize a regularized system to augment teaching and learning by employing POT. Recommendations for improved practice in future therefore emerged.
1.3 Rationale of the change project

Tuckman (2009) asserts that effective teaching is crucial to learning and development, defining it as either that which a) leads to student learning and growth, or b) is acknowledged and accepted by educators and other academic professionals alike. Regardless of the context, effective teaching is necessary, and evaluation of teaching is equally pertinent for sustained growth and heterogeneity in HE systems (Henard, 2010). Evaluation is a singular process that involves making judgments based on standards, objectives and principles (Scriven, 1967) and applying such judgments to program development or course delivery (Taras, 2005). Hence, effective evaluation of teaching is also essential.

Henard (2010) contends that increasing demands within the HE sector and society-at-large have amplified the emphasis placed on the quality of programs being offered at institutions, underscoring the heightened need for teaching and program evaluation. In effect, there is a substantial lack of data on how to improve teaching quality, especially as Taylor and Tyler (2012) assert, this research deficiency could potentially serve as a significant barricade to professional development and instructional improvement among teachers. Consequently, experimental methodologies, like POT, are becoming more welcomed and accepted in the education and program development sphere.

Peer observation of teaching is one such means that has materialized as a widespread practice in higher education institutions, in response to internalities and externalities that call forth the need for quality assurance systems within educational provisions (Byrne et al., 2010). Aligned with this idea is the principle on which peer observation is typically grounded: the amelioration of teaching quality via the exchange of good practice among educational staff members (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006).

Bingham and Otterwill (2001) regard peer observation as developmental in nature, defining it as a formative process, rather than a summative one. Likewise, the formative nature of evaluation demands feedback (Taras, 2005), a central element of POT, for without it, POT cannot function, nor can it be expected to institutionalize change.

It has been suggested that POT directly correlates to educators’ progressive professional
development by pinpointing the criteria, within teaching and learning domains, that necessitate further reflection, and perhaps, re-adaptation (Bingham & Ottewill, 2001). Quality enhancement, as explored by Biggs (2003), is closely linked to peer observation, in that it endeavors to improve the quality of teaching, learning and evaluation by supporting new and pioneering approaches. Focusing on the writer’s context brings to light the precise rationale of this change project: to develop quality enhancement by augmenting the quality of teaching and learning within an HE medical organization in Dubai, UAE.

The writer’s chosen medical institution, primarily focused on dentistry, models its programs after the philosophical principal of lifelong learning and innovation, aiming to produce specialists in dental education, research and clinical practice. Lifelong learning and innovation take centre stage here, for the operative word innovation becomes synonymous with fresh and original approaches. The aforementioned statement is the key reason as to why this institution was chosen, for its mandate is committed to quality enhancement.

Lomas and Nicholls (2005) posit that quality enhancement is strongly associated with transformation, contributing merit and augmenting quality not on a limited and superficial basis, but rather on a sustained and transformative one. In this light, the writer’s change initiative attempted to incite change on a transformative level, whereby its impact could not only be felt on every level, but could also become embedded into the institution. POT, with its roots in transformative change, was chosen as the means to enact and institutionalize a regularized system to augment the quality of teaching and learning. The HSE model plays an integral role in underpinning peer observation of teaching, for its cyclical, non-linear path denotes fluidity and dynamic movement that is perfectly suited to organizational change occurring on multiple levels (HSE, 2008). Successful change, in this regard, is most likely to happen within elastic and pliable organizational boundaries, particularly when the four stages of the HSE model are properly executed, those being initiation, planning, implementation and mainstreaming. Consequently, the HE sector must mirror similar movements, to ensure that change becomes so deeply rooted, that it transforms and augments quality on all levels of the
teaching and learning continuum. As exemplified by Sachs and Parsell (2014), activities involving peer observation require full implantation into organizational systems to become maintainable.

Enhancement is relative when discussing the change project's rationale, because of its significant role across the POT spectrum, particularly in terms of student outcomes, professional environments and staff development. Additionally, enhancement and evaluation go hand-in-hand, particularly the formative kind, which necessitates feedback, highlighting the gap between the content being assessed and the requisite standards to catalyze improvement or enhancement (Taras, 2005). Therefore, CIPP, a 60’s-born evaluation approach, was specifically chosen to evaluate the writer’s change initiative. It encompasses the evaluation of four fundamental components - content, input, process and product – of any program, project, personnel, product, institution or evaluation system (Stufflebeam, 2003). Its foundation is grounded on improving, not proving, the program itself in a “learning by doing” fashion (Zhang et al., 2011), and its appropriateness is amplified by its focus on feedback, as Taras (2005) argues, the latter of which is an inherent component of POT’s successful functioning.

The giving and receiving of feedback is a mode of communication, thus creating a dialogue exchange between the observer and observee and highlighting the significance of continued communication throughout all stages of the POT process, particularly when identifying key stakeholders, assessing goals and reporting data. Furthermore, the process component of CIPP investigates the quality of a program’s implementation, which is precisely what a POT change initiative endeavors to achieve – a quality assurance action plan intended to improve teaching and learning on a sustained basis. CIPP is a highly suitable model for evaluating the writer’s change initiative.

According to Bell (2001), peer observation has legitimized itself as an impelling tool for augmenting teaching and enriching academic experiences, while contributing to the overall betterment of student outcomes and learning. Similarly, its usefulness is further fueled by standardized instating at academic institutions like the University of Melbourne or York Technical College, where peer observation of teaching is regularly practiced, for
it has proven to foster networks, improve teaching and establish communities (McGrath & Monsen, 2015). The latter three variables thus have assisted in cultivating quality work environments and professional development of staff, especially when the institutions’ administrators have enabled a culture that fosters a “collegial exchange” based on the endorsement of trust (Israel, 2015). It is for these reasons that the writer opted to pursue POT as the focus of the change project.

1.4 Context of the change

The change initiative’s launch in Dubai, UAE, occurred at an HE medical institution where a POT pilot had never before been executed. It specializes in medicine, but more specifically dentistry studies, cultivating highly qualified individuals in dental education, research and clinical practice within a scholastic environment that embraces lifelong learning and innovation. In this mindset, the institution recognizes the need for continued development and change, especially when vying for a top position among internationally-accredited schools. The change initiative was, therefore, structured in such a way as to actively contribute to the institution’s goals of providing excellence in teaching and learning for medical (dental) residents and developing their specialized skills within a highly competitive and demanding market. Hence, this is the context in which the change occurred.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The change project’s aims and objectives were SMART-based. This means that meaningful objectives are established by creating a framework of results to be achieved founded on specific criteria (Doran, 1981). SMART is actually an acronym for the criteria on which it is based; these are specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related. Though some differentiation exists among the criteria and individuals determining them, the ones mentioned above are the most commonly applied. For this change initiative, the exact SMART criteria were employed with slight modifications. Firstly, the change project was intended to be specific; then, both measurable and meaningful; next, assignable and attainable; followed by realistic and relevant; and lastly, time-related and trackable.
Its **aims** were two-fold:

- To implement and assess a quality assurance action plan involving peer observation of teaching within an HE medical organisation.
- To institutionalize regularized systems to augment teaching and learning standards by utilizing POT.

Its **objectives** were six-fold:

1) To execute a time-bound, action learning-based pilot of POT (June 2015 – January 2016).
2) To determine participants’ viewpoints and attitudes toward POT via survey (June 24\textsuperscript{th}, 2015).
3) To deliver a meaningfully effective POT training session, focusing on feedback and reflection processes (October 6\textsuperscript{th}, 2015).
4) To assess the initiative’s effects by tracking the experiences of both the observer and observee via post-POT focus group interviews (January 24\textsuperscript{th}, 2016).
5) To measure the achievability of the change project’s goals (April 2016).
6) To provide recommendations for improved practice in future (January 24\textsuperscript{th}, 2016 and beyond).

**1.6 Conclusion**

Establishing a quality assurance regularized system is essential to this project. POT was chosen as the means to accomplish this goal, a widely sought-after evaluation approach that has been applauded in academic literature, for its apparent impact on the augmentation of teaching practice, the learning process, workplace environment and/or sub-culture and staff professional development. Discussions, flexibility and open communication with key stakeholders are crucial to the overall operation for a two-fold purpose: a) to demonstrate a commitment to quality assurance, and b) to establish a concrete understanding of both the capacities and confines of POT as an evaluation tool. In fully carrying out this process, clear recommendations emerge and help to ascertain a course-of-action for institutions’ management teams’ efforts. Such efforts are to solidify
the change impact of POT by embedding it within organizations as a regularized system.

Within the writer’s chosen institution, it was hoped that POT would accomplish the goals set forth, while simultaneously assisting the institution’s commitment to excellence in teaching and learning. Its fullest effects are yet undetermined, due to time constraints, but it is felt that the POT action plan, with its strong roots in the HSE model and the CIPP evaluation model, will be successful in attaining some degree, if not all, of sustainability within the institution.
Chapter 2

Literature Review
2.1 Introduction

According to McMahon et al. (2007), peer observation of teaching, or POT, revolves around facilitating change for the betterment of everyone concerned. It has been, for some, a social means to augment the quality of teaching (Peel, 2005). For others, it has not only improved teaching practice, but has also helped to significantly alter educational points of view and foster collegial spirit (Bell, 2005). Either way, the diversity of literature most commonly points to a beneficial educational tool that is used to, first, evaluate, and second, to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. This chapter examines POT in great detail by synthesizing the vast array of academic literature on this subject, and in so doing, this review’s overarching goal is brought to the forefront - to analytically assess POT as an instructive tool, pinpointing both its merits and shortcomings, and in due course, debating whether it truly impacts the quality of teaching and learning at institutions that are currently practicing this methodology or are considering its application.

2.2 Search Strategy

For this literature review, multiple bibliographic, journal and e-book databases were consulted to acquire a comprehensive catalogue of information about POT. The primary ones employed were Eric, Emerald, PubMed and RCSI Library databases, alongside a few minor journal articles extracted from Google Scholar. To narrow the online search, controlled vocabulary, for instance “peer observation of teaching” or “peer review teaching,” were identified pre-search and then subsequently applied, generating hundreds of potentially useful articles that were typically listed by name and subject on the library databases. Occasionally, alternative key words were used to maximize relevant results, thus yielding a favorable surplus of POT-related information. The titles were perused, and the articles were chosen based on relevance and the surfacing of themes. From the research, notable experts in this field emerged, prompting a hand search of their key journal publications, some of which were selected for this review. In total, approximately 50 articles were drawn from for the completion of this chapter, sought only in English text and derived from such countries/regions as the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and the Middle East.
2.3 Peer Observation of Teaching

The world of teaching and learning is continually progressing, developing new and improved methodologies, strategies and approaches, to meet ever-increasing international demands, to compete with other institutions and to overcome challenges. Peer observation of teaching is one such method that has emerged from the woodwork in recent years, as a strategic approach to augment the quality of university education (Bennet & Barp, 2008; Byrne, Brown & Challen, 2010). Definitions of POT slightly vary, but the most consistent one conveys it as a process involving colleagues, or “peers” as its name implies, observing each other in their teaching, with the ultimate aim of augmenting teaching practice (Hendry & Oliver, 2012). Bell and Mladenovic (2008) assert that a large percentage of POT research is centered on peer observation at the lecturer echelon or above, with less focus placed on expert observation as part of tutor development. Essentially, its delivery can assume one of three model forms – evaluative, developmental or peer review-oriented (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006; Gosling, 2002), and is intended for either formative assessment, closely linked to professional development, or summative assessment, concerned with performance management (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008).

Hitchens (2014; McGrath & Monsen, 2015) contends there exists no homogenously conventional model of peer observation, but most models transition through stages of reflection, peer briefing, observation and debriefing, and lastly, planning and putting change into teaching practice, a process that has been adopted by some of the world’s most prestigious universities - UC Berkley, CALTECH, University of Cambridge and Harvard University (McGrath & Monsen, 2015). The aforementioned is intended to give some context to the nature of POT’s practice, but it is its formative facet that has been academically lauded for its professional development benefits in teaching, providing the angle from which this work was written.

It is important to mention that research surrounding education in the Middle East and the application of new methodologies, like POT, is sorely inadequate, presenting some
challenges when trying to contextualize higher education in the writer’s location focus of Dubai. Akkari (2004) states the Middle East and North Africa are at a crossroads in their educational development, due to a fear of equipping indigenous people with the ability and knowledge to challenge power, or educating them in a formal system that is representative of western culture hegemony (Akkari, 2004). Despite this, GCC countries are forging ahead by opening and globalizing the HE market in Arab countries, founding top-class universities whose goal is to revolutionize Arab academia from a site of knowledge reception to one of knowledge construction (Romani, 2009). If this path continues, in spite of overwhelming opposition, the Middle East has the capacity to elevate itself as a competitor in the international educational market.

2.4 Review of Themes
Bell (2002) asserts that there is a significant lack of quantitative data surrounding the effectiveness of peer observation of teaching, and yet, volumes of qualitative data on this subject are available. Drawing from over 50 different articles, numerous key words were repeated, allowing for parallels to be drawn between articles and important themes to materialize. Consequently, the articles’ margins were filled with these recurring words, and a list was compiled thereafter to record and organize them, with the intent of formulating three or four prominent themes from the abundant gathered information.

In this case, three themes formed the foundation of this literature review. Firstly, POT is complexly intertwined with the notion of transformation in varying degrees and contexts. Secondly, it is concurrently an individual and reciprocal process when delivered and carried out in a manner that optimizes its potential. Thirdly, the right ethos must be in place to maximize POT’s benefits, i.e. a holistic approach fundamental to the dissemination of best practice. Evidently, each theme underpins the other, forming a triangulation of sorts, whereby each correlates to the one before it and ends at the starting point. Simply stated, POT’s success is contingent on the following through of this complex symbiotic-like relationship, and as such, the themes and their interconnections will be elaborated upon.
2.4.1 Theme 1: The concept of transformation in POT

In tertiary, or third-level, education, POT has the potential to be a transformative mechanism for sustainable change. In this context, the transformation link to POT is related to quality enhancement, endeavoring to accomplish improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by encouraging the adoption of new approaches (Biggs, 2003; Lomas & Kinchin, 2006). Jackson (2002) suggests that quality enhancement is transformative and is primarily concerned with contributing merit and augmenting quality in education.

The term transformation implies a major change, a metamorphosis of sorts, which can occur over a continuum on an individual teaching level and/or an entire organization. Donnelly (2007) contends that learning about teaching in tertiary education comes from a cyclical process of transforming and finding meaningfulness in a myriad of linked ways, while increasing one’s professionalism. In her mind, this notion is intrinsic to the blueprint and delivery of the POT format. The crucial transformation occurs when one makes meaning to rationalize or interpret an experience, in this case a learning one, and transfers this interpretation to the decision-making process or course-of-action (Mezirow, 1990), for instance, an educator’s impact-filled experience leading to a change in teaching philosophy. Such meaning and/or interpretation are made during the critical reflection phase of POT, when participants investigate both excellent and poor teaching examples, and provide and accept constructive feedback (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008).

Subsequently, participants are given the opportunity to reflect on their present teaching practice, while exchanging their experiences with helpful “peers” and experimenting with new strategies in a supportive environment (Donnelly, 2007). New ways of assessing one’s teaching and the embracing of new methods to improve practice emerge, allowing transformative learning and professional development to take place. Highly reminiscent of Kolb’s experiential learning, newfound knowledge, in this context, is generated through the transformation of experience (Donnelly, 2007). In effect, the transformation of experience occurs as a result of probing and restructuring conjectures, assuming
different viewpoints and recognizing that conjecture alters meaning (Donnelly, 2007); this is transformative learning at its finest.

Aligned with transformation occurring on different levels during the POT process, is the teacher’s self-reflective element of self-study, augmenting not only the individual’s learning, but also playing a crucial role in advancing the learning of a group of teachers (Byrne et al., 2010). Wilcox (2009) recommends that self-study transfers personal reflections to a communal sphere through a reflexive process, sparking critical discourse, a type of dialogue engaged by a group deemed to be informed, objective and rational to explore reasoning that legitimizes challenging thinking (Mezirow, 2003), in this case, participating teachers. Such discourse leads to enhancement by liberal participation and continuing dialogue via critical reflection (Mezirow, 2003). Hence, transformative learning is enabled via the self-study process and communicative learning (grasping what others mean when they communicate), influencing individuals or groups to think and act differently, while a new perspective is exchanged within the learning community (Byrne et al., 2010). Similarly, Golparian et al. (2015) characterize classroom peer reviews, and their ensuing discourse, as a probable transformative process for both reviewer and reviewee (substitutes for observer and observee), providing a prime opportunity for the reviewee to receive feedback on their teaching, while illustrating different teaching styles and techniques to the reviewer. This is an alternative way of defining transformative learning.

Wilcox (2009; Byrne et al., 2010) further suggests that time plays a significant role in the collective critical discourse that ensues during and after the POT process; sufficient time is required to facilitate deeper reflection and superior reflexivity, intended to transform or enhance teaching practice. In turn, participating teachers are given time to validate their new perspectives and to take action on them, displaying significant knowledge transformation and a complete paradigm shift (Mezirow, 2003). Thus, the likelihood of the transformation actually sticking increases ten-fold, for Sachs and Parsell (2014) state that peer observation of teaching activities need to be embedded within organizations for sustainability to occur.
POT has the capacity to fully transform a teacher’s “way of being,” by enhancing professional development as part of an increasing attainment of peer-approved teaching abilities within a community of practice (Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007). This statement underscores the duality of POT methodology – how it functions simultaneously as both a singular and reciprocal process. Therefore, the second theme of this literature review is brought to the forefront.

### 2.4.2 Theme 2: POT’s duality: the individual vs. the collective

Cosh (1999) argues that POT should not be utilized as a vehicle for the evaluation of teachers being observed, but rather should restructure its focus to encompass self-awareness and self-development in education. This approach highlights the individual, whereby one is engaged in a scheme to encourage reflection upon their own teaching practice and to initiate active self-development (Donnelly, 2007). Herein lies reflective practice, an aptitude to contemplate action with the intent to partake in a process of continuous learning (Schon, 1983), while zoning in on functional values and hypotheses to attain developmental understanding (Bolton, 2010). Consequently, in this role, the teacher becomes the reflective practitioner, who considers the effectiveness of their own teaching and determines their own developmental needs, which according to Gosling (2005), is one of the primary objectives of the POT developmental model. Furthermore, the reflective practitioner reconstructs their own experiences, openly acknowledges and assesses feedback, examines their own abilities, attitudes and knowledge scope and ascertains and thus investigates potentialities for professional improvement (Schon, 1983).

Donnelly (2007) maintains an individual’s self-development is especially enhanced when they observe their peers, likely colleagues, execute assignments effectively. This argument bridges the gap between the individual teacher and the reciprocal nature of POT, proving that the process benefits both the individual and a collective of teachers, even the institution-at-large. To ponder that such a magnitude of change is grounded in one’s own critical reflection is astounding.
Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory fortifies the assertion that duality is closely tied to POT. Bandura (2001) posits that symbolic communication influences human thinking, feeling and action via two pathways: the direct and the socially mediated. In the first, changes are endorsed by enlightening, facilitating, stimulating and directing participants, while the latter is concerned with how media pressures associate participants with social networks and community backdrops that enable natural motivation and continuous personal direction for desired change (Bandura, 2001). Potentially, both pathways are engaged during the POT process, whereby reflective practice facilitates the professional learning of academic staff and faculty (the direct pathway) and contributes to molding a knowingly reflective learning organization (the socially mediated pathway) (Askew, 2004). The social context of peer observation is emphasized here, defined by Gosling (2005) as a “social practice” that is both physically and academically present in the workplace and field, which has become progressively recognized as a highly probable transformative means for the enrichment of teaching practice (Harris et al., 2008). Furthermore, when utilized for formative purposes with mixed-disciplinary peers, POT appears to satisfy the essential measures for the development of teaching practice independently and jointly across the spectrum of teaching teams, departments and organizations (Weller, 2009).

Collaboration is implicit in social practice, highlighting the operative words of “sharing” and “engagement” within the confines of a community of practice. In this setting, POT incites critical discourse amongst peers who share their knowledge and professional experiences, provide feedback, expose areas in need of improvement and contribute and enhance insight into teaching (Bell & Cooper, 2013), all-the-while experiencing in-depth engagement and collaboration with each other that lead to highly favorable outcomes, including specialized interactions, guidance, improved attitudes and augmented teaching quality (Luchoomun, 2007). However, this is achievable only when all the participants exhibit a balanced readiness to commit time, effort and active participation to the group POT process (Byrne et al., 2010), meanwhile, engaging in professional discourse and specific ventures that encourage learning togetherness over time, as part of a larger academic learning community (Aubusson et al., 2007). As Haigh (2005) asserts, learning
conversations are invaluable to the learning process, and dialogue with colleagues, sparked by critical reflection, is at the very core of peer mentoring and coaching (Little, 2005; Zwart et al., 2007). Ergo, teaching practice is improved through constructive enabled discourse and self and joint reflective practice, as part of a collaborative peer review initiative (Golparian et al., 2015).

In short, the synthesis of information surrounding the literature review’s second theme of duality qualifies as an exemplification of action research at its finest. Correspondingly, action research is a research approach that augments transfer of learning, involving stages of collaboration, action and reflection (Atkinson & Bolt, 2010), each synonymous with peer observation of teaching. These stages reaching their optimal potential are contingent on two factors: a) proper execution, and b) the appropriate ethos in place. The latter factor gives way to this review’s third and final theme.

2.4.3 Theme 3: Applying the right ethos

Peer observation of teaching’s efficacy is deeply rooted in ethos, the distinctive character, emotion, moral nature or guiding principles of a person, group or institution (McLaughlin, 2005). All three form the contextual focus here. When the right ethos is put in place, then the achievability of success becomes likely; if not, the entire POT initiative runs the heightened risk of being compromised or even worse, derailed completely. In institutions where authority and social relationships are in disequilibrium, for instance, the prospect for peer observation of teaching to enhance professional development is overshadowed (Bryne et al., 2010). Similarly, POT has been construed as a “ticking the box” activity (Cosh, 1999), meaning a mundane and routine managerial task. Lomas and Kinchin (2006) discuss the subjectivity of POT and how it is fraught with difficulties, for example, a lack of clarity involving the aims of peer observation or an oversight in contextualizing the procedures unambiguously for the participants. This could, in effect, lead to anxiety and frustration (Al Darwish, 2012), becoming unfocused (Gosling, 2002), fatigue stemming from a time-consuming commitment to the process (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008), and eventually causing resistance to change (Lomas &
Kinchin, 2006). To avoid these possibilities, the ethos must be formative, developmental, collaborative, reflective and allowing an inner study of practice (Donnelly, 2007).

Equally important is the presence and assurance of confidentiality between the observer and observee (Hendry & Oliver, 2012), flexibility and diversity (McGrath & Monsen, 2015), collegial trust and respect (Blackmore, 2005), mutual responsibility for sustained learning (Byrne et al., 2010) and openness and honesty (Woodman & Parappilly, 2019). When these facets are mutually exclusive, then the sharing of good practice becomes attainable, especially when the POT scheme is implemented sensitively and acknowledges the concerns of all participants (Lomas & Kinchin, 2006).

To achieve success, the peer observation of teaching climate is vital. Consequently, a holistic approach is the most valued, according to Luchoomun (2007), who asserts that sanctioning teachers to collaborate and be accountable for their professional development is key. In so doing, the learning environment should be non-judgmental and supportive (Lomas & Nicholls, 2005), with participants who cooperate and offer viewpoints, investigate new strategies with others and seek to find solutions to future challenges in teaching (Barnard et al., 2011). The relationship between peers should be a partnership of equals that is purpose-filled to stimulate collegiality, rather than developing face-to-face instructional skills (Bell & Cooper, 2013). Woodman and Parappilly (2019) echo this sentiment on collegiality, but also emphasize that creating enthusiasm for the POT process is essential.

According to Byrne et al. (2010), collegiality is the sense of engagement in genuine and meaningful activity, inspiring autonomy in peer development and affirming that such development is actually taking place. This element is a decisive factor in the growth of learning communities (Schuck et al., 2008). Collegiality increases confidence in teaching pedagogy, engagement and professional development (Barnard et al., 2011), while participating in activities that are relevant, interrelated, stretched over a considerable period of time and socially embedded (Gibbs, 2013). This enables the gradual diffusion of good teaching practice, when a POT initiative is built on the right ethos. As Woodman and Parapilly (2019) state, academic developers should stress the value of fostering
collegiality, scholarship for teaching and learning and good ethos for good practice to all POT participants.

2.5 Implications for the Project

The literature review’s three core themes are strongly correlated to the concept of change, more specifically, sustainable change in the domain of teaching and learning. Atkinson and Bolt (2010) maintain that sustainable change is intrinsic to using peer review for the enhancement of teaching and learning, which Lewin (1947) argues necessitates a triple-faceted approach involving research, training and action, the three components of action research. These three factors are vital to the progression of the writer’s POT initiative.

Research

Vast and abound, the gathered literature on peer observation of teaching assisted in affirming the writer’s POT initiative objectives: a) to implement and assess a quality assurance action plan involving peer observation of teaching within an HE medical organization; and, b) to institutionalize a regularized system to augment the quality of teaching and learning by utilizing POT.

The concept of quality enhancement frequently surfaced from the literature, in that it aspires to accomplish improvements in quality by promoting new methodologies in teaching, learning and assessment (Biggs, 2003). By broadening teachers’ perspectives to consider and implement new approaches, transformative learning (theme 1) takes place via the examples and experiences set by the POT process. At the writer’s Dubai-based dental organization, it was hoped that by undergoing the POT project, the participating academic staff would experience transformative learning on a deeper level, helping to embed POT into the institution as a regularized mechanism for sustainable change. According to Hendry and Oliver (2012), observing someone teach well motivates others to apply the strategy, and when they achieve success, the conviction in the utility of what is seen and what is possible becomes enhanced and more likely embedded. Likewise, Donnelly (2007) states that if peer partnerships are maintained, even after a POT initiative has finished, the peers can engage in continuous exploration of practices and
ideas, thus contributing to professional development over time. Hence, it was also hoped that some of the peer partnerships, formed during the writer’s POT project, would remain intact, even after its completion.

Training
POT’s dual process emerged from the literature, indicating the initiative’s impact on both the individual and the group (theme 2). It is a singular and reciprocal process that can help the writer in determining how to properly prepare the project’s participants. Peer observation is largely focused on self-reflection, which augments not only the individual’s learning, but also plays a critical role in progressing the learning of a group (Byrne et al., 2010). Learning conversations then ensue, typified by the spotlight on the learner(s), and are agents in engendering critical reflection through dialogue (Allard et al., 2007). This dual, dynamic process is perfectly suited to the writer’s employed change model – the HSE model – which can direct practitioners through complicated processes of change management, involving numerous interactive elements that are never static (HSE, 2008). This implies a state of flux, highlighting the necessity for flexibility in peer observation, which according to McGrath and Monsen (2015), fuels the processes to be embedded.

The training aspect begins when the roles of observer and observee are explained to participants during an in-depth POT training session, delivered by a field expert. As a result, clear, purpose-filled guidelines for peer observation of teaching must be established, to avoid ambiguity or resistance, and an easy, operational environment must be created, one of collegial trust and respect (Harris et al., 2008). Basically, participants must have a solid understanding of the project, as well as their roles, the expectations placed on them and how their performances could affect both the implementation of POT and its outcomes. As the writer hoped, the desired outcome is to ascertain clear recommendations emerging from the change initiative, which should assist the management teams’ push toward the maintained and institutionalized implementation of POT.
Action

Action is crucial to the prospect of change. In this instance, the real action arises with the implementation of POT, alongside the application of the writer’s methodology. Additionally, the writer’s evaluation model – CIPP - is brought to the fore, in how it assists in carrying out fundamental functions (Stufflebeam, 2003). CIPP’s aim is not to prove an educational program, but rather to improve the program itself in a “learning by doing” manner (Zhang et al., 2011). In essence, only a certain amount of preparation and training can transpire before the implementation of POT; the improvement occurs when all participants learn by doing, as the action unfolds. However, the project’s success is dependent on the right ethos being in place as the action is carried out (theme 3). A holistic approach yields the best results with the ethos grounded in formative, developmental, collaborative and reflective practice, while also enabling one’s personal self-study (Donnelly, 2007). Meanwhile, establishing collegiality and enthusiasm for the process become equally important to the project’s outcomes (Woodman & Parapilly, 2019), allowing for the dissemination of good practice.

2.6 Summary and Conclusion

Summary

Synthesizing the information succinctly was difficult at times, but the repetition of controlled vocabulary aided the identification of key themes. The most prominent facet emerging from the POT literature is the essential placement of particular variables that are fundamental to the process: the right climate and ethos, the practice of critical reflection (self-study and group learning collaboration) and the presence of collegiality. These facets are complexly interwoven, forming a similar triangulation to the review’s dominant themes. When present, improving teaching quality through the exchange of good practice amongst academic staff becomes achievable (Lomas and Kinchin, 2006), especially when all concerned individuals cooperate, offer opinions and insight, investigate new tactics with peers and tackle challenges by finding solutions (Barnard et al., 2011). In this light, sustainable change within HE institutions is quite possible.
Conclusion

This chapter’s ultimate goal was to provide a critical debate of the significant themes revolving about the application of POT. Evidently, the literature indicates the increased employment of POT within HE education, for the purposes of quality assessment of teaching and quality enhancement, leading to staff professional development. Agreement in the literature points to the positioning of formative needs at the fore, since it is the most favored by staff. In conjunction, critical reflection is pivotal to the process, helping to establish an environment consisting of mutual trust, openness, respect, responsibility and interest, so that all participants can dynamically engage and feel confident in giving and receiving feedback. A clear framework and a balanced approach are integral, allocating some structure to the observational aspect, but using less formality in the feedback and follow up proceedings. Little quantitative research has been done on POT, therefore the bulk of data has been garnered qualitatively, denoting tremendous sponsorship for POT by its participants. However, there exists a lack of research on POT’s concrete effect on instructional quality; there is a dire need for further systematic evaluation to be carried out. Regardless of this limitation, it appears to be widely used in educational milieus for its utility in quality assurance plans in HE institutions and other organizations beyond.
Chapter 3

Change Process
3.1 Introduction
If Heraclitus’ words about change ring true – that it is the only constant – then, a state of flux is unavoidable. As such, it must be embraced, for “to improve is to change,” according to Winston Churchill, who furthers the aforementioned notion by stating that “to be perfect is to change often.” This third chapter presents a synopsis of the change initiative assumed by the writer, delineating the notion of change, the diversity of change models and the rationale for the writer’s selection of change model. Subsequently, an elucidation of the change initiative’s application of the HSE model is given, culminating in a conclusion which merges the essential points conveyed throughout the chapter.

3.2 The notion of change
Churchill’s reference of “perfection” linked to changing often is perhaps not the most realistic, but the parallel drawn between “change” and “improvement” is. Fullan (2014) suggests that when change wreaks havoc, unsettling the normalized pace of everyday functions, humans can find new ways to progress and to improve that are otherwise impossible in inactive societies. This implies that change occurs when there is movement and activity, but this does not mean that all movement and change are meaningfully significant (Shanley, 2007).

The term “change” is used ubiquitously across the literature spectrum, but its true nature is not easily understood (Shanley, 2007). To understand change, it must be perceived as complex, and innovation must not be construed as change (Fullan, 2014). It is, in fact, an entire process that is dynamic, non-linear, never static and fluid (HSE, 2008), primarily concerned with progress and the achievement of specific calculated objectives (Pfeefer, 1994). Here, an implementation slump may occur and resistance is highly probable, but the latter can be a positive force when appropriately harnessed (Fullan, 2014). Consequently, the complexity of change is highlighted, demanding interactive elements that are continuously revisiting and rerouting themselves throughout the change process (HSE, 2008). The varying models are thus instrumental in enabling a deep investigation of all the crucial elements central to the process. Only then will change be understood.
3.3 Models of change

Cummings and Worley (2009) define the term “model” as the simplification of a certain phenomenon or system description for reasons of analysis and understanding, whereas “change” is characterized as to make or become different (Oxford English Dictionary online, 2016). Combining the two elements enables organizations to manage change effectively in a multitude of fashions, for Burnes (2004) states change is a continuously present facet of organizational life at both functional and strategic echelons. According to Cameron and Green (2009), three dimensions of organizational change exist: outcomes, interests and emotions. Yet, these dimensions manifest themselves differently in each unique change model, grounded in varying philosophical principles (Burnes, 2004). Consequently, the appropriate model selection is contingent on fully grasping the sort of change that is necessitated (Shanley, 2007), emphasizing the need for successful change management, a process of repeatedly refreshing an organization’s trajectory, framework and ability to fulfill the ever-increasing needs of external and internal clients (By, 2005).

By (2005) demonstrates the various kinds of change based on the rate of occurrence, commencing with discontinuous, followed by incremental, smooth incremental, bumpy incremental, continuous, continuous incremental and finishing with punctuated equilibrium. Once the type of change has been ascertained, then the most apt change model can be decided upon and executed to accomplish organizational sustainability, a time-pressed and delicate process, relying on the alignment of certain interconnected issues (Burnes, 2004). Senge et al. (1999) suggest that sustaining any sort of transformative change process is dependent on a crucial shift in thought process.

The literature presents diverse approaches to organizational change, encompassing the likes of planned approaches including Lewin’s three-step model (1951) and the HSE model (2008); prescriptive models like Kotter’s eight steps (1996); the emergent ones of Pettigrew (1990) and Kanter et al.’s Big Three (1992); psychologically grounded ones like Bandura’s social cognitive theory (2002); and finally, behavioral approaches including Prochaska and Diclemente’s (1994).
Evidently, each change model offers its own benefits, but they are not devoid of weaknesses or drawbacks. Critics have faulted planned approaches for being too linear in nature and operating under the assumption that organizations are in a stable state (Burnes, 2004). Schein (1985) argues that a focus on planned change disables any catalyst of radical organizational change from occurring. Similarly, prescriptive models, particularly Kotter’s, have faced criticism for not only being too linear and straightforward in design, but also failing to follow through with an energetic and consistent response over a continuum (Cameron & Green, 2009). Emergent models place emphasis on a bottoms-up approach, are directly opposed to planned ones and highlight the evolving roles of senior management from controllers to facilitators (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Emergent approaches are unified in their stance against planned change, but falter on the agreement of a specific alternative (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Psychologically-driven approaches, like Bandura’s, revolve around the interconnections of three agentic modes of human development, adjustment and change: individual, proxy and collective agencies, all of which interact and interconnect differently cross-culturally (Bandura, 2002) and offer insightful perspectives on employees’ thoughts, ideas and behaviors to change.

Behavioral sciences have rendered a change model that concentrates on an individual’s readiness for organizational change (Cunningham et al., 2002) based on three factors: an apparent need for change, one’s self-efficacy and an avenue to partake in the change process (Armenakis et al., 1993). Prochaska et al.’s (1994) stages of change is perhaps one of the best examples of behavioral approaches, consisting of the following phases: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and finally, maintenance, illustrating longitudinal success in movement through these stages by balanced decision-making, risk expectations and anticipating probable change advantages (Cunningham et al., 2002). Its success really is contingent on employees’ level of engagement to job problem-solving (Karasek, 1979).

Carnall (2003) maintains that continual commitment to change is driven by the change implementation process. Shanley (2007) argues that focused compliance to one model is
unlikely to bring about success because change manifests itself differently. This infers the need for openness to facets from perhaps more than one model, especially when change is dynamic and encompasses diverse human perceptions, carrying with them behavioral and emotional components of the human condition. Consequently, Carr (2001) argues for significance to be placed on the emotional factor when considering the change process, but there is a limit, for as Bandura (2001) claims, individuals are not simply reactive creatures molded and propelled by environmental happenings or intrinsic motivations; rather, they are self-managing, practical, self-reflecting and self-controlling beings whose own development, adaptation and change are ingrained in social systems.

Note the focus on “self” in Bandura’s words about the human condition. His social cognitive theory takes center stage here, as a means for individuals to act as agents of change in both themselves and their surroundings via their interaction with it (Bandura, 2001). Enter here one’s self-belief (Bandura, 1997) or belief in their efficacy: one’s capacity to employ control and to accomplish objectives they set for themselves (Hendry & Oliver, 2012). Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1997), can be influenced by a number of factors, the most dominant being mastery experience – when an individual trusts he/she has what is necessary to excel (Donnelly, 2007) or goes through repeated successful performances (Hendry & Oliver, 2012), thus developing a sturdy sense of efficacy (Donnelly, 2007). Similarly, one’s self-efficacy can be enhanced by observational learning or modeling, i.e. observing someone else engaged in successful performance (Hendry & Oliver, 2012). Bandura (2001) refers to this as vicarious capability and/or experience, one theory that can underpin POT’s advantages.

Contrastingly, self-efficacy can be undermined by failure, particularly if it occurs in the beginning phases of the learning experience (Donnelly, 2007). Either way, one’s direct or vicarious experience with success or failure will powerfully affect one’s self-efficacy (Donnelly, 2007), hence driving or stagnating the potentiality of the change process. Blackwell and McLean (1996) assert that positive teaching observation experiences help to bolster the confidence of teaching faculty and to achieve fundamental aims, including the promotion of interpersonal communication skills and individual evaluation and self-
appraisal skills (Weller, 2009). One’s self-appraisal, or as Wilcox (2009) calls it “self-study,” can catalyze a transformative learning process that leads to change, especially when a teacher’s self-concept is boosted (Weller, 2009). It also operates in the reverse, when a teacher’s self-concept has been deflated by a negative experience. Change, in this case, is improbable.

Bandura’s portrayal of human nature as comprising the capabilities of symbolization, forethought, evaluative self-regulation, reflective self-consciousness and symbolic communication, categorically divided below (see Figure 1), largely forms the basis on how humans can enact change in social systems and how one’s self-efficacy can urge or immobilize it.

Figure 1: Social Systems’ Determinants

![Figure 1: Social Systems’ Determinants](image)


### 3.3.1 Selection of change model for this project

Due to change’s dynamic nature, the writer sought a model that complemented and accommodated two facets: a) the cyclical, non-linear processes that accompany the complexity of change within organizational contexts; and, b) the flexibility and openness correlated with successful POT implementation. In this way, practitioners can be directed through complicated processes of change management by employing the HSE model, involving numerous interactive elements that are never static. The HSE model allows for fluid movement between the interconnecting elements bi-directionally,
emphasizing the need for flexibility when aiming to achieve successful organizational change.

### 3.4 The change process

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

The HSE, or Health Service Executive (2008), defines change as a non-linear, constant and adaptive process whereby all the components are interconnected and impactful to each other. According to this model, successful change is more likely to transpire when its four stages are properly executed in the following sequence: initiation, planning, implementation and mainstreaming (HSE, 2008). The entire model can be observed below (see Figure 2), with the four key stages framing seven secondary steps of the change process. Subsequently, each stage will be elaborated, chiefly their correlations to the current change initiative.

*Figure 2: HSE’s Model of Change*

![HSE's Model of Change](image)

*Model adapted from: Kolb, D. & Frohman, A. (1970); Project Management Institute (2004)*

#### 3.4.2 Stage 1: Initiation

This first, but pivotal, stage is primarily concerned with preparing to lead the change, purposefully constructing the groundwork for effective change and harnessing support throughout the organization (HSE, 2008). In essence, it is a *scoping* stage - to ascertain the focus and thus plan for it, to assess the span and depth of the change endeavor, and to
identify who will be directly affected by the change and/or who will be instrumental to its implementation.

Specific to this change project, it was firstly important to identify the need driving the change and to create an awareness of urgency (HSE, 2008). The need revolved around mounting demands for developing augmented quality assurance in teaching and learning at an HE medical organization, while generating a sense of urgency coincided with establishing and completing tasks within precise time limits, imposed by both the writer and other academic staff. Next, the HSE model advises to analyze and target key stakeholders, those who are most relevant to the change, by engaging with them during a project’s preliminary phases (HSE, 2008). Consequently, the writer, once determining the key stakeholders, embarked on a quest to actively engage with vital internal professionals. This action required a series of meetings with various individuals, spanning one week in June 2015, in conjunction with distantly liaising with others, particularly the Director and secretary.

Once achieved, undergoing a potential risk and issue analysis is wise (HSE, 2008), a pre-emptive measure to circumvent potential threats that may arise during the process. In this case, several probable threats were highlighted, including an ambiguous or unclear layout of the POT vision, the buy-in factor being challenged by staff contesting or resisting the change, a lack of understanding about the POT training tutorial, and finally, time constraints creating two difficulties: a) the final step (embedding the change) would be difficult to achieve in a short time frame; and, b) not having sufficient time for the observer and observee to swap places.

Lastly, the importance of identifying leverage points is emphasized and thus essential to the project’s success (HSE, 2008). To elaborate, leverage points are small, focused actions that may produce a ripple effect (analogous to ripples on a pond) in the system. In the beginning, the writer carefully scoped out and pinpointed the key stakeholders throughout the organization. Consider the position of the POT tutorial facilitator, who was responsible for not only explaining the observer and observee roles, but was also
required to provide the how to training for these respectively. This facilitator delivered an unambiguous tutorial, providing participants with a clear vision of what was expected of them in fulfilling their roles, echoed in the words of Hallinger (2003), who emphasized the importance of all employees understanding their roles in contributing to the vision. As such, this unified and collective understanding, stemming from the facilitator, catalyzed a positive ripple effect throughout the participating body.

3.4.3 Stage 2: Planning

This stage comprises a three-step process, involving building commitment, ascertaining the detail of the change and developing the implementation plan (HSE, 2008). These three components have one integral factor in common: the role of communication. Its function, in this change initiative, will be further discussed.

When building commitment, it must extend across the organization, simultaneously creating drive and capacity for the change and boosting participation and engagement in the change process (HSE, 2008). Support is thus created and once established, the process is simplified. For this change project, the much-needed support was acquired through a variety of means, but communication was critical. Firstly, a series of meetings was held to entice and engage key stakeholders, including the organization’s Director on June 15th, 2015, each successful by providing clear information about the change in varying fashions, as part of a continuous process. Therefore, the communication had to be effective, respectful and engaging, helping to augment understanding of what was fueling the change and what it intrinsically meant for all involved.

Two tactics were used to achieve desired support: a) a staff survey via Survey Monkey to determine employees’ perceptions and attitudes about POT (June 22nd, 2015); and, b) a two-hour POT training session (October 6th, 2015), to prep participants for their roles. In both cases, the language applied had to be communicated clearly, meaningfully and motivationally, to create a platform open to feedback reception. Fortunately, ethical approval was issued by the organization beforehand on September 10th, 2015 (Appendix
followed by organizational permission and sponsorship on September 13th, 2015 (Appendix 1).

As mentioned, communication also played a fundamental role in determining the detail of the change. A rough gap analysis was executed to gather information about the organization’s present situation and its collective future vision, accomplished via good and collaborative communication with key stakeholders during the meeting phase and through correspondence. The open feedback forum was extended to this domain, helping to target what needed to be modified or suspended and what had yet to be created or introduced, thus engaging all key stakeholders in the process and rousing a stimulus for action. At this point, all participants were eager to start the process, and consent forms were then distributed.

Detailing the design of the POT implementation was also largely dependent on communication, for its effective delivery explained what change would mean for stakeholders within different levels of the organization and encouraged them to be open to the change potential. Kotter and Cohen (2002) assert that to maintain visionary momentum, the short, medium and long-term actions must be communicated to stakeholders. Here, the involvement of concerned staff from all levels, and their ensuing feedback, was essential. Regarding feedback, it is important to mention that a feedback facilitator was recruited for the POT training session, explaining to participants how to give and receive constructive feedback, since few had ever been schooled in feedback processes. The critical discourse synonymous with feedback again highlights communication’s pertinent role.

3.4.4 Stage 3: Implementing change

The HSE (2008) calls stage 3 the “going into operation” phase, geared towards not only implementing and monitoring the initiative’s plan, but also focusing on the aspects that will enable long-standing change. Equally important is the time factor; change requires time for implementation, particularly when endeavoring to maintain drive and energy for the change. Consequently, for this project, the implementation of POT occurred over a
three-month period, commencing after the training session on October 6\textsuperscript{th}, 2015, and finishing on December 31\textsuperscript{st}, 2015. The official number of participants was nine, though fifteen had been originally recruited from the same resident faculty, and they utilized POT through traditional class teaching or lecturing, each lasting in duration from 90 minutes to two hours. Fortunately, each individual was allocated a peer (bar one), and the three months provided was sufficient time for the partnered peers to swap roles as observer and observee. Due to odd numbers, one individual acted only as an observer.

No organizational head supervised the stages of implementation, for it was important to allow the sequenced steps to evolve naturally, and besides, all participants understood their roles following the training session. If needed, they knew they could address their issues with the Director and the Senior Executive of Quality Assurance. These two resources were provided to maintain project direction and were aligned with the approved vision for change.

The three month implementation, at this point, is not an adequate time frame to truly embed POT into the medical organization; it is, however, a promising start. Kotter (2001) warns against announcing too early that a change initiative’s optimal aims have been achieved, highlighting change’s need for time. Additionally, factors like adaptability and flexibility are required, alongside creating willingness for change and welcoming it by aiding concerned individuals with their unpredictable reactions to change. Hence, having the right people driving the implementation and change is crucial to its achievement.

3.4.5 Stage 4: Mainstreaming

This final stage is mainly concerned with assessing the efficiency of the change process and shaping the foundation for continued enhancement. These foci are accomplished by completing two steps: a) “making it the way we do business,” as in setting a regular quality standard on which business is based; and, b) evaluating and learning (HSE, 2008). Regarding the aforementioned “step a,” support is key to embedding change into daily activities and behaviors, particularly employees’ mindsets supporting the change.
Consequently, communication’s central role, in conjunction with engagement, takes stage here, for it demands continuous consideration to guarantee effectiveness. This means that faculty feedback, from this POT initiative’s participants, should be garnered for a dually-connected purpose: to establish POT within the organization by determining the process’s facilitators and challengers through feedback, hence providing a clear direction for the further execution of POT. As such, the writer performed focus group interviews, comprising nine individuals (n=9) from the pilot’s participating faculty on January 24th, 2016, structured with eleven target questions. Responses were recorded and later transcribed verbatim, shedding useful insight into participants’ experiences of POT. Furthermore, the faculty survey results, distributed during the preliminary phase, offered perspective on their thoughts and attitudes of probable POT implementation.

Both data sets were instrumental to the change initiative, for they served as forms of evaluation, the last step involved in mainstreaming. The HSE model (2008) asserts the importance of learning from the change experience, and evaluation tools are the best method of achieving this aim, helping to ascertain a project’s value and to decide what needs to be improved upon and further expanded. In this case, the dual data sets yielded very positive results, indicating a strong desire for the institutionalization of POT.

3.5 Conclusion

The implementation of POT at the writer’s organization proved to be an enlightening experience for all. Significant change did occur, and all participants were eager to fully embed POT into their institution, aided by the HSE model and its four stages: initiation, planning, implementation and mainstreaming. These stages enabled the writer to tackle the change initiative’s principal issues throughout the process, and only time will tell the extent to which the organization will enable sustainable change via POT implementation. It will largely depend on how individuals process an innovation, bringing to light Rogers’ (1983) five steps (see Figure 3) when encountering an innovation: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation.
Figure 3: Stages of Innovation-Decision Process

Five Stages in the Decision Innovation Process

- Knowledge
- Persuasion
- Decision
- Implementation
- Confirmation

Reject
Accept
Chapter 4

Evaluation
4.1 Introduction

Evaluation revolves around the methodical and impartial discernment of the value or merit of an object (Stufflebeam, 1983), but in terms of a program, it is concerned with gathering and cataloguing information about a specific one to authorize sound decision-making addressing a specific program element (McNamara, 2000). This chapter commences with a dialogue about evaluation models, particularly focusing on the components of CIPP and how they directly correlate to the present change project. Furthermore, the ensuing dialogue will refer back to the project’s aims and objectives as a means of determining whether they have been met, and thus closes with a reiteration of the fundamental points of this chapter.

4.2 Evaluation models

McNamara (2000) suggests the selection of an evaluation model should be based on the how factor – how to uncover the most favorable information for stakeholders and other staff in the most economical way. This may prove more challenging than originally perceived, for Stufflebeam (1966) posits that an array of program evaluation approaches is essential when considering the dissimilarities between objective-focused evaluation methods and needs, combined with the differing needs of stakeholders and staff. Nevertheless, the above focus on contrast with words like “dissimilarity” or “differing” is not as it appears. This is because all the components of an education program, as part of a larger academic institution, are actually interdependent and in constant interplay with each other, existing together and not in isolation, as the complexity theory outlines (Frye & Hemmer, 2012). Here, significance is placed on the interaction between the components and the relationships between them; these are complex, dynamic and fluid, much like the interactive elements that are continuously revisiting each other throughout the change process (HSE, 2008). Hence, to conduct a full system evaluation, all components must be investigated, alongside their interrelationships with each other, the participants and the environments in which they exist (Frye & Hemmer, 2012).
Among the many existing evaluation models, only four will be discussed in this section, including the logic model, the Kirkpatrick model, the outcome-based evaluation model and finally, the CIPP model. To begin, the logic model, spanning 30 years, is a tool used by program managers to evaluate the effectiveness of a program, emphasizing connections between the following key areas: inputs, activities, outputs and short, intermediate and long-term outcomes associated with a program’s specific problem or issue (McCawley, 2001). Its illustration of sequential cause-and-effect relationships highlights its linearity (McCawley, 2001), potentially limiting due to its focus on particular components, thereby overlooking unexpected outcomes that may arise during the evaluation (Frye & Hemmer, 2012). By comparison, the Kirkpatrick model is more resilient, a frequently-used framework consisting of four “levels” of training outcomes for participants: reaction, learning, behavior and results (Bates, 2004). Level one concerns itself with the participants’ satisfaction of a particular program; level two captures the degree of learning that occurs during the training; level three encapsulates behavior outcomes, i.e. the extent to which behavioral change takes place; and lastly, level four comprises the effect that training has on a wider organizational scope (Bates, 2004). Despite its popularity, critics fault the model for its oversimplification of training efficiency, perceiving it as either overextending (Bates, 2004) or falling short (Riotto, 2004).

The outcome-based evaluation (OBE) model is slightly different with its focus on the program objectives geared towards the recipients of its services, delineating the evaluation stakeholders are demanding - organization-referenced outcomes to mirror efficacy (Wang, 2009). Harden (2002) defines learning outcomes as broad declarations of a course’s achievements and subsequent evaluation at its close. In spite of the OBE model’s renowned success, critics state that it creates constraints and levies an inflexible framework for curriculum designers to work with (Harden, 2002). CIPP, the last model, is far more inclusive and flexible than OBE, and it constitutes four elements of an education program: context, input, process and product (Frye & Hemmer, 2012). Due to its expansive and versatile nature, this model is a perfect choice for evaluating any education program where particular needs of multiple stakeholders are concerned.
4.3 The CIPP model – the writer’s choice

Reflection upon the various models yielded a careful selection of the CIPP evaluation model for the writer’s change initiative. Developed in the mid 1960’s by mastermind Daniel Stufflebeam, it is a model that provides a thorough framework for directing evaluations of programs, projects, personnel, products and institutions (Stufflebeam, 2003). Originally developed to ameliorate and establish accountability for U.S. school programs, its four core concepts – context, input, process and product – now enable evaluations to carry out fundamental functions. Its aim is not to prove an education program, but to improve the program itself in a “learning by doing” manner (Zhang et al., 2011).

CIPP was specifically chosen for the writer’s project due to its suitability to POT. Throughout the various stages of CIPP (see Figure 4), continued dialogue and communication are integral, also paramount to POT in engaging key stakeholders, assessing aims and objectives and reporting data. Additionally, the process component of CIPP investigates the quality of a program’s implementation, which is exactly what a POT change initiative is aiming to achieve – a quality assurance action plan intended to improve teaching and learning on a sustained basis. Lastly, providing feedback is inherent to CIPP, of which is equally significant to the successful workings of a POT pilot. Here lies the rationale for selecting CIPP.
4.3.1 Aims and Objectives

The project’s aims and objectives were SMART-based.

Its aims were two-fold:

- To implement and assess a quality assurance action plan involving peer observation of teaching within an HE medical organisation.
- To institutionalise regularised systems to augment teaching and learning standards by utilising POT.

Its objectives were six-fold:

- To execute a time-bound, action learning-based pilot of POT.
• To determine participants’ viewpoints and attitudes toward POT via survey.
• To deliver a meaningfully effective POT training session, focusing on feedback and reflection processes.
• To assess the initiative’s effects by tracking the experiences of both the observer and observee via post-POT focus group interviews.
• To measure the achievability of the change project’s goals.
• To provide recommendations for improved practice in future.

4.3.2 Context

CIPP’s proactive use can catalyze sound decision-making and quality assurance (Zhang et al., 2011), emphasizing the current project’s rationale, which Stufflebeam (2003) claims is at the core of context evaluation. Simply put, its primary focus is on evaluating the true necessity or driving force of the change, in this instance, the requirement to develop enhanced quality assurance in teaching and learning to meet HE demands in the Middle East.

Romani (2009) substantiates this notion by stating that the Arab world is presently undergoing a quiet, yet multi-faceted transformation involving an upswing in higher education, and the writer’s chosen organization is undergoing a similar metamorphosis, modeling its programs after the philosophical principle of lifelong learning and innovation in medicine. In fact, this institution has recently revamped its image, to enact a collegial strategy to become internationally recognized as a competitive establishment, graduating markedly proficient specialists in dental education, research and clinical practice, while also offering postgraduate residents a three-year Master of Science degree in six specializations. Furthermore, it has undergone program alignment with another prominent European medical institution, enabling its graduates to obtain accreditation from two separate, but closely linked, institutions. This has helped to make the institution’s mission statement a reality, while catapulting itself into the academic stratosphere. Hence, the aforementioned context evaluation assisted in molding POT’s inception at the writer’s chosen organization, highlighting its objective of assessing the overall environmental readiness of the project (Stufflebeam, 2003).
4.3.3 Input

Input evaluation is namely oriented to pinpoint and examine present system capacities, to find and closely analyze probable approaches and/or to propose alternate project action plans (Zhang et al., 2011). In other words, its intent is to create a project designed to meet the specified needs (Zhang et al., 2011). To assist the writer here, a deep investigation of the relevant literature was carried out, combined with comprehensive consultation with all those involved in the POT process, participants and stakeholders alike, to grasp their particular experiences and counsel for future growth of this methodology. Likewise, guidance was sought from the institution’s education faculty, to ensure all bases were covered. Subsequently, the following POT structure was formulated:

- A training tutorial for all POT participants, lasting 2.5 hours (Appendix 4).
- Seven volunteers were randomly partnered (two were absent, totaling nine volunteers) for the observer and observee roles.
- The actual POT format consisted of: a pre-POT meeting; observation of a teaching session selected by the observee; a swapping of roles, followed by another observation; and, a post-POT meeting.
- A clearly devised POT evaluation tool was provided (Appendix 5).
- All volunteers were invited to partake in focus group interviews following the POT teaching sessions.

In doing the above, the first aim of the change project was achieved in executing and evaluating a quality assurance action plan via POT. Regarding the second aim - the institutionalizing of POT as a regularized mechanism - the writer’s organization has undergone a successful change on the surface and has been provided with the foundational building blocks to secure its embedding from this point forward.

4.3.4 Process

Process evaluation oversees the project’s implementation process over a continuum (Zhang et al., 2011), endeavoring to archive the process and to supply feedback for a tri-
fold purpose: a) to determine the degree to which the intended activities are performed; b) to ascertain if tweaks or alterations are needed; and, c) to evaluate the extent to which participants assume and complete their roles (Zhang et al., 2011). Regarding the current change project, the objective of its process evaluation was to not only establish the degree to which participants undertook their roles, but also to acquire their general perceptions of POT, including those who were, in some way, involved in the organization’s POT process.

4.3.4.1 Staff Survey Questionnaire

A survey was the selected instrument for the writer’s project, specifically tailored to extract staff perceptions of POT. Its questions were devised based on the key themes that emerged from the literature (Appendix 3) and analysis of other POT questionnaires. Reliability testing was not carried out, but face and content legitimacy were verified by the organization’s Director and Senior Executive Quality Assurance Officer. The survey was distributed via the Director on June 22nd, 2015, to 15 faculty members utilizing Survey Monkey. The survey closed on July 7th, 2015, generating a response rate of 60% (9 respondents). All results are displayed in written text, followed by some visual representations in pie and bar graphs.

4.3.4.1.1 Prior knowledge and readiness to participate in POT

More than half of the participants (66.6%, n=6) had previous knowledge of POT, having been asked outright, leaving 33.3% (n=3) with no prior knowledge of POT before taking the survey. Next, they were asked how willing they would be to partake in a POT tutorial, and they unanimously agreed (100%, n=8), bar one individual who omitted this question.
4.3.4.1.2 Observer and observee roles

Once consensus was achieved, participants were questioned about what capacity they preferred to assume - an observer, an observee or occupation of both roles. 11.1% of participants (n=1) specified the observer role, while no person chose to be solely observee, and a resounding 88.9% (n=8) stated they preferred to occupy both roles during the POT implementation. Figure 5 illustrates the itemization of role percentages.

Figure 5: Survey Question - How will you partake?

![Pie chart showing role preferences: 11.1% as an observer, 88.9% as an observer and observee.]

4.3.4.1.3 Previous participation capacity in POT

Participants were probed about their previous experience, if any, in assuming POT roles, of which four (44.4%, n=4) responded that they had, while the remaining five (55.6%, n=5) had never before. Of this group, just one individual had formerly assumed the role of an observer (25%, n=1), while the remaining three occupied both observer and observee roles (75%, n=3). See Figure 6 for this data demonstration.

4.3.4.1.4 The “who’s who” of POT roles

Four options were presented to participants of whom they preferred to peer observe their teaching; their responses yielded even thirds. 33.3% (n=3) opted to have someone within their department observe them; another 33.3% (n=3) chose to have an individual outside their department perform the observation; and, the final three participants (33.3%, n=3) selected an external individual from another academic institution. Interestingly, no one
chose to have their Department Head perform the POT evaluation. Figure 6 illustrates their choices.

*Figure 6: Survey Question – Who would you prefer to peer observe your teaching?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who would you prefer to peer observe your teaching?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] A colleague within your own department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] A colleague outside your department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Your department head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] An external colleague (from another academic institution)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33.3% 33.3% 0.0% 33.3%

**4.3.4.1.5 Inclusion of various teaching formats**

Participants were provided with five options of different teaching formats for the POT observation, and surprisingly, their answers significantly varied. Here, they were permitted to select more than one option. 44.4% (n=4) chose lab sessions; 100% (n=9) chose class lectures; 11.1% (n=1) chose online tutorials; 55.6% (n=5) chose workshops; and finally, 77.8% (n=7) chose seminars. Figure 7 exhibits the variance among the participants.

*Figure 7: Survey Question – What forms of teaching and learning methods should be observed?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What forms of teaching and learning methods should be observed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Lab sessions 44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Class lectures 100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Online tutorials 11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Workshops 55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Seminars 77.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Series1 44.4% 100.0% 11.1% 55.6% 77.8%
4.3.4.1.6 Inclusion of teaching elements

At this stage, participants were asked to select the teaching elements they felt should be incorporated into a POT evaluation form. Their responses were similar across the spectrum, commencing with 88.9% (n=8) choosing information delivery; followed by content (88.9%, n=8); clarity (88.9%, n=8); teaching style (100%, n=9); organization (88.9%, n=8); and, focus on learning objectives (88.9%, n=8). Consequently, their answers shed light on just how extensive teaching elements are in the learning process, demonstrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Survey Question – Which elements of teaching/learning process should appear in POT evaluation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which elements of the teaching/learning process should appear in a POT evaluation questionnaire?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of information (enthusiasm, body language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.4.1.7 POT’s use for formative purposes and enhancement

Next, participants were asked whether POT should be employed for formative purposes, to promote professional development. Predictably, there was consensus among the participating body, for they all gave “yes” responses to this question (100%, n=9). Afterwards, participants were given a statement about POT’s potential for teaching enhancement and were instructed to indicate their agreement, or otherwise, with it. The majority of participants (87.5%, n=7) concurred with the statement, and only one
individual disagreed (12.5%, n=1). One participant chose to skip this question. Evidently, participants have favorable opinions of POT’s enhancement probability, as displayed in Figure 9.

![Figure 9: Survey Question – POT will augment my teaching practice?](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POT will augment my teaching practice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.3.4.1.8 POT’s learning outcomes’ achievability**

A second statement was proffered to the participating body – “POT will help to achieve learning outcomes.” Their viewpoints were called upon, revealing 87.5% (n=7) for this statement and 12.5% (n=1) against it. Again, one individual omitted this question. Figure 10 shows the disparity in opinions.

![Figure 10: Survey Question – POT will help to achieve learning outcomes.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POT will help to achieve learning outcomes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In short, the survey results indicate a unanimous push for the formal implementation of POT, employing a formative developmental approach at the writer’s chosen organization. A few among the participating faculty had some previous knowledge and/or experience with POT, but all together, they eagerly complied to participate in a POT tutorial and thereafter, to assume the dual roles of observer and observee during the implementation process; this was in lieu of having an external individual or Department Head perform the evaluation. Consequently, all teaching elements and formats were integrated, the latter illustrating a predominant preference for class lectures, workshops and seminars.
Evidently, the survey garnered some invaluable information about the staff’s highly favorable perceptions and attitudes of POT, hence fulfilling one of the writer’s objectives. As a final point, the overall results emphasize the beneficial teaching and learning aims of POT, mirroring the key points displayed in the published literature.

4.3.4.2 Focus group interviews

One post-POT focus group session was conducted on January 24th, 2016. Fortunately, all participants were present (n=9) at the pre-scheduled meeting, and before partaking, it was essential that all consent forms were signed (Appendix 7). Nine targeted questions were asked (Appendix 6), whereby the responses were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. At this point, data analysis commenced via basic descriptive study (Sandelowski, 2000), involving the writer’s repetitious reading of transcripts to isolate recurring words and ideas, followed by their categorization and later thematic convergence. Now, the emergent themes will be introduced and elaborated.

4.3.4.2.1 The qualities of POT

Much discussion centered on the nature of POT, primarily whether it should be employed for formative or summative purposes. Many participants favored POT as a formative, developmental process.

P2: “I believe the formative approach is better because it improves the quality of teaching.”

P5: “POT is used to evaluate the faculty development, so its formative use is best.”

Others recognized the benefits of both approaches.

P1: “POT has value in both formative and summative approaches. Formative use is for a long period of time, while summative use is good for promotion.”

P4: “It’s a good instrument, and it depends on the use.”
POT has often been perceived as being limiting, in that it focuses on a short teaching period, a snapshot in time. Participants exchanged their opinions on this topic, yielding agreement to the aforementioned statement to an extent.

P1: “It’s true, because, for example, it depends on the topic. Some topics need more preparation than others. There should be an assessment, and it should be more frequent than just a snapshot.”

Some participants went beyond discussing its limiting nature, sharing their conceptions of POT’s effective time frame and incorporation of numerous instructional formats, including technology use.

P4: “POT is not meant to be a snapshot, but rather for a long evaluation period because it’s for self-development. This needs time.”

P2: “It should not be done for lectures only; it should evaluate everything from seminars, lectures, clinical sessions, labs, etc.”

P5: “Technology can be used to reduce the problem of POT’s “snapshot” nature. For example, we can give electronic surveys to students to evaluate each lecture given by their lecturer.”

Later, participants deliberated on POT’s rationale, to ascertain if its purpose was achieved during the writer’s change initiative. Generally speaking, their views matched each other in most respects, namely how its intended purpose was attained.

P7: “There was improvement after the POT training session. Following it, I read more about how to improve my lectures, so I gained a lot of useful information to make my teaching better. So, there was enhancement; POT’s purpose was achieved.”

Nevertheless, a couple participants, though aware of its advantages, perceived POT’s shortfalls during their involvement with the process, believing it needed further dimension and more time.

P9: “It’s a nice tool, but the purpose was not achieved because it was only a snapshot.”
4.3.4.2.2 Engagement in the process

Participants’ level of engagement during the entire POT experience became a dominant theme. Fortunately, unanimous agreement ensued, as each participant not only affirmed full-fledged engagement in the process, but also explained how it was augmented by the dual learning of occupying both observer and observee roles.

P1: “Yes, indeed, it was an enjoyable experience. When I observe, it is not just about critiquing and assessing the observee; I am also learning.”

P6: “I enjoyed being both an observer and observee. It is always good to be on both sides of the table, and this is how you learn better, to feel and learn from both experiences.”

Some useful suggestions were made about how to positively enhance the experience for all involved, particularly areas like organizational environments and circumventing old biases.

P2: “I think the enjoyment comes from an environment that is non-threatening and trusting the opposite person. The environment in which it is given is very important.”

P8: “It’s important for us to not let a prior bad experience influence our judgment of POT in this instance. An awful teacher can damage us.”

Important to mention, learning also came in the form of reflection.

P3: “While reflecting on my partner’s feedback, I realized that what was said was, in fact, true about me. I have a low voice, so my colleague advised me to expand the projection of it while teaching. This realization occurred during the reflective process, so it was helpful to my self-improvement.”

4.3.4.2.3 The “art” of good communication

Communication, particularly feedback, was a much-debated topic among the focus groups’ dialogue. Responses were rather diverse, circling around their degree of training,
or lack thereof, in feedback delivery and reception, culminating with a pronounced demand for more training in this domain.

P5: “Yes, before I experienced giving and receiving feedback in an informal way, but not like POT in a formal setting.”

P9: “I felt I was not qualified in giving feedback because my colleague was more experienced than me.”

A core element of feedback emerged as discussion flowed. The subjects of anxiety and fear arose when participants exchanged their perceptions about feedback as an entity, creating markedly unsettling feelings that were, however, legitimized given the circumstances.

P1: “Yes, of course, I felt a little anxiety. I think we all experience the same feeling because it depends on the subject. Some subjects need more preparation.”

P3: “Yes, it happens naturally because you want to impress the observer and of course, you don’t want to make any mistakes because nowadays, students are very smart. They probably know more than we do now.”

Despite uneasy sentiments surrounding feedback, it was extremely eye-opening to learn how most participants felt the liberty to be honest in their feedback; very few felt restricted in this regard.

P4: “I think because we all know each other; we gave honest feedback. It’s a matter of respect.”

P.2: “I believe we all gave honest feedback.”

Alongside the need for honesty, participants stressed the need for constructive and helpful feedback, not of the critical and marginalizing kind.

P1: “If feedback is too critical or negative, it will have the opposite effect.”
4.3.4.2.4 POT’s organizational future

The final thematic stream focused on how to improve or modify the POT process for future use. Consensus about POT’s effectiveness surfaced.

P3: “In general, I feel this tool should be embedded in all educational organizations, and that we should continue doing it after the project has been implemented.”

Nevertheless, its shortcomings were also highlighted.

P4: “POT could be seen as ambiguous. That is why before doing anything new, POT’s message needs to be clearly stated and spread, so that all staff fully understands.”

Given both sides, recommendations were proffered about what amendments could be made to ensure its success within organizations.

P7: “I think that the methodology of POT is important and in order for it to be successful, selection of the lecture should be at random, including whom we are going to evaluate and the evaluation topic. This will minimize the effect of the snapshot, and the evaluation will be better.”

P9: “We also need a system to observe the new faculty during their first months of teaching, to examine the quality of it. That way, we will get professional teachers for the organization.”

Lastly, unanimity was displayed for POT’s full implementation, for it to be an ongoing and sustainable process at the writer’s organization.

P3: “Absolutely! We want to see it embedded in our organization and to be a continuous process.”

4.3.5 Products

Product evaluation determines whether a present program should be continued, modified or discontinued (Stufflebeam, 2003). In this case, the four elements of the CIPP
evaluation model enabled the assessment of this change project’s tools, facilitators, impediments and continued support for future development at the writer’s organization, all part of a collegial strategy to enhance quality assurance in teaching and learning. Therefore, the final product, the writer’s own visualization, can be viewed in Figure 11. This model outlines the foundation for POT’s successful implementation, requiring the following essential elements: a formative, development process, an effective time frame, the inclusion of many instructional formats, a combined cyclical and reflective approach facilitating evaluation and dual learning with the observer and observee swapping roles. Moreover, communication and feedback underpin the success of this approach, together with training at all stages of the POT process. Finally, learning is crucial to the model, for its facilitation occurs when all elements are successfully executed, therefore bringing about internal enhancement and change. From here, the writer asserts that this model illustrates the establishment of the project’s final objective – to make recommendations for better practice in future.

*Figure 11: The writer’s Suggested Model of POT*
4.4 Conclusion

In short, the writer’s change initiative was evaluated by employing the CIPP model. In terms of context, the drive for change was to develop enhanced quality assurance in teaching and learning to meet HE demands in the Middle East. Consequently, an in-depth training session was given to all POT participants, who also jointly completed a staff survey and partook in focus group interviews. Both data sets were analyzed, and their mutual findings were consistent, indicating a favorable response toward POT and invaluable perceptions of how its methodology can be successfully implemented within the organization. Additionally, the writer devised a bespoke POT model emerging from the CIPP evaluation, highlighting the importance of learning and subsequent growth at every phase of the process. Evidently, the evaluation is affirmation of the change project’s accomplishment of both its aims and objectives.
Chapter 5

Conclusion
5.1 Introduction

The impact of organizational change, both limited and widespread, is tricky to ascertain. For some, organizational change translates into organizational transformation (Kotter & Cohen, 2002), but this is not necessarily the case when much importance is placed on evidence-based practice (Egger et al., 2001). This is why when organizational change does arise, leaders must direct and instill in employees improved ways to not only implement change, but to also sustain it (George & Jones, 2007). This chapter dually explores the impact of the change and its strengths and drawbacks, while providing recommendations for enhanced future application. It closes with all essential points, raised throughout the chapter, converging into one succinct overview.

5.2 Impact of organizational change

Change is progressively becoming more common, extreme and complicated, therefore increasing failure rates of change initiatives within organizations that neglect to implement the change completely (Miller, 2012). To ensure success, individuals, internal to the organization, must cultivate the know-how, skills and procedures central to the change process (Miller, 2012).

Embarking on the current change project’s trajectory, the writer sought to execute an initiative aimed at truly enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in the Middle East, a region that severely lacks modern and well-subsidized educational resources, including good teachers. Partly driven by personal experience, the writer searched for an HE institution that aligned its mission statement with advancement, and fortunately, found a medical institution in Dubai fueled by the promotion of lifelong learning and innovation in medicine. Consequently, the writer chose to propose the POT pilot initiative to its Director in June 2015, whereby negotiations and strategic planning for implementation began soon after. Subsequently, key stakeholders were incentivized to buy into the project, being promised the knowledge, tools and resources to improve teaching and learning, but also the successful achievement of the collegial strategy targeting widespread educational quality enhancement. With this as its foundation, the
likelihood for pilot success became tangible, alongside steadfast commitment to the cause from all involved parties.

General feedback, garnered from the focus group interviews, exemplifies POT’s organizational success, with learning occurring on two parallels, that of the observer and observee. All participants wholeheartedly embrace the implementation of POT, combined with head administrative support, employing a formative and developmental approach. As such, POT’s impact has positively influenced senior staff members to assume early adoption of the methodology, thereby planting the proverbial roots of change, what Miller (2012) refers to as partial installation.

Complete implementation, i.e. creating sustainable change, within the writer’s organization, however, is contingent on different variables at play. Firstly, time is of the utmost importance to embedding the change, and here, the writer’s initiative spanned only three months, therefore making it difficult to ascertain how far-reaching POT’s effects will be. Secondly, the creation of the writer’s own POT model (Figure 11) indicates favorable outcomes and effects on participating staff, augmenting its potential for future success, especially when internal individuals are dedicated, ready to change and will uphold their new behaviors and attitudes sided with the change needs (Miller, 2012).

5.3 Strengths and drawbacks

5.3.1 Strengths

This change project’s ultimate strength was not POT as a notion or methodology, but rather its specific tailoring to coincide and complement both the writer’s aims and objectives to enhance teaching and learning and the medical institution’s mandate for lifelong learning and innovation. In conjunction, the careful selection of key internal individuals was undertaken to guarantee the correct placement of the organizational requirements for change, as well as the effective management of local needs during the change (Miller, 2012). These strategies led to initial success, but were furthered by the
utilization of two elements: a) the HSE change model (HSE, 2008) and its contributing direction to the project; and, b) the CIPP evaluation model and its cyclically flexible patterns for change (Stufflebeam, 2003), adding depth and dimension to both the writer’s overall venture and the devising of an original POT model for the organization.

The tailored POT model, which is evidence-based, will provide a clear and guided path for the complete implementation of POT within the organization, particularly if the key internal individuals follow through with giving the know-how, skills and procedures vital to the sustainable change process.

5.3.2 Drawbacks

The project’s major drawback was the time frame. Although three months was seemingly sufficient, it really was not, for complete installation of the change has yet to occur. An extended period would be required, which would simultaneously permit a deeper and more substantive level of engagement from the participants and the gathering of greater insight from them. In so doing, perhaps the number of contributors and participants within the organization, and potentially external to it, could have been expanded, too, to surpass the superficial and partial implementation of POT. For instance, a greater understanding of POT could be attained with the inclusion of post-grad students and PhD faculty from other organizations in the Middle East.

Additionally, more time would have given the swapping of roles added dimension, in the sense that different teaching formats, elements and styles could have been experimented with, thus providing more depth to the roles and the evaluation process. Here, full implementation is more likely to occur, given the degree of time and contribution by all concerned parties.

5.4 Implications for institutional management

The incorporation of POT is most pertinent to the organization’s management, for this methodology is closely associated with its mandate for institutionalizing quality assurance mechanisms to enhance teaching and learning. As a result, such mechanisms
are paramount to internal and external stakeholders’ investment in the organization’s endeavors for excellence. Nevertheless, these attempts will prove ineffective without the right developmental know-how, resources and procedures for staff, particularly when observation solely does not guarantee excellence; rather it simply legitimizes the teaching that has been observed to date.

The organization’s staff enthusiastically embraces the implementation of POT employing a formative and developmental approach. From the analyzed data, it can be inferred that greater training could be provided, especially in terms of feedback delivery and reception, and that management could proffer further educational initiatives to staff, whereby POT could be experimented with using technology. Additionally, adopting a mentoring system could be beneficial, allowing senior faculty members to be partnered with graduate students, aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning within the organization.

5.5 Recommendations for future practice

Evidently, the formative, developmental facet of POT is crucial to its success. Also, the right individuals (internal and external) need to be involved and invested in the methodology, possessing a clear vision and understanding of such an initiative in its entirety. This extends to all concerned employees, for without their full realization and understanding of their own parts to play (Hallinger, 2003), the initiative would fail miserably. Hence, strategic planning and goals are required from the outset with the full involvement of all staff affected.

5.6 Conclusion

This change initiative revolved around the implementation and evaluation of a peer observation of teaching pilot at a medical organization in Dubai. Employing the HSE change model and the CIPP evaluation model, the writer was able to launch a scheme that generated highly favorable results, as mirrored in the feedback from participants who
wholly support a formative, developmental approach. Their opinions matter most, as they will likely assist in the further facilitation of POT throughout the organization.

As the project unfolded, a bespoke POT model emerged for the subject organization that has the capacity to cement complete implementation of POT, if closely followed. Fortunately, the writer will continue to correspond and work with the organization’s key individuals, to aid in the embedding process of POT’s change-worthy effects.
References:


HSE. (2008). Improving our services: a user’s guide to managing change in the Health Services Executive. HSE, Dublin.


### Appendix 1: Organisation Permission & Sponsorship

**RCSI**

**Organisation Permission & Sponsorship Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Employee/ Student):</th>
<th>MAHA MOHAMMED ALSAIADY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Number:</td>
<td>13159038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Sponsor:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Line or Senior Manager)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Contact:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Contact:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Start Date:</td>
<td>23/05/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Date of Completion:</td>
<td>01/03/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Title of Project**

Implementation of a Peer Observation of Teaching Initiative for Staff in a Higher Education Medical Institution.

**Declaration**

I give permission for this project to be undertaken in this organisation/ department and I agree to act as organisational project sponsor. I also agree to being contacted by the RCSI to verify this project if required.

Name: (Signature)  
Date: 13/9/15
Appendix 2: Research Ethics Committee Permission

Title of project: Implementation of a Peer Observation of Teaching Initiative for Staff in a Higher Education Medical Institution

Reference:
Dear Ms. Maha,
Thank you for submission of your proposal for approval to the Ethics Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, I am pleased to confirm a favourable ethical opinion, effective 9th September, 2015, on the basis described in the application form.

Director, will be your contact person at

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Chairman, Research & Ethics Committee
Appendix 3: Staff Survey

Staff Survey

Peer Observation of Teaching Survey

Dear Participants,

At the present moment, I am completing an MSc in Leadership in Health Professions Education at the RCSI in Dublin, Ireland. As stipulated by the MSc program, it is necessary for all students to spearhead a change project. This project entails distributing a survey to investigate staff perceptions of the probable use of Peer Observation Teaching (POT) at Medical Education Department at Dubai Health Authority. Following this message, a link is provided to a simple survey that should only take five minutes to do. The questions are geared towards discovering differing staff perceptions of the probability of participating in a POT training session. It is important to mention that the information collected will not only assist in better understanding the variance in staff perceptions of POT, but will also, hopefully, aid in making recommendations for practice in future teaching and learning.

Peer observation of teaching, as defined by Bell (2005, p.5) is: “a collaborative, developmental activity in which professionals offer mutual support by observing each other teach; explaining and discussing what is observed; sharing ideas about teaching; gathering student feedback on teaching effectiveness, reflecting on understanding, feelings, actions and feedback, and trying out new ideas.”

Lastly, confidentiality is guaranteed in this project, meaning that your responses will remain completely anonymous and will only be used for further research analysis.

Thank you for your time and support.

Regards,

Maha AlSaiady
1) Have you heard about POT before? Yes/No

2) If you answered “yes,” how did you find out about POT?
   - From a previous educational experience Yes/No
   - From past research ventures Yes/No
   - From the Internet Yes/No
   - Other Yes/No

3) Would you be interested in partaking in a POT training session? Yes/No
   - As an observer Yes/No
   - As an observee Yes/No
   - As an observer and an observee Yes/No

4) Have you ever participated in a specific POT role? Yes/No
   - As an observer Yes/No
   - As an observee Yes/No
   - As an observer and an observee Yes/No

5) Would you prefer POT to be incorporated into your Department? Yes/No

6) Who would you prefer to peer observe your teaching?
   - A colleague within your own department Yes/No
   - A colleague outside your department Yes/No
   - Your department head Yes/No
   - An external colleague (from another academic institution) Yes/No

7) What forms of teaching and learning methods should be observed?
   - Lab sessions Yes/No
   - Class lectures Yes/No
   - Online tutorials Yes/No
8) Which elements of the teaching/learning process should appear in a POT evaluation questionnaire?

- Delivery of information (enthusiasm, body language)  Yes/No
- Content (knowledge base)  Yes/No
- Clarity (voice)  Yes/No
- Teaching style (engagement, methods, use of audiovisuals)  Yes/No
- Organisation (structure, format)  Yes/No
- Focus on learning objectives  Yes/No

9) How often would you like a lecturer’s teaching to be evaluated using POT?

- Once a semester  Yes/No
- Once an academic year  Yes/No
- Once every two+ years  Yes/No

10) a) Should POT be used for formative (linked to development) purposes? Yes/No

    b) Should POT be used for summative (linked to promotion/management) purposes?  Yes/No

11) Please state whether you agree or disagree with the below statements:

- POT is a efficient method for evaluating teaching  Yes/No
- POT will augment my teaching practice  Yes/No
- POT will help to achieve learning outcomes  Yes/No

Thank you kindly for your time and participation.
Appendix 4: Format of POT training session

POT training session:

1) Introduction and welcome
2) How would you define peer observation of teaching?
3) How exactly does peer observation of teaching work?
4) What peer observation tools will be applied to this project?
5) Using these tools, what is the most effective way to provide feedback?
6) Are there any questions?
7) Conclusion of session.
Appendix 5: Peer Observation of Teaching Tool

Peer Observation of Teaching Tool

Date:

Which role are you representing?
   a) as an observer
   b) as an observee

Teaching session method used: Circle from choices below.
   • Lab sessions
   • Class lectures
   • Online tutorials
   • Workshops
   • Seminars

All teaching criteria are listed below in different categories and are evaluated on a number scale from 4-1, with 4 representing proficient, 3 representing strong, 2 representing fair and 1 representing need for improvement. The non-applicable option is there if needed. Circle the number you feel best expresses the skills of below.
### Organisation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Need Improvement</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the purpose clearly stated?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the objectives clear?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the information presented in a structured manner?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are clear transitions made between the session's different components?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are examples and diagrams used to explain difficult notions?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the central ideas and important points summarized?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker digress from the main focus?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Delivery and Clarity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Need Improvement</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker use correct volume and tone of voice?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker use appropriate speed when necessary?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker omit awkward pauses or verbal fillers ? (“Ummm”, “aahh”, etc)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker clearly enunciate words?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker appear enthusiastic about the topic?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker maintain eye contact with the audience?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker use appropriate body language?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Content and Engagement:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Need Improvement</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker appear knowledgeable about the topic?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker make the topic interesting?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker engage the audience by asking questions?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker help to clarify any confusion or emphasize the importance of the topic?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Audiovisuals:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Need Improvement</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker apply audiovisuals to the session?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the speaker use audiovisuals efficiently?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do they enhance the session?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**: *(Feel free to add any further thoughts, suggestions or feelings you have about the session you just witnessed.)*

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Appendix 6: Focus Group Interview Topics

**Focus groups interview topics:**

- What are your thoughts and experiences of peer observation of teaching?
- What are your thoughts about the probability of implementing peer observation of teaching to your organization?
- What are the challenges of implementing peer observation of teaching?
- What are your experiences with the structure of peer observation of teaching?
- How did you find giving and receiving feedback?
- Do you truly feel that peer observation of teaching can enhance teaching and learning? If so, how? If not, explain please.
- Do you feel that this experience has helped you to develop new and/or hone existing teaching and learning skills?
- Was it a positive experience overall? If so, what did you like most about it? If not, what was the cause of worry or anxiety for you?
- Do you have any questions or further comments for this interview?
Appendix 7: Consent form

Implementation of POT and focus group consent form

*For all concerned participants in the whole POT project. Please read each statement carefully and tick one of the boxes for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have closely listened to everything mentioned during the POT training session, and now have a clear understanding of my role in the project. It was explained well, and I was encouraged to ask questions to become better informed.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that I can choose to leave the study at any time; however, I know that my departure could impact both the process and final results. In this case, I am aware that I will be encouraged to bring my concerns and/or issues to the organizational director, to discuss them before deciding to definitely leave.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know that any personal information about me will be kept strictly private and anonymous (identity unknown), used only on a general basis to reveal results during focus group interviews.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that if I require a copy of my consent form, I must ask the organizational director for it.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that only the organizational director is aware of my identity for this research project.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consent to having any data collected about me being saved, referenced and/or published for scientific research purposes only.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS): ________________________________

Participant Signature: ________________________________

Date: ____________________

To be completed by either the key researcher or another nominated individual.

I, _MAHA ALSAIADY_, the undersigned, have clearly detailed and explained the entire process, stage by stage, of the research project to the aforementioned participant in an easily understood fashion. I have encouraged them to ask questions or address concerns about any element of the project that may affect them. ________________________________

Name (Block Capitals): MAHA ALSAIADY Signature: ____________ Date: 6/10/2015
Appendix 8: Poster

Implementation of a Peer Observation of Teaching Initiative at a Dubai-based College’s Faculty of Dental Medicine

Msc in Leadership in Health Professions Education
Maha AlSuafdy maha.sa2007@gmail.com

Introduction & Background

Since its first introduction during the 1990’s, peer observation of teaching has been met with considerable success across the higher education spectrum in western countries. Its name implies exactly what it comprises:

A methodology, either formal or informal in nature, which involves faculty being partnered to observe each other teach during a single instructional encounter as part of a greater evaluation process.

This definition sets the tone for the writer’s rationale for launching a pilot of peer observation of teaching at an HE medical organisation in Dubai; there existed an enormous impetus to develop enhanced quality assurance in teaching and learning as part of a broader collegial strategy to promote lifelong learning and innovation.

Methodology

The HSE’s change model was employed to underpin this change process, due to its facilitation of cyclical, fluid and dynamic movement to and from interacting elements that enable the complexity of organisational change to occur.

**Figure 1: HSE Change Model**

Its four stages (specific to this project):

1. **Initiation** – identify the need driving the change; create a sense of urgency; target key stakeholders; do a potential risk and issue analysis; and, identify leverage points.
2. **Planning** – communication is integral to generating commitment from stakeholders and participants; to ascertaining the change details through a rough gap analysis; and, to designing an implementation plan with a feedback facilitator provided.
3. **Implementation** – “going into operation” phase involving a 3-month duration, 9 participants using traditional lectures and the swapping of observer and observee roles.
4. **Mainstreaming** – determining the efficiency and value of POT by garnering feedback via a survey and focus group interviews.

Evaluation

Sluffebear’s CIPP model was used to evaluate this initiative. Its core concepts – content, input, process, product – aim to improve an educational programme in a “learning by doing” manner.

Two data sets were used to evaluate the initiative: a) a survey and b) focus group interviews. Both yielded congruent findings, the most prominent being a strong push for the complete implementation of POT organisation-wide.

**Figure 2: Survey results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organisational Impact

The implementation of POT, as a regularised quality assurance mechanism, will actively contribute to the organisation’s collegial strategy by:

- providing excellence in teaching and learning for medical residents.
- delivering both enhanced programs and instruction.
- offering the know-how for both feedback delivery/reception and formal reflection.

Conclusion

By means of the implementation, a bespoke POT model emerged that has the capacity to cement change in the writer’s organisation. This tailored model is grounded in the findings mentioned in the section above. If closely followed, the organisation can reap tremendous benefits by ensuring its mandate stays true to lifelong learning and innovation.

**Figure 3: The writer’s Suggested Model of POT**

References


HSE. (2008). Improving our services: a user’s guide to managing change in the Health Services Executive. HSE, Dublin.

