INTRODUCTION TO

BRINGING MULTIPLE STRANDS OF WORK TOGETHER

Paul Gaston  Norm Jones  Dan McInerney

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

Lumina Foundation
Opening reminder

• Would you like to share more information with colleagues on your campus about the DQP and Tuning?

• *DQP/Tuning Coaches* are available for a one-day campus visit at no cost to the host institution.

• A Coach will be paired with the requesting institution based on a match of interests, intended outcomes, and expertise.

• For information, see: http://degreeprofile.org/coaches/
A DQP PRIMER
THE DQP AND TUNING
THE DQP AND ASSESSMENT
CASE STUDY ON ONE CAMPUS
What is the Degree Qualifications Profile?

What does a degree represent?
- seat time?
- Carnegie credit hours?
- grade point averages?
- required courses?

All of these suggest what degrees represent in terms of numbers.

What do degrees represent in terms of learning?
What is the Degree Qualifications Profile?

The DQP is

• a framework clarifying what degrees should signify in terms of knowledge and ability.
• a model for explicit statements of learning outcomes.
• a platform for effective assessment.

The DQP isn’t

• An attempt to dictate standards or promote standardization.
• A comprehensive collection of learning outcomes.
• A device for evaluating faculty performance.
5 AREAS OF PROFICIENCY:

- specialized knowledge
- broad, integrative knowledge
- intellectual skills
- applied & collaborative learning
- civic & global learning

3 DEGREE LEVELS:

- associate’s
- bachelor’s
- master’s
1. Specialized Knowledge
2. Broad and Integrative Knowledge
3. Intellectual Skills
4. Applied and Collaborative Learning
5. Civic and Global Learning
EACH CAST AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SOPHISTICATION AS DQP MOVES UP THE DEGREE LADDER

- Specialized Knowledge
- Broad and Integrative Knowledge
- Intellectual Skills
- Applied and Collaborative Learning
- Civic and Global Learning
Specialized Knowledge

At the associate level, the student...

Describes the scope of the field of study, its core theories and practices, using field-related terminology, and offers a similar description of at least one related field.

Applies tools, technologies and methods common to the field of study to selected questions or problems. Generates substantially error-free products, reconstructions, data, juried exhibits or performances appropriate to the field of study.
Specialized Knowledge

At the bachelor's level, the student...

- Defines and explains the structure, styles and practices of the field of study using its tools, technologies, methods and specialized terms.

- Investigates a familiar but complex problem in the field of study by assembling, arranging and reformulating ideas, concepts, designs and techniques.

- Frames, clarifies and evaluates a complex challenge that bridges the field of study and one other field, using theories, tools, methods and scholarship from those fields to produce independently or collaboratively an investigative, creative or practical work illuminating that challenge.
At the master’s level, the student...

Elucidates the major theories, research methods and approaches to inquiry and schools of practice in the field of study, articulates their sources and illustrates both their applications and their relationships to allied fields of study.

Assesses the contributions of major figures and organizations in the field of study, describes its major methodologies and practices and illustrates them through projects, papers, exhibits or performances.

Articulates significant challenges involved in practicing the field of study, elucidates its leading edges and explores the current limits of theory, knowledge and practice through a project that lies outside conventional boundaries.
THE DQP RESPONDED TO . . .

- Calls for “accountability” in higher education
- Emphasis on assessment from accreditors and “performance funding”
- Dramatic higher ed reform in the E.U. (“Bologna Process”)
- Models of learning outcomes frameworks (UK, Australia, Scandinavia)
- Degree completion goals (Lumina, 2025: 60% w/ quality postsecond credentials)
- Critical studies (Academically Adrift; Our Underachieving Colleges)
- Policymakers’ critiques (Spellings Commission; accreditation process)
- Employer (and faculty) concerns about graduates’ skill sets
Higher education must tell its story more effectively—or others may write our story for us

Increasing the number of degrees awarded is meaningless unless there is a guarantee of quality

A degree qualifications profile should address these concerns in ways that institutions, faculty members, students, and many others can use.
2010: draft circulated to 100+ experts and stakeholders

2011: publication as Beta document

2011-2014: broad dissemination, pilot applications, detailed reporting, NILOA tracking

2014: incorporate feedback from hundreds of users, analysts, critics, proponents

2015: official publication of the DQP
Lexicon for terms used in the DQP

Acknowledged credentials not (yet) defined at this stage of the qualifications profile work
- Certificates
- Other short-cycle credentials
- Professional practice doctorates
- The Ph.D.
REVISIONS, 2011-PRESENT:

Lexicon for terms used in the DQP

Additional credentials

Clarification /emphasis on
-quantitative reasoning
-global learning
-ethical reasoning
-cross-disciplinary learning
-integration of proficiencies
-assessment of proficiencies
REVISIONS, 2011-PRESENT:

Lexicon for terms used in the DQP

Additional credentials

Clarification /emphasis

Examples of institutional and organizational experience in using the DQP
REVISIONS, 2011-PRESENT:

- Lexicon for terms used in the DQP
- Additional credentials
- Clarification /emphasis
- Institutional/Organizational uses of DQP
- Clarify “family resemblances” between the DQP and the Tuning Process
REVISIONS, 2011-PRESENT:

Lexicon for terms used in the DQP

Additional credentials

Clarification /emphasis

Institutional/Organizational uses of DQP

DQP ← → Tuning

direct users to resources that support the assessment of DQP proficiencies
HOW DOES THE DQP CONTRIBUTE TO EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT?

ALIGNS VALUES

MAKES *IMPLICIT* LEARNING OUTCOMES *EXPLICIT*

ASSERTS THAT LEARNING OUTCOMES SHOULD BE *DEMONSTRABLE PROFICIENCIES*

INSISTS THAT LEARNING OUTCOMES MUST BE ASSESSABLE
DQP ALIGNS VALUES

• **Assessment goals**
  - frame outcomes clearly
  - measure performance in ways that support improvement
  - allow for comparisons that reflect the public interest and respect academic priorities

• **Degree Qualifications Profile**
  - Expresses a consensus and provides support for articulation of outcomes
  - Describes proficiencies in active terms that support AND invite assessment
  - Enables institutions and programs to clarify their distinctive strengths
MAKES IMPLICIT LEARNING OUTCOMES EXPLICIT

• Instead of . . .

“The student will gain an appreciation for the rich diversity of the world’s cultures.”

• Consider . . .

“The student will identify significant issues affecting countries, or cultures, present quantitative evidence of the challenges through tables and graphs, and evaluate the activities of NGOs or inter-governmental initiatives in addressing that issue.”
• Instead of . . .

“The student develops an awareness of the importance of collaborative work.”

• Consider . . .

“The student negotiates a strategy for group research or performance, documents the strategy so others may understand it, implements the strategy, and communicates the results.”

ASSERTS THAT LEARNING OUTCOMES SHOULD BE DEMONSTRABLE PROFICIENCIES
• Instead of . . .

“The student understands the ethical dimensions of his or her discipline.”

• Consider . . .

“The student analyzes competing claims from a recent discovery, scientific contention, or technical practice in terms of benefits and harms to those affected, articulates the ethical dilemmas inherent in the tension of benefits and harms, and (a) offers a clear reconciliation of that tension informed by ethical principles OR (b) explains why a reconciliation cannot be accomplished.”

INSISTS THAT LEARNING OUTCOMES MUST BE ASSESSABLE

“INSISTS THAT LEARNING OUTCOMES MUST BE ASSESSABLE”
WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS KNOW, UNDERSTAND, AND BE ABLE TO DO WHEN THEY COMPLETE A MAJOR?

WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS KNOW, UNDERSTAND, AND BE ABLE TO DO WHEN THEY COMPLETE A DEGREE?
A learning-centered framework for what college graduates should know and be able to do to earn the associate, bachelor's or master's degree

A process by which faculty in different fields of study determine discipline-specific desired learning outcomes for their subject area through consultations with one another, colleagues on other campuses, students, alumni, and employers
• The DQP
  • Offers a degree qualifications profile — exclusive of discipline-by-discipline qualifications
  • Describes a *product* (the degree) but implies a *process* (Gen Ed → a major)
  • An *institutional* process across disciplines

• Tuning
  • Invites *disciplinary* qualifications profiles—consistent with degree-level qualifications
  • Describes a *process* (Gen Ed → a major) but implies a *product* (the degree)
  • A discipline-by-discipline process across institutions
WHAT'S THE BEST STARTING POINT?

**Begin with Tuning**

ask disciplines to clarify their incremental outcomes — then derive institutional degree qualifications from the result

**Begin with the DQP**

define degree-level outcomes — then ask disciplines to frame incremental outcomes consistent with them
Bringing It All Together to Foster Intentional Learners

CASE STUDY AT Utah State University

Bringing It All Together to Foster Intentional Learners
• Utah’s land-grant university
• 850 faculty; 27,700 students
• 7 colleges; 200 + majors
• main campus (Logan) + 5 branch campuses
• distance learning sites
• wide range of on-line degrees
What should students know, understand, and be able to do in history and physics?
CHANGE 1: Led to a redesign of majors

Ex.: History

clearer sequence of courses
“pre-major” pathway
theory/methods classes
skills-based exercises
develop proficiencies required in the capstone
CHANGE 2: LED TO OTHER QUESTIONS
PROMPTED BY THE DQP (2011):

(1) What is the relationship between General Education and preparation for success in the major?

(2) How might USU better use its already-established degree profile, the “Citizen Scholar”?
What knowledge, understanding, and abilities did students need to develop in General Education coursework?

Next “employer” of a Gen Ed student?

The major

What does Gen Ed prepare the student to do in the major – and shape where the major begins?
General Education: largest academic program at Utah State

(What major enrolls 3,000 students?)

General Education faculty:
identify what students will learn . . .
and how we can know they learned it
Faculty course proposals must:

- make implicit course expectations explicit
- frame a class not simply for future majors – but also *(sometimes mainly)* for non-majors
- reflect on a discipline’s distinctive contributions to Gen Ed
- reflect on exercises appropriate to this notion
- reflect on assessment of learning
Faculty teaching in Gen Ed ALSO teach in their disciplinary departments

Disciplines both “produce” and “consume” Gen Ed courses
Faculty explore how the whole curriculum fits together (GE + major + ancillary courses)

“Citizen Scholar” Degree Profile understood as a collaborative, integrated curricular process
What about the students?
New student orientation

- What should the student be doing when?
  - purposeful course selection in “clusters”

First Year Experience

- changing the students’ narrative:

  “I’m here to get a job”  →  “I’m here to get an education”

creating intentional learners
First Year Experience: 3 Big Questions

• Why am I here?
• How do I best engage myself in the process of becoming and educated person?
• How do I become a fully engaged member of the university community?
Key words:

- **intentionality** in courses, assignments, curricula
- **integration** of academic initiatives
- **inclusion** in the “educators” with whom we consult
Additional view of the process:

“Navigating USU: The Structure of a College Degree”

https://prezi.com/vzdfrapcqvv5/navigating-usu/