DIALING IN FOR THE NILOA WEBINAR?

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THE THREAD THAT RUNS SO TRUE

CONNECTING MAJOR INITIATIVES IN A WORLDWIDE EFFORT TO MAKE **HIGH QUALITY** HIGHER EDUCATION MORE EFFECTIVE

A NILOA Webinar

Presented by Paul L. Gaston
Trustees Professor, Kent State University
Favorite vegetable
Qualiflower
Favorite animal
Initiatives
THE THREAD

INTENTIONALITY
THE SPOOL
QUALITY
In every program, every degree
In every discipline
In every course
In every class
By way of contrast, a hypothetical letter
Dear Professor Pedant,

It is with pleasure that I attach to this covering e-mail an article for publication in the *Journal of Esoteric Study*. 
In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I want to make it clear that the objectives of this article are nowhere clearly defined or stated.
I ask that you respect my lengthy experience as a scholar and that you assume my intent will emerge in due course.
Because I do not make clear the structure of the article, a reader may not at first understand how its different elements add up to a coherent whole. They have to work at it, and there’s nothing wrong with that. I can’t hold every reader’s hand! They are adults, after all.
Also worth your attention is my conviction that any effort on your part to evaluate my article would be at best premature and at worst a violation of my academic freedom.
Many readers who fail to understand my arguments on a first reading may in time—perhaps many years later—come to appreciate their importance. Frankly, in the short term, who is a better judge of my effectiveness as a scholar than I am?
I will look forward to seeing my article in print as soon as possible.
Ridiculous, but . . .
Ever hear . . . ?
“Memorable courses evolve. If you’re too definitive at the beginning about what you hope to accomplish, you leave no room for spontaneity and exploration.”

“I have had alums tell me that it wasn’t until years later that they appreciated what they had learned in my course on ___________.”
“My syllabus is between me and my students. I don’t want the bloody provost telling me what it supposedly should include.”

“When I close the door to my classroom, I expect—and my students expect—to be left alone.”

“Learning outcomes? That may be the latest jargon, but there’s nothing new about that. Students have been learning stuff for thousands of years.” (2007)
“Of course I’m in favor of assessment. I give grades, don’t I?”
Care to comment? A grain of truth in some of these statements?

Courses should be allowed to evolve.

Realizing and confirming learning may take years.

A syllabus is a private communication.

The classroom is a privileged enclave.

There’s nothing new about “learning outcomes.”

Grading is a form of assessment.
But a commitment to intentionality in the cause of quality sounds like . . . .
Here’s our syllabus. First, let’s discuss what we will be learning together in the course of the semester—and how we will be able to demonstrate what we have learned.
How many of you are sociology majors? Would you be willing to share with the class your view of what someone with a bachelor’s degree in sociology should know and be able to do?
That’s great. Now let’s discuss how this course helps to get you there.
Good morning! Today we will look at the important role of rewards in society and consider how changing the rewards can lead to a change in behaviors. By the end of the hour, we should all be able to offer an example of this phenomenon drawn from our own observations.
Any qualms so far?
Following the Thread
The Essential Learning Outcomes
A new framework to guide students’ cumulative progress through college
# The Essential Learning Outcomes Across the Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Knowledge of Human Culture &amp; The Natural World</th>
<th>Intellectual &amp; Practical Skills</th>
<th>Individual &amp; Social Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Experiences</td>
<td>A plan of study . . . should clearly connect the expected outcomes to the student’s choice of courses and major field(s). Learning goals, experiences, resources, and assessments should be aligned . . . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused Studies, Major/Minor(s)</td>
<td>Milestone assessments as students progress in their studies in both general education and the major should be tied to key outcomes . . . .</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Integrative &amp; Culminating Work</td>
<td>Experiences in which the student actively demonstrates and is assessed for his or her cumulative accomplishments of the college career.</td>
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The Essential Learning Outcomes

Are intended to

Provide the academy with a conceptual, aspirational frame for a cumulative liberal education

Guide student and faculty understanding of essential outcomes for learning

Are not intended to

Define in detail what degrees (associate, bachelor’s, master’s) mean—and how they differ

Offer an explicitly operational basis for assessing student performance
Questions?
Following the Thread

DQP

Tuning  Assessment  ELO’s
Why a Degree Profile?

• The DP “describes concretely what is meant by each of the degrees addressed.”
• The DP “illustrates how students should be expected to perform at progressively more challenging levels.”
What a Degree Profile Is Intended To Do

- Offer reference points for students, faculty, advisors, accreditation
- Create expectation for a curriculum that is clearly intentional, coherent, cumulative
- Encourage assessment
- Support institutional reporting
- Provide a baseline for institutions seeking to clarify their distinctiveness
- Clarify the incremental nature of degree levels, thereby encouraging progression
What a Degree Profile Is NOT Intended To Do

- Standardize degrees
- Define what should be taught
- Prescribe pedagogy
- Encourage rankings, internally or externally
Organization of the Degree Profile

Five areas of learning

• Integrative Knowledge
• Specialized Knowledge
• Intellectual Skills
• Applied Learning
• Civic Learning

shown as interrelated, not discrete
Understanding the outcomes

- They are summative—and may be approached by more than one path
- They are illustrative, not exhaustive
- They define students’ achievement of competence for students but do not enable ranking
- They assume/build on the outcomes defined for prior levels
Questions?
Following the Thread
THE EUROPEAN CONNECTION

Tuning

Degree Supplement

QUALITY Frameworks
Tuning Europe → Tuning USA
Differences

TUNING EUROPE

Discipline faculty from many nations
Focus on baccalaureate
Faculty driven
Many languages

TUNING USA

Discipline faculty within selected states
Community colleges
Student participation
One language
What students within specific disciplines should know and be able to do at each stage of a coherent and cumulative curriculum within that discipline.

What students awarded a degree (associate, bachelor’s, master’s) should know and be able to do through a coherent and cumulative curriculum integrating general and disciplinary education.
Information gathered from Tuning will illuminate issues bearing on planned revision of the DQP.

Responses to the DQP—especially from employers—can provide a perspective useful to those engaged in Tuning.
The more thoroughly Tuning is informed by the DQP, the more coherence there will be among the different Tuning efforts, discipline by discipline, state by state.

The greater the awareness in the DQP of the experience gained through Tuning USA, the more credible and substantive will be its implementation—and second iteration.
Tuning offers to the DQP the experience of defining incremental and cumulative stages towards degrees within disciplines.

The DQP offers tuning a new standard of specificity and concreteness in defining learning outcomes for the degree.
Questions?
Following the Thread

DQP

Tuning

ELO’s

Assessment
Assessment & the DQP
Three Principles

1. The statements of learning outcomes in the DQP are meant to invite—not to prescribe—assessment.

2. Because those who use the DQP determine the level at which the outcomes are to be met, the most effective assessments may be developed locally.

3. In response to considerable feedback, DQP 2.0 (2014) will offer resources for assessment, including sample approaches, that users may find helpful.
Assessment & the DQP
For Instance

1 Faculty members might be asked to identify the DQP learning outcomes *that they emphasize* in a particular course.

2 For each outcome, faculty members might identify assignments they *currently use* that lead to outcomes assessable in terms of the outcome statements: e.g., exam questions, papers, performance instructions, lab exercises, etc.
One approach, cont’d

3 Having reviewed such traditional measures, faculty committees might propose one or more approaches to genuine “assessment”

4 Several recommended assessments for each learning outcome, throughout the curriculum, could emerge

5 Rubrics of performance and grading remain in the hands of individual faculty
The thread that ties together a global aspiration for Higher Education
Intentionality
The spool that keeps the thread of intentionality from unraveling
Commitment to QUALITY
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Questions?

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