

DQP 2.0: Reflections on Support and Relationships with Lane’s Core Learning Outcomes, Christina Howard, LCC Assessment Team Chair, March 2014

Overview

Lane introduced Core Learning Outcomes (CLOs) in Fall 2012 after intentional work to re-envision learning at Lane. Our Assessment Team work included researching and discussing national frameworks, including the DQP, which informed our process and aided in generating our final CLO descriptions and definitions. In turn, our institutional work with Oregon DQP allowed Lane an opportunity to provide feedback on strengths and challenges of the DQP model as it relates to two-year colleges and vertical alignment, contributing to a revised DQP 2.0.

DQP 2.0 supports and relates to our institutional work on Core Learning Outcomes by (1) strengthening our alignment with a national framework for articulating transferable skills; (2) guiding an institutional focus on continued tuning of our assessment plan and frameworks; and (3) validating our faculty-led process to engage in methods to inform teaching and learning through meaningful CLO assessment across disciplines.

Improved Alignment with a National Framework

The descriptions of outcomes within DQP 2.0 have expanded to include applied and collaborative learning and civic and global learning. Inclusion of these elements strengthens alignment with Lane’s CLOs. As a result, CLOs are now more consistent with DQP 2.0 and because DQP 2.0 changes were derived from qualitative data from many two and four-year institutions, it can be inferred that Lane’s CLOs strongly reflect national higher education values (Table 1):

Table 1: Comparisons between DQP 2.0 Language and Lane Core Learning Outcome Language

| DQP 2.0 | Lane Community College CLO |
|---|---|
| Applied and Collaborative Learning | Engage Diverse Values with Civic and Ethical Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Includes collaborate with others to achieve shared goals</i> |
| Civic and Global Learning | Engage Diverse Values with Civic and Ethical Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Includes global communities in its description</i> |

Indications for Institutional Tuning

DQP 2.0 is more specific and somewhat prescriptive in its sample outcomes for each component (e.g., “provides evidence of participation in a community project”, or “identifies an economic, environmental, or public health challenge affecting at least two continents...”). On the surface, the revision appears to be seeking more reliability by explicitly identifying or quantifying learning, and therefore degree outcomes. Lane’s CLOs are written to allow for students to demonstrate varying levels of competence and are more general. Lane faculty will need to engage in more conversations described within DQP 2.0 as “tuning” to develop a shared understanding of how to assess student growth in Lane’s outcomes across disciplines.

Of particular importance is the challenge of Lane’s high variety of courses in its general education curriculum. Most students who are seeking a general education and transfer (e.g., AAOT) do not have to enroll in courses in any predictable or meaningful sequence. Learning assessment is more systematic when students travel through the curriculum in some form of cohort or through a predictable sequence. This is affirmed by the more systematic learning assessment within many career and technical disciplines. As an AAC&U Roadmap College, Lane has made progress in improving advising, implementing high impact practices, and increasing the visibility of its CLOs. Lane is in the nascent stages of assessing how the AAOT or other associate degree frameworks may guide students more intentionally in their general education.

Lane is in the early stages of mapping program and course outcomes, which are much more specific, to CLOs to increase visibility of transferable skills within the curriculum. Such “crosswalks” would help define assessments of student learning through signature assignments, rubrics and other assessment strategies. These will be tailored to Lane’s curriculum. The proficiency statements of the DQP 2.0 may again provide guidance and checkpoints as Lane faculty consider assessment of student learning.

Collaborative and Meaningful Mapping Strategies

There is strong alignment between DQP 2.0’s emphasis on faculty collaboration within and across disciplines and the institutional work led by Lane’s Assessment Team. DQP 2.0 includes samples of DQP engagement and assessment activities by other institutions and Lane’s efforts reflect similar levels of engagement. We have developed a General Education Assessment Plan that includes course and curricular mapping and we are in the development stages of using an adapted “spider web” to increase visibility of CLOs as it relates to course and degree outcomes (Figure 1). Our beta-version of a mapping tool allows faculty to connect course outcomes to CLOs and include sample assessments/assignments that provide evidence of student learning assessment and expected student proficiencies.

Figure 1: LCC CLO Spiderweb – Course Map for PTA 101 – Introduction to Clinical Practice 1

Details for PTA101

Title: Introduction to Clinical Practice 1

Credits: 5

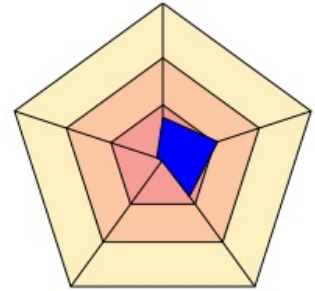
Think: 27

Engage: 4

Create: 1

Communicate: 29

Apply: 37



The sample visual maps in DQP 2.0 are effective in demonstrating how program and institutional outcomes are not constrained by a symmetrical or predictable shape. Lane remains skeptical that mapping in this manner is an effective or valid method to demonstrate student growth or evidence of student learning. Quantifying relative weights of CLOs within a course or program outcome is wrought with methodological deficiencies. However, the Lane Assessment Team feels that our mapping tool may provide another mechanism for faculty to engage with CLOs and how CLOs are assessed in courses they teach. By working with a visual mapping strategy, we expect richer and deeper faculty discussions on how we can improve our teaching and learning practices while making learning visible and valuable to our students.

Conclusion

DQP 2.0 outcomes are more aligned with Lane’s CLOs, thus affirming the strength and timelessness of our institutional agreement on what our students should know and do. The DQP 2.0 acknowledgement of tuning as a requisite for authentic student learning assessment is consistent with our current work in developing and funding projects where discipline teams develop systematic approaches and methods to assess Lane CLOs. Institutional support must persist in order to sustain the work of making learning at Lane visible and meaningful to students.

In the absence of majors or required course sequences, Lane is challenged in its ability to demonstrate student growth over time as visually represented in the DQP 2.0 spider web. The methodology for creating the map using course data is confounded by a lack of signature assignments and variability in course grading. The validity of a map for Lane programs is limited by our current general education curriculum that allows students to take many courses out of sequence and complete a degree by choosing distribution requirements from many courses offered within broad categories.

Submitted to Lane DQP Team by Christina Howard, Lane Assessment Team Chair.