Using Elements of Dynamic Criteria Mapping as a Process Facilitating DQP
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<u>**Introduction**</u>

Last week Dr. Sarah Witte discussed with me how Eastern Oregon University (EOU) might begin the work of DQM by creating a common rubric in English/Writing, modeling it for other disciplines/departments, and documenting the process that it might be replicated at other institutions. Several processes have received considerable attention in English/Writing and provide a solid place to begin the conversation. These include:

1. The Program Portfolio
   a. Recent program changes have been finalized, with the Bachelor of Arts in English providing two majors—1) English Studies and 2) Rhetoric, Culture, and Writing—that share common Program Objectives/Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs).
2. Work with WICHE, particularly with the Interstate Passport Initiation, to articulate WR 121 outcomes and assessment standards between EOU and community colleges.
3. The Value Rubrics derived from LEAP

Additionally, Dynamic Criteria Mapping (DCM), a model for devising homegrown writing assessment tools could prove useful in opening conversation among writing faculty, and this methodology could transfer across disciplines. First described by Broad in *What We Really Value: Beyond Rubrics in Teaching and Assessing Writing* (2003), the theoretical origin of DCM was "inspired by Guba and Lincoln's *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (1989) and Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory (1967)" (p.5). The appeal the DCM approach is that it "promotes inductive (democratic) and empirical (ethnographic) methods for generating accurate and useful accounts of what faculty and administrators value in their students' work" (p. 5). Since Broad's introduction of DCM, writing program administrators at other institutions have adopted it for various assessment foci—writing placement, first year writing program, assessment across the curriculum, and writing and critical thinking assessment—and have demonstrated its flexibility, broad applicability, and richness. These efforts are documented in *Organic Writing Assessment: Dynamic Criteria Mapping in Action* by Broad et al.

EOU is beginning a process of discovery in attempting to model "authentic assessment," and DCM methods offer potential to facilitate the invitational local conversation important to faculty buy-in. While application of DCM as such in EOU's DQP process would likely oppose the spirit of DCM as locally grown, organic assessment, and would not result in a purely dynamic criteria map, it would promote a bottom-up element of inquiry that invites the voices of local faculty to join in the process of developing institutional assessments based on an established DQP model. In addition, DCM would contribute an expanded vocabulary of assessment at institutional, program, course, and classroom levels, and do so in a way meaningful to local assessment teams. Further, DCM will help uncover criteria commonly applied in assessment that fall outside of and currently remain undocumented in an authorized rubric.

<u>Example</u>

The DQP faculty conversation will begin in English/Writing, with a focus on the lower-division university writing requirement. The purpose of the initial meeting is to orient faculty in the program to the Dynamic Criteria Mapping and to test the assessment process through conversation, activity, and collaboration. We will also try to get a sense of what DCM might offer to processes leading to a DQP model for other disciplines. A proposed outline of the approach to this session follows:

> *Facilitators, including Recorder*

> *Required Materials/Technology*
> > Computer/projector/screen
> > Typing paper/pencils or pens
> > Copies of VALUE rubric for Written Communication
> > Program Learning Outcomes as stated in Program Portfolio

> *Process*

> 1. Explain purpose of meeting: to begin the process of assessing the lower-division University Writing Requirement, beginning first in English/Writing.
> 2. Invite discussion. (Recorder types defining and descriptive words/phrases, which are projected on screen for all participants to see.) Suggested starters[1]:
>   a. What is written communication? Take a minute or two to write down your response…Let's talk about this now. What is written communication?
>   b. Why is it important in the class you teach?
>   c. What are important elements of written communication?
>   d. What do you value in assessing written communication?
>   e. What words do you use to describe the characteristics of valued criteria?
>   f. Do you ever struggle to name or define what you like or do not like about a student's response to an assignment that involves assessment of written communication?
>   g. (And so on…)
> 3. Introduce the basic task the team is charged with:

> Each faculty represents a class for which Written Communication outcomes will be assessed with a locally designed rubric. Faculty will collect, analyze, and interpret pedagogically (close the loop) the data gathered from their own class.

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[1] This *hermeneutic dialectic* process of inquiry is flexible (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Inquiry is not confined to a strict list of predetermined questions. A response may yield unexpected ideas or criteria that prompt Facilitators (investigators) to ask one or more questions not previously anticipated. Facilitators may backtrack to ask new questions of any stakeholder at any point of the inquiry.

Conversation is dynamic in a group setting, such as the GEC Sampling Team, in which hermeneutic dialectics are employed. Questions--and so, too, data— are not limited to predetermined criteria but provide space for disciplinary faculty to contribute a variety of responses, some of which may fall outside authorized rubrics.

4. Faculty will score same student samples against the VALUE Rubric for written communication and compare results with locally designed rubrics, gaining an understanding of inter-reader reliability as well as the usefulness of the VALUE Rubric as a meta-rubric to guide interdisciplinary conversation about Written Communication.

References

Broad, B. (2003). *What we really value: Beyond rubrics in teaching and assessing writing.* Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.

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Guba, Egon G., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.