

Portland State University

DQP Progress Report

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Summary of Institutional Characteristics

Portland State University is Oregon's largest and most diverse public university. It is an urban campus with approximately 27,000 students. PSU is located in downtown Portland and has many outstanding programs, notably in business, technology, and urban planning and social work and environmental studies. Portland State is noted for its commitment to civic challenges and high student participation in internships, community-based projects, education, social services, and government.

PSU offers more than 60 undergraduate and 40 graduate programs in fine and performing arts, liberal arts and sciences, business administration, education, urban and public affairs, social work, engineering and computer science. PSU offers more than 226 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

Portland State's has a well recognized University Studies curriculum that provides small class sizes and peer mentoring for all first-year students and culminates in Senior Capstones.

The University has taken aggressive steps to enhance the student experience and campus life, with new student housing and a comprehensive recreation complex and remodeled science and performing arts facilities. Portland State also has bolstered academic and career advising and orientation programs and created new programs to support students.

Statement of Year 1 DQP Work Plan Goals and Objectives

After substantial changes in PSU's leadership, aspirations were reduced and the goals evolved to focus on a single program in the Graduate School of Education's Administrative Licensure Program. The Program had established a culture of evidence and a practice of assessment. The population of students was appropriate for the Degree Qualification Program, comprised of K-12 administrators or aspiring administrators who would benefit from gaining exposure to a program that was working to adapting shared competencies. The plan was therefore decided to be to implement VALUE rubrics to guide assessment of program outcomes as determined by the professional accreditors—NCATE, and then to use year 2 to map the outcomes more fully to align with the DQP.

The Goal and Objectives: Faculty in the PSU Administrative Licensure program would use VALUE rubrics adapted for purposes that focused on DQP outcomes in Applied Learning and Civic Engagement.

They would compare reliability by assessing student work collaboratively with the rubric, and use results to guide modification in year 2.

Progress to Date

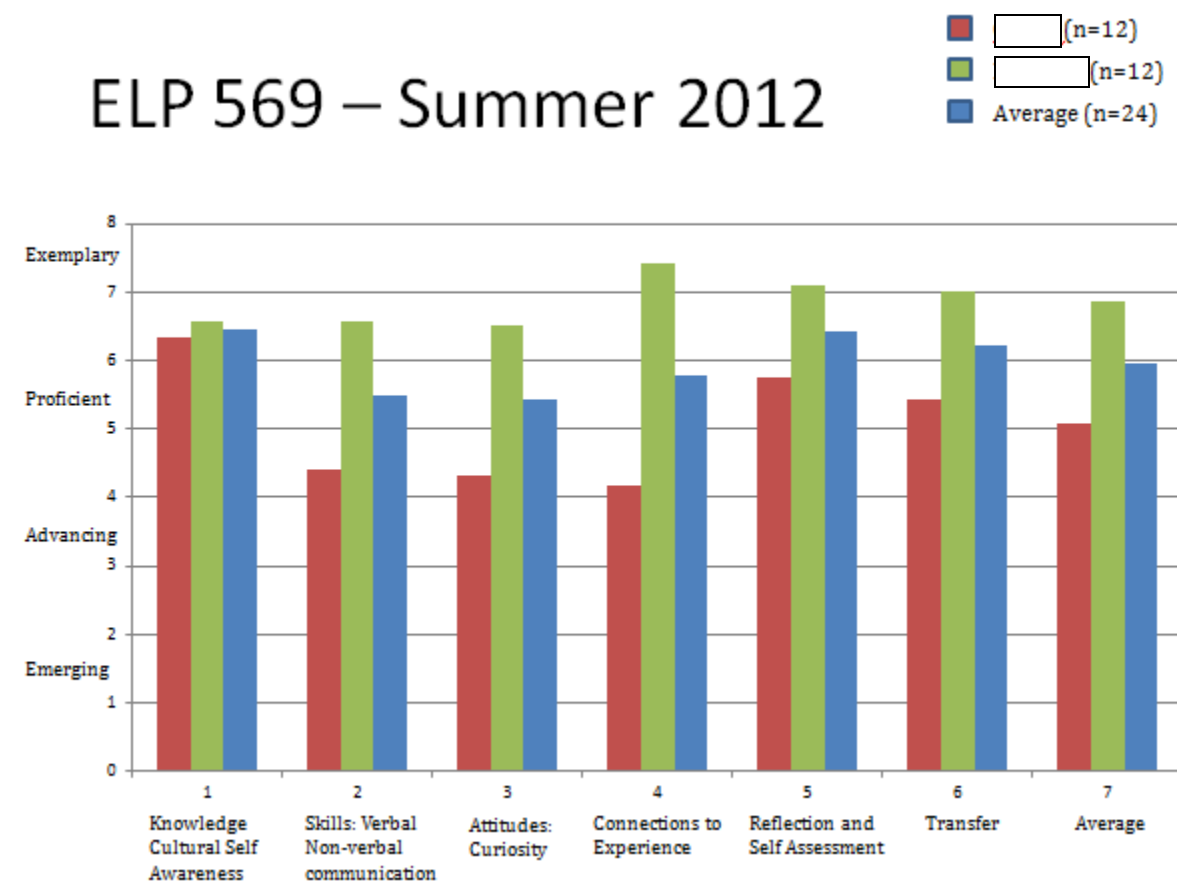
The Portland State University Graduate School of Education's Administrative Licensure program has completed a preliminary round of assessment of two key DQP outcomes as well as a suite of NCATE required outcomes. They have done a preliminary mapping of the embedded outcomes for "ethical leadership" to DQP "civic engagement" and "applied learning" to "create and sustain an environment based on integrity and ethical principles" (from PSU outcomes) in their "platform papers" in which students communicate "core values" aligned with "sound theories of practice and action."

The approach is being refined through active and collaborative assessment to meet NWCC&U criteria for “verifiability” and consistent with best practices in assessment. A VALUE rubric has been broadly adopted by the program for purposes of meeting NCATE and DQP outcomes goals.

They are engaging students as future and current educational leaders in the program in joining in the acquisition of a deeper understanding of the outcomes and, in sequence, a greater understanding of the implications of competency-based assessment.

Key principles of the DQP were confirmed in those activities as it was determined that students’ civic engagement and applied learning were understood in notably different ways among faculty in the program, and it was determined that reliability among faculty was an important target outcome if students in the program.

Refinement of rubrics and assignments has ensued and discussion of differences has been rewarding. For instance, see the figure below that illustrates various perceptions of student artifacts assessed in the pilot. Note that the histogram represents the initial assessment that resulted in recognition that the outcome process has potential utility for advancing the curriculum. The outcomes identified are primarily NCATE, but the assessment is done in with recognition of the DQP context and the opportunity to map the program outcomes in useful ways to those encouraged by the DQP.*



**Specifically, “Cultural Self-Awareness” can be mapped to Civic Engagement; Connections to Experience can be mapped to “applied learning.”*

Unanticipated Opportunities and Challenges

Portland State's initial forays into work with the DQP provide a critical example of the role of leadership in the success of an initiative. Though we cannot point to additional Lumina grants, we can report the PSU story is common with many other grants—leadership and changes in leadership underpin the story. It will be useful to include more discrete questions in the report requirements to monitor the participation of leadership as the DQP moves forward.

Insights and Lessons Learned from Work with the DQP

There are key insights to note that follow from the change in leadership. It is not possible in this time of changing leadership to report on the sustainability, but competing initiatives compromise the viability of any new initiative. PSU has elected to pursue the primacy of the Provost's "ReTHINK" challenge, which is early in its formation. Though it is possible and in fact potentially valuable to integrate the DQP with the Provost's challenge as a measure of success and as a means of future dissemination, there is danger of innovation creep, and PSU has elected to maintain focus on only one. So a key insight is that leadership at PSU prefers another focus to the DQP at this time.

At what point will PSU's ReTHINK be measured in the larger context of Oregon and the country, and to what extent will the DQP itself provide a useful benchmark worthy of sustainability? Those questions may or may not be useful.

An additional insight was presented in part based on PSU's DQP work at the AAC&U meetings in Atlanta and at the AAC&U Student Success conference in Miami in early April. As the histogram indicates, the varying perceptions of students' work within a single program illustrate the challenge and need for the DQP or something akin to it. The discrepancy indicates the need for greater agreement as indicator of curricular coherence. Faculty members in PSU's Administrative Licensure have embraced the implications of the discrepancy and have plans to embrace the challenge.

Reflections

DQP Influence on Degree or Program Outcomes

The purposes of the DQP hold a set of conceptual and practical challenges. Conceptually the broad framework requires a shift from content based assessment to the integration of that content with skill sets required in the 21st century. Practically the mapping of a program's content, the integration of that content with the skills required to engage one's community and to apply one's learning reflect a substantial teaching and curricular challenge. Nonetheless, the largest challenge may not be the broad vision the DQP embodies, but the ability to collaborate to accomplish that vision.

Still, PSU's faculty members in the Administrative Licensure program that has persisted with the DQP merit recognition. They have adopted a more sophisticated rubric appropriate to obtain DQP goals and outcomes. They have collaborated with professionals in the Center for Online Learning, and they have discovered outcomes that afford them with insight and opportunity to close the loop and ultimately to improve students' learning opportunities by expanding and deepening the curriculum.

DQP influence on teaching and learning

As noted above, the identification of the challenge has had, so far, a subtle but important influence on teaching and learning. Individual faculty members now are working to implement outcome-based

pedagogies in consistent ways. They understand their work to be collaborative and assessment reliability commensurate with curricular coherence.

Influence on assessment of student achievement

As noted in the previous section, perhaps the most significant influence is the understanding that assessment and student achievement are inextricable from teaching and learning.

Assistance Requested on Work Plan

No additional assistance is required at this time. The faculty in the Administrative Licensure program are thankful for the assistance of a talented team of instructional designers led by Vince Shreck in COL.

Recommendations on DQP as Framework

The DQP works very well as a framework. It is a necessary and useful framework that bears the brunt of bad Public Relations that may be inescapable—it conjures in the minds of the wary standardization, though high standards are not synonymous with standardization. The need to collaborate, implicit in the DQP, conjures up fears of relinquished autonomy. The focus on broad skills and dispositions is counter to the tradition in which teaching is focused on content. These challenges are not attributes of the DQP as a framework; they reflect the challenges implicit in change, and, in this case, change that is inevitable and overdue.

What assistance would you like to receive to achieve of your Work Plan objectives?

None needed at this time.

What recommendations do you have to improve the DQP as a framework for practice?

We are aware that a revision is in the works, and that the revision will not be major.

Lumina Grant Deliverables

Outcomes reports from GSE that are fully mapped to the DQP

Describe current or planned engagement of faculty in the DQP project.

Currently all program faculty are now involved in the assessment activity, though it is a small program that includes only three faculty at this time. We anticipate some spread effect on the assessment work over time.

Describe the use, if any, of spider web maps in current or planned DQP work

We are using bar charts, as indicated, with no plans to adopt spider graphs in this phase of our work at PSU.

Describe current or planned involvement, if any, by students and advisory committees in the DQP work.

The program was selected precisely because students are positioned to benefit from DQP potential.

Concluding Thoughts

Though PSU's involvement in the DQP has been reduced, PSU has found focused utility in the project. We have modified our focus on problem-based learning as an example of the DQP applicability goals. Faculty in GSE have recently learned that work enriched by the DQP will be reported in the article,

“Preparing future school leaders to ensure racial, ethnic, and linguistic and socio-economic equity,” which will appear in an NCPEA publication. The reach of that work, specifically as it pertains to K-12 administrators, is notable.