



Learning Outcomes for Transfer

Publication Project

Preliminary Recommendations

Project Overview



Learning Outcomes for Transfer (LOFT) Publication Project

Rationale:

- ✧ There has been a dramatic increase in the use of learning outcomes in postsecondary education and ONCAT has demonstrated considerable interest in the potential for learning outcomes to serve as a tool for advancing credit transfer
- ✧ Now is an ideal time to conduct a broad-based and rigorous critical assessment of learning outcomes across jurisdictions as they contribute to student mobility
- ✧ Such work is necessary for informed decision-making and the establishment of tools, methods and policies that will place Ontario at the forefront



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Goals:

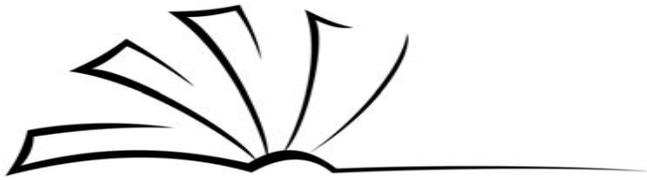
- Assess the conceptual foundations, assumptions, and implications of using learning outcomes for the purposes of postsecondary credit transfer and student mobility
- Review current approaches to the use of learning outcomes across national and international jurisdictions with a multivalent examination of their potential impacts in the unique context of Ontario



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Work Undertaken:

- Produced a comprehensive annotated bibliography (scholarly research)
- Conducted an environmental scan (initiatives, programs, and projects)
- Invited international scholars to write a series of papers identifying critical themes and learning opportunities
- Constructed a body of commentary that responds to the invited work and investigates issues and practical challenges surrounding outcomes-based approaches to credit transfer in Ontario from a variety of perspectives



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Project Contributors:

- Project Team
- Research Consortium
- International Scholars
- Graduate Assistants
- ONCAT Stakeholders





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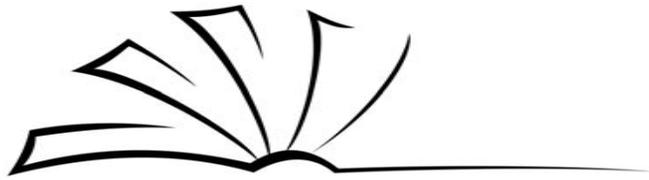
Strategy:

Inform ourselves about contexts and conflicts
to advance effective practices

Learn through our analysis of the
experiences from other jurisdictions

Contribute to policy learning as well as
policy borrowing

Leverage current cycle of review and
revitalization



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Recognitions:



- Collegiality and contributions of those within the postsecondary education system
- Balance between theoretical and practical considerations that are realized at the level of policy and practice
- Wicked problem that is highly contingent without beginning or end; right or wrong answers
- Importance of discourse and defining nomenclature

Guiding Model and International Scholars



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Guiding Model:

- The first element speaks to **theoretical and conceptual foundations** that have led to the current application/redaction of stated student learning expectations for credit transfer/student mobility (historical, cultural, political, theoretical, etc.).
- The second element debates the (de)valuing of stated student learning expectations-based approaches and the inherent **assumptions** associated with their application (research, evidence, practice, lessons learned, etc.).
- The third element examines **implications** of development and implementation at the system(s), institutional, administrative, and student levels (frameworks, assessments, stakeholders, collaboration, trust, tools, processes, resources, etc.).



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Dr. Stephanie Allais:

- South African researcher examining the relationships between education and work with experience in tertiary institutions, government, and trade unions
- Competencies and learning outcomes can be overloaded concepts that become too burdened, fragmented, and detailed to be meaningfully associated with learning (hand washing competency)
- Problems with system and institution level implementation can be damning, as trust relations take time and cannot be replaced with rules, policies, and procedures



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Dr. Debra Bragg:

- American researcher examining underserved youth and adults' use of community colleges to transition to further education with comprehensive experience in vocational education, evaluation, and public policy
- Historical, structural, political, and epistemological contexts can be considerable sources of contention when designing for equity and social inclusion
- Federated and intrastate initiatives represent the majority of partnerships, and few currently link both learning outcomes and credit transfer



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Dr. Peter Noonan:

- Australian researcher shaping public policy in vocational and higher education for over 25 years with experience in tertiary institutions, government, and various international organizations
- Bridging vocational and academic credentials entails ensuring a parity of esteem, connecting operations, and addressing freighted meanings
- Universities are concerned with vocational education and training (VET) competencies with an under emphasis on underpinning skills, language, communication, writing, and disciplinary knowledge



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Dr. Robert Wagenaar:

- European researcher examining international reference points or benchmarks for subject areas and innovative methodologies for delivery with experience on ECTS, AHELO, and CALOHEE projects
- Coherence between the components of a tertiary education system are required and can be achieved via bridging of outcome levels (framework, sectoral, and disciplinary) and stakeholder involvement
- Reflective and innovative practices require constant review and critique, always moving forward and modifying and bringing in new partners



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Dr. Chris Winch:

- British researcher examining the philosophy of education in professional and vocational knowledge with experience on several Erasmus funded projects
- Knowledge relations and progression are structured differently across disciplines and this consequently shapes credit transfer possibilities and processes
- Combinations of input and output measures are beneficial for information and trust purposes, and as such supplemental input measurements are being employed (student time on task)

Responses and Preliminary Findings



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Historical, Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

- Origins and initial rationale for outcomes-based education and student pathway development
- Managerial/corporatist/neoliberal and student/learner-centred

- Historical and contextual factors, intersection of outcomes and credit transfer
- Policy learning and borrowing

- Discourse mediates policy, process, and practice
- Cultivate a broad-based understanding of how meaning and understanding regarding crucial concepts are formed



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Systems and Structures

- 
- Stakeholder tensions within the system and balancing power and competing interests
 - Trust relations, conflicting expectations, incrementalism, and avoidance

- 
- Regulatory frameworks and the associated merits
 - Qualification frameworks, regulators, and accreditation

- 
- Approaches to organizational change and policy development
 - Compulsion/compliance vs. authentic investment



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Institutions and Curriculum Considerations

- Levels of outcomes, purposes, and functions
- Differences respecting qualifications, sectors, disciplines, and learning

- Outcomes, interdependencies, and interactions across spheres of work
- Credit transfer currencies, input and output measure variations

- Responding to the pressures of government priorities, employer needs, and balancing learning in breadth, fields, vocations, and professions
- Unacknowledged issues and barriers



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Preliminary Recommendations:



- Moderation in all things, wise to avoid overloading expectations for learning outcomes based transfer reforms on any singular policy, concept, framework, tool or measure
- Recognition of knowledge construction and progression across programs, ensuring that curriculum allows for the broad disciplinary and theoretical knowledge required to further education and judge knowledge claims
- Competencies and outcomes should not be so narrowly specified that they limit application or are disembodied from teaching and learning processes and educators
- All relevant stakeholders must have a seat around the table and proper training and support for understanding what is collectively developed for meaningful engagement



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Outcomes/Products:

- **Publication:** Invited papers will be published alongside response essays that reflect upon and analyze the invited positions from the Ontario context (Spring/Summer 2019)
- **Colloquium:** Resulting breadth of perspectives will be presented and debated at the 2nd Colloquium on Learning Outcomes for Transfer that will engage the growing learning outcomes community

• Discussion Activity

Critical Question for Exploration

- How do these recommendations actualize in your daily work?
 - What elements relate to the work you currently are involved in?
 - What elements might require variations in current procedures and policies?
 - What implications would be encountered and are there any solutions?