Hunters & Gatherers: A comparison of tools to support faculty-wide approaches to assurance of learning – avoiding reinventing the wheel!
What do we mean by Assurance of Learning (AoL)?

In the Welsh language they have just one word that means both to teach and to learn “dysgu”, this makes a lot of sense because can we really say we have taught something if our student has not learnt?
What do we mean by Assurance of Learning (AoL)?

It can be seen as the answers to the following questions:
1. What will our students learn in our program? What are our expectations?
2. How will they learn it?
3. How will we know they have learned it or not?
4. What will we do if they have not learned it?
5. If they have not learned it, how will we try to fix this?
How do we do it?

1. Write Course Learning Outcomes
2. Map CLOs across degrees
3. Collect Evidence
4. Use Evidence to Improve Practice
5. Benchmark Externally
Main Challenges

The main challenges identified were:

- **Staff Workload**
  - “staff looked upon AoL as extra burden” (D)
  - “time consuming, academic staff see it as imposition on their time” (B)

- **Staff Engagement**
  - “challenge to get beyond that this is more than ticking box, it’s about improving student learning outcomes” (B)
  - “it took me six years to get staff buy-in” (F)
  - “we have achieved staff acceptance, not buy-in” (Q)
  - “the ones that are really hung up on the content are the ones that the most difficulty accepting a different way of thinking about their course and their assessment” (O)
Main Challenges

- **Scale**
  - The size of the challenge to curriculum map and data collect over a number of programs in a faculty was seen to be daunting by a number of the respondents, especially those universities with large student populations, for example, universities with intakes of over 1000 students in undergraduate programs.

- **Technical**
  - All the universities wanted to have a streamlined, efficient system to assure learning but achieving this provided some technical problems.
How do we do it?

- Write Course Learning Outcomes
- Map CLOs across degrees
- Collect Evidence
- Use Evidence to Improve Practice
- Benchmark Externally
What is out there?
Mapping:

- [http://assuringlearning.com/resources/SOS_Template.xls](http://assuringlearning.com/resources/SOS_Template.xls)
- CoGent – Free public Access to Tools
  - [http://resources.glos.ac.uk/tli/lets/projects/cogent/index.cfm](http://resources.glos.ac.uk/tli/lets/projects/cogent/index.cfm)
  - [http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/cogent](http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/cogent)
- JISC – Free Public Access to Tools
  - [http://assuringlearning.com/resources/assessment_and_feedback_inc_summary_grade%20penalty.xlsx](http://assuringlearning.com/resources/assessment_and_feedback_inc_summary_grade%20penalty.xlsx)
- CMapTools – Free Download after Log-In
  - [http://cmap.ihmc.us/download/](http://cmap.ihmc.us/download/)
Data Collection:

- Review –
  http://assuringlearning.com/resources/ReView.docx
- SPARK Plus –
  http://spark.uts.edu.au/
- Rubric Development Templates – Freely Available Once Signed In
  http://boliver.ning.com/page/standards-rubrics-1
- AoL Repository –
  http://assuringlearning.com/resources/aol_rePOSITORY.PPTX
- Sharepoint – Free 180 day evaluation version available
- Livetext –
  https://www.livetext.com/overview/
- Chalk & Wire – Free teleconference and web sharing session via WebEx
  http://chalkandwire.com/index.php/company/contact
- Taskstream –
  https://www.taskstream.com/pub/
- Waypoint Outcomes – Free Licence up until Institutional level
  http://www.waypointoutcomes.com/get-started
- ELumen – Provides a free Private Webinar
  http://www.elumen.info/
Tool Review Process

- Extensive interview of AoL process; questions specifically about how tools fit into process
- Sample of tools drawn from ADTL interviews (6 mapping; 6 data collection)
- Independent review
- Identifying important elements for effective tools to support AoL
Elements for AoL

- an inclusive and participatory process;
- program-wide approach to produce mapped overview;
- mapping by assessment tasks;
- student awareness of attributes and their distribution in the program.

- a consistent criteria for attributes across programs;
- Ability to extract outcome specific data embedding measurement in the curriculum;
- Built-in reports and analysis for closing the loop;
- using multiple measures of assurance of learning for a program-wide view.
Review Criteria

- Pedagogical foundations/principles;
- Establishing sensible pedagogical links between assessments and GAs at program and unit of study levels;
- Quality of induction and explanation support encapsulated by the tool;
- Ease of use;
- Overall design, navigation & visual presentation;
- Efficacy for participation and interaction enabling between users.
All of the tools have merits and utility for educators who are involved in AOL;

For *curriculum mapping*, Subject Overview Spreadsheet (SOS); C2010; and JISC Designstudio were standouts;

For *data collection*, ReView; EElumen; and SPARK Plus were considered more effective tools.
Curriculum Mapping Tools

- **C2010 (Curtin)**
  - C2010 has good layout and visualization features in its representations of alignments between institutional level intended learning outcomes & the ‘sub–tools’ are useful for curriculum design.

- **SOS (UTS Business School)**
  - Program/curriculum review is assisted by some particularly valuable features/capabilities (e.g. means for gap analysis and examination of assessment policy compliance).

- **JISC Design Studio**
  - Extremely comprehensive suite of resources, with a strong ‘general guidance’ feel to it.
Data Collecting Tools

- **ReView**
  - It has considerable power and flexibility for helping with the recording, summarizing, analyses and reporting of assessment data.

- **Elumen**
  - As a resource it is holistic, logical and adopts an integrative perspective on curriculum development.

- **SparkPlus**
  - SPARK Plus focuses primarily on assessment of/for group participation and performance or contribution in teams.
But . . .

- A tool is just a tool, what matters is how people use it;
- Not surprisingly, the tools such as those reviewed appear to be evolving over time. Even the better tools in the sample could be improved significantly against certain criteria. For example:
  - currently there is insufficient attention given (in the curriculum mapping related tools) to planned student learning experiences as a key element in curriculum review, design and AOL work.
  - better induction and other guidance for the use of the tools could be incorporated within the packages, so that the need is reduced for supplementary professional development for users.
  - Inclusion of other evaluative data (e.g. student experience, student work).
  - Terminology across different faculties and institutions.
  - Tool that integrates curriculum mapping and data collection in one package
  - Bb – Goals
Resources

Website:
- http://assuringlearning.com/

- Tool Review

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