Accountability for Educational Outcomes: The Academic Developer's Role

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Academic developers can help institutions meet their accountabilities for educational outcomes through instructional development in course design. Workshops and discussions on setting student learning outcomes, creating assessments, and selecting pedagogies yield instructional benefits. By targeting course clusters with common student learning outcomes, the resultant assessment data can contribute to the organization's measures of student learning. The author presents an example case of a center for teaching and learning's course design programming for cluster courses.

Rhode (2006) reported that many higher education administrators "believe that higher education should be held more accountable for educational outcomes" (p. 86). In her investigations of actions on those beliefs she found, however, that despite the pressures to do so from agencies such as the Commission on the Future of Higher Education, few presidents address the challenges of assessing student learning. Rhode recommended that "administrators must do more to motivate their faculties to take advantage of the resources and incentives available" (p. 87). Some faculty welcome professional development activities in teaching and learning, which could ultimately assist administrators in their quest to satisfy external accountabilities. Smith and Geis (1996) described the typical faculty member as having limited knowledge and skill about teaching. They recommended that developers take a *faculty development* approach and view professors as clients, assess them where they are in their development as teachers, and advise accordingly.

Faculty development is one role developers can undertake. The term *academic development*, however, is a broader term. It also encompasses the

organizational and *instructional development* roles. The Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education (n.d.) has defined these areas of work. Faculty development refers to programming to assist the faculty member as a person, teacher, and scholar; organizational development involves participating in support of the institution's efforts to maximize learning; and instructional development focuses on assisting in course and curriculum development and in efforts to enhance student learning.

I propose that through the organizational and instructional development roles, academic developers can assist administrations in being accountable for educational outcomes. Institutions that engage in assessment of student learning for reaccreditation often focus on academic majors and minors. The work of assessing student learning is typically conducted by a team of staff and faculty, and academic developers are not always involved in that work. But academic developers can contribute useful data. One way they can do so is to conduct instructional development activities with groups of faculty who teach for established course clusters that have commonalities so that the clusters' goals, pedagogy, and learning outcomes are strengthened. The faculty members' teaching within and beyond the cluster would be enhanced. And engaging groups of faculty teaching for the clusters in course design best practices could provide assessment data on student learning outcomes that would be available for the institution.

Before explaining how to accomplish these objectives, I provide background on course design and course clusters as well as an example of how instructional development in course design could help to provide organizational assessment data.

Course Design and Course Clusters

Course design involves addressing three course components in a particular order: first identify the student learning outcomes, then create assessments, and, finally, select pedagogy. For faculty accustomed to designing a course by starting with the textbook to determine the course topics, this approach to course design might seem backward. The *backward course design* model is often attributed to McTighe and Wiggins (McTighe & Wiggins, 2004; Wiggins, 1998; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Fink (2003) enhanced it by emphasizing the importance of integration, or making a connection among the components. That is, the components should "reflect and support each other" (p. 65). If faculty do not incorporate the appropriate pedagogy to support their learning outcomes (the first break

in connection), then their assessments will not reliably and validly align with their learning objectives (the second break in connection).

The description of course design above is an oversimplification. Whetten's (2007) use of travel as a metaphor for course design adds eloquence and is worth noting:

> It is important to point out that the order in which I am discussing the three components of course design reflects what is referred to as "backwards design" (Wiggins, 1998), signifying that decisions about how to assess student learning should precede decisions about how to help students learn. Thinking of course readings, activities, and projects as opportunities for students to prepare for tests and graded assignments helps us stay focused on our learning goals as we sift through stacks of possibilities for filling course time. Stated differently, having asked the questions, "What is our intended destination?" and "How will we know if we arrive?" one is now ready to address the all-important question of "How are we going to get there?" (p. 349)

Once Whetten (2007) became involved with academic development, he realized that in his early years of teaching he would have benefited from his new knowledge of course design and learner-centered teaching. I propose that course design knowledge can benefit faculty who teach for course clusters and, ultimately, assist administrators with their accountabilities for educational outcomes.

Designing a single course is a challenge for some faculty members. Adding several qualifiers or enhancements to designs for a group of courses could present multiple challenges. For example, introductory first-year courses from numerous disciplines could be clustered together and designed to focus on promoting critical thinking, intellectual development, or encouraging responsibility for one's own learning. The enhanced courses would share the same or similar student learning outcomes as their focus. Additional design challenges would include defining the focal student learning outcomes, uniformly assessing learning for the focus, and selecting pedagogy for the outcomes. Each challenge must be considered in turn.

Promoting critical thinking or intellectual development is often a desirable objective, but it can be a challenging endeavor. Doherty, Chenevert, Miller, Roth, and Truchan (1997) noted that developing intellectual skills is a complicated undertaking. There are differences of opinion in what is meant by intellectual skills and what the student learning outcomes should be. And there is a prevailing, false assumption that students' intellectual

skills will develop merely by studying the subject matter.

How to assess critical thinking or intellectual development is necessarily tied to how critical thinking or intellectual development is defined. Bers (2004) explained the assessment challenge for course clusters (such as service-learning and honors) in the community college:

> A . . . major challenge is to obtain faculty concurrence on what key learning outcomes should be assessed and what level of ability or knowledge students should attain to reflect adequate or excellent learning. When faculty agree in theory, they may still find it difficult to settle on specific assessment approaches or details of implementation. (pp. 48-49)

Besides dealing with outcomes and assessments, there is the pedagogy to select. For example, disciplines have specific ways of teaching for critical thinking (Middendorf & Pace, 2004). Consequently, in course clusters that have a variety of disciplines represented, it could be difficult for faculty to teach for critical thinking in a uniform way or in ways that will all lead to the desired student learning outcomes.

The following example illustrates these challenges and points to the assistance academic developers could provide. A cluster program at a large university did not fully collaborate with academic developers to set student learning outcomes, design assessment instruments, and select pedagogy. The purpose of the program was to facilitate students becoming inquirers. A subset of the faculty determined the learning outcomes for the cluster's focus, and then the teaching faculty added them to their disciplinary outcomes. The outcomes list was modified over several years, but it usually included some, if not all, of the following: Help students develop a sense of inquiry, help students develop responsibility for their own learning, foster growth toward intellectual maturity, provide guidance in critical thinking, provide guidance in writing and speaking, help students meet general education requirements, and help students understand the value of hard work and deep thinking while being aware of the complexity of the questions being asked.

Although the outcomes were defined by referencing institutional documents related to general education, or to models or theories such as William Perry's (1970) scheme of intellectual and moral development, they were not defined so that learning could be measured. Consequently, uniform assessments of student learning could not be constructed. This is an example of Fink's (2003) break in the connection among the course design components. During some years faculty were asked to require that students write an essay at the beginning of the semester and again at the end of the semester. A faculty team evaluated those essays according to

Paul and Elder's (2001) critical-thinking rubric. Faculty did not necessarily, however, teach critical thinking according to the Paul and Elder model. During other years each faculty member designed and then evaluated his or her students' work on a course-based assessment. Also, students were asked to respond to questions about their experience in the course. For example, at the end of the semester they reported any incidences when they took responsibility for their own learning and thought critically. The assessment plan was viewed by some faculty as less than satisfactory in its ability to provide meaningful information about how well students achieved the outcomes.

Curious about the students' understanding of the learning outcomes, I asked 62 students who had completed a cluster course to respond to an informal questionnaire. Four of the questionnaire items asked students to provide the meaning of the concepts inherent in four program outcomes: inquiry, responsibility for one's own learning, intellectual maturity, and critical thinking. Most of the 62 students responded that *inquiry* means "to inquire" or "to inquire about something." No student response exactly matched the program's definition. The most frequent meaning for *responsibility for one's own learning* was "to be responsible for your education." Some responses used other terms for responsibility: "depending on yourself" or "taking it upon yourself." Other responses included "to get work done" and "to succeed." For *intellectual maturity* most student responses began with "to be" and ended with "mature in one's intellect," "advanced in one's intelligence," or "on a high level in your abilities." No response matched a definition similar to the highest level of Perry's (1970) scheme. About two thirds of the students wrote that critical thinking meant "to think beyond the normal range," "to think deeply about something," or "to think about a subject." The responses did not include analyzing, evaluating, or drawing conclusions based on resources, all of which were elements of the faculty subset's outcome definition.

The faculty members met occasionally to discuss how their courses were going. But there were no systematic and systemic academic development opportunities to assist faculty in writing the student learning outcomes, designing aligned assessments, and selecting ways to teach so that all three components of course design could be integrated. Enlisting academic developers to assist faculty in completing the basic course design steps could have narrowed the outcomes to a more manageable number and resulted in outcomes that could be measured. Appropriate assessments could have been created. Finally, academic developers could have assisted in sifting through the many pedagogical strategies and techniques to find the most appropriate for the aligned outcomes and assessments.

The problem that Bers (2004) pointed out is evident in this example. The program's outcomes were based on faculty agreeing, at least in theory.

The Academic Developer's Strategy

No matter where faculty are in their travels through course design, it is never too late for an academic developer to intervene. The advantages of getting faculty to join a course design journey, much like Whetten's (2007), are not only instructional; they are also organizational. Student-centered teaching would be promoted, student learning would be enhanced, and the cluster program, as well as the institution, would be able to have documented evidence of student learning for the outcomes. When leading a course design journey the academic developer embarks on his or her own program design journey as well. What is the academic developer's intended destination? The academic developer intends to enable faculty to enhance student learning and enable the institution in its accountability for its educational outcomes. How will the academic developer know if he or she has arrived? There will be data that support faculty members' effective teaching and the institution's attainment of its educational outcomes. How is the academic developer going to get there? One way is through the programming of course design for faculty who teach for clusters.

The journey begins by identifying clusters. Examples include service-learning, honors, the first-year experience, capstones, or courses targeted to be part of an initiative, such as promoting outcomes related to diversity or multiculturalism. Clusters may have web pages, be described in the college catalog, or have offices with leadership and staff positions. The criteria for embarking on work with a cluster are the potential to engage in instructional development activities with the faculty and the opportunity to gather evidence of student learning for the institution.

The next step is to investigate the details of a target cluster: Does the cluster have common student learning outcomes? If so, what are they? Are the learning outcomes measurable? Is there a common assessment required of all students enrolled in the courses? Do faculty teach a particular way for the cluster? Are end-of-semester reports submitted to the administration?

The final step is to offer to help the faculty members enhance their teaching and student learning, thereby assisting the cluster program in meeting its objectives. Ultimately, the collaboration will help the institution meet its student learning accountability goals. Workshops on course design can provide information and guidance to many people at once. If

gathering faculty together is not feasible, individual consultations with a cluster's leadership could work as a train-the-trainer format.

When workshops are feasible, apply Whetten's (2007) approach. In Whetten's workshops, participants went through the course design journey twice. The first time through, the components were explained. The second time through, the importance of aligning the components was discussed. One variation on this approach could be a three-workshop series: one for setting student learning outcomes, a second for selecting or creating assessment instruments, and a third for selecting pedagogy. Then, once the cluster has data on student learning, the academic developer can prepare the data for the institution's accountability needs.

A typical first workshop, on writing student learning outcomes, includes definitions and information on how the statements are structured. Student learning outcomes usually state what students will be able to do, think, or feel by the end of a class session, unit, or the entire course. The statements are structured to reflect the specific disciplinary content learned and the cognitive activity level expected for the learning, for example: "Students will be able to identify (a cognitive activity level in verb form) the parts of an empirical research article (the content in noun form)." A workshop provides an opportunity for reflection and discussion about the desired student learning outcomes, practice in writing the outcomes, and questions and answers. Faculty acquire new knowledge, their student learning outcome statements, and ideas for the future. In faculty groups that teach for course clusters, focusing on conceptual outcomes such as intellectual maturity, appreciation for diversity, and ethical sophistication, stating student learning outcomes may require extensive reflection and discussion until there is agreement.

The second workshop focuses on the second leg of the journey. The question asked is this: How will we know if students have learned? Workshop participants can explore examples of formative and summative assessment instruments that can be matched to the student learning outcomes. Reflection and discussion allow faculty effectively to design assessments for their needs. For course clusters, a uniform assessment would be most beneficial if it taps the desired student learning outcomes but does not shift student learning assessments away from the academic course. Work on assessments might lead to work on grading or other topics of interest around assessment in majors or in general education. These assessments are potentially valuable to the institution. Of course, a single, uniform assessment from course clusters does not provide the administration with the sole measure for accountability. Shulman (2007) advised that any assessment should be located within the "larger concep-

tual framework that explicitly stipulates what it does measure *and* what it does not" (p. 23).

The third workshop targets teaching for alignment with the student learning outcomes and assessments. The resources on this topic are abundant, and many faculty are unfamiliar with them (Friedlander & Serban, 2004). Weimer (2006) remarked that not only do faculty have little or no training in teaching, few read pedagogical literature, and they do not necessarily know where to start looking for the valuable nuggets. Sifting and finding these valuable nuggets is what an academic developer can do.

As the sole academic developer in the center for teaching and learning at a small liberal arts college, I conduct faculty, instructional, and organizational development programming. I combined the instructional and organizational development roles when I employed the course design strategy described above with faculty who teach for course clusters.

Taking the Course Design Journey

The organizational development work I undertake relates not only to the college's mission statement and educational goals, but also to its commitment to reaffirmation of accreditation requirements. Some of the accreditation work involves assessment of student learning. The college articulated a campuswide goal to promote student proficiency in information literacy, and it planned to integrate standards for information literacy into academic departmental goals. Civic engagement is an element of the college's mission and has been met through service-learning courses and other community outreach programs. The information literacy goal and the service-learning program could contribute to the college's accountability for student learning if best practices for course design could be applied to a cluster for information literacy and within the existing service-learning course cluster. The course design journey through a workshop series was deemed the mechanism best suited to gather the evidence for student learning and enhance information literacy and the service-learning program.

Information Literacy

In addition to the college's goals to raise student proficiency in information literacy and integrate information literacy standards into the academic curricula, the college's librarians had their own information literacy-related goals. They wanted faculty to teach information research skills within their disciplines rather than over-rely on the library staff

to instruct students in classroom-type settings from their first through senior year. The college's goals and the librarian's goals necessitated having discussions and collaborations among faculty and librarians to develop and implement a plan. One school within the college that houses interdisciplinary courses took on the challenge and asked two librarians to establish a pilot program for four faculty volunteers. It was hoped that when the pilot was conducted, evaluated, and adjusted as needed, it could serve as a model for the entire college. The librarians approached me for assistance in developing a way to have the conversations with the faculty that would lead to these goals. In this case, a course cluster with a common student learning outcome focus presented itself as a ready-made opportunity to apply the course design journey: interdisciplinary courses and information literacy. It also was a ready-made opportunity to provide assessment data to the college. I proposed the course design journey through a workshop series.

Our planning began by reiterating the college's, the librarians', and my goals by confirming my suggestion to use the course design strategy and by discussing a theme for the workshop series. We believed the course design framework would accomplish all of our goals: to help faculty better teach for student proficiency in information literacy, enable faculty to teach information literacy within their courses, and enable me to gather evidence of student learning for the college. For a theme, we wanted to have the students' perspective about information literacy threaded throughout the workshops. We wanted to focus on how information literacy is really about student learning. What questions do students have about research? What problems do they have when doing research assignments? What do we want them to be able to do effectively with information when they leave college and then beyond? This thread would keep everyone focused on student learning.

Like most faculty, the four volunteers had limited time available for this endeavor. Consequently, we developed a streamlined workshop series. The librarians were familiar with student learning outcomes, assessments, and pedagogy, so we quickly set to work at planning our workshops. We would offer four workshops, each to last one hour. It was not as much time as we wanted, but because it was a pilot program, we intended to monitor it closely and, based on participants' feedback, make adjustments for the next iteration.

The first workshop would involve introducing everyone to each other, asking the faculty to list what they perceive as their students' concerns and troubles when attempting to research a topic, giving a brief overview of what information literacy entails, clarifying the overarching goals,

and, finally, introducing what would happen at the next session. Our intention was to have our participants go away better informed about information literacy and the range of concerns and issues students must deal with when they are assigned research papers or projects. Because we were not certain our participants would be able to list trouble spots, we brainstormed some of our own to have on hand.

At the second workshop we would introduce the course design journey, explain basic principles for writing student learning outcomes, and examine each other's student learning outcomes for their target courses. We would encourage the participants to suggest ways to refine outcomes to more intentionally articulate the information literacy level that they wished their students to meet. The American Library Association's Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (2000) would be provided as a guide to selecting those levels. Faculty would be better able to write focused student learning outcomes that incorporate established standards.

The third workshop would focus on the research assignments that faculty require students to complete. In keeping with our theme, we planned to distribute a fictitious example of an ineffective assignment, and the participants would analyze it from the students' perspective. This assignment had numerous preparation requirements, unclear research instructions, and dubious student outcomes. We brainstormed ahead of time about how our participants might perceive their students' reactions to the assignment. During the workshop, we would discuss ideas about how the assignment could be better constructed. Faculty would take away practical guidelines for designing an assignment that aligns with the student learning outcomes and can actually be completed within our college context.

At the final workshop, we planned to facilitate a guided discussion about how to teach information literacy skills effectively in order for students to complete their assignments successfully and meet the student learning outcomes. Participants would be exposed to available teaching tools and techniques to help students conduct research within their disciplines. The tools and techniques would involve collaborations between faculty and librarians, which would satisfy goals for the college and for the librarians.

The first workshop began with introductions. Then one of the librarians gave a brief overview of information literacy. Afterward, the participants articulated their perceptions of their students' trouble spots with the required research assignments. Those trouble spots matched our previously brainstormed list. We then listed the several goals for the pilot program

and described how the upcoming workshops would focus on information literacy within their courses; and how student learning outcomes, assessments, and teaching for information literacy would be introduced in turn.

After the first workshop, the librarians and I held a debriefing. We concurred that the trouble spots the participants articulated matched those that we had brainstormed. Therefore, we believed that the participants had enough knowledge of information literacy to proceed to the next workshop.

During the second workshop I introduced the entire course design journey, then targeted the student learning outcome statement format consisting of verbs and nouns. Examples of verbs patterned after Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) were distributed. No questions or concerns came forward. The librarians then facilitated a discussion about the participants' student learning outcomes for their target courses. Participants were prompted to state what students typically ask about when they first encounter the course syllabus. They noted that students often ask about when assignments will be due, and that students do not remember the student learning outcomes after seeing them the first day of class. One participant quickly remarked that his student learning outcomes could be more fine-tuned to include his desired information literacy goals. Another participant noted that each student learning outcome on her syllabus referred to information literacy. As at the previous workshop, our time was quickly up, and the next one would soon be upon us.

At our second workshop debriefing, the librarians and I discussed several concerns. We confirmed what we had initially decided—that we needed more time at each session. We also realized that we approached our information literacy cluster participants as if the student learning outcomes would be an add-on rather than an integrated outcome for many courses at the college. A service-learning course or an honors course, for example, could have a student learning outcome or two added to address this additional purpose. In the case of information literacy, however, the purpose is not always considered an add-on. It is infused in many if not nearly all courses. Few college-level courses do not require some library or information research. Thus, we discovered that our attempt to extract information literacy outcomes from the usual list for our participants' courses was problematic. There could, but not necessarily would, be specific student learning outcomes for information literacy. Each student learning outcome for the disciplines represented in the interdisciplinary courses our participants taught could include an information literacy element. We intended to correct our error at the beginning of the third

session by explaining both possibilities, and we planned to compliment our participants on their cooperation with our experiment to conduct the course design journey for information literacy goals.

At the third workshop we clarified our intention for the second workshop regarding the student learning outcomes. Given our limited time frame, we could request only that our participants either refine their student learning outcomes to be more explicit about information literacy, or that they prepare an outcome to speak specifically to their information literacy goals. In this workshop, which the librarians and I shared in facilitating, assessments for student learning outcomes were explored. We distributed the fictitious assignment to the participants and asked them to react from their students' perspective. Their reactions were similar to those we had brainstormed ahead of time. We asked for their ideas about what the fictitious professor had in mind for student learning outcomes, and for recommendations on how the assignment could be improved. The participants suggested that the assignment could be reaching for high-level information literacy skills, but without clearly stated student learning outcomes, it would be difficult to be sure. They recommended including the student learning outcomes statement in the assignment, explaining why the assignment would meet the outcomes, and gathering the mechanical preparation rules and listing them in one place on the assignment sheet. Therefore, the assignment preparation mechanics would not detract from the foundational assignment purpose. Two participants expressed concern that by having too much specificity, student creativity could be squelched. We recognized their concern but emphasized the librarians' point of view: the importance of assigning research projects that can be completed with the resources available to student on campus.

At our debriefing for the third workshop, we agreed that we may have overlooked the faculty members' intention to allow students the freedom to be creative in selecting topics and completing assignments. We would need to consider ways to avoid this discrepancy in the future. Another concern that emerged was that we became even more aware of our limited time frame. We frequently thought of possible handouts, readings, topics, exercises, and discussions that we wished we could have incorporated. Our next iteration would be lengthier.

At the start of the fourth and final workshop I reviewed the journey format and what we had accomplished so far regarding student learning outcomes and assessment. Then the instructional librarian introduced the workshop topic: How can faculty help students achieve information literacy proficiency, and how can collaborations between the faculty and the librarians be formed for maximum benefit? We encouraged participants

to offer their ideas, with the librarians facilitating. They wove information about existing services and pedagogical tools and techniques that aligned with the participants' ideas into the discussion when appropriate.

Some examples of these ideas included the following: Develop electronic research guides for students that are specific to courses or assignments and that feature access to primary sources, design and construct effective research assignments, establish blogs for faculty that provide information and tips on assignment construction and teaching for information literacy, and create guides for students that provide realistic timeframes for completing specific research assignments. Finally, the participants were asked to complete an evaluation that would be delivered to them electronically after the workshop, and we requested they submit their revised student learning outcomes, assignments, and examples of student work from the next time they taught their target courses. The examples of student work would be made available to the college for its accountability requirements.

At our final debriefing, we concurred that the discussion was fruitful in revealing ways faculty and librarians can collaborate to enhance information literacy. The participants responded with positive feedback. They remarked about the series' strong organization, opportunities for fruitful reflection, and beneficial discussions among colleagues. They agreed that more time would be helpful, but they recognized that much of the work of course design requires reflection and action on one's own time.

Service-Learning

The college's mission states that it seeks to promote civic engagement. Civic engagement is not precisely defined, but a service-learning program on campus is often considered to be a vehicle for civic engagement. The program arranges opportunities for students to volunteer in the community, and it supports a cluster of approximately 30 courses that incorporate service-learning pedagogy. But the program's visibility is limited, the registrar has no designation for service-learning courses, and dedicated faculty members' morale has been in danger of slipping due to their perceived lack of recognition and support. I believed that instructional development in course design could contribute to meeting the program's needs, and to providing student learning assessment data for educational accountabilities.

I approached the service-learning program leader and proposed a three-workshop course design journey for faculty involved in the program. She recognized the potential benefits of having a common student learning

outcome, a shared assessment instrument, and group study of pedagogy for service-learning. She invited me to attend an already scheduled informal sharing session to propose the course design journey and recruit interested faculty.

At the sharing session, I explained the purposes of the workshop series and requested the faculty members' participation. Several faculty at this meeting expressed their concern with regard to their roles and responsibilities as faculty involved in service-learning pedagogy. They felt their service-learning contributions to the college mission were not recognized enough. They wanted to draw attention to their work as pedagogy and not have it categorized only as service to the institution. Besides meeting the college's mission to promote civic engagement campuswide, these faculty wanted to raise awareness of the value of their pedagogy for student learning. Dedication to student learning was undeniably present among this group. And, finally, the college's mission and community engagement were considered essential to the liberal arts focus of the college. Nine faculty expressed interest in participating.

I planned to pattern the three workshops after the information literacy series. Because I had introduced the workshops at the informal sharing session, I intended to focus the first workshop on student learning outcomes, the second on assessment, and the third on pedagogy for service-learning. The participants were as pressed for time as those in the information literacy group. I scheduled the three workshops for one hour each. Unlike information literacy, which is naturally infused in courses that require research, service-learning is usually considered an additional purpose needing additional outcomes. Consequently, I did not expect to encounter the same concerns about learning outcomes as the librarians and I did with the information literacy participants. For assessment of student learning, I expected that reflection would emerge as a common method to measure the service-learning outcomes. And I believed the discussion around pedagogy would also revolve around reflection because it is often considered a teaching and assessment method.

Seven of the nine participants attended the first workshop. I briefed them about the typical student learning outcome statement, which consists of a cognitive learning verb and a subject matter noun. For example, *at the end of this course, students will be able to apply the disciplinary principles in their community agency experiences*. We then quickly set to work brainstorming about verbs that would reflect the outcome for any service-learning course. Many verbs were offered, and many thoughts about what students gain from service-learning were discussed. By the end of the hour we all became aware that a cognitive verb is not enough to describe the learning

from courses in the cluster. We also realized that the college's mission and the service-learning program's mission would both need to be considered when crafting a common student learning outcome.

Because we were not able to settle on a common student learning outcome, my original plan for the second workshop was abandoned. My revised plan was to ask the participants to more fully and deeply articulate their course purposes and their students' experiences in light of the program and college mission statements.

Only four participants were able to attend the second workshop. It was apparent that with so few of the original faculty present, the discussion might be stalled. A turn in the discussion toward defining service-learning helped to move things forward, although not in the direction I had expected. The participants at this session realized that we could not formulate a common student learning outcome unless everyone was sure about what is meant by service-learning. Questions were raised about the definitions for civic engagement, community action, community service, and experiential education. Using a laptop to access the Internet, a participant located a nationally recognized definition of service-learning that appealed to everyone present. At this point our time was up.

The original plan for the third workshop was also abandoned. As I was contemplating the third and final workshops, participants sent e-mail messages to ask about continuing the discussions, selecting a name for the group, and preparing a position paper to advance the service-learning program. I decided to use the third workshop as a forum for the group to discuss their ideas. It seemed to me that although I was unable to accomplish the course design journey, the approach that the group wished to take would not have come about if I had not organized the group in the first place.

At the third workshop all of the participants who had volunteered at the start were present. They brainstormed ways to facilitate accomplishing the concerns expressed at the beginning of the workshop series: How can faculty be recognized and rewarded for service-learning pedagogy? How can student learning be elevated? How can the college meet its civic engagement mission? The group advanced the idea of preparing a position paper. With that decision, a participant skilled in marketing communication, the service-learning director, and I now are collaborating on this project.

When academic developers embark on their own development program design journeys, sometimes the traveling goes as planned, and sometimes it does not. The course cluster for the information literacy pilot went close to the original plan, and student learning data for the institution are

forthcoming. The course cluster program for service-learning did not go as planned. But sometimes the most effective way to promote instructional and organizational development is to enable faculty to develop as they deem appropriate. The attempt to promote effective course design for the service-learning cluster revealed a missing element. The service-learning program needs a clearly articulated overarching goal that can be served through solid course design.

Conclusions

A scholarship of teaching and learning project could develop out of the collaborative work on the information literacy and service-learning programs described here. Academic developers have the expertise needed to design an educational or action research project. Not only are new resources being published continuously, but also there are professional faculty development organizations, such as the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education, and conferences that can provide the latest information and support materials to assist developers in working with faculty to do scholarly work on teaching and learning.

Whetten (2007) points out that by focusing on course design, the academic developer can "help professors avoid wasting their time chasing educational fads or discovering on their own, through trial and error, effective educational principles and practices" (p. 355). Academic developers also can assist colleges and universities in their efforts to remain accountable for student learning. By targeting existing clusters of courses that have common purposes within them, and by focusing on course design, academic developers can help faculty enhance their teaching, and the institution can come closer to meeting its educational outcome accountabilities.

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