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Internships, Integrative Learning and the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)

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Foreword by Pat Hutchings

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Table of Contents

Abstract

Internships are among the most beneficial out-of-classroom experiences designated as High–Impact Practices (HIPs). Yet, due to the diverse and unscripted nature of internship experiences, as well as the many different models for facilitating them, outcomes assessment practices are a long way from capturing the full power of internships as learning experiences.

This paper draws upon the framework of the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) to sketch three different curricular pathways that learning from internships might follow. This allows for mapping specific learning outcomes expected in internships, as well as the identification of appropriate forms of evidence for documenting their achievement – including evidence from intentionally designed assignments.

Drawing on the DQP, and the VALUE Rubrics from the Association of American Colleges & Universities, the paper explores Integrative Learning as a framework for evaluating learning associated with different internship learning pathways. It concludes with suggestions for collaboration on- and off–campus that can help facilitate meaningful learning though internship experiences.

Foreword

Over the last decade, higher education has learned a lot about the ingredients that make up a powerful undergraduate experience. Many campuses have been drawn to the idea of "high–impact practices" (now, after ten years, widely and affectionately known as HIPs) and are working to put them in place more effectively for more students. There are now eleven of these, among them first–year seminars, learning communities, undergraduate research, and – the focus of this occasional paper by Alan Grose – internships.

Grose is well positioned to lead readers through this subject. A political philosopher by training, with teaching and administrative experience on a number of campuses, he is now Senior Director of Academic Affairs at The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars (TWC) in Washington, D.C. An independent, nonprofit organization serving hundreds of colleges and universities in the United States and other countries, TWC provides students with challenging opportunities to work and learn in Washington, D.C. for academic credit. The largest program of its kind, TWC has more than 50,000 alumni, many of whom are in leadership positions in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Working in this setting since 2011, Grose has had a great perch for appreciating both the power of internship experiences, as well as some of the challenges they represent.

One of the challenges–central to this paper–is assessment. As Grose points out, the internship experience is "highly unscripted." The learning that results is "emergent" in the sense that it is shaped by circumstances and dynamics that cannot be fully controlled or anticipated in advance. These features of the internship experience are in large part what give it such power. But they can also make it difficult to map the experience onto program and institutional goals for student learning, and to know where to look for evidence about the outcomes that result.

This is where Grose is especially helpful, identifying different internship types and purposes (career launch, exploration of professionalism, and civic learning) and then, drawing on the Degree Qualifications Profile, illustrating how the internship experience can be mapped onto clearly specified learning outcomes and curricular pathways. Predictably, doing so also sets the stage for more intentional thinking about the tasks, assignments, and reflective exercises that play such an important role in turning experience into learning (some of which can now be found in the NILOA assignment library).

One of the phrases that shows up regularly in language about student learning outcomes and assessment is "what students should know and be able to do." It is difficult to imagine an approach that is more perfectly attuned to that formulation than internships (and other field experiences). Indeed, the integrative interplay between knowing and doing is why internships are high–impact practices. It is why they are on the rise on campuses. And it is why, with thanks to Alan Grose, NILOA is especially pleased to provide this occasional paper.

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Internships, Integrative Learning and the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)

Alan W. Grose

Introduction

There is growing evidence that internships are among the most beneficial out-of-classroom learning experiences available to students today. Because of their strong positive association with increased engagement in other academically purposeful activities and improved outcomes in areas such as persistence, they are among the activities designated by George Kuh as High–Impact Practices (HIPs) (Kuh, 2008, p. 14). More recently, the Gallup-Purdue Index found that college graduates are 1.8 times more likely to be engaged at work and 1.3 times more likely to flourish across multiple areas of well-being if they reported having a job or internship in which they applied what they were learning in the classroom (Gallup, 2015, p. 17-18). Further, in a recent national survey, 89% of chief academic officers reported that they considered internships or work experience "extremely effective" or "very effective" as an "enhancement of traditional classroom academic work" – more than any other such practice (Inside Higher Ed and Gallup, 2017, p. 40).

Internships are highly unscripted experiences in which the learning is emergent.

Yet, despite these findings, internships seem almost to defy assessment at the level of individual student learning outcomes. Several considerations contribute to this. While some internship experiences are framed as extensions of specific learning outcomes achieved in the classroom, in many other cases, no explicit attempt is made to integrate the learning outcomes of internships with those achieved in the classroom. Internships are highly unscripted experiences in which the learning is emergent. As a result, the learning that takes place seems to be qualitatively unique to each learner in each situation.

The challenge of assessing the learning in internships also reflects variations in the ways institutions embrace out–of–classroom learning. Recent generations have seen a "transformation of out–of–classroom experiences from activities that students simply enjoy to experiences in which students also learn important things" (Suskie, 2015, p. 5). Increasingly, internships are regarded as co–curricular, rather than extracurricular, in the sense that they "help students achieve meaningful learning outcomes in concert with academic study" (Suskie, 2015, p. 6). Yet, on many campuses, the management of internships is highly decentralized, with different departments or offices on campus handling internships in different ways. Few campuses have developed a shared vocabulary for articulating how internships fit into students' broader careers in their college years. As a result, we are a long way from capturing the full potential of internships as learning activities.

I approach this terrain from the vantage point of my work at The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars (TWC) in Washington, D.C. TWC works with students from around the country and around the world and from a variety of different institutional types (from small private liberal arts colleges to very large public universities) who come to D.C. for an academic semester built around an internship. We see up close the power of internships to transform students that has earned these experiences their place among HIPs. Though TWC has long appreciated internships as fertile ground for integrative learning (Grose, 2013), the incredible diversity of kinds of learning outcomes students achieve has been a source of inspiration mixed with a bit of wonder for me as an assessment professional.

In this paper, I take up the challenge of understanding this range of outcomes. First, I explore the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) as a useful framework for making sense of the qualitatively unique forms of learning that take place through internship experiences. The DQP, with its five domains of learning outcomes, allows us to see in the diverse range of internship experiences a few relatively simple but meaningful "pathways" that the learning in internships might follow as students navigate their ways across the curriculum and co–curriculum. This allows us to map the learning we would expect to take place in internships and the evidence we might point to in documenting that learning. Second, I propose the framework of the Integrative Learning VALUE Rubric designed by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) as a fruitful gauge of that learning. I conclude with some observations about how this approach to assessing internships might advance our shared work of facilitating high–quality internship learning experiences.

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The Evolution of the Internship Landscape

Internships began to occupy the space they now hold in higher education in the 1970's when they were a leading element in a new movement to award college credit for "experiential learning" (Chickering, 1977). Just as there are many kinds of activities that fall under the umbrella of "experiential learning," so too there are many forms of learning that might characterize an internship. To set the stage for mapping the place of internships along learning pathways between the curriculum and co–curriculum, it will be useful to consider the evolution of work-based learning and higher education that led up to the embrace of work-based learning as a valuable part of the undergraduate experience. It is possible to trace at least four different models of learning that might be associated with work-based settings.

First, in what we might call the "apprenticeship" model, learning to perform the practiced activity is itself the intended outcome, and the activity is conceived as something that can only be learned fully and adequately by doing. From at least the Middle Ages to well into the early history of the American republic, apprenticeships were the primary means of preparing

for a vocation. Reflecting on his education in the colonial period, Benjamin Franklin describes in his *Autobiography* the various apprenticeships in printing shops that prepared him for his future as a hero of industriousness (Franklin, 1986). Similarly, in the first volume of *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville described education as a "general cultivation of intelligence" that lasted to about the age of fifteen at which point one was expected to take up a career. Of the preparation for this, he noted "every profession requires an apprenticeship" (Tocqueville, 2000, p. 51). Some experiential education activities, such as many in the fine and performing arts and even some skills in clinical professions such as nursing, still resemble this apprenticeship model in which learning is best accomplished by practicing the activity under the very close attention of faculty.

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A second model, which we might call the "application" model, conceives of work–based learning as an application of a body of knowledge or a discipline that should be learned first in an academic environment. The period from roughly the end of the Civil War to the first decade of the twentieth century saw a transformation in American higher education whereby the idea of professionalism became increasingly synonymous with learning a specialized academic discipline (Menand, 2010). The curriculum of Harvard Law School, which was transformed in the 1870's and 1880's under the leadership of Dean C.C. Langdell, set the early example. Langdell, who began his career practicing law in New York City in the era of Boss Tweed, was the author of the first case book and the inventor of the case-based method of teaching. As Dean, he instituted a sequenced curriculum and extended the time required to earn the degree to three years. Langdell was convinced that this rigorous academic preparation for a legal career was the best way to ensure the integrity of the legal profession as a profession (Kimball, 2009). Today, one of the hallmarks of professionalism is the ability to apply a disciplinary method, accepting only the conclusions or outcomes that follow from the application of the method. Importantly, because this application takes place as a subsequent step to learning the academic discipline, it makes sense to posit that learning to apply a specialty might take place at distance from the classroom. Thus, by 1976, William Burke, the founder of The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars, was able to note that for political science majors the value of internships in Washington, D.C. had become an "obvious idea" (Burke, 1976, p. 70).

In the third model, which we might call the "service-based" model, internships intersect importantly with the objectives of public service, civic engagement and service-learning. In 1978, the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education was formed through the merger of the Society for Field Experience Education and the National Center for Public Service Internships, both founded in 1971 (Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999, p. 253).[1] Reflections from the early practitioners of these movements suggest that they came to the work from diverse interests ranging from education, to service, to democratic organizing, but struggled to give their efforts institutional staying power (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999).

[1] Today this organization is the National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE).

At the same time, they found common cause in the belief that work–based and/or service-based learning added a layer of richness and meaning to student learning – beyond what the more academic classroom setting could offer (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007). In this constellation of civic and public learning contexts, the learning that took place in the work-based setting was less a matter of *applying* what was learned in a specific course or major than of *transferring* academic learning to a new setting or *integrating* it with a civic or public perspective learned in the context of service.

Finally, this period also saw the rise of what we might term the "student development" model. Tracing their inspiration to the educational philosophy of John Dewey, early theorists of experiential education saw it as leveraging "an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (Dewey, 1938, p. 20; cf., Chickering, 1977, p. 15, and Kolb, 1984, p. 5). Many practitioners of internships, indeed, came from student affairs contexts and aligned themselves with the objectives of student development. They construed learning in the classroom as a process of passively absorbing content that was imposed by outside control and authority and saw experiential education as promoting values of activity and authenticity. Today, of course, this trend also shapes approaches to what goes on inside the classroom, with an ever–increasing emphasis on active learning that is often collaborative and stresses inquiry and discovery. Seen through the lens of student development, internships become valuable experiences for students to undertake concurrently with, but independently from, their learning in the classroom. Indeed, one of the most significant gains from the internship might be an increased motivation for learning in general.

In light of this history, it is clear that work-based learning can make a meaningful contribution to undergraduate student learning outcomes in many ways. Mapping those contributions is an important step toward effectively achieving and assessing them.

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Curricular Pathways and the DQP

In the best-case scenario, internships are meaningful steps in an educational pathway toward a purposeful goal. The notion of an educational pathway implies both a sense of progression and a movement toward increased proficiency (Leskes & Miller, 2006). The learning that takes place in an internship, then, should build upon and enrich learning that takes place in the more formal curriculum, but as the history of work-based learning in higher education suggests, there are many ways in which it might do so. The DQP, with its five qualitatively distinct domains, provides a useful framework for doing justice to the range of ways in which an internship experience might be a meaningful part of the undergraduate experience.

If there is a common element to all internships, it is that they are learning experiences that are based in the professional work environment. In the framework of the DQP, this points to the domain of Applied and Collaborative Learning. This domain focuses on what students can do as a result of their education, emphasizing the transition from theory to practice

where the academic setting meets the nonacademic. Not surprisingly, this domain of the DQP explicitly references what students accomplish in field-based experiences, including internships. It includes descriptors of the project students might complete in integrating their knowledge and skills, but it also emphasizes that these might be acquired in part in field-based settings. Additionally, the Applied and Collaborative Learning domain calls for students to negotiate strategies for collaboration within a group setting. Because these skills of collaboration are so important for students as they progress toward their futures beyond college, it seems particularly fitting that outcomes from this domain of the DQP should figure into the learning involved in an internship experience.

But internship experiences also map onto other domains of the DQP. In what follows, I sketch three different educational pathways that a student's internship might follow. None of these pathways necessarily excludes the others, and many meaningful internship experiences have dimensions of more than one of these pathways.

Career Launch Pathways

The internship pathway that comes most quickly to mind in higher education today centers around what we might call the "career launch" internship. In this pathway, a student interns in an organization that affords her the chance to apply within a professional setting what she has learned in the classroom in her major. Sometimes this form of internship is described as an opportunity to "test drive" the major. Jeffrey Selingo (2016), in his book *There Is Life After College*, captures the aspiration of this sort of internship when he discusses the students he calls "sprinters," who pick their majors early and spend time outside of the classroom on projects or internships that prepare them for professional jobs (p. 10). Students who engage in internships with this aspiration are looking to enhance their learning within the DQP domain of Specialized Knowledge. This domain takes into view both the knowledge and the skills of the area of specialization. It envisions students at the undergraduate level not only being proficient with the basic elements of the field of study, but also exploring complex problems and challenges by utilizing the ideas and methods of that field. In a career launch internship, a student explores these elements of the field but in an applied and collaborative mode within an unscripted professional environment.

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Many examples illustrate the range of learning that might be achieved through a career launch internship. At The Washington Center, many students come to us as international affairs majors. They intern in a range of organizations from governmental organizations to nonprofits. In the course of these engagements, consistent with the learning at the heart of the DQP Specialized Knowledge domain, these interns extend their knowledge of the complex challenges facing various regions of the world, as well as the theories and assumptions underlying complex matters of international relations. At the same time, their learning is

enhanced as they work collaboratively on specific projects and contribute to their organization's larger mission. Success at applying an academic specialization in such a collaborative, real–world setting is one of the most compelling indicators to both their home institutions and prospective employers that these students are ready for a career in their chosen field.

Exploration of Professionalism Pathways

For many students, however, an internship might be a valuable experience apart from exploring specific connections to a career. Here, a pathway centering on what we might call an "exploration of professionalism" internship occupies a space that is less well defined in higher education curricula and, as a result, often falls under the general umbrella of student development. Such internships help students understand what it will take to work in a professional setting, but this learning might be quite independent of the field of study of the major. From a curricular point of view, though, this kind of internship explores the intersection of the DQP's Applied and Collaborative Learning domain with the outcomes represented in the domain of Intellectual Skills. The skills outlined under the latter include analytic inquiry, use of information resources, engaging diverse perspectives, ethical reasoning, quantitative fluency, and communicative fluency. These skills are described as "crosscutting" and as "proficiencies that transcend the boundaries of particular fields of study." They are also all essential to thriving in today's professional environments.

For many students, however, an internship might be a valuable experience apart from exploring specific connections to a career.

Three scenarios come to mind as occasions in which such an "exploration of professionalism" internship might prove especially beneficial. First, many students pursue majors such as English or Philosophy which do not correspond directly to a nonacademic profession. Internships for these students are a way to explore how their skills might nevertheless be employed in the professional world. Second, students who are still early in their undergraduate careers might engage in such an internship as a way to gain professional experience while they are still considering the field of study for the major. Finally, students often begin an internship intending for it to be a career launch experience only to learn that the particular field is not one they would like to pursue further. In such a scenario, the internship will still involve work on complex projects or performances that integrate skills and knowledge learned in multiple experiences in the curriculum, all applied in a collaborative fashion.

The intellectual skills practiced in these sorts of internships are often associated with the general education curriculum, though they are skills that will serve graduates well in the professional world. By incorporating the dimension of Applied and Collaborative Learning, this kind of internship experience explores Intellectual Skills at the point where they transfer from the academic setting to a nonacademic setting. If these skills are associated with the general education curriculum, their performance in the context of an internship represents an advanced or upper–level experience in general education. Importantly, there is also a sense today that some of the most important skills for preparing students for the workplace are general or so-called "soft skills" (Burning Glass, 2015).

Mapping this pathway to the intersection of the Intellectual Skills and Applied and Collaborative Learning domains of the DQP gives curricular expression to how these skills might be learned.

Civic Learning Pathways

The third pathway centers on what we might call a "civic learning" internship. This internship immerses the student in a new civic setting, whether at the local, national, or even international level. Not surprisingly, this pathway emphasizes the DQP domain of Civic and Global Learning. Like the domain of Applied and Collaborative Learning, Civic and Global Learning emphasizes what students can do in unscripted field-based settings and is more specific in its focus on civic knowledge (such as the ability to describe diverse positions on civic issues) and demonstrated understanding of civic modes of action (such as the ability to evaluate how organizations interact to address issues of concern). Work-based learning experiences within civic settings provide exceptionally rich contexts in which to demonstrate these proficiencies.

Several kinds of internships come to mind as examples. At The Washington Center, we frequently see students who travel to Washington, D.C. for internships related to specific issues about which they care deeply, such as veterans' affairs or environmental sustainability. Their primary motivation is the desire to make a difference, rather than to start a specific career. Thus, the internship experience is an avenue of civic engagement, very much as some students choose to engage in local or even international service-learning courses. One of the hallmarks of the DQP is that it gives expression to the role of higher education in preparing graduates to function and participate within a democratic society. The pathway of a civic learning internship might, of course, parallel either of the first two pathways. Like the career launch internship, a student on this third pathway might explore in a collaborative way the specialized knowledge and skills developed within her major. Equally, though, a civic learning internship might parallel the exploration of a professionalism internship, particularly where the internship connects more to general Intellectual Skills than to Specialized Knowledge. This kind of learning might be particularly characteristic of the learning that takes place in an internship early in one's college career or even in a service year that operates as a transition between high school and college.

To summarize, drawing upon the domains of learning articulated in the DQP helps us to make sense of the rich diversity of ways in which an internship might be a meaningful part of an undergraduate education. This learning will, of course, be emergent as each student makes sense of each new unscripted situation. Designating pathways in advance, though, is an important indicator of intentionality as we strive to help students achieve the richest possible learning over the course of their progress toward their degrees.

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Mapping Curriculum and Evidence

One of the most important aspects of the DQP is its focus on outcomes and evidence. There is a challenge about documenting student learning that takes place in unscripted, real–world situations, rather than in activities that can be carefully designed to prompt specific performances. With internships, in particular, the evidence of learning can vary widely. Yet, learning is also best documented through evidence that is authentic to the activities and assignments in which students develop their proficiencies, and internships are an unusually rich terrain for this. To tap that richness, two things are necessary. First, the domains of the intended learning should be mapped ahead of the internship experience. Second, the evidence of learning should be documented during and at the conclusion of the internship.

Learning is also best documented through evidence that is authentic to the activities and assignments in which students develop their proficiencies, and internships are an unusually rich terrain for this.

Because the learning envisioned in the pathways sketched earlier involves the interaction of two domains of the DQP, the DQP matrix suggests a useful strategy for mapping the learning associated with internships (Adelman, Ewell, Gaston, & Schneider, 2014, pp. 22-23). In this schematic, the authors of the DQP represent the way in which proficiencies in the Intellectual Skills domain are developed in the other domains of the DQP. Thus, they propose a matrix or table in which each of the skills in the Intellectual Skills domain is assigned a line and the other domains are assigned a column. Each of the cells, then, can be populated by an assignment that is designed to demonstrate proficiency in the relevant intellectual skill and other domain of the DQP. The matrix, then, affords a forward-looking strategy for faculty to plan curriculum, as well as a backwards-looking way to tell the story of the learning that results.

In adapting this schematic to mapping the learning that takes place in internships, the goal is to represent the way learning in one domain happens across multiple settings of Applied and Collaborative Learning over time. Thus, the rows in an internship learning map might be assigned to different aspects of the domain that defines the primary focus of the internship. In the case of a career launch internship, for example, the rows might be assigned to the different aspects of proficiency in Specialized Knowledge – for instance, to distinguish foundational knowledge of theories in the field from problems or challenges that the field addresses in contemporary society (see Figure 1). The columns, in turn, would represent separate opportunities for learning, progressing in chronological order and representing greater proficiency in Applied and Collaborative learning. The first columns might represent courses based in the classroom, followed next by experiences in an internship. Even later columns might represent capstone projects or other experiences completed back on campus. As in the matrix in the DQP, each cell would focus on the evidence demonstrating the learning. To develop internship learning maps for specific fields of study, expectations may be articulated to that specific field, such as those developed from various disciplinary or state-based Tuning projects. For additional mapping matrices for internship pathways, see Appendix A.

Figure1: Career Launch Internship Learning Map

Proficiencies of Specialized Knowledge	Performances of Applied and Collaborative Learning			
	Course 1	Course 2	Internship	Capstone Project
Defines and explains the structure, styles and practices of the field of study using its tools, technologies, methods and specialized terms.				
Investigates a familiar but complex problem in the field of study by assembling, arranging and reformulating ideas, concepts, designs and techniques.				
Frames, clarifies and evaluates a complex challenge that bridges the field of study and one other field, using theories, tools, methods and scholarship from those fields to produce independently or collaboratively an investigative, creative or practical work illuminating that challenge.				
Constructs a summative project, paper, performance or application that draws on current research, scholarship and techniques in the field of study.				

Assignments

A central tenet of the learning outcomes assessment movement has been that the best evidence for demonstrating student learning comes from assignments that arise from the context in which the learning actually takes place. In most cases, this is course–based work where faculty design learning activities and assignments closely aligned with the intended learning outcomes and scaffold those activities and assignments to support the best possible learning process. This approach, rather than free-standing standardized tests, is also the context where students are most motivated to make their best efforts (Hutchings, Jankowski, & Ewell, 2014.). Of course, faculty cannot design the day–to–day activities that form the fabric of the internship experience since it happens away from the classroom. There is, nevertheless, an important role for faculty in crafting assignments that both guide and document the learning that takes place as a result of the internship experience.

A key insight from the theory of experiential learning is that reflection makes the difference between experience and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). In the context of an internship, reflection makes the difference between someone who simply follows instructions and someone who genuinely learns from the experience.

A key insight from the theory of experiential learning is that reflection makes the difference between experience and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). In the context of an internship, reflection makes the difference between someone who simply follows instructions and someone who genuinely learns from the experience. Since the learning that takes place in an internship helps to define a pathway between the curriculum and the co-curriculum, reflective assignments need to be scaffolded at two levels. First, with each new task performed it is important that the student identify what she has accomplished and the learning that it represents. Beyond this, it is important for students to become aware of how they have grown as learners as a result of the internship experience. The right assignments scaffolded in the right way can help to facilitate this learning process.

The most important tool available to practitioners on campus for guiding learning associated with an internship is the portfolio. Portfolios have been a part of the pedagogy of experiential education for a very long time. At the most basic level, portfolios allow students to gather and organize artifacts that document the work they complete at the internship site so that faculty on campus can review and assess it. These artifacts might include work samples ranging from reports written for the host organization, business correspondence, or products produced in the course of the day-to-day operations of the internship host organization. In the case of performances which do not normally yield an artifact, journals or narratives of the work performed might fill this role. Once these artifacts are assembled, portfolios create a space in which students can reflect on their meaning and significance.

Today's online technology allows for the construction of digital portfolios that can provide even richer – perhaps even the most ideal – environments for reflection. Indeed, the practice of e–portfolio has recently been added to the list of High–Impact Practices recognized by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (Watson, Kuh, Rhodes, Light, & Chen, 2016). What is most important, though, is that this course of reflection is done well, and carefully constructed assignments can make all the difference. Even though

faculty should not expect to be able to design the learning activities that students undertake in their co-curricular internship experiences, there is still a great deal they can do to structure assignments that will help to identify the alignment of internships with curricular learning objectives. By the same token, there is also an important role for faculty expertise in scaffolding the different kinds of reflective assignments to help ensure that students gain the most from their internship experiences (Hutchings, Jankowski, & Ewell, 2014).

Three kinds of assignments suggest themselves for the work of facilitating reflection. First, each time a student adds a new artifact to his or her portfolio, it is appropriate to add a reflective statement that identifies what the artifact is and what went into its production. For portfolios constructed of printed documents, this might be as simple as an instruction to include a cover page for each artifact describing what the artifact is and the student's role in its production. In an e–portfolio, this reflection might be a part of a caption associated with a link to the particular artifact. This commentary might also speak to the domains of the DQP that describe the learning represented in the artifact, in effect identifying the place of the particular artifact in an internship learning map. Thus, in a career launch internship for a public administration student, she might include a briefing memo from a project she helped to complete during the internship. The reflection accompanying this memo might be expected to identify the issue addressed and the specialized theories or skills of research and analysis employed in producing the paper. When guided by an internship learning map, this reflection might also discuss the prior course-based contexts in which she had first learned about the issues, theories or skills represented in the memo. Since the internship is an experience in Applied and Collaborative Learning, the reflection might also address the teamwork that was involved in the execution of the project. In this way, this artifact-level reflection speaks to both of the domains that define one cell in an internship learning map. Ideally, a student's portfolio would contain a variety of artifacts accompanied by these explanatory reflections so as to present a full and detailed picture of the work completed in the internship.

Ideally, a student's portfolio would contain a variety of artifacts accompanied by explanatory reflections so as to present a full and detailed picture of the work completed in the internship.

The second kind of reflection assignment that should accompany an internship experience represents a higher–order reflection on the student's experiential learning in general. The point at which an internship is completed provides a particularly rich moment for broad and open-ended reflection. At The Washington Center, we assign what we call a "Capstone Reflection" at the end of the term in which we ask students to reflect on how they might have grown and how their goals and plans might have changed (Grose, Burke, & Toston, 2017). We ask them also to consider what might account for these changes as a way of encouraging them to reflect on how they have learned from experience. In the context of a portfolio, such a reflection might serve as an introduction to the other items that are collected. Students might also be prompted to explain to a reader how these items tell the story of their experience as a learner or how they might have applied, transferred or adapted learning from other contexts in the new situations presented in the internships. In this way, this culminating reflection for the experience might tell a first-person narrative of the story represented more abstractly by the internship learning map.

Finally, there is a sometimes a bit of a leap from reflection that focuses on individual performances to higher–order reflections on the process of learning, and faculty might find it helpful to scaffold other assignments along the way in order to equip students to make richer meaning of their pathways. Indeed, the idea that a student is pursuing a particular pathway might provide the occasion for specific assignments. At The Washington Center, we ask our students to conduct an Informational Interview with professionals already working in a field of interest (Grose & Williams, 2017). Students undertaking career launch internships have the chance to learn from such interviews how specialized training in an academic discipline helped prepare their interviewees for their careers. For students in an exploration of professionalism internship, this assignment might speak to how academic training has shaped their sense of professionalism in general. An informational interview assignment might, accordingly, allow students to describe their interviewee's pathway from college to career as a way of priming the pump, so to speak, before they are tasked with envisioning what their own pathway might look like.

Integrative Learning as a Framework for Learning and Assessment

The stories students tell in their portfolios about their internship experiences will all be unique. That is as it should be. But it raises a question, as well, about how we might find a common standard or measure to evaluate such divergent learning experiences. In such situations, rubrics allow us to evaluate the use of Intellectual Skills across diverse contexts and tasks. Rubrics, in general, allow for standards without standardization. With internships, students ideally acquire the capacity to connect learning from multiple sites and sources across an educational pathway through the curriculum and co–curriculum. This is the terrain of integrative learning. It is an important skill for students in making meaning of the learning that takes place across their undergraduate career as a whole, as well as a skill that will help students navigate their trajectories from college to career as lifelong learners. Here the AAC&U VALUE Rubric for Integrative Learning is particularly useful. Integrative Learning is defined by the AAC&U as "an understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus" (Rhodes, 2010, p. 51). The skills in the Integrative Learning rubric are all–purpose skills that can be applied in multiple kinds of experiences or activities, and each finds fruitful expression in the learning associated with internships.

To read the Integrative Learning rubric is to see in its descriptors the markers of intellectual growth that students might display as they progress in intellectual development. As such, the first value of this rubric is for formative assessment. It is a tool to help measure students' individual development, and also one that the student can use to help guide his or her own progress. For faculty, it is a tool to help guide assignment design at different points in the curriculum.

Skills of Integrative Learning in Internship Portfolios

Connections to Experience. Students might point to artifacts from projects in the internship that helped them to see concepts studied in coursework, but in a more concrete or dynamic context.

Connections to Discipline. Students might analyze how a challenge they encountered within an internship was effectively addressed through a multi-disciplinary or team-based approach.

Transfer. Students might describe how skills, such as writing, transferred from the academic context to be sharpened or adapted to new challenges in the professional environment.

Integrated Communication. Students might show examples of communication tasks they completed in the professional setting and describe their choices of language and medium to fit the particular audience and task.

Reflection. By reflecting on how the internship experience was a learning experience, students might envision their future pathways and the role that learning from experience will play in helping them to navigate their professional careers.

Early in an undergraduate career, integrative learning can animate the general education curriculum as students begin to explore questions and challenges that invite study from multiple perspectives and that might not have simple solutions (Braid, Schrynemakers, & Grose, 2012). At the more advanced level, it can help to design capstone experiences, such as internship experiences, as well as assignments that scaffold students' progress toward the highest levels of outcomes associated with these experiences.

At the program-level, the Integrative Learning rubric is also a useful tool for summative assessment. Because the skills are so broadly applicable to a wide range of unscripted learning opportunities, the rubric allows for building a baseline measure for these outcomes – establishing the levels of performance students must demonstrate in a given kind of internship. Thus, for sophomore-level students in exploration of professionalism internships, a campus might specify that at least 80% of students should meet at least the Milestone 2 level for each of the skills in the rubric. For seniors in career launch internships, by contrast, the goal might be that 90% of students will perform at the Milestone 3 level or higher for each skill. Faculty across campus should then engage in calibration exercises to prepare them to rate student portfolios according to the rubric.

Maintaining measures of the levels of each skill associated with portfolios reflecting student experiences in internships has at least three benefits at the program-level. First, where the targets for aggregate outcomes are met, it affords faculty the chance to identify which assignments were helpful in creating the evidence of the learning so that effective practices can be replicated more broadly. Second, where targets for outcomes are not reached, faculty can experiment with the design of current or new assignments that might be more effective in achieving the outcomes in question. Most fundamentally, though, as a program–level indicator of learning, keeping track of these measures can help institutions monitor how effectively their internship programs work to connect the curriculum and co–curriculum.

Sharing the Work

In the landscape of higher education today, the possibilities for students to benefit from internships are many and varied. Mapping curricular pathways is an important strategy for ensuring that these work-based learning experiences are widely available and academically meaningful. In this, there are important opportunities for collaboration both on- and off-campus.

For stakeholders on campus, the DQP provides a way to share the work of facilitating learning through internships. The academic division of labor on campus often leaves the experience of the curriculum fragmented for students. Specialists in various disciplinary departments steward the work of building Specialized Knowledge; often an entirely different set of teachers deliver the courses that constitute the general education curriculum; and co-curricular learning is frequently the province of staff in a host of offices like career services and student affairs.

Working with VALUE Rubrics

When using VALUE rubrics in a particular campus setting or to assess a particular program, it is sometimes useful to adapt the rubric to fit the particular context. AAC&U encourages adapting VALUE rubrics in this fashion (Rhodes & Finley, 2013). In the case of the Integrative Learning rubric, The Washington Center found that the language in some of the descriptors in some of the skills areas seemed awkward or too limited in that it only referred specifically to campus-based activities. The skills, however, are also highly relevant to activities that take place off campus. TWC's adaptation of the rubric may be found in the NILOA Assignment Library (Grose, Burke, & Toston, 2017; Grose & Williams, 2017).

The VALUE rubrics are also not intended as assignment–level grading rubrics. In developing grading rubrics, however, it might be desirable to align the expectations in those rubrics with specific target levels of the VALUE rubrics. In the cases of TWC's Capstone Essay and Informational Interview assignments, we aligned the A-level performance with the descriptors at the Milestone 3 level of the Integrative Learning VALUE rubric (Grose, Burke, & Toston, 2017; Grose & Williams, 2017). Our grading rubrics also contain lines corresponding to specific assignment-level expectations, such as "Formatting" and "Organization and Clarity" that are not as pertinent to the program-level assessment where we use the VALUE rubric.

The advising of students is also often fragmented as students pass from one "caseload" to another as they move through general education courses to the major. These divisions of labor serve a purpose, as they allow specific learning activities to be facilitated or specific student needs to be addressed by professionals with relevant skills and expertise. But there is also a potential cost associated, when the hope is for an integrative learning experience.

Embracing the idea of carefully mapped, broad pathways through the curriculum and co-curriculum can help to overcome the negative tendencies of this fragmentation on campus to place the complex work of stewarding students' educational journeys at the center of our work. When this mapping informs the practice of e–portfolio on campuses, it empowers students to become active participants in the ongoing cultures of evidence associated with internships (Eynon & Gambino, 2017). This, in turn, will elevate integrative learning from the position of a single, though essential, learning outcome to the status of a shared value.

Mapping pathways for meaningful internships can also help to strengthen partnerships for learning forged with the organizations beyond campus that host internships in the community. Sharing the mapping of the intended domains of learning with internship hosts can help them to identify meaningful work assignments that will build upon the learning their interns have already achieved on campus. It can also help internship supervisors to mentor students as they transfer their learning from the academic to professional contexts. Given the importance of Applied and Collaborative Learning to all internship experiences, colleges and universities should request that supervisors provide structured feedback to both the intern and the campus-based sponsor on such competencies as "professionalism/work ethic" and "teamwork/collaboration," which are among those recently named as central to career readiness (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2015).

Given the number of individuals both on- and off–campus who might play a role in students' internship experiences, ensuring that they are meaningful learning experiences is a complex proposition to say the least. Finding ways to work together to harness the power of these unscripted learning opportunities is key to ensuring that their benefits are widely available. Mapping learning pathways is one promising strategy toward this end.

Finding ways to work together to harness the power of these unscripted learning opportunities is key to ensuring that their benefits are widely available.

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Appending A: Sample Internship Learning Maps

Each row of the internship learning map itemizes a specific kind of performance of the domain of the Degree Qualifications Profile that characterizes the primary focus of the internship. The text in the headings for the rows of the maps represented here is drawn from the general descriptors of performance at the bachelor's level from the DQP.

The columns under the heading of "Performances of Applied and Collaborative Learning" are ordered chronologically. The progression of the performances under each column is meant to show a general growth in proficiency in application and collaboration.

Exploration of Professionalism Internship Learning Map

Intellectual Skills	**Performances of Applied and Collaborative Learning**			
	Course 1	Course 2	Internship	Capstone Project
Analytic Inquiry				
Use of Information Resources				
Engaging diverse perspectives				
Ethical Reasoning				
Quantitative Fluency				
Communicative Fluency				

Civic Learning Internship Learning Map

Proficiencies of Civic and Global Learning	Performances of Applied and Collaborative Learning			
	Course 1	Course 2	Internship	Capstone Project
Explains diverse positions, including those representing different cultural, economic and geographic interests, on a contested public issue, and evaluates the issue in light of both those interests and evidence drawn from journalism and scholarship				
Develops and justifies a position on a public issue and relates this position to alternative views held by the public or within the policy environment.				
Collaborates with others in developing and implementing an approach to a civic issue, evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the process, and, where applicable, describes the result.				
Identifies a significant issue affecting countries, continents or cultures, presents quantitative evidence of that challenge through tables and graphs, and evaluates the activities of either non-governmental organizations or cooperative inter-governmental initiatives in addressing that issue.				

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NILOA's primary objective is to discover and disseminate ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen undergraduate education, and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders.

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NILOA Occasional Papers are commissioned to examine contemporary issues that will inform the academic community of the current state-of-the art of assessing learning outcomes in American higher education. The authors are asked to write for a general audience in order to provide comprehensive, accurate information about how institutions and other organizations can become more proficient at assessing and reporting student learning outcomes for the purposes of improving student learning and responsibly fulfilling expectation for transparency and accountability to policy makers and other external audiences.

Comments and questions about this paper should be sent to:
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About NILOA

- The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) was established in December 2008.
- NILOA is co-located at the University of Illinois and Indiana University.
- The NILOA website contains free assessment resources and can be found at http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/.
- The NILOA research team has scanned institutional websites, surveyed chief academic officers, and commissioned a series of occasional papers.
- NILOA's Founding Director, George Kuh, founded the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE).
- The other co-principal investigator for NILOA, Stanley Ikenberry, was president of the University of Illinois from 1979 to 1995 and of the American Council of Education from 1996 to 2001.

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