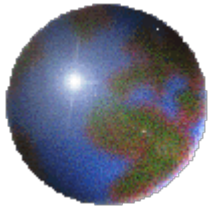
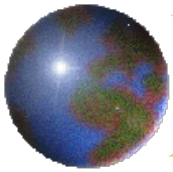


The Lines Between What Tuning is and what Tuning is not, and how Tuning can “become” in Japan

Cliff Adelman, Institute for Higher Education Policy, March 2013



As a process, Tuning has been conducted independently from:

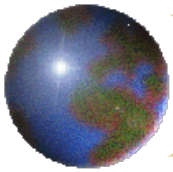
- Guidelines of professional associations.
- Statements of learned societies/scholarly organizations.
- Requirements of specialized accrediting authorities.
- Government ministries.
- National higher education associations.

How?

- Tuning is faculty-based, faculty-organized, and voluntary.
- While faculty may be well-represented in most of these other organizations, they are not a voluntary, driving force.
- Coordination of Tuning activities takes place outside any of these organizations.
- Tuning practice involves core interactions with former students and employers. With rare exceptions, that is not true of these other types of organizations.

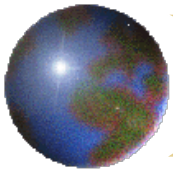
The missions of these other types of organizations are focused on different issues

- Defense of the profession or discipline
- Promotion of research and scholarship
- Broad curriculum reform independent of discipline
- Insuring the provision of curriculum in disciplines and the adequacy of departmental resources
- Progression of graduates to either the labor market or higher degree levels.



Tuning, on the other hand, does not worry about:

- Departmental resources and faculty qualifications
- Whether faculty are preparing the next generation of researchers in their fields
- Bureaucracies of oversight and enforcement.
- Or even what courses should be taken in what sequences at what levels of education.
- Costs or student placement in the labor market.

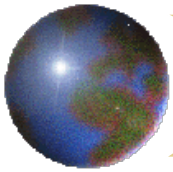


Think, first, about discipline program accreditation

- It does not apply in all disciplines, for example, history, government, literature, linguistics, anthropology, physics, biology, geology
- It is voluntary in other disciplines, for example, chemistry, fine arts, music
- It is heavily weighted toward fields that require licensure or certification, for example, architecture, nursing, medicine, engineering, teacher education, accounting.

And while Tuning faculty teams may cite accreditation standards . . .

- Nobody from an external body will be visiting all the institutions involved to make sure they adopt and practice those standards in a Tuning project
- There is no pressure on institutional participants in a Tuning field in which mandatory accreditation does *not* exist to voluntarily adopt accreditation standards

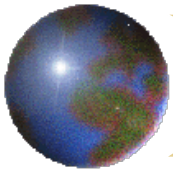


And do you rely on scholarly and professional organizations?

- In the U.S., there are 63 such associations in the Life Sciences alone, ranging from the Association for Tropical Biology to the Society for Neuroscience
- When you examine what they do to improve undergraduate education in the life sciences, their activities include providing lab materials, indices of Web sites, scholarships, and information.
- There is nothing about student learning. Do Japanese scholarly/professional organizations behave differently?

An exception to all these rules and boundaries: the European Chemistry Thematic Network (ECTN)

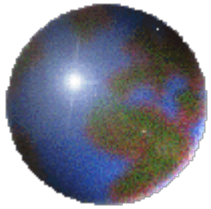
- Chemistry is not separately accredited in Europe (and ACS accreditation is voluntary in the U.S.)
- Yet the EC-sponsored Thematic Network brought in industry associations in chemistry, professional and scholarly associations in chemistry---along with universities, and required the Tuning process.
- The most noteworthy result was a Euro-bachelor's degree in chemistry, something no other Tuning discipline had even attempted.
- And in its 12th year of development, both Chemical Engineering and Chemical Technology joined this group---and began work on coordinated Tuning.



Tuning statements would be far more specific than those of professional and scholarly organizations in chemistry, for example:

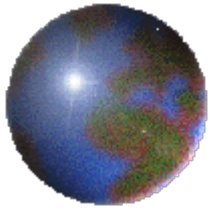
- "knowledge base covers essential aspects of subject matter. . ."
- "problems of a familiar nature are solved in a logical manner. . ."
- "experimental work is carried out in a reliable and efficient manner"
- "performance in generic skills is sound"

Tuning would not find any of these statements of student learning acceptable! And neither did ECTN!



Based on your understanding of Tuning, why would these statements not be acceptable?

And how would you re-write them in your discipline so that they would be acceptable?



And a lesson from the ECTN:

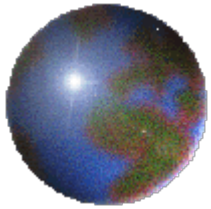
If you can teach the scholarly or professional association how a true student learning outcome statement should read, they can join Tuning

A case to prove the point: history in the U.S.

- The American Historical Association (AHA) wrote a statement about the history major in 2009. It was basically about the design of curriculum and delivery.
- The Indiana and Utah state systems undertook a pilot Tuning project in history in 2009, with final reports in 2010, with a focus on student learning outcomes.
- The AHA looked at what Indiana and Utah institutions had done with concrete statements of (a) reference points in the field, and (b) student competencies that flowed from those reference points, and began a Tuning process of their own across 15 state systems.

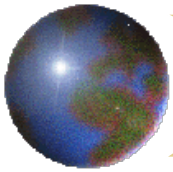
What you have in these two examples, on two continents---ECTN and AHA

- **Are cases of the convergence of both academic and professional organizations with the Tuning process and its results**
- **And in such a way as to influence how an accrediting body should recast its approach to the documentation of student learning, i.e. to refocus on students.**



Different approaches to credits in European and U.S. Tuning examples

At first, European Tuning tried to translate competences into credits; the U.S. example pushed credits to the back, competences to the front

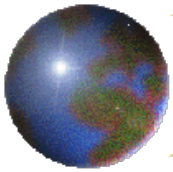


What Tuning is not, but related to: Program Profiles

- These are statements describing necessary course offerings, the distribution of faculty expertise, (where applicable) the minimum facilities necessary to present a discipline within any institution, dominant methods of teaching, and ways of assessment.
- They are the type of guidelines and standards found in specialized accreditation documents.
- Individual departments then present themselves not according to core concepts and methods, rather in terms of their surface characteristics, and credit requirements.

What Tuning is not, but closely related to: Benchmarking

- This model is the hallmark of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK, and has been followed in countries where both "ordinary" and "honors" degrees are awarded
- Regardless of degree type, benchmarking seeks to establish standards for two levels of student performance: "threshold" and "typical"
- Tuning does not make these distinctions.

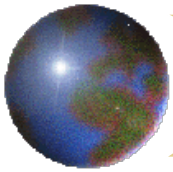


Therefore, benchmarking usually includes:

- A general statement of the purpose of academic programs in the discipline, for example (in Business), “study of organizations, their management and the changing external environment in which they operate”
- Statements elaborating on the general, but phased in terms of the objects of study (nouns), for example, “external environment encompasses . . .economic, environmental, ethical, legal, political, sociological and technological. . .” In other words, “everything.”

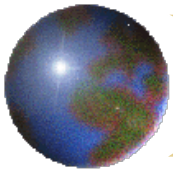
Benchmarking does not stop with those targets

- It turns to a listing of issues and topics that graduating students should know---all nouns, and some very generalized, for example (in business), “people,” “operations,” “information systems”
- And a listing of skills of graduates. Here we begin to see verbs, “identify,” “evaluate,” “formulate,” “create”



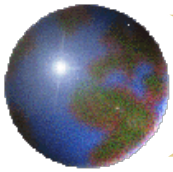
The bottom line of benchmarking: the distinction between “threshold” and “typical” student competence, for example (in Business):

- **Threshold: “students will have knowledge and understanding of the key areas of business and management, the relation between these and their application.”**
- **Typical: “students will have a wide knowledge and understanding. . . And the detailed relationships between these. . .and their importance in an integrated framework.”**



Observations on the Benchmarking "bottom line"

- There are no verbs here. The distinction is carried out by adjectives.
- Tuning does not make these distinctions.
- The differences in performance judgments are minor
- We are reminded why language is so central to convincing statements of student competence.



We have covered a great deal this week about Tuning and its relatives

- Diploma supplements, core statements of disciplines, competences as “reference points,” student learning outcomes, assessments and assignments, Program Profiles, Benchmarking. . .
- So where---and how---would you begin? Where, and how, would you continue?