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# COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING THROUGH ONLINE INTERNSHIPS

DEMONSTRATING PROFICIENCIES IN A COMPETENCY-BASED DEGREE PLAN.

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**“Higher learning has become especially critical in today’s knowledge society. To succeed in the workplace, students must prepare for jobs that are rapidly changing, use technologies that are still emerging, and work with colleagues from**

**(and often in) all parts of the globe.”** (Adelman, C., Ewell, P., Gaston, P., & Schneider, C., 2014, p



# COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING

“Competency-based strategies provide flexibility...allows students to progress as they demonstrate mastery of academic content, regardless of time, place, or pace of learning...leads to better student engagement because the content is relevant to each student and tailored to their unique needs.”

(The US Department of Education, 2013, para 1)



## Experiential Skills

- Applying learning in a “real world” context
- Evidence of critical thinking
- Evidence of skills in context of the application

## Measurable performance

- Pre-Diagnostic Measurements
- Performance Tools
- Measurable Results

# APPLYING *DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE (DQP)* AS FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENT

“The *DQP* also points to the many ways in which students now demonstrate their proficiencies. While conventional testing may still be useful, the *DQP* holds that students provide more persuasive evidence of their learning through their completion of assigned tasks and major projects within and beyond the classroom.” (Adelman, C., Ewell, P., Gaston, P., & Schneider, C., 2014,

## DQP Proficiencies to assess student learning

- Outlines what students should know in specialized fields
- Encourages broad, integrative approach to support exploration of multiple fields of study
- Supports proficiencies in analytic query and ethical reasoning
- Focused on what students can actually do or perform with what they have learned.
- Prepares students for civic engagement locally, nationally, and globally.
- Proficiencies are appropriate for degree level, ie. Associates, Bachelors and Masters (not applied to Doctoral level).
- Proficiencies are described with active verbs to declare what the student should be able to do per level of degree plan.

# DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS PROFILE (DQP): STUDENT PERFORMANCE

*Proficiencies organized in five broad categories.*

- **Specialized Knowledge.** Beyond the vocabularies, theories, and skills of fields of study, Addresses what students in any specialization should demonstrate with respect to the specialization.
- **Broad and Integrative Knowledge.** This category asks students at all degree levels covered in the *DQP* to consolidate learning from different broad fields of study — the humanities, arts, sciences, and social sciences.
- **Intellectual Skills.** Both traditional and non-traditional cognitive operations are included: analytic inquiry, use of information resources, engaging diverse perspectives, ethical reasoning, quantitative fluency, and communicative fluency.
- **Applied and Collaborative Learning.** This element of the *DQP* emphasizes what students can do with what they know, demonstrated by innovation and fluency in addressing unscripted problems in scholarly inquiry, at work and in other settings outside the classroom.
- **Civic and Global Learning.** Responsibilities both to democracy and to the global community, this fifth area of learning addresses the integration of knowledge and skills in applications that facilitate student engagement with and response to civic, social, environmental and economic challenges at local, national and global levels.

# SYNERGY OF INTERNSHIPS AND COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING

Internships organized as learning activities can also encourage application of sociology concepts and methods to complex problems, critical thinking, strong communication and interpersonal skills, and personal and social responsibility.

(O'Neill, 2010, p. 7)

The five proficiencies outlined by the DQP include specialized knowledge, broad and integrative knowledge, intellectual skills, applied and collaborative learning, civic and global learning. Creating high-impact experiential practices provide opportunity to embed these proficiencies in student degree plans. Presenting internships provides a connection for students to prove what they have learned and continually gain feedback throughout the experience. Internships provide a vehicle for students to demonstrate proficiency in a competency-based degree plan.



- Applying theory to practice
- Qualitative Outcomes
- Experience integral to learning
- Engaged activity with feedback loops
- Not restricted to physical locations



**“Learning in a meaningful context will be more easily retrieved than that which is acquired in isolation.”  
(Tsai, Shen, & Lee, 2011, p. 42)**

<b>Design</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Results</b>
Adult Learners	Learning Platforms	Improved Industry Functions
Convenience Factor	Video Conferencing	Improved Team Skills
Self-Directed	eMail Communications	Potential Career Opportunities
May Have Industry Experience	Collaborative Online Environments	Exercise or Improve Complex Skills
Possess Unique Skills	Project Management Venues	Enhanced Negotiation Skills
<b>Establishes Community Partnerships</b>		

“The core theoretical concepts of constructivism are indeed re-emerging in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century approaches

of *experiential learning*, including *service learning*, *community-based learning*, *externship/internship programs*

*agency-based learning programs.*” (Giannoni & Selby, 2014, p.11)



## *Value for All*

### Online Students

Highly Motivated  
Eager for Engagement  
Desire Meaningful Applications  
Come with Experience

### Educational Institutions

Measurable Learning  
High Persistence and Graduation Rates  
Graduates Develop Knowledge and Career Skills

### Partner organizations

Student Can Provide Fresh Ideas  
Provide Extra Workforce Help  
May Hire Talented Graduates

**Adelman, C., Ewell, P., Gaston, P., & Schneider, C. (2014).** *The degree qualifications profile 2.0: Defining U.S. degrees through demonstration and documentation of college learning.* Lumina

Foundation.

**Giannoni, D.L. & Selby, A.P. (2014).** The Synergy of Virtual Internships and Competency-Based Online Learning

**O'Neill, N. (2010).** Internships as a High-Impact Practice: Some Reflections on Quality. *Peer Review*, 4-8.

**Tsai, C.-W., Shen, P.-D., & Lee, T.-H. (2011).** The Effects of Combined Training of Web-based Problem-based Learning and Self-regulated Learning. *International Journal of Web-Based Learning and Teaching Technologies*, 40-50.

**Selby, A. P. & Giannoni, D. L. (2013).** Global Virtual Internships: Technology Integration for International Collaboration. 29th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning. University of Madison, Wisconsin.

(August 7-9, 2013: pp. 501-505)

# ALLISON SELBY

Allison Selby has taught in higher education for the last ten years. She has taught various digital media courses for many schools, including The University of the Arts, Drexel University and Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia. Currently, she serves as the Director of Internship Programs, for the School of Information Technology in Kaplan University. She chairs the Leadership Professional Competency Committee.



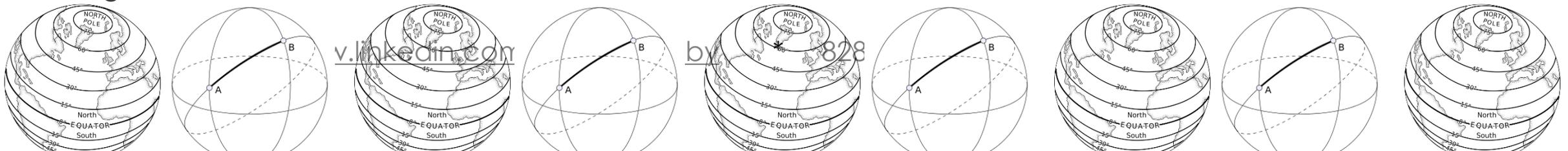
Allison is a graduate of Chestnut Hill College, Masters of Science, Educational Technology. She recently earned a Graduate Certificate in Service-Learning and Community-Based Learning in Postsecondary Education from Portland State University. Her current interests focus on high-impact experiential practices and particularly how they can be integrated in an online environment. Her primary focus is extending service-learning and internship opportunities for adult students through virtual solutions.

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Dr. Giannoni has been an educator for 27 years and in higher education for 17 of those years. Dawn's Doctor of Philosophy degree was earned in Organizational Leadership, an Education Specialist degree in Brain Research, her Masters in Information Technology, and a Bachelor's degree in Business.

She is a published author, consultant, coach, innovator, leader, and dedicated teacher. Whole learning is her chief service but also her personal life-long purpose. Dawn's core belief is that it is not simply academic or career accomplishments that earns us happiness in life but it is in serving others in achieving their goals.



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