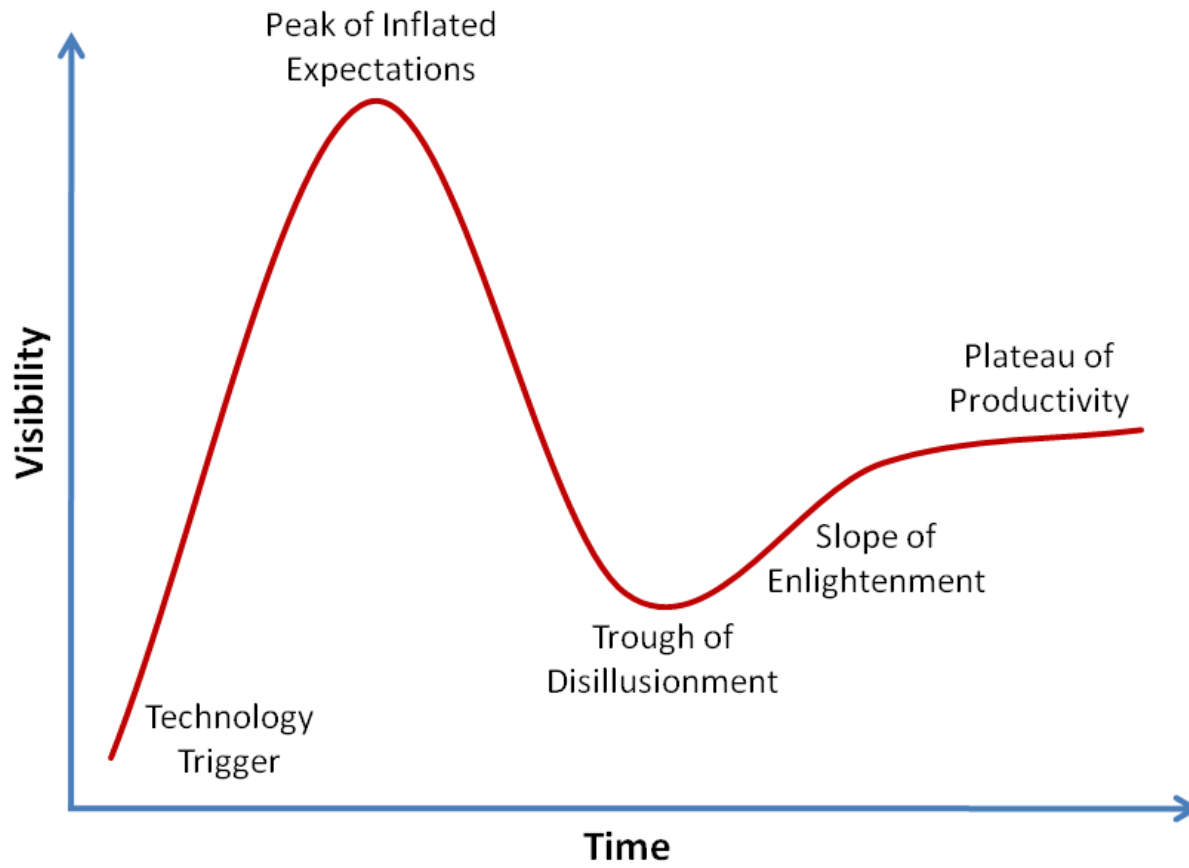# Mapping the terrain of learning outcomes

**Dr Mary Catharine Lennon**
Senior Policy Advisor
Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board
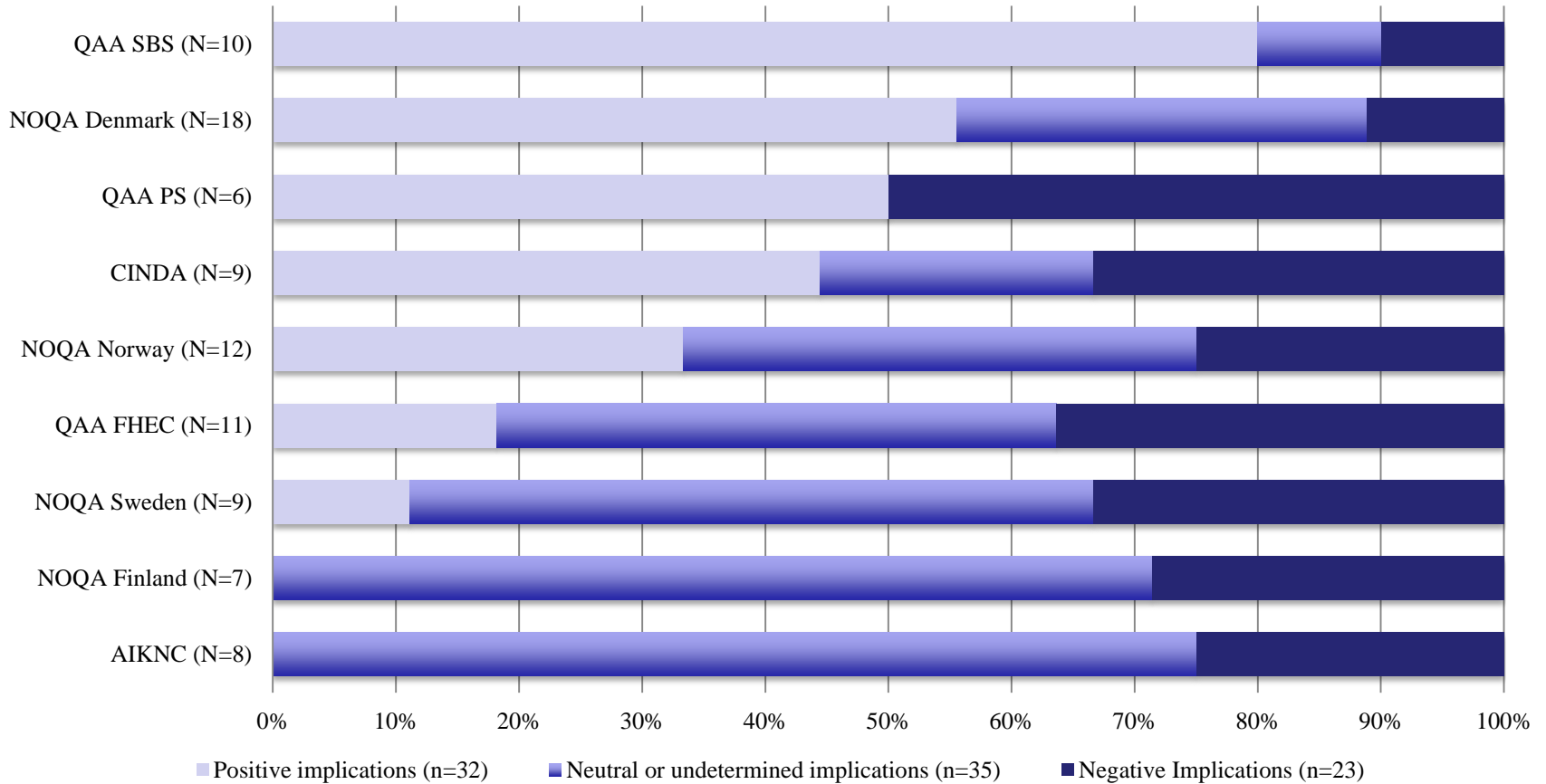Government of Ontario

Presented to the Learning Outcomes Assessment Conference
Toronto, Ontario
October 18, 2016

# Hype cycle heuristic



Gartner, 2016

# Learning outcome policy success



Horizontal stacked bar chart showing learning outcome policy success by agency.

| Agency | Positive implications (n=32) | Neutral or undetermined implications (n=35) | Negative Implications (n=23) |
|---|---|---|---|
| QAA SBS (N=10) | | | |
| NOQA Denmark (N=18) | | | |
| QAA PS (N=6) | | | |
| CINDA (N=9) | | | |
| NOQA Norway (N=12) | | | |
| QAA FHEC (N=11) | | | |
| NOQA Sweden (N=9) | | | |
| NOQA Finland (N=7) | | | |
| AIKNC (N=8) | | | |

# Learning outcomes as a policy

- Misdirected
- Misaligned
- Misapplied
- Unexamined

Formulate    Implement
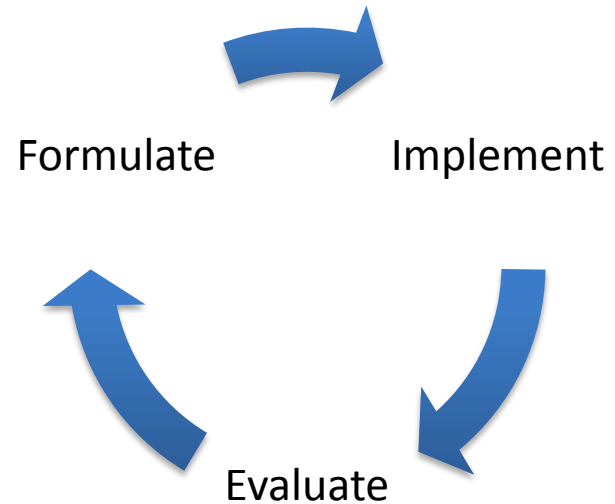
Evaluate

# Matrix of learning outcomes policy development

| Structural features | | | Policy formulation | | | | Implementation | | | Evaluation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actors | Focus of expectation | Type of expectation | Common goals | Level of expectation | Target audience | Audience needs | Strategy type | Activity | Expected impact | Evidence | Data Collection | Evaluation of policy success |
| Programs | Generic skills | Learning objective | Transparency | Student (in course) | Students | Indications of program outcomes | Articulation | Writing learning outcomes | Better skill-matching in labour market | Retention and graduation rates | Pre and post implementation graduation rates | Are the primary goals being achieved? |
| Institutions | Program | Learning outcome | Teaching and learning | Student (across courses) | Public/employers | Indications of student capacities | Implementation | Curriculum mapping | Improved results of assessments | Graduates in field closely aligned to program | National graduate survey | Are there positive/negative impacts elsewhere? |
| Discipline associations | Discipline | Competency | Institutional improvement/ quality | Program | Faculty (course design) | Ways to capture student achievement | Evaluation | In class assessments | Alignment of teaching and assessment activities | Longitudinal or cross-sectional assessments | Test | Are there unintended consequences? |
| Quality assurance agencies/ accreditation bodies | Institution | | System design (i.e. transfer) | Institution | Program (curriculum development) | Improved course design | | Course development and program alignment | Improved retention and graduation rates | Faculty/student satisfaction | Survey | How can the policy be improved? |
| National/ jurisdictional governments | Sector | | Labour market alignment and economic development | Nation/ jurisdiction | Institution (quality assurance/ accountability) | Performance indicators | | Demonstrating achievement (i.e. badges/learning passports) | Improved quality assurance processes | Number of transfer students/credits awarded | Institutional data | |
| International/ regional government or non-governmental organisations | Credential | | International coordination (and comparison) | International/ regional | System-level (coordination and accountability) | | | Large scale assessments | Improved comparative understanding | Improved internal and external quality assurance processes | Gap analysis | |

# Structural features

- **Actors**
  - Programs, Institutions, Discipline associations, Quality assurance agencies/ accreditation bodies, National/jurisdictional  governments, International/regional organisations
- **Focus of expectation**
  - Generic skills, Program, Discipline, Institution, Sector, Credential
- **Type of expectation**
  - Learning objective, Learning outcome, Competency

# Policy formulation

- **Goals**
  - Transparency, Teaching and learning, Institutional improvement/quality, System design, Labour market alignment and economic development, International coordination (and comparison)
- **Level of expectation**
  - Student (in course), Student (across courses), Program, Institution, Nation/jurisdiction, International/regional
- **Target audience**
  - Students, Public/employers, Faculty (course design), Program (curriculum development), Institution (quality assurance/ accountability), System level (coordination and accountability)
- **Audience needs**
  - Indications of program outcomes, Indications of student capacities, Ways to capture student achievement, Improved Course design, Performance indicators

# Implementation

- **Strategy type**
  - Articulation, Implementation, Evaluation
- **Activity**
  - Writing learning outcomes, Curriculum mapping, In class assessments, Course development and program alignment, Demonstrating achievement (i.e.. badges/learning passports), Large scale assessments
- **Expected impact**
  - Better skill-matching in labour market, Improved results of assessments, Alignment of teaching and assessment activities, Improved retention and graduation rates, Improved quality assurance processes, Improved comparative understanding

# Evaluation

- **Evidence**
  - Retention and graduation rates, Graduates in field closely aligned to program, Longitudinal or cross-sectional assessments, Faculty/student satisfaction, Number of transfer students/credits awarded, Improved internal and external quality assurance processes
- **Data Collection**
  - Pre and post implementation graduation rates , National graduate survey, Test, Survey, Institutional data, Gap analysis
- **Evaluation of policy success**
  - Are the primary goals being achieved? Are there positive/negative impacts elsewhere? Are there unintended consequences? How can the policy be improved?

# Mapping examples

1. OECD's AHELO Feasibility Study Engineering Strand (AHELO)

# Map of AHELO policy activities

| Structural features | | | Policy formulation | | | | Implementation | | | Evaluation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actors | Focus of expectation | Type of expectation | Common goals | Level of expectation | Target audience | Audience needs | Strategy type | Activity | Expected impact | Evidence | Data Collection | Evaluation of policy success |
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| Quality assurance agencies/ accreditation bodies | Institution | | System design (i.e. transfer) | Institution | Program (curriculum development) | Improved Course design | | Course development and program alignment | Improved retention and graduation rates | Faculty/student satisfaction | Survey | How can the policy be improved? |
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| International/ regional government or non-governmental organisations | Credential | | International coordination (and comparison) | International/ regional | System level (coordination and accountability) | | | Large scale assessments | Improved comparative understanding | Improved internal and external quality assurance processes | Gap analysis | |

AHELO

# Mapping examples

1. OECD's AHELO Feasibility Study Engineering Strand (AHELO)

2. Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF)

# Map of AHELO and OQF policy activities

| Structural features | | | Policy formulation | | | | Implementation | | | Evaluation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Actors | Focus of expectation | Type of expectation | Common goals | Level of expectation | Target audience | Audience needs | Strategy type | Activity | Expected impact | Evidence | Data Collection | Evaluation of policy success |
| Programs | Generic skills | Learning objective | Transparency | Student (in course) | Students | Indications of program outcomes | Articulation | Writing learning outcomes | Better skill-matching in labour market | Retention and graduation rates | Pre and post implementation retention rates | Are the primary goals being achieved? |
| Institutions | Program | Learning outcome | Teaching and learning | Student (across courses) | Public/employers | Indications of student capacities | Implementation | Curriculum mapping | Improved results of assessments | Graduates in field closely aligned to program | National graduate survey | Are there positive/negative impacts elsewhere? |
| Discipline associations | Discipline | Competency | Institutional improvement/ quality | Program | Faculty (course design) | Ways to capture student achievement | Evaluation | In class assessments | Alignment of teaching and assessment activities | Longitudinal or cross-sectional assessments | Test | Are there unintended consequences? |
| Quality assurance agencies/ accreditation bodies | Institution | | System design (i.e. transfer) | Institution | Program (curriculum development) | Improved Course design | | Course development and program alignment | Improved retention and graduation rates | Faculty/student satisfaction | Survey | How can the policy be improved? |
| National/ jurisdictional governments | Sector | | Labour market alignment and economic development | Nation/ jurisdiction | Institution (quality assurance/ accountability) | Performance indicators | | Demonstrating achievement (i.e. badges/learning passports) | Improved quality assurance processes | Number of transfer students/credits awarded | Institutional data | |
| International/ regional government or non-governmental organisations | Credential | | International coordination (and comparison) | International/ regional | System level (coordination and accountability) | | | Large scale assessments | Improved comparative understanding | Improved internal and external quality assurance processes | Gap analysis | |

AHELO

OQF

AHELO and OQF

# Mapping examples

1. OECD's AHELO Feasibility Study Engineering Strand (AHELO)

2. Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF)

3. Badges

# Map of AHELO, OQF and Badges policy activities

| | Structural features | | | Policy formulation | | | | Implementation | | | Evaluation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Actors | Focus of expectation | Type of expectation | Common goals | Level of expectation | Target audience | Audience needs | Strategy type | Activity | Expected impact | Evidence | Data Collection | Evaluation of policy success |
| | Programs | Generic skills | Learning objective | Transparency | Student (in course) | Students | Indications of program outcomes | Articulation | Writing learning outcomes | Better skill-matching in labour market | Retention and graduation rates | Pre and post implementation retention rates | Are the primary goals being achieved? |
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| | International/regional government or non-governmental organisations | Credential | | International coordination (and comparison) | International/regional | System level (coordination and accountability) | | | Large scale assessments | Improved comparative understanding | Improved internal and external quality assurance processes | Gap analysis | |

Legend:
- AHELO
- OQF
- AHELO and OQF
- Badges
- OQF and Badges
- All

# Exercise 1: Mapping your activities

- Identify a real or imagined learning outcomes activity
  - Consider the structural features
  - Map the policy formation and implementation activities

- Connect in small groups to discuss

- Report back

# Exercise 2: Planning an evaluation

- Bring the policy plan into larger groups

- Identify one or two to work through the Evaluation phase

- Report back

# Learning outcomes as a policy

Formulate

Implement

Evaluate
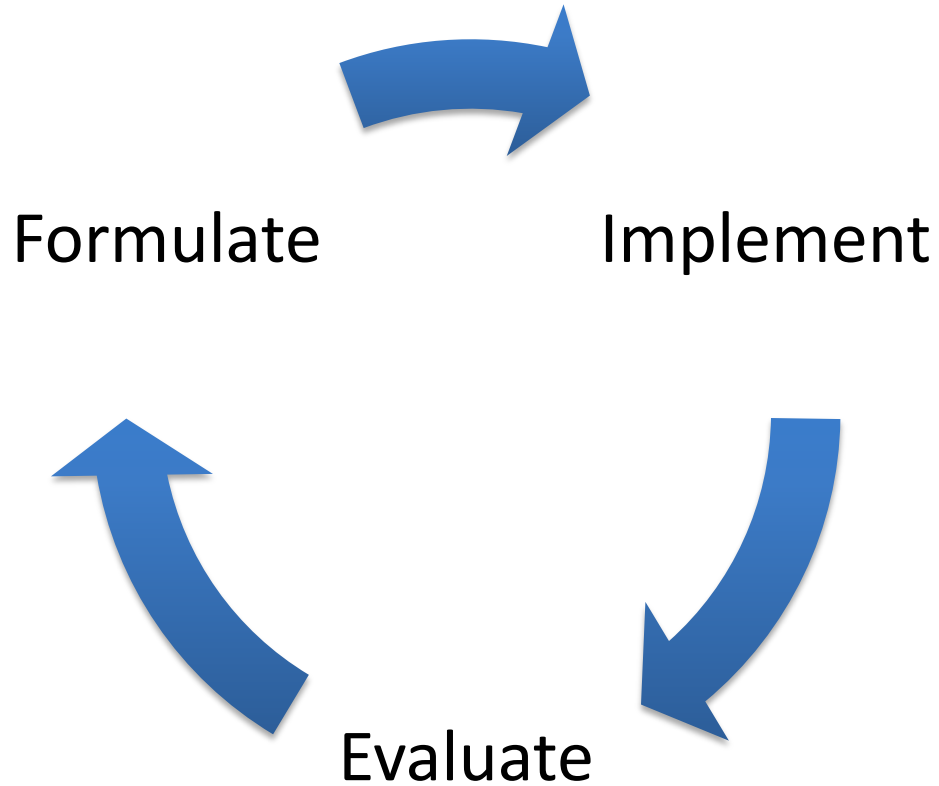
Thank you for your participation!

MaryCatharine.Lennon@Ontario.ca