

Program Level Learning Outcomes in Music and Technology: Toward Improved Assessment and Better Communication

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Abstract : The assessment of learning outcomes at the program level has attracted much international interest from the perspectives of quality assurance and ongoing curricular redesign and renewal. This paper examines program-level learning outcomes in the field of music and technology, an area of study that has seen an explosion in program development over the past fifteen years. The Audio Engineering Society (AES) maintains an online directory of educational institutions worldwide, yielding the most comprehensive inventory of programs and courses in music and technology. The inventory includes courses, programs, and degrees in music and technology, music and computer science, music production, and the music industry. This paper focuses on published student learning outcomes for undergraduate degrees in music and technology and analyses commonalities at institutions in North America, the United Kingdom, and Europe. The results of a survey of student learning outcomes at twenty institutions indicates a focus on three distinct student learning outcomes: (1) cross-disciplinary knowledge in the fields of music and technology; (2) the practical application of training through the professional industry; and (3) the acquisition of skills in communication and collaboration. The paper then analyses assessment mechanisms for tracking student learning and achievement of learning outcomes at these institutions. The results indicate highly variable assessment practices. Conclusions offer recommendations for enhancing assessment techniques and better communicating learning outcomes to students.

Keywords : quality assurance, student learning; learning outcomes, music and technology

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