

Essential Learning Outcomes

The Richard Stockton College
of New Jersey

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Research, Rubrics, and Reflection

Even though we are in the early stages of ELO implementation, Stockton faculty, administrators, and staff have already begun to produce scholarship on many aspects of Essential Learning Outcomes. In this month's newsletter, for instance, you will have a chance to learn about ways in which two faculty colleagues incorporate ELOs into their courses, assess students' ELO competency, and reflect on their ELO pedagogy.

As well, the newsletter contains the Stockton presentation from the 2014 IUPUI Assessment Institute, a collaboration that includes an overview of the history of ELOs at Stockton, a literature review of pedagogical scholarship about ELOs and high-impact teaching practices, an example of ePortfolios for the display of students' work with ELOs, and a case study of a course designed to provide opportunities for students to develop one ELO in-depth.

You can also read some results of a research study, currently out for review, that follow from the work of the 2020 funded ELO Study Group.

Finally, the newsletter contains one attempt at creating a draft rubric for the Adapting to Change ELO.

Assessment of Creativity and Innovation ELO in the Marketing Communication and Social Media Class

Diane Holtzman
Associate Professor of Business Studies, Management

Sometimes it may be difficult to frame assignments as real-world experiences for students. However, in the Marketing Communications and Social Media MBA class in the Fall 2013, having students work with regional small businesses and non-profit organizations on creating integrated marketing communication plans blended well with the course objectives and gave students meaningful assignments that would help community groups. The course is offered once a year, typically in the fall semester as an elective for MBA students and for students in other graduate programs.

At the completion of the project students have a major assignment—creation of an integrated marketing communication plan using social media. This project could be added to students' portfolios to highlight students' communication skills, professionalism, teamwork, program competence, critical thinking, and creativity/innovation. Many of these measurable ELOs also align with the Assurance of Learning assessments needed for the School of Business AACSB accreditation. Although the project encompasses many ELOs, the areas assessed in the MBA class last academic year were creativity and innovation in solving the marketing problems of the community partners.

Go to page 2, Holtzman

Excerpt from:

Ethics: Who should teach it? How? What? Why?

Jill Gerhardt
Associate Professor of Computer Science and Information Systems

In the spring of 2011, Stockton's Provost challenged the faculty and staff to define ten essential learning outcomes (ELOs) that each Stockton student should achieve by graduation. The Provost wrote, "These outcomes will combine a robust and flexible liberal arts education with adaptive marketable skills." These ELOs were not meant to be specific for a particular program, but meant to encompass all programs. The ten ELOs are: Adapting to Change, Communication Skills, Creativity and Innovation, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Global Awareness, Information Literacy and Research Skills, Program Competence, Quantitative Reasoning, and Teamwork.

Because I had been teaching Ethics for a long time (Gerhardt, 2001), I decided to serve as a Member of Stockton's Essential Learning Objectives Ethics Committee: fall 2011 until spring 2013. The result of that committee's work is the Ethical Reasoning Learning Map-June 2013 [which can be accessed [here](#)].

Concurrently, Stockton's CSIS Program is working toward accreditation. ABET, an accreditation board for the computing major has nine Learning Outcomes for the CSIS major. Letter e is: An understanding of professional, ethical, legal, security and social issues and responsibilities. In particular, I wanted to concentrate on an understanding of ethical issues and responsibilities.

In the past (Gerhardt, 2001) I was concerned more with ethical awareness and the student's attitude concerning ethics rather than ethical reasoning. I wanted students to be able to recognize a situation as having an ethical dimension, explain why it is a dilemma, and identify those most immediately affected. These are all listed under Level 1 on Stockton's Ethical Reasoning Learning Map...

Go to page 2, Gerhardt

Essential Learning Outcomes
and the Organization of
Institution-Wide Assessment
at a Public, Liberal Arts College

IUPUI Assessment Institute
Indianapolis, IN
October 2014

**Click the
image to
access the
presentation**

Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) will help all Stockton students focus on the intellectual and marketable talents needed to prepare for personal and professional success in the 21st century.

Holtzman, cont'd.**Background of the project**

As part of this project student teams worked with representatives from external organizations about the marketing challenges the organizations faced. Students then developed marketing strategies that were integrated in terms of design, message strategy and social media. These experiences provided the graduate students opportunities to hone their skills, acquire new skills, and deepen their relationships within the community as well as with non-profit organizations and small businesses. Importantly, it also required students to think creativity in solving the marketing problems faced by the community members and developing innovative ways to address the problems using marketing principles as well as social media.

After meeting their clients, the student teams narrowed the scope of the marketing challenges they would be addressing and determined which strategies, types of marketing collateral (fliers, brochures) and forms of media would be used to address the marketing issues. Through these projects, students refined their professional interactions as they applied theories and lessons into real-world situations. Students learned the importance of flexibility and understanding in working with the clients. In addition students gained additional experience in communicating with the clients through different channels such as emails and phone calls. In addition to these skills, students also developed collaborative teamwork skills in addressing the marketing issues, planning and writing the integrated marketing communications plan, and presenting the plan to the clients and to the class.

ELO focus

The focus for the ELO assessment in this class last academic year was on Creativity and Innovation; I wanted to assess students' knowledge and skills in the development of creative solutions to marketing problems, to determine students' competencies in applying marketing concepts, and to connect the marketing principles with their creative solutions. This assessment information would help guide my revision of the instructional methods as well as course content and was essential since the course does not have any pre-requisites of marketing, advertising or social media. I wanted to assess students' ability, after their introduction to marketing and social media concepts in the course, to note how they connected marketing and social media principles to actual solutions and products in creative/novel ways. It was important feedback for me to note where the instruction and the project had strengths and where there were weaknesses that could be improved when the project was revised and refined.

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Findings and Closing the Loop:

1. Of the 8 team projects and 2 individual projects, 6 team projects and the 2 individual projects scored with the majority of the assessment at the "skilled level"; 1 team projects scored, overall, with the majority of the assessment at the "competent" level and 1 team project scored with the majority of the assessment at the "aware" level.
2. After applying the rubric to the finished projects, the integrated marketing plans that ranked at the "competent level" did not have multiple approaches for solving the external partners' marketing problems-only the minimum amount of collateral was used (brochures, ads, and social media); likewise at the "aware level" students did not identify the multiple approaches nor did they connect the ideas or solutions that applied to the marketing problem expressed by the community partner. Composition of teams with some students not having marketing or advertising backgrounds were factors that may have contributed to the "competent" and "aware" rankings on the marketing plan project.
3. "Closing the Loop": from applying the rubric to the students' final projects, I was able to identify the areas in which additional instruction and experience needed to be offered. This semester, based on the results of the assessment in the last academic year:
 - I have added additional readings and a more comprehensive review of basic marketing concepts, basic advertising principles within the first quarter of the semester before the project begins.
 - In addition, from the results, I am presenting more case studies throughout the term in order to provide additional experiences and discussions in creative thinking to solve marketing problems.
 - Likewise, in addition to the case studies, students' progress in developing the marketing plans is reviewed in class sessions allowing feedback from the students—not only from the instructor-- on developing novel approaches and identifying multiple approaches to solving real-world marketing problems.
4. Assessment will take place again this term to determine if the "Closing of the Loop" activities provided students with a stronger background to brainstorm and generate ideas, and develop collateral, that helps solve the marketing problems of the community members and to more strongly connect marketing principles with proposed solutions.

Gerhardt, cont'd.

In my most recent study (Spring 2014), my goal was to help students make a decision based on ethical reasoning. This is Level 2 on the Stockton Learning Map. This is also what many authors suggested such as Martin (2011). She recommended using case studies or complex ethical scenarios for practicing ethical reasoning.

I decided to do this because our students will find themselves in ethical dilemmas in the real world and I wanted to help prepare them. Also, I knew that it would make the course more interesting for the students and me. Finally I knew it would help the students make a personal connection to the subject matter and therefore increase their motivation.

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Gerhardt, cont'd.

I embedded an understanding (i.e. awareness and reasoning) of ethical issues and responsibilities into my Advanced Systems Analysis Class in spring 2014. I did this by discussing situations with ethical ramifications and reviewing the ACM [Association of Computing Machinery] Code of Ethics. As mentioned in the introduction, many educators stress the importance of making students aware of a professional code of ethics.

Stockton's Ethical Reasoning Learning Map was applied to the assessment of ABET's Student Outcome letter e: an understanding of ethical issues and responsibilities. The performance indicator was: Students will recognize and evaluate ethical issues involved in a professional setting.

The ethical issues came from Stockton's Ethical Reasoning Learning Map:

- Identify those people most immediately affected.
- Explain how those involved will be affected.
- Identify more than one course of action.
- Identify values and principles that apply.
- Explain the reasons for the decision made....

The difficult part of the experience was in evaluating the subjective data. In the future I would create a more structured answer sheet where the response area for the five individual issues is clearly labeled. In spite of the challenge in assessing the subjective data, the responses were clearly Satisfactory. The goal was that 70% of the students would score Satisfactory, and the result is that 85% scored Satisfactory.

The results for the objective data were also good with an average correct response rate of 97%. The goal of this study was that 70% of the students would get those questions correct. In the future I would suggest additional objective questions concerning the ACM Code of Ethics.

The difficult part of the experience was in evaluating the subjective data. In the future I would create a more structured answer sheet where the response area for the five individual issues is clearly labeled..... In the future I would [also] suggest additional objective questions concerning the ACM Code of Ethics.

Selected References

- Gerhardt, J. (2001). Put ethics and fun into your computer course, *The Journal of Computing in Small Colleges*, 16, 247-251.
- Gerhardt, J., & Trail, M. (2008). Developing an equal playing field in the information systems classroom, *Information Systems Education Journal (ISEDJ)* 6. Retrieved from <http://isedj.org/galley/7.656.1500>
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Drafting a Rubric for the Adapting to Change ELO

In last month's *ELO Newsletter*, I solicited course assignments/exercises designed to help Stockton students develop competency with adapting to change. To follow up, I thought I would share the thought process leading to a first iteration of an instrument to measure students' development of this ELO. We need an instrument for this and the other ELOs, as the learning maps offer guidance for teachers and students but do not and were not intended to serve as rubrics for measuring outcomes.

Students experience many opportunities for adapting to change during their years at Stockton. Whether faculty design courses and assignments to instruct and to assess this ELO, students may reflect on their personal/social/intellectual/spiritual growth in their ELO ePortfolios with reference to it. Consequently, we will need an instrument to measure students' growth in the midst of changes and as agents of change. Such an instrument may also assist teachers who aim to integrate the adapting to change ELO into their courses/assignments.

The learning map defines adapting to change as the ability to successfully engage in and navigate new circumstances and create opportunities, including partnering with others, identifying necessary learning activities, practicing appropriate coping mechanisms, performing relevant research, and designing innovative solutions or strategies for initiating necessary change. From the work of the Adapting to Change ELO team, this definition provides direction for rubric construction since it suggests:

- a number of sources and motivations for change (internal/external, perceived/necessary)
- essential conditions for change (disposition/openness/maturity and adequate knowledge/preparation)
- various effects of change (i.e., in personal values, external environment, intellectual or emotional/spiritual makeup, etc.).

The following draft rubric is an attempt to create an instrument from a definition and, as a result, may not suit any actual assignment or may suit only some learning contexts for adapting to change with more face validity than others. For instance, the rubric may fit courses/assignments that offer opportunities for developing adapting to change by identifying a needed change and taking steps to implement/effect it more successfully than it does forms of adapting to change that require responses to changes in the external social/physical environment, to internal emotional/psychological/spiritual life, or to intellectual reflection.

I hope the draft rubric sparks dialogue about the process of "rubricizing" ELO learning maps. Please share your ideas, comments, and suggestions. We look forward to them.

Thanks to the Adapting to Change ELO team for its contributions to this draft!

DRAFT Adapting to Change Rubric*

<p>Definition: the ability to successfully engage in and navigate new circumstances and create opportunities, including identifying necessary learning activities, practicing appropriate coping mechanisms, and designing innovative solutions or strategies for initiating necessary change</p>	<p>Aware: recognizing circumstances requiring change</p>	<p>Competent: participating in activities leading to change</p>	<p>Skilled: demonstrating independent initiation/design of strategy leading to change</p>
Criteria		Performance Indicators	
Connections	Acknowledging the limitations of working alone to identify and resolve a complex problem	Working in assigned groups to outline a problem that requires change	Selecting a group of individuals to work on a problem that requires change
Attitudes/Perceptions	Recognizing the need to examine beliefs and biases and to determine if those beliefs and biases might interfere/benefit successful progress/action	Identifying the groups' beliefs and biases that might interfere/benefit successful progress/action	Demonstrating leadership in facilitating elimination/mitigation of interfering or damaging attitudes/perceptions
Knowledge	Evaluating available documents/materials/resources to determine their usefulness	Locating resources to facilitate understanding of the situation and to offer guidance	Using existing materials to map out a plan of action and to generate new resources related to the situation that requires change
Decision Making	Analyzing and comparing the effectiveness of various decisions	Choosing between various decisions the one best suiting the situation that requires change and explaining the reasons for the choice	Formulating multiple decisions and collaboratively selecting the most appropriate one for the situation that requires change or revising to create a workable decision
Actions	Assessing the success and future implications of various plans/strategies	Selecting from among given actions those most appropriate to the situation that requires change and explaining the reasons for the choices	Designing actions that lead to effective change, organizing actions in a workable timeline, and initiating the process of change

*This rubric is adapted from Stockton's ELO Learning Map for Adapting to Change (<http://www.stockton.edu/elos>) and from the outline for Steps in the Change Process in *Outcomes for Success* (2000) by Jane Reisman and Judith Clegg, which can be accessed at http://orsimpact.com/resource-download/?resource_id=272.

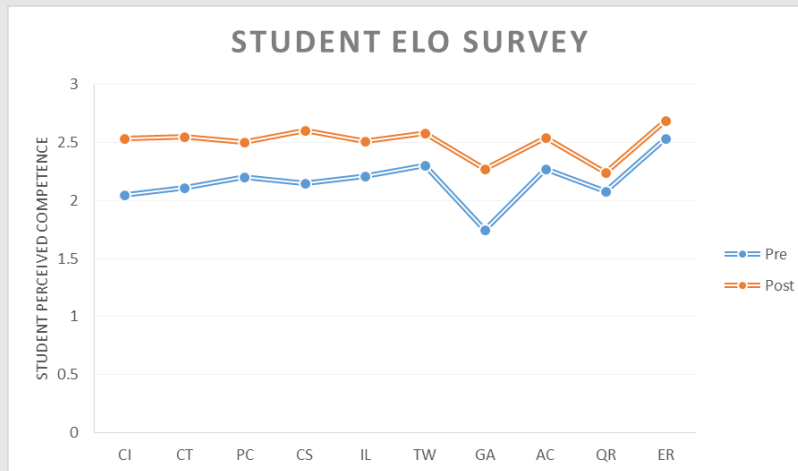
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Excerpt from:**Integrating and Assessing Essential Learning Outcomes: Fostering Faculty Development and Student Engagement**

Susan Cydis, Mary Lou Galantino, Diane Holtzman, Carra Leah Hood, Mary Padden, and Marc Richard

Thanks to all of the participants in the 2020 funded ELO Study Group during the fall semester 2014. As a result of participants' careful, thoughtful, and generous contributions to the work of the ELO Study Group, the facilitators were able to conduct meaningful research from which the following findings emerged.

ELO Student Perception Survey. Findings indicated that overall scores on the post-test were higher with a mean difference of 0.25 ($p \leq .05$). These results show increase in student perceived ELO competence over the course of the semester. The differences in the means for each ELO in each course showed increases ranging from 0.16 to 0.52. Furthermore, the respective means of the ELOs targeted by faculty participants for integration into their respective courses showed an increase at a level of significance.



Themes Identified in Student Statement Data. The thematic analysis of student statements focused on references to ELOs as interpreted by researchers. [The graph] reflects the results which included between 10 and 36 references for each ELO targeted for instruction. Students cited many examples of growth in the areas of these ELOs. For example, students' responses included references to the ability to think beyond the scope of the class as evidenced by the following statements.

"I have learned how to think and create beyond the scope of the class to achieve an open-ended goal."

"It gave some perspective to the theories and knowledge we have learned by applying it to real world scenarios."

Students also identified the need to integrate the use of critical thinking skills with other information and settings as evidenced in the following [example].

"I have learned not to take everything I read at face value, but rather to compare what I read to my own personal views and to consider why a particular culture feels a certain way about a topic."

<http://www.stockton.edu/elos>



Carra Leah Hood Assistant Provost 609.652.4606 carra.hood@stockton.edu

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