

Loyola University Chicago Research Report

Research Team:

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Research Question:

In what ways do ePortfolio artifacts capture the students' engaged learning experiences?

Processes of Inquiry

As the Engaged Learning University requirement was launched in fall 2012, the Engaged Learning (EL) Sub-Committee of the Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUS) worked with members of the Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy to identify learning outcomes, critical reflection prompts, and an assessment rubric, with the intention of designing an assessment program for EL. The researchers worked with the EL Sub-Committee on an evaluation/research project for the EL university requirement.

In terms of our research methodology, we considered rubrics, surveys, focus groups, interviews, clustering, cataloguing, and artifact analysis. We decided on surveys and artifact analysis, utilizing a stratified random sample to select artifacts. We analyzed the selected artifacts using a created rubric as our main methodology. During fall 2013, the EL Sub-committee calibrated the Engaged Learning rubric, reviewed sample assignments from students, and applied the EL rubric to evaluate students' responses to the Engaged Learning critical prompts. A total of 39 student artifacts were collected and reviewed. The members of the EL Sub-Committee, made up of faculty and staff, served as the review committee.

In spring 2014, the evaluation/research project enlisted both new and returning faculty who were teaching EL courses across all five categories (Academic Internship, Service-Learning, Fieldwork, Public Performance, and Undergraduate Research) as participants. To broaden

involvement, a review committee was created consisting of faculty instructors who teach EL courses and who participated in the assessment pilot. During May and June 2014, the review committee again calibrated the EL rubric, reviewed sample assignments from 50 students, and applied the EL rubric to evaluate students' responses to the Engaged Learning critical prompts.

In fall 2014, we increased artifact selection across a broader range of EL courses. We collected 278 student artifacts from Service-Learning, Academic Internship, and Fieldwork courses. Through a stratified random sample, the review committee assessed 100 student artifacts. The aggregated results from all artifact assessments are displayed in Tables 4 and 5.

The following four sections provide more insight into our assessment process: the EL learning outcomes, the prompts given to students, the assessment rubric, and the reviewers.

Section 1: Engaged Learning Outcomes:

Building on participation in an engaged learning course (defined as a structured project or experience of service-learning, an academic internship, professional fieldwork, undergraduate research, or a public artistic performance), a Loyola student will be able to:

1. synthesize out-of-classroom and in-classroom learning through reflection
2. relate the experience of engaged learning to intellectual, personal, professional, and/or civic development
3. connect the engaged learning experience to the mission of Loyola University Chicago to 'expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith.'

[Approved February, 2013 by Engaged Learning sub-committee of BUS]

Section 2: Engaged Learning Assignment Prompts and Evaluation Rubric

The [Engaged Learning university requirement](#) is designed to support the mission of Loyola University Chicago to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith" by embedding opportunities in courses for students to experience the different forms of experiential learning, helping them to enhance their knowledge, skills, and values. All undergraduate students are required to complete an Engaged Learning course/s totaling at least three (3) credit hours. To ensure that the Engaged Learning student learning outcomes are being met, a standard assignment was incorporated into a select group of Engaged Learning courses and assessed by a faculty/staff review committee using a common rubric. This assignment entails responding to ONE of the following prompts below. Please submit your artifact in TaskStream (specific instructions on which assignment to include inserted here by instructor).

1. Create an artifact for your ePortfolio that demonstrates an impact this engaged learning experience has had on your professional development, especially in light of Loyola University Chicago's mission to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith."
2. Create an artifact for your ePortfolio that demonstrates an impact this engaged learning experience has had on your civic development, especially in light of Loyola University Chicago's mission to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith."
3. Create an artifact for your ePortfolio that demonstrates an impact this engaged learning experience has had on your personal development, especially in light of Loyola University Chicago's mission to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith."
4. Create an artifact for your ePortfolio that demonstrates an impact this engaged learning experience has had on your intellectual development, especially in light of Loyola University Chicago's mission to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith."

The Center for Experiential Learning serves as a resource to support the Engaged Learning University Requirement of Loyola University Chicago. For more information, on Engaged Learning, please visit www.luc.edu/engagedlearning or contact the Engaged Learning Subcommittee of the Board of Undergraduate Studies at engagedlearning@luc.edu.

Section 3: Engaged Learning Rubric

Levels/Criteria	Does Not Meet/ Partially Meets Expectations (1)	Meets Expectations (2)	Exceeds Expectations (3)	Score/Level
Synthesis through Reflection	Does not clearly connect out-of-class and in-class experiences as they relate to the Engaged Learning Experience, or does not demonstrate meaningful reflection upon the experience.	Articulates clear connections between the in-class and out-of-class components of the Engaged Learning Experience, and reflects meaningfully upon the experience.	Demonstrates clear connection/s between the in-class and out-of-class components of the Engaged Learning Experience, and demonstrates exceptional insight in meaningful reflection upon the experience.	
Relate Experience to Development	Lacks clear connection between the Engaged Learning experience and the student's intellectual, personal, professional, and/or civic development, or does not demonstrate meaningful reflection upon the experience.	Clearly articulates how the Engaged Learning experience contributed to the student's intellectual, personal, professional, and/or civic development, and reflects meaningfully upon the experience.	Clearly articulates how the EL experience contributed to intellectual, personal, professional, and/or civic development, and demonstrates exceptional insight in meaningful reflection upon the experience.	
Connect Engaged Learning to Loyola University Chicago Mission	Does not articulate a clear connection between the Engaged Learning experience and Loyola's mission to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith."	Articulates a clear connection between the Engaged Learning experience and Loyola's mission to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith."	Demonstrates how the Engaged Learning experience helped <u>put into action</u> Loyola's mission to "expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith."	

**Section 4: Engaged Learning Faculty/Staff
Review Committee Members***

JoBeth D'Agostino, Chair of the Engaged Learning Sub-Committee of BUS,
Associate Provost for Curriculum Development

Patrick Green, Director, Center for Experiential Learning

Alex Grigorescu, Associate Professor, Political Science

Michelle Kusel, ePortfolio Coordinator, Center for Experiential Learning

Jackie Long, Associate Professor, College of Arts & Sciences

Jack McLean, Assistant Vice President, Student Development

Shannon Milligan, Assessment Coordinator, Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy

Stacy Neier, Instructor, Marketing, Quinlan School of Business

Carol Scheidenhelm, Director, Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy

Jeanne Sokolec, Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Social Work

*Membership of this committee intentionally drew from members of the Engaged Learning Sub-Committee of BUS in order to provide extensive feedback on the evaluation research project, as well as from members of the Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy and the Center for Experiential Learning; other members were faculty instructors who have a history of teaching engaged learning courses and participated in this pilot.

Main Findings*

Survey Results

After both fall 2013 and spring 2014, surveys were sent out to faculty teaching courses in the EL assessment pilot and students who submitted work for assessment.

Student Survey Responses

Students were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

- I understand the value in creating this assignment for the assessment of the [Engaged Learning requirement](#)
- There was value in creating this assignment for my own development
- I am proud of the work I created for this assignment

The responses are presented in Table 1. We combine the responses for both fall 2013 and spring 2014 to show the number of responses in each of the rating categories (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree).

Table 1-Student Rating Responses (Frequency by Rating Category)

Value for Assessment		
Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
0	10	12
Value for Development		
Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2	6	12
Pride in Work		
Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
0	8	13

Faculty Survey Responses

Similar to the students, faculty were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

- I understand the value in my students creating this assignment for the assessment of the Engaged Learning requirement
- There was value in my students creating this assignment for their own development

In Table 2, we combine the responses for both fall 2013 and spring 2014 to show the number of responses in each of the rating categories (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree).

Table 2-Faculty Rating Responses (Frequency by Rating Category)

Value for Assessment			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	0	5	2
Value for Students			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	0	4	3

As you can see from the results in Tables 1 and 2, overall both faculty and students agree that there is value in the creation and submission of artifacts, both for the assessment and for the students' development.

Student Artifact Review Results

After each semester, a faculty/staff review committee assessed artifacts submitted by the students in response to the EL critical prompts. Each student was assessed by three members of the review committee and every member of the review committee was teamed with each other member at least once. These artifacts were assessed against the EL rubric to gauge student performance on the EL learning outcomes. The number of student artifact submissions by semester, along with the number of artifacts assessed, are included in Table 3. As previously mentioned, the artifacts to be evaluated were selected through a stratified random sampling process.

Table 3-Number of Student Artifacts Submitted and Assessed

Semester	Submitted	Evaluated
Fall 2013	39	39 (14 Internship, 24 Service Learning, 1 Performance)
Spring 2014	81	50 (5 Internship, 45 Service Learning)
Fall 2014	278	100 (15 Internship, 81 Service Learning, 4 Fieldwork)
Total	398	189

The review results are provided in Table 4. The rubric criteria are listed in the left column and the rubric rating categories are listed across the top. Since each student was assessed by three reviewers, their “score” for each criterion is an average of the three individual scores. The numbers in the second, third, and fourth columns represent the number of students whose average score fell into that rating category for that rubric criterion. For example, the average score for 133 of the 189 students fell into the “Does Not Meet/Partially Meets Expectations” rating category for the “Synthesis through Reflection” criterion. The numbers in the last category represent the average scores for that criterion, across all students and all reviewers, with an overall average, across all students, criteria, and reviewers, of 1.55.

Table 4-Average Ratings by Criteria and Performance Level

Criteria	Does Not Meet/Partially Meets Expectations (1.00-1.99)	Meets Expectations (2.00-2.99)	Exceeds Expectations (3.00)	Average
Synthesis Through Reflection	133 (70%)	54 (29%)	2 (1%)	1.59
Relate Experience to Development	102 (54%)	82 (43%)	5 (3%)	1.79
Connect Engaged Learning to Mission	168 (89%)	21 (11%)	0	1.28
Overall				1.55

Another way of looking at this data is to consider the number of times each rating category was used for each criteria. We present this data in Table 5. Since this method presents actual ratings, rather than averages, we get a better sense for student performance. For example, Table 4 paints a rather bleak picture of student performance on the learning outcomes. However, Table 5 shows that while most ratings fell into the lowest rating category, a fair number of students did receive ratings of “Meet Expectations” or “Exceeds Expectations,” especially for “Relate Experience to Development.”

Table 5-Ratings by Criteria and Performance Level

Criteria	Does Not Meet/Partially Meets Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Synthesis Through Reflection	312	174	81
Relate Experience to Development	218	248	101
Connect Engaged Learning to Mission	435	106	26
Overall	57%	31%	12%

We did consider whether high or low ratings were due to particular raters being consistently harsher or more lenient than others. An analysis showed that the difference between the average for the “harshesht” rater and the “most lenient” rater was less than one point. In addition, for 153 of the 189 students (81%), the ratings were all within one category of each other (e.g. all raters gave either 1’s or 2’s, not 1’s and 3’s). Based on these analyses, we conclude that there was strong consistency across raters. We plan to follow-up with more detailed analyses of inter-rater reliability and rater analysis.

*Analysis of data and data graphics provided by Shannon Milligan, Assessment Coordinator, Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy

Value of Research for ePortfolio Practice

- Allowed us to identify gaps in communication and technology hurdles, thus identifying needed tutorials and additional support structures.
- Allowed us to conduct informal comparisons of the quality of one artifact versus multiple artifacts in an ePortfolio.
- Heightened the exposure of the ePortfolio program at the institution.
- Exposed students to the ePortfolio system in a non-overwhelming way by only requiring one artifact (though some students submitted multiple artifacts).
- Identified gaps with our system/vendor (e.g. a student enrolled in multiple EL courses can only submit one artifact right now)

Perceived Value of Loyola’s Participation in the Coalition for Research and/or Practice

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of our participation in the Coalition is the community that has evolved among cohort members. From the first meeting, the attendees have willingly and openly shared their topics and encouraged an exchange of ideas. This type of interaction was set up by the Coalition leaders and effectively carried out in the majority of the meetings.

Discussion opportunities with our colleagues have enhanced and focused our understanding of the research task before us. Cohort members have provided useful feedback about our research topic and process, offered suggestions for further research, and helped us rethink findings as we apply them to the larger topic. The placement of these discussions in the overall Coalition agenda was well conceived and matched the pace university groups were following.

Research shared by the Coalition organizers was generally useful but sometimes carried our discussion far afield of where we felt our focus should be concentrated; since our meeting times were short, the need to make the best use of time together was especially important to attendees. Overall,

the feedback from the leaders was direct and helpful, especially the on-site discussions and informal sit-downs with coalition groups.

Another thing we especially appreciated was the responsiveness of the leaders to concerns of the group. For example, when our university requested that materials be submitted electronically rather than as print outs (always keeping the university's ecological focus in mind) the leaders did establish digital space where we could upload our assignments and still access other university's work. The original goal of sharing the documents with others could still be met with this arrangement and saved dozens of trees (and eliminated the need to carry documents from campus to meeting). We were not the only university who appreciated this opportunity.

Overall, the experience has been a positive one. We have met a large number of colleagues from other universities with whom we have conferred on other projects. For example, our Chicago colleagues from DePaul have worked with us on some assessment programming spurred partly by the work with the coalition. We have been in contact with some of the group from University of Cincinnati about retention issues they were interested in learning about. Our friends from Deakin have provided us with feedback and suggested research approaches.

But the other community that was established was our own team's research community. It is sadly the case that often we have to be away from the university in order to find time to work together on a campus project. The research we have done for this project will be a great guide for further projects as we apply what we learned, use and revise the model, and approach other important ePortfolio assessment projects on campus.

Plans for dissemination and or application of findings

- EL Subcommittee
- Board of Undergraduate Studies
- Office of the Provost
- Center for Experiential Learning Annual Report
- Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy Annual Report
- Engaged Learning faculty
- Publication / Conference Presentations

Next Questions Emerging from Inquiry

1. *What impact does multimedia reflection have on engaged learning experiences?*
2. *Is there a significant difference in the quality of reflection between written narrative reflection artifacts versus multimedia reflection artifacts?*
3. *How do educators evaluate multimedia reflection artifacts in comparison to narrative reflection artifacts?*

Rationale:

In our evaluation research project, we observed the following and generated the above questions based on implications of our evaluation research:

- Students submitted videos, graphics, links, and papers
- There was no consistent performance difference by artifact media
- The major source of performance difference was whether instructors followed the prompts that were crafted to address the Engaged Learning requirement

4. *What are strategies to assist students in practicing critical reflection?*

Rationale:

In our evaluation research project, we observed the following and generated the above question based on implications of our evaluation research:

The evaluation project of the Engaged Learning University Requirement revealed information about the assessment process of collecting the student artifacts more than student performance on the three (3) Engaged Learning outcomes. Because there is evidence of student learning and evidence of aspects of the Engaged Learning outcomes, the recommendations from this evaluation projected focused on improving the artifact collection process within the assessment protocol. The faculty/staff review committee met in June 2014 to determine the following recommendations; the decision was made by the committee members to not alter the Engaged Learning outcomes, prompts, or rubric, but rather focus on the assessment process to garner better data for evaluation of the Engaged Learning outcomes.

Recommendations for 2014-2015 Assessment of the Engaged Learning University Requirement

- Standardize faculty instructions with explicit directions for students by August 1st (for fall semester) and December 15th (for spring semester)
- Communicate the “lessons learned” to faculty from the assessment pilot, such as:
 - Place instructions in syllabus
 - Include a lesson in sakai
 - Announce at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester.
- Communicate directly with students and provide explicit directions on how to focus their reflection
- Identify a selected list of engaged learning courses each semester across all 5 categories (service-learning, academic internships, undergraduate research, fieldwork, and public performance)
- Send invitation to faculty instructors of the selected list to invite participation (communicate as an expectation, not voluntary), e.g., Your course has been selected to participate in the Engaged Learning Assessment for fall 2014. Please communicate the following instructions to your students. . . .
- Repeat process for spring 2015 semester assessment of the Engaged Learning University Requirement