



## Southwestern Student Learning Assessment Steps

### EXAMPLE 2: Business Program Achievement of the SWOCC Student Learning Assessment Outcomes Plan

1. **Map courses to Program/Discipline Outcomes**. Over the academic year 2013-14 the business department reviewed the program outcomes for the AAS degree in Small Business Management/Entrepreneurship. National Entrepreneurship standards were used to eliminate some redundancies in outcome statements, and some were just reworded to narrow their scope to facilitate measurement of what a student should know, understand, and/or be able to demonstrate upon program completion. Using these revised outcomes, the department's program mapping working group then mapped the program's courses to the outcomes. Each course was evaluated in the context of its contribution towards programmatic outcomes. Courses that did align with an outcome were rated as to whether they served as an introductory (I), reinforcement (R), or measurements (M) of outcome attainment. The course/program outcomes assessment spreadsheet visually revealed any potential shortfalls of course to program outcome alignment, as well as a top-heavy distribution of course clustering on one outcome which might indicate an inefficiency in course distribution across the program.
2. **Map Program/Discipline Outcomes to GSLOs**. This institutional-level mapping of College-wide GSLOs to the AAS Program Outcomes allows the team to verify that the mapping process does seem to suggest that the re-written program outcomes have an institution-wide scope in alignment with the GSLOs. The mapping process allows the team to visually ensure that the GSLOs were evenly covered by program outcomes; all GSLOs were mapped to two or three program outcomes.
3. **Map assessment tools to Program/Discipline and Course Outcomes**. All course learning outcomes were assembled in a single spreadsheet to facilitate this phase of the mapping. Each course supporting specific outcomes was then assessed as to whether it introduced the outcome, reinforced the outcome, or a course assignment provided a measurement tool to assess the students' attainment of the program learning outcome. The reflective ePortfolio model was adopted as a key assessment tool to more directly measure student achievement of program and GSLOs. The assessment mapping provides the structure for the ePortfolio's evidence of learning by identifying the specific assessments that serve as measurements of program and GSLOs.
4. **Develop measurable tools and criteria for each Program/Discipline Outcome**. The Business Program Assessment Report form details the measurable tools and criteria for each program outcome. At the course level, some specific course assessments serve as measurements of both program outcomes and course-level student learning outcomes.

Appropriate rubrics have been developed to measure both reflective learning and specific discipline concepts. For example, current research suggests that reflection is key to integrative ePortfolio practice (Eynon, Gambino, & Totok, 2014). Therefore, the ePortfolio rubric gives the reflective component of the ePortfolio a greater weight than only the inclusion of an artifact as evidence of learning and overall ePortfolio formatting considerations. The [ePortfolio rubric](#) attempts to measure student reflections as evidence of integrating knowledge across the program.

5. **Record measurement data.** Students present their reflective ePortfolio to a panel made up of faculty, agency representatives, and business community members. Spring term 2014 was the first term the ePortfolio was used as an assessment of program outcomes. A rubric was developed to assess program completion. The [Program Assessment Report](#) form shows measurable criteria of 80% of students meet or exceed expectations as identified in rubric to be the level that would indicate successful achievement of the program outcome.
  
6. **Analyze measurements data and verify benchmarks.** Part I of the rubric assessed whether the ePortfolio contained evidence of each program-level learning outcome along a scale of 1 through 4. For Program Outcome #1, 70% of the students met or exceeded expectations using the rubric, so the measurable criterion was not met. The results for the other Program Outcomes are on the [Program Assessment Report Form](#).  
The faculty debriefing brought out the following points:
  - The rubric did a good job ensuring that all program outcomes had been addressed.
  - The rubric did not adequately quantify the disparity of ePortfolio development.
  - The rubric gave more weight to the placement of the learning artifacts in the ePortfolio than it did to the reflection on the learning that had taken place.
  - The student's choice of artifact to support a specific program outcome was sometimes problematic.
  - The choice of web platform for the ePortfolio constrained some students in being able to fully exhibit their evidence of learning and also limited their ability to organize their reflections and artifacts in a logically meaningful way.
  
7. **Adjust outcomes and curriculum as necessary—at course and/or program/discipline level.** This step brings the process full cycle. The business program team analyzed the data from the ePortfolios, in which the students have included their course-level evidence of learning and their integrative program-level reflections. The analysis suggested a need to rework the [Capstone ePortfolio Rubric](#) to capture the weight the reflective learning component of the ePortfolio.

In the spring 2014 Capstone class students were able to choose whatever evidence of learning they wanted to include thus demonstrating attainment of the program learning outcome. Some choices of evidence of learning held a very weak connection to the

intended program outcome. The analysis suggested standardizing key assessments as measurements of attainment of program outcomes, as can be viewed on the [Map course Outcomes to Program/Discipline Outcomes](#)

There is a need to develop program templates to standardize the assessments across the different students. The availability of free website/ePortfolio tools changes from month to month. The customization a student is able to perform using a specific web-based tool can also change, becoming more restrictive over time. However, given these challenges, using the ePortfolio as a tool to assess program completion appears to be a very robust, student-centered, method for assessment.

Program and course outlines are reviewed by the Business Advisory Committee made up of local business community members. The last advisory meeting was during fall term 2014 and the next one will take place during spring term 2015. Outcomes are evaluated in the context of current knowledge, skills, and abilities required to be a successful small business owner and/or employee. Both outcomes, course and program-level, are additionally tracked to stay in alignment with National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education (<http://www.entre-ed.org/Standards Toolkit/>).

The ePortfolios are developed in the capstone class which is offered each spring term. During spring term the faculty team will focus on whether the updated ePortfolio rubric captures the intended focus of the student's reflection on learning. Additionally, the ePortfolios will indicate the overall strength of the key assessments as indicators of program outcomes.

## Sources

Eynon, B., Gambino, L., Török, J. (2014). What Difference Can ePortfolio Make? A Field Report from the Connect to Learning Project. *International Journal of ePortfolio*, 4, doi 10.1037/0278-6133.23.5.54.

The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education. (2004). *National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.entre-ed.org>.

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