

Project Name

Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning Evaluation Project

Principal Investigator Bidhan Chandra

Campus Empire State College

Year of Project 2013

Tier Tier Three

Project Team

- Dr. Keith Landa, Purchase College
- Rebecca Smolar, SUNY Levin Institute
- Dr. Runi Mukherji, The College at Old Westbury
- Dr. Patrice Prusko Torcivia, Cornell University
- Dr. Susan Jagendorf-Sobierajski, SUNY Cobleskill

Overview Summary

Pilots and strengthens cross institutional adoption of e-Portfolio initiatives on participating campuses through creating a Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning Evaluation Toolkit to improve the development and assessment of international experiential learning activities

Outcomes Summary

Complete toolkit doc available [here](#).

Project Abstract

E-Portfolio adoption is a priority for the SUNY system. E-Portfolios are a formidable tool to help students demonstrate learning and present future employers with a deep understanding of what students gained from their college experience. Buy-in from both students and faculty are important to e-Portfolio adoption. If e-Portfolio assessment tools are readily available to faculty and staff, they are more likely to champion their

use and encourage students to place artifacts in the e-Portfolios. The SUNY FACT2 e-Portfolio task group is charged with developing a strategy to implement e-Portfolios at SUNY. One sub-set of SUNY faculty and staff that could help campuses adopt e-Portfolios is international education staff and those engaged in efforts to internationalize the curriculum. This group understands the importance of outcomes assessments and wants to measure the effectiveness of these types of programs. Furthermore, international educators can help the Chancellor implement the recently announced SUNY Plus initiative to encourage students to participate in experiential learning activities by rewarding participants with a transcript notation. E-Portfolios could help students and faculty better understand the impact of these experiences.

One of the early e-Portfolio adopters, Stony Brook, emphasized the use of Robert Barr's and John Tagg's Instruction Paradigm to assess e-Portfolios. This paradigm focuses on outcomes assessment, using inquiry, reflection, and integrative learning. After piloting e-Portfolios, Stony Brook identified its challenges, such as "Gathering a meaningful collection of artifacts or E-Portfolios to use for Outcomes Assessment", "Identifying the competencies and developing the rubrics needed to evaluate artifacts of student learning for Outcomes Assessment," and "Developing assignments aligned with designated competencies."

One competency that international educators would like students to develop is cross-cultural competency. As noted in the Power of SUNY Report Card "Beyond being a pathway to culturally competent employment, SUNY campuses are also the training grounds for many future corporate and community leaders."

Cross-cultural competency is very difficult to document. A group of SUNY faculty and staff, led by the Levin Institute, recently formed the "International Experiential Learning Group" to develop assessments to measure the attainment of cross-cultural skills from international (or internationally-focused) experiential learning opportunities. Some Learning Group members are formally part of the Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning Evaluation Project while others are not. Members of the group hail from SUNY Empire State College, The College at Old Westbury, Purchase College, SUNY Cobleskill, SUNY Cortland, The College at Brockport, SUNY Ulster, New Paltz and the Office of International Programs. The group is consulting with the SUNY FACT2 e-Portfolio task group to carry-out this project and to promote it, upon completion of the pilot.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU)'s Intercultural Value Rubric will be the basis for the project's learning outcomes. The rubric assesses the following cross-cultural skills: empathy, cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks, curiosity, verbal and nonverbal communications, and openness. For example the learning outcome at the capstone level for cultural self-awareness is "Articulates insights into own cultural rules and biases"; at the top milestone level it is "Recognizes new perspectives about own cultural rules and biases"; and at the benchmark level it is "Shows minimal awareness of own cultural rules and biases." The team will explore other cross-cultural skills as well. While providing outcome statements, the AACU Intercultural Value Rubric does not provide guidance on how to translate the outcomes into experiential learning opportunities.

The team plans to create, pilot, assess, and promote a Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning Evaluation Toolkit, which will include: 1) Revised AACU Intercultural Value Rubric (that has a Likert scale for assessment purposes), 2) Student Orientation Guide and Pre/Post Intercultural Competency Questionnaire to help students prepare for the cross-cultural interactions, 3) Student Guidelines to help students create digital assignments that reflect the rubric's outcome statements and 4) Faculty Guidelines to help faculty craft assignments that address the learning outcomes of the revised AACU Intercultural Value Rubric. SUNY Levin will develop an interactive webpage to host the above Toolkit.

The Toolkit will be piloted by 17 faculty members or staff at SUNY Cobleskill, SUNY Empire State College, The College at Old Westbury, and SUNY Ulster. The project team members (PI, Statistician, and 3 identified pilots) as well as 12 additional pilots will be recruited. They will pilot the Toolkit in the following experiential learning opportunities: COIL courses, study abroad programs, faculty-led trips, international or intercultural service learning projects, and other curricular internationalization projects.

Dr. Landa, Co-PI will lead virtual e-Portfolio workshop(s) in Mahara for the pilot faculty and students at

campuses that have not yet chosen a platform (The College at Old Westbury, SUNY Cobleskill, and SUNY Ulster). All SUNY Empire State College faculty and students will be trained in Mahara at SUNY Empire State College. Pilot faculty will also attend a second workshop to help them create experiential assignments that reflect the AACU Intercultural Value Rubric. After the assessment process, the team will revise the Toolkit and start promotional efforts, scheduled to begin in Spring 2014 at the CIT and COIL conferences. Once revisions are made, the project team will work with the SUNY FACT2 e-Portfolio task group and e-Portfolio teams on the participating campus to introduce this tool as part of the e-Portfolio adoption process on the participating campuses. This project will be scalable across SUNY as it provides all the resources faculty and staff will need to create effective international experiential learning opportunities that build cross-cultural skills as demonstrated in e-Portfolios.

Reports and Resources

- [Final report](#)
- [This document](#) contains all necessary components of the finally developed Toolkit
- [Short report](#) on some of the benefits from the project and some of the challenges faced
- [Project website](#)
- [Mid-project report](#)
- [Project outcome report](#)

Assessment, Understanding, Monitoring Student Progress

- Course Evaluation
- E-Portfolios
- Outcomes Assessment