

HEQCO Learning Outcomes Assessment Consortium – Confederation College

Overview

Confederation College of Applied Arts and Technology is conducting a multiphase research project to create a critical-thinking assessment tool based on the college's Indigenous Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and Indigenous understandings of critical thinking. The ILOs are a set of seven learning outcomes that were developed in a collaboration between the Negahneewin College of Indigenous Studies at Confederation College and the Negahneewin Council, a group of Indigenous representatives. The ILOs seek to provide all learners with the opportunity to learn from and understand Indigenous worldviews, culture and context in relation to their own field. These ILOs relate to the critical-thinking skills outlined in the Essential Employability Skills developed by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development. The team facilitating the creation, validation and implementation of an ILO rubric is led by Brenda Small, vice-president of the Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning (CPAL) at Confederation College.

Methodology and Timeline

The project contains three phases:

Phase 1 | Steering Committee and Literature Review (March 2016 – November 2016)

Steering Committee: The steering committee consists of the following members: vice-president (academic), five school deans, ILO officer, vice-president (CPAL) and project manager. The committee members are responsible for: providing advice (i.e., recruitment and implementation); communicating key findings, timelines and requests; acting as champions of the project and leaders of change in their departments; and participating in the research.

Literature Review: The literature review will provide an understanding of critical thinking through an Indigenous lens. It will focus on outcomes of Indigenous education, global citizenship and an assessment of “non-conventional” understandings of critical thinking. The literature review will include both national and international resources.

Phase 2 | Draft Rubric and Testing (November 2016 – May 2017)

The objective of this phase is to create and test a draft rubric for the ILOs. An environmental scan of course outlines will be conducted to identify samples of assignments and marking rubrics. These artifacts will provide the foundation for drafting the rubric.

Once the draft rubric is created, there will be a three-part testing process:

- **Part 1:** The rubric working group (5–10 members from the steering committee) will be identified and brought together to collaboratively mark and discuss the rubric against examples of students work.
- **Part 2:** New samples of student work from the communications program will be evaluated by the working group.
- **Part 3:** Student work from the communications program will be evaluated by members external to the working group.

Phase 3 | Handbook and Anchor Paper (May 2017 – May 2018)

The discussions around the rubric will be analyzed and used to inform the creation of an anchor paper that will be a part of a handbook. In this phase, there will also be professional development opportunities at Confederation College that will extend the rubric into programs that do not have ILO content. The working group will create an ILO toolkit for faculty that will help facilitate future expansion.

Contact Information

For more specific information about this project or for any questions, please contact Alexandra MacFarlane, Senior Researcher at HEQCO, learningoutcomes@heqco.ca, Brenda Small, vice president of the Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning (CPAL) at Confederation College, sbsmall@confederation.on.ca or Emily Willson, Project Manager (Research) at CPAL, emily.willson@confederationcollege.ca.