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Communicating Value: A Comprehensive Learner Record Toolkit

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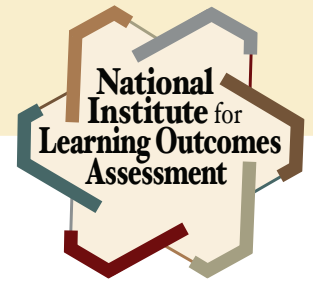
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NILOA Mission

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), established in 2008, is a research and resource-development organization dedicated to documenting, advocating, and facilitating the systematic use of learning outcomes assessment to improve student learning.



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Planning for Effective Communication of Comprehensive Learner Records

This toolkit is designed to help you effectively communicate about the value and importance of Comprehensive Learner Records by developing value propositions and tools to make the case for the work.

The toolkit includes the following elements:

Making the Case: These resources help guide you through reflective questions regarding appropriate communication channels and messaging that can help make the case for why Comprehensive Learner Records are needed, what initiatives they connect with, and what problems they help address for the institution. Questions in this section encourage you to reflect on the communication strategies that are most effective for your context, as well as the language that can best resonate with your audience regarding the value of Comprehensive Learner Records.

Communicating Value: Once you reflect on the best approach to make the case for the value of assessment and effective communication methods, this section of the toolkit walks you through the important elements needed to communicate to your audience. Elements such as clearly identifying the problem and how Comprehensive Learner Records help resolve it are addressed here.

Making the Case

These questions are designed to help you become clearer on the value of Comprehensive Learner Records (CLR) by developing clear “value propositions” as to why an institution/program/unit would engage in CLR in the first place.

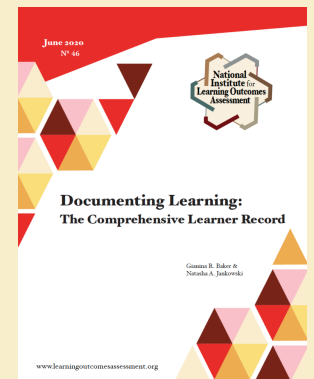
Making the Case for Comprehensive Learner Record

- What value does a Comprehensive Learner Record offer to the student? Faculty? Program? Institution? Employer?
- What problem(s) or questions is the Comprehensive Learner Record helping/trying to solve or address?
- How does the Comprehensive Learner Record address that problem for this specific institution or program?
- How does the Comprehensive Learner Record strengthen institutional or academic brand?
- How does the mission of your institution support Comprehensive Learner Record efforts and how might having a Comprehensive Learner Record support the mission of your institution?
- What issues regarding timing need to be considered in the value proposition?
- Other issues or contextual considerations for value proposition development (state-related, institutionally specific, initiative-related, historical considerations, etc.)?

Making the Case Long-Term

- How does the Comprehensive Learner Record help support new initiatives? How can the Comprehensive Learner Record be integrated into new strategic efforts? How is the Comprehensive Learner Record relevant to current and forthcoming efforts?
- With what other ongoing work is the Comprehensive Learner Record aligned or could be aligned?

Use the Comprehensive Learner Record paper to introduce stakeholders to the concept and idea.



Communicating the Value

There will inevitably be confusion from faculty, staff, and students within the institution as well as among external stakeholders about the value and purpose of the Comprehensive Learner Record. As such, anyone talking about or leading such efforts should be ready with a brief explanation of the value of the work to the institution/program/unit and the student. The following activity is designed to develop clear, short arguments about the value of CLR's modeled after the development of "Elevator Pitches". To help get you started we offer some broad, overarching value statements about CLR's. These are too broad and not institution-specific to simply adopt off the list, but they do offer starting points or idea generators for your institution-specific value proposition.

- The CLR is a pro-active advising tool to help students focus on the learning they have yet to master, making their time to degree more efficient and relevant to their needs.
- The CLR is a portfolio of student work from throughout an institution, making clearer the value and worth of higher education, making learning transparent to students, and unpacking evidence of learning and making it more explicit and meaningful to students, employers, and institutions.
- The CLR empowers students to communicate effectively to employers what they know and can do coupled with the evidence of that learning within a particular context.
- In light of COVID-19, institutions and students need a different way to capture and document learning for retention and to support the most vulnerable student populations, supporting transfer and intake of learning from other sources which can be validated in a learning record.
- The CLR captures evidence of student learning in a transcript to make the transcript more informative to various audiences including students.
- The CLR serves to demonstrate that a college education is more than a chronological enrollment summary, allowing students and those with whom they choose to share their records, to see and understand what was learned.
- Institutions are able to provide a summary of learning that more clearly articulates, to internal and external audiences, learning within a course or program with a CLR.
- As a student is moving through an institution, the CLR can be a mechanism for advising offices to help students see the learning outcomes associated with different learning experiences and opportunities.
- The CLR serves to make the intentional design of institutions transparent to key stakeholders to help better explain the value-added by higher education institutions by clearly connecting the learning associated with different activities, courses, and experiences offered to students.
- The CLR not only provides transparency as to why something is being done, it also provides a means to indicate the connected nature between academic and student affairs learning that builds towards shared institutional goals. This directs students and others to see the connected nature of learning, but also the value of how the different pieces are supporting and driving towards the same end goals, albeit in various ways.
- The CLR positions institutions to engage in badging and incremental credentialing faster and easier.



Elements to Consider

Provide Some Context: What Is It?

Explain the background of CLR efforts and the relationship to the institution – where did this work come from and what it is for? Be prepared to answer the “What is a CLR?” question.

Problem Identification: What Problem Does this Address?

What challenges, problems, or issues does CLR address for the institution/program/stakeholder? Be prepared to clearly state why this work is important. Be prepared to answer the “So what?” question.

How CLR Helps: How Does it Help?

What value does it add, or in what ways does a CLR help solve the identified problem(s)? Be prepared to address how CLR efforts can help. Does this build off existing work?

Address Misconceptions and Concerns

What concerns or areas of confusion will you need to address that are specific to the stakeholder with whom you are speaking? What misconceptions need to be cleared up? This may entail talking about how this is different from things that were done before.

The Individual: Why Does This Matter to Me?

Be prepared to address the inevitable question of “what do I have to do differently” or “How does this impact me?” Be prepared to answer, “Why does this matter to me?” questions.



Make Your Own

Elements to Consider

**Provide Some Context:
What Is It?**

**Problem Identification:
What Problem Does this
Address?**

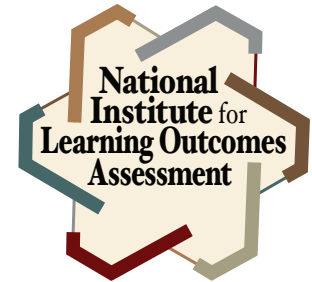
**How CLR Helps: How
Does it Help?**

**Address Misconceptions
and Concerns**

**The Individual: Why
Does This Matter to
Me?**

About NILOA

- The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) was established in December 2008.
- NILOA is co-located at the University of Illinois and Indiana University.
- The NILOA website contains free assessment resources and can be found at <http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org>.
- The NILOA research team has scanned institutional websites, surveyed chief academic officers, and commissioned a series of occasional papers.
- NILOA's Founding Director, George Kuh, founded the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE).
- The other co-principal investigator for NILOA, Stanley Ikenberry, was president of the University of Illinois from 1979 to 1995 and of the American Council of Education from 1996 to 2001.



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