



University of Rochester and the Comprehensive Learner Record

Andrew Wolf & Suzanne Carbonaro

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The higher education transcript, in its traditional sense, may finally be getting a facelift that is well overdue. Shifts in the delivery of postsecondary education are in motion and a focus on outcomes and skills are at the forefront of helping to usher in changes in the way higher education verifies knowledge, skills, and degrees. Comprehensive Learner Record (CLR) is at the epicenter of this change, helping to provide transparency to evidence of learning and making learning evidence more explicit and meaningful to students, employers, and institutions.

What is Comprehensive Learner Record or CLR?

According to Educause (2019), Comprehensive Learner Record “is a digital asset that helps students both better understand their learning and share a verifiable record of their knowledge and accomplishments. With a learner’s consent, the CLR gathers data about performance beyond just course grades, with an ultimate goal of capturing, recording, and communicating learning when and where it happens across a student’s higher education experience.”

CLR is the new generation of secure and verifiable learning records which includes the context of learning achievements within courses, competencies and skills, and employer-based learning achievements. CLR can be a vehicle for learning in real-time and supports an ecosystem of skills that employers value, providing valuable opportunities to share knowledge, skills and abilities with a greater audience.

IMS Global Learning Consortium has been working closely with its higher education, K-12 and educational technology partners over the last five years to define a standard for CLR that provides a “modern and web-friendly interoperable learner record structured for easy understanding yet flexible enough to support a wide range of use cases to meet the needs of learners and workers, registrars and employers.”

Recommended by AACRAO, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the IMS Global CLR is designed to support traditional academic programs, co-curricular and competency-based education as well as employer-based learning and development—in any domain where it’s important to capture and communicate a learner’s and worker’s achievements in verifiable, digital form (IMS Global).

This case study highlights the University of Rochester’s School of Nursing’s need to pivot from a traditional ePortfolio system to CLR, use assessment data to close gaps, and leverage the student voice and experience to inform programmatic decisions and student employability.

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The University of Rochester

The University of Rochester is located in western New York State and its diverse community of stakeholders includes more than 3,000 faculty, 12,000 students, and 30,000 staff. The University of Rochester School of Nursing (URSON) offers a number of high quality academic programs with a wide range of options that include master's, doctoral and as well as accelerated and RN completion degrees, a rich research initiative, and extensive clinical and educational partnerships throughout the University of Rochester Medical Center and wider community. The University of Rochester School of Nursing's (URSON's) mission is "Building on a pioneering tradition of unifying nursing education, research, and practice, the UR School of Nursing pursues excellence in clinical and scientific learning, discovery, and nursing care within an environment of diversity and inclusion." It is through its mission that URSON fosters equitable and more modern assessment processes using CLR.

URSON ePortfolio to CLR transformation

As part of a broader initiative to shift from a traditional didactic curriculum to a competency-driven curriculum, the URSON developed an ePortfolio system but quickly realized that it was not enough to support student learning and program level assessment.

ePortfolio was a manual process for both students and faculty, presenting both parties with duplicative work, reviewing past work for the faculty and "search and rescue" old work for students. This was also created within the university's learning management system and served as a "one-off" for students who could not access the ePortfolio nor saw value for it after they completed their final course where ePortfolio sat as a capstone assessment of competency.

ePortfolio, due to its process and limited function, did not allow for URSON to assess learning in real-time nor did it have a co-curricular component weaved in—meaning students could not self-issue additional work products and link it to the program's competency framework.

Further, COVID-19 significantly impacted experiential learning, causing faculty and students to scramble to provide a myriad of alternatives to clinical learning and simulation. Instead of a single planned clinical experience, disparate experiences were combined, which was hard to handle without a comprehensive way to present back various achievements of learning all in one place. Although this was an acute change, it presages a future in which access to clinical sites continues to be more and more difficult. UofR needed a better way to prepare for this future. Thus, the URSON began a transition towards CLR.

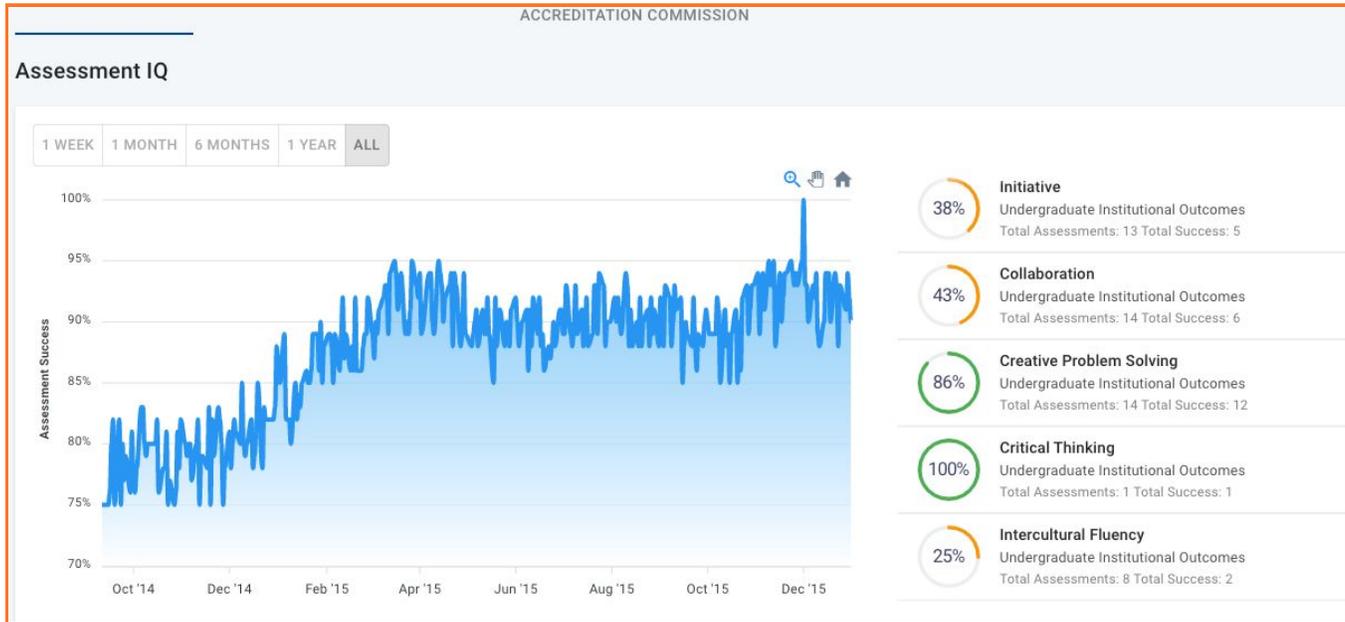
URSON Using CLR

The need for an integrated assessment management system that enabled a continuous flow of data from multiple measures in one location quickly gained traction across the decentralized university.

AEFIS is an education technology company that partners with colleges and universities to improve learner success and empower authentic lifelong learning. AEFIS's powerful assessment management software helps higher education institutions drive measurable results and engage students throughout their lifelong learning journey through Comprehensive Learner Record (CLR). AEFIS was chosen as the assessment platform that helped to better integrate curriculum and assessment processes at the institutional level, which ultimately provided URSON the infrastructure it needed to modernize curriculum and assessment processes and provide the foundation for CLR.

Once this foundation was developed, URSON began mapping professional competencies, to program and, course learning outcomes, and assignment rubrics. URSON created the components of an end-to-end CLR to provide real-time data on students' performance related to competencies required by the nursing profession.

The infrastructure of CLR enables synthesis among varied learning experiences that differ from student-to-student, and day-to-day. The competencies which have been mapped in the CLR provides a conceptual framework to pull the learning together into a coherent whole, and allows faculty to continue to track and measure student achievement.



A Work in Progress

The CLR infrastructure built so far allows URSON to:

1. Evaluate student competency through key assessments linked to AEFIS from Blackboard LMS
2. Focus in on those few students not meeting competency standards to provide needed support
3. Enable students to self-issue other work products and link them to the competencies
4. Provide a quality assurance that all students complete courses and programs with the competency(ies) needed to progress in the program, or to enter practice.

Using a set of pilot courses, URSON began building the curriculum infrastructure to support their CLR outcomes beginning in March 2020. From there AEFIS and URSON had a series of meetings, various presentations and opportunities to discuss plans for rolling out CLR to students in the spring 2021 timeframe. **This process of digitizing curriculum is leading to the end-to-end CLR which URSON desperately needs to better prepare students and provide them with a record that best reflects their achievements to employers.** In this effort, CLR serves as both a formative and summative assessment, which enables students to reflect on feedback in context with their learning and skills attainment and share records of achievement with potential employers.

AEFIS is the first ed tech company to attain IMS CLR certification and URSON will be one of the first institutions to use the new CLR platform. Dr. Andrew Wolf has led the URSON team in completing the curriculum mapping that will lead to an end-to-end CLR.

References

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