



Designing an Online Learning Community

Academic Plan 2013 Fall Term Project Team Status Report (December 2013)

Mohawk College's 2012 [Academic Plan](#) is a thematic accumulation of responses from both external and internal stakeholders when asked these three questions:

- 1. What might make students want to come to Mohawk over the next ten years?**
- 2. What core capabilities and skills might students need for the future?**
- 3. How might we enable high-quality learning over the next 10 years?**

Stakeholder responses included:

- Leverage simulation technology to deliver relevant education to a broader student population p.3.
- Create personal learning environments for students with the drive to manage their own learning p.5.
- Integrate development of key 21st century skills into all programs p.7.
- Provide greater student support and career-option clarity, from pre-admission to post-graduation p.9.

Project Team Members & Task

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The Team's task was to identify key information and spokespersons to communicate academic and student services information via an online learning community using student produced videos, interviews and simulations. An Online Learning Community was to support and supplement Mohawk's many successful face-to-face student engagement initiatives.

Project Team's Objectives

1. Evaluate the learning needs and styles of students aged 10-20 who are future or current students at Mohawk College.
2. Research the skills required in the world and the workplace over the next 10-20 years.
3. Understand the strengths and challenges of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Online Learning Communities (OLCs) to determine which is most suited for the college learner.

4. Understand the specific learning needs and information requirements of college students: pre-admission, first semester, second through final semester, and post-graduation.

Project Team's Findings

1. New/different methods of teaching and learning can be supported in an Online Learning Community (OLC) [The Shifting Nature of Teaching and Learning](#).
2. Content covered in Keys to Success: Building Analytical, Creative, and Practical Skills, Mohawk Professor Peter Maurin Canadian author, could be effectively migrated to an Online Learning Community [Student Success from Monographs to MOOCs to OLCs](#)
3. Numeracy Fluencies of First Year First Semester students were identified as particularly weak, were identified as a subject, by Professor Elizabeth Martin that could be gamified and included in the OLC: [Numeracy Skills for College Success and Continuous Learning](#).
4. The principles of gamification and progressive badge-earning are recognized elements of an online community - student engagement in the Online Learning Community will increased with elements of gamification and badging.
5. Employers expect recent college graduates to have highly developed digital skills and the ability to be continuous learners. [Canada's Top Employers for Young People](#)

Project Team's Recommendations

That a member of the College's senior leadership support, this first of its kind in Ontario initiative, and be the Project Sponsor for this college-centred Online Learning Community: [Proposed Project Charter for the Creation of Mohawk's First Online Learning Community](#)

Project Team's Key Human and Digital Resources

All members of this project team researched and presented evidence online learning communities as environments to support student success.

[C21 Canadians for 21st Century Innovation and Learning](#).

Conference Board of Canada. [2000+ Essential Employability Skills](#).

Gluszynski, T., Werkneh, G., & Zhao, H. (2014). [Employed Adult Learners in Ontario and Canada: Engaged and Disengaged](#). Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.

Scott, L. & Campbell, A. (2011). [Skills and Productivity Action Plan for Canada](#). Conference Board of Canada.

[KPMG Survey of Canada's Top Employers for Young People](#). 2013

ISTE [Advancing Digital Age Teaching](#). 2012.

ISTE [Necessary Conditions to Effectively Leverage Technology for Learning](#) 2012.

[Partnership for 21st Century Skills](#). 2001.

[The Shifting Nature of Teaching and Learning in Today's University](#) by Richard Wiggers HEQCO Executive Director Research and Programs. August 2013.