

Level Up

Student Experience Blueprint

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In the evolving CCR community, we must meet the demands of our changing student population. As an institution with 80% of students commuting to and from school each day, it is imperative that we implement a co-curricular recognition program that considers the entire student experience both inside and outside of the classroom and on and off campus.

Considering recommendations generated from interviews and focus groups with students, staff, and faculty, a review of the CAS Standards, consultation with career development professionals, and hiring organizations, we have developed a four-level co-curricular recognition program. Level Up: The Student Experience Blueprint focuses not only on student involvement, but is a journey through personal discovery, reflection and storytelling. The program is hosted on our learning management system, Desire2Learn (D2L), and incorporates StrengthsFinder, CollegiateLink, an ePortfolio and a series of workshops designed to assist students with the curation of their student experiences into their storytelling method of choice.

The foundation of the Level Up program is comprised of four guiding theories:

1. Baxter Magolda's Theory on Self-Authorship: Holding space for students to define their beliefs through personal exploration.
2. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle: Encourages the use of personal experience as a basis for observation, reflection and application of learning resulting from the progress through the cycle.
3. Chaos Theory: From a reflection-based learning perspective, Chaos Theory suggests that experiences often considered unimportant or trivial might have an equal weight in shaping perspective as the experiences often considered most important.
4. Martin Seligman's PERMA-V Model: The theoretical model of happiness (PERMA-V) helps us to understand Positivity, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments and Vitality and what we can do to maximize each of these areas to live a life of fulfillment.

High Impact Practices

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) describes High Impact Practices (HIPs) as "enriching educational experiences that can be life-changing."¹ The learning opportunities included in each level have been intentionally designed to provide students with tools to reflect upon and engage in potentially high impact practices including:²

- First-year seminars
- Learning communities
- Writing-intensive workshops
- Common intellectual experiences
- Community Service learning
- Diversity experiences
- Capstone experiences

¹ NSSE - National Survey of Student Engagement. (n.d.). Retrieved March 20, 2017, from http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/high_impact_practices.cfm

² Kuh, G. D. (2009). What student affairs professionals need to know about student engagement. *Journal of College Student Development*, 50(6), 683-706.

Level 1

Discover Your Strengths

Purpose

To provide participants with tools to assist with the identification of strengths and resiliency techniques so that they transition smoothly into the Ryerson community.

Required Components

StrengthsFinder

Participants can choose to discover their strengths by completing a StrengthsFinder assessment to gain insight into their top five (5) personal strengths.

*Gallup StrengthsFinder is a tool used to help you uncover your talents. When you know your strengths, it becomes easier to identify the classes and craft the careers that allow you to do what you do best. For more information on StrengthsFinders, visit <http://strengths.gallup.com/>.

ThriveRU

The ThriveRU Resiliency Series is a four (4) session program designed to change participants set point for happiness by building skills and changing attitudes so that they can bounce back from challenges and thrive. Participants will learn how mindfulness, gratitude, optimism, self-compassion and grit (perseverance) combine to build resilience. Grounded in the principles of Martin Seligman's PERMA-V model³, participants are encouraged to consider their well-being using six elements: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments and Vitality.

Examples of Optional Components

- ThriveRU Workbook
- StrengthsFinder Workshop: Sculpting Talents into Strengths
- StrengthsFinder Workshop: Developing Strong Relationships
- REACH: Leadership Coaching Program
- Weekly/Bi-weekly/Monthly Reflections
- Use of D2L message board

Engagement Indicators of High Impact Practices

Student-Staff Interaction

- Talked about career plans and/or story with a staff member

Higher-Order Learning

- Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts

Reflective & Integrative Learning

- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.)
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective
- Learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept

Discussions with Diverse Others

- People from a race or ethnicity other than their own
- People from an economic background other than their own
- People with religious beliefs other than their own
- People with political views other than their own

³ Seligman, M. (2012, December 13). PERMA. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK6K_N2qe9Y.

Supportive Environment

- Encouraging contact among participants from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)
- Providing opportunities to be involved socially
- Helping participants manage their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)

Evidence of Learning

Learning Intention #1	Students who participate in Level 1 will be able to list their top five (5) strengths.
Learning Intention #2	Students who participate in Level 1 will be able to describe their strengths in relation to their work with others.
Learning Intention #3	Students who participate in Level 1 will be able to describe two (2) components of Martin Seligman's PERMA-V model.
Learning Intention #4	Students who participate in Level 1 will be able to explain how mindfulness, gratitude, optimism, self-compassion and grit (perseverance) combine to build resilience.

Level 2

Explore Your Community

Purpose

To provide participants with an online community where they can track their involvement on and off campus so that they recognize their experiences as opportunities for learning.

Required Components

ConnectRU

Participants will self-report experiences into the Level Up Experience Tracker on connectRU.ryerson.ca under seven (7) employability themes that have been drawn from research including surveys, interviews and focus groups with students, staff, faculty and employers and the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills 2000+.⁴

These include:

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Community Engagement
- Innovation & Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Personal Management & Responsibility
- Storytelling with Research & Data

Examples of Optional Components

- Participation in on-campus clubs, committees, course unions, groups, etc.
- Attendance at specific events
- Event/group specific reflections
- Use of D2L message board

Engagement Indicators of High Impact Practices

Student-Staff Interaction

- Talked about career plans and/or story with a staff member

Higher-Order Learning

- Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts

Supportive Environment

- Using learning support services (Student Learning Support, Writing Support, etc.)
- Encouraging contact among participants from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)
- Providing opportunities to be involved socially
- Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)
- Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues

Evidence of Learning

Learning Intention #1	Students who participate in Level 2 will be able to identify five (5) co-curricular experiences that have prepared them for their future.
Learning Intention #2	Students who participate in Level 2 will be able to list three (3) Level Up themes.
Learning Intention #3	Students who participate in Level 2 will be able to explain the importance of on and off campus involvement in the development of the whole student.
Learning Intention #4	Students who participate in Level 2 will be able to describe how to find new involvement opportunities on ConnectRU.

⁴ Seligman, M. (2012, December 13). PERMA. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK6K_N2qe9Y.

Level 3

Capture Your Experience

Purpose

To provide participants with an online ePortfolio to store artifacts that are accumulated through experiences in and out of the classroom and on and off campus so that they can reflect on their growth and development through these experiences.

Required Components

D2L ePortfolio

Participants will use the D2L ePortfolio to reflect on and store and collect artifacts from their experiences. They will build an online portfolio where they can translate the transferrable skills they've learned from exploring their community into tangible items for their coursework, resume, LinkedIn, personal blog, networking opportunities, etc.

Examples of Optional Components

- Weekly/Bi-weekly/Monthly Reflections
- Use of the ePortfolio presentation tool to create a shareable presentation to highlight work
- Use of D2L message board

Engagement Indicators of High Impact Practices

Student-Staff Interaction

- Talked about career plans and/or story with a staff member

Higher-Order Learning

- Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts

Reflective & Integrative Learning

- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ ethnic, gender, etc.)
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective
- Learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept

Evidence of Learning

Learning Intention #1	Students who participate in Level 3 will be able to identify four (4) methods of reflection.
Learning Intention #2	Students who participate in Level 3 will be able to explain their process for reflection using Kolb's Experiential Learning Model.
Learning Intention #3	Students who participate in Level 3 will be able to summarize their learning from experiences through reflection.
Learning Intention #4	Students who participate in Level 3 will be able to apply at least five (5) Level Up themes to their experiences.

Level 4

Share Your Story

Purpose

To engage participants in a series of workshops so that they are able to share the story of their time at Ryerson in their chosen method of communication (i.e. resume, LinkedIn, website, blog, interview, presentation, etc.).

Required Components

Workshops

Participants will attend at least two (2) workshops hosted by the Level Up program designed to introduce participants to storytelling as a method for reflection and communication.

Examples of Optional Components

- Attending a career-focused workshop hosted by the Career Centre
- Attending a writing-focused workshop hosted by Student Learning Support
- Attending a writing group with other participants
- Attending a video creation workshop hosted by the Student Affairs Storytelling Unit

Engagement Indicators of High Impact Practices

Student-Staff Interaction

- Talked about career plans and/or story with a staff member

Higher-Order Learning

- Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts

Reflective & Integrative Learning

- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ ethnic, gender, etc.)
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective
- Learned something that changed the way they understand an issue or concept

Evidence of Learning

Learning Intention #1	Students who participate in Level 4 will be able to identify four (4) tools for sharing their story.
Learning Intention #2	Students who participate in Level 4 will be able to summarize three (3) examples of experiential learning.
Learning Intention #3	Students who participate in Level 4 will be able to identify four (4) platforms where their story can be shared.
Learning Intention #4	Students who participate in Level 4 will be able to articulate three (3) areas of personal growth during their time at Ryerson.