

## General Education Program Assessment Results and Recommendations

The assessment of student learning in the General Education program at Valencia College is led by Learning Outcome Leaders (LOLs) and Deans representing each academic discipline. All seven disciplines are included in this report summarizing assessment activities, results, and improvement plans. This is the second year Institutional Assessment has developed and shared this report format; this year drawing from the learning outcomes assessment information entered by LOLs in the new Xitracs reporting system.

At the end of the 2016-17 assessment cycle the LOLs reported their activities, results, and improvement plans in the college's new online planning software (Xitracs). This report incorporates those results as well as revisions reported to Institutional Assessment after the close of the cycle in May 2017, sometimes going beyond the results reported in Xitracs. The LOLs and Deans have read and revised this report as needed. Detailed assessment plans for the next cycle (2017-18) are available online in the Xitracs system.

The 2016-17 assessment cycle results indicate that students at Valencia College need...

- 1) continued opportunities for learning *ethical responsibility, interpersonal communication, and oral communication*;
- 2) scaling and strengthening of the existing support structures for learning *cultural and historical understanding, written communication, information literacy, and scientific reasoning*; and
- 3) specialized interventions and new opportunities for learning *critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills*.

**Students are meeting faculty goals** for the *ethical responsibility, interpersonal communication and oral communication* outcomes. This has been documented through the results from assessments embedded in social science, speech, and the New Student Experience courses.

**Students are improving, but still not meeting faculty goals** for the *cultural and historical understanding, written communication, information literacy, and scientific reasoning* outcomes. The results showed improvement over the prior year, but the number of students scoring at the satisfactory level is still not meeting the goals set by faculty members. This has been documented through the results from assessments embedded in humanities and science courses.

**Students are not meeting faculty goals, and not improving** for the *critical thinking and quantitative reasoning* outcomes. This has been documented through the results from assessments embedded in humanities and mathematics courses. Students are meeting the *critical thinking* goal in the New Student Experience course and there were improvements over the prior year in *quantitative reasoning* assessments embedded in liberal arts math. The evidence suggests that students are mastering the introductory level critical thinking and quantitative reasoning necessary for college-level material, but are not meeting higher level standards as they progress through the curriculum.

Faculty and Deans can draw from the results included in this report, considering successes and areas for improvement across the disciplines in order to make college-wide improvements.

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## English—Overview of 2016-17 assessment activities

To determine that there was grading consistency of written communication not only within each English division on each campus but also between English divisions on the various campuses, student writing samples from Composition I (ENC 1101) and Composition II (ENC 1102) were assessed using a checklist items rubric (just beginning, developing, competent, and accomplished) in relation to logic and organization, purpose, and accuracy. 45 student papers were collected in fall 2016, of which 12 were assessed (the 2015-16 assessment cycle measuring the same outcomes drew from a sample of 600 with a 63% response rate). English faculty hoped to use this work as a vehicle to identify similarities and differences in grading, such as ones related to grammatical and mechanical errors.

[Assessment instrument \(checklist\) available at the VIA website](#)

### Results, including any relevant at-risk populations

A difference of 22.3% separates the scores of faculty on East, Lake Nona, and Winter Park and the ones of faculty on Osceola, supporting the conclusion that some students are exposed to different views on this checklist item when they take Freshman Composition I on the one campus and then Freshman Composition II on the other campus. Some students may encounter difficulties in response to the different views, thereby undermining their academic success. The Lead LOL for English observed, "Differences in grading between full-time English faculty on each campus create challenges and/or barriers for not only students but also faculty. Until faculty discuss this difference in greater detail, they may never achieve enhanced grading consistency between campuses or explore strategies to enhance student writing." Many faculty are now realizing that instructors can impact student learning tremendously and that they must address this subject accordingly." The focus on grading consistency relates to enhanced written communication in that instructors exploring this focus in greater detail can identify strategies that enable students to improve their writing.

The assessment work with 12 essays revealed that English faculty on each campus displayed grading consistency, but that English faculty between campuses lacked that same consistency with two of the three items on the checklist. 68.4% of East, Lake Nona, and Winter Park faculty scored "yes" for logic and organization, while only 48.8% of Osceola faculty and 57.6% of West faculty gave the same essays an identical score. 71.1% of East, Lake Nona, and Winter Park faculty scored "yes" for purpose, while only 48.8% of Osceola faculty and 60.9% of West faculty gave the same essays an identical score. There was more consistency between campuses for the checklist item accuracy with 63.2% for East, Lake Nona, and Winter Park faculty scored "yes" for accuracy, while 56.0% of Osceola faculty and 63.0% of West faculty gave the same essays identical scores.

Satisfactory "yes" scores (labeled competent or accomplished) were given by East, Lake Nona, and Winter Park faculty to just over 70% of the papers for purpose, and just under 70% of the papers for logic and organization. The other campuses scored larger percentages unsatisfactory "no" (labeled just beginning or developing). Scoring of the papers for accuracy falls short of the expected 70%.

## Next steps to improve student learning

On September 23, 2017 the Lead LOL will present scoring results and lead a discussion of next steps at Valencia College's Writing Conference. Based on the discussion that occurs at the Writing Conference, the Lead LOL will prepare a list of points that all English faculty college-wide need to consider to enhance grading consistency of Freshman Composition I and Freshman Composition II essays. These points and their consideration will enable faculty to identify changes to instruction in the fall of 2018.

## Year over year comparison

For written communication the 2016-17 cycle was a limited-sample repeat of the identical assessment from 2015-16. The 2016-17 results indicated some students need improvement in organization, purpose, and most importantly accuracy. The 2015-16 results indicated some students needed improvement in the selection of appropriate credible sources, organization, and identification of specific historical events or cultural developments that are relevant for the discussion of artifacts. The 2015-16 improvement plan stated that individual instructors could craft plans that might include changes to their courses, (i.e. adding instruction on content or updating current group work). As needed, individual instructors could include student support through library orientations that emphasize the selection of credible secondary sources or Learning Support Services like writing consultants in the Writing Center. The 2016-17 improvement plan is stronger than the previous cycle due to its focus on faculty discussions, as opposed to individual faculty plans, and will result in a shared list intended to lead to changes to instruction in the 2018-19 academic year.

## Humanities—Overview of 2016-17 assessment activities

To measure critical thinking in introductory humanities courses, a fifteen question quiz was administered as a pre-test and post-test during spring 2017. The questions were designed by faculty in fall 2015 to test the relevant critical thinking indicators (bias, context, use of evidence). The quiz was administered in spring 2017 to 3624 students with a response rate of 22% taking four minutes or more on the assessment, and administered as a post-course assessment in spring 2016 to 3420 students with a response a rate of 15% taking four minutes or more on the assessment. The 7% response rate for students who submitted both the pre-test and post-test falls well short of the 20% goal (up from the 4% response rate in the previous cycle measuring the same outcome).

To measure cultural and historical understanding, information literacy, and written communication skills in all Greek and Roman, Roman and Late Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque, Enlightenment and Romanticism, and 20th Century Humanities courses (HUM 2220, HUM 2223, HUM 2234, HUM 2250), students submitted papers during fall 2015. Faculty assessed the papers using the Gen Ed checklist rubric established in fall 2014. A sample of 150 papers were requested, of which 58 were assessed, a 39% response rate (down from the 50% response rate in the previous cycle measuring the same outcomes).

[Assessment instrument \(checklist\) available at the VIA website](#)  
[Assessment instrument \(15 question multiple-choice exam\) available upon request](#)

## Results, including any relevant at-risk populations

Only a small subset of students score better from the pre-test to the post-test and this is a trend that has persisted for three semesters. Students are not demonstrating critical thinking.

Students taking period courses in humanities should all have taken Composition I (ENC 1101). The Lead LOL for humanities observed, "Faculty hope that that background should enable students to score at least a 2 (yes, on the writing indicators), but sometimes the sorts of paper we write in humanities is different from students' previous experiences. There may be a skill level that isn't coming across in the assessments as they are presented. It all depends upon how much work the faculty members are doing in their respective courses." Part of the improvement plan from 2015-16 was to improve the prompts students were given. Faculty think that helped students to be successful in the 2016-17 cycle.

Participation on the critical thinking assessment was low. Students who did complete the pre-test and the post-test for critical thinking scored 58% of the items correct on the pre-test, just short of the goal of 60%. On the post-test the scores dropped to 55%. This represents both a decrease and an unsatisfactory level. Faculty discussed the unsatisfactory student performance which may be explained by overthinking. Students' performance actually decreased two years in a row from the pre-test to post-test data. The lead LOL for humanities observed, "Perhaps students are becoming more lateral thinkers and seeing the merits in multiple approaches. This is a value in the Humanities, but it may actually decrease their performance on critical thinking assessments. We may need to make the material less culturally loaded." Faculty discussed the low participation rate as partly a matter of apathy. Students don't seem to put much stake in these assessments which may be related to how faculty introduce them. Given the low level of achievement in critical thinking, it is unclear whether at-risk students are performing particularly worse than non-at-risk students. Data comparing student performance according to high school grade (by state report card) indicated students from "A" high schools actually improved from pre-test to post-test: 9.3 to 9.4 (N = 25). Meanwhile, "B" and "C" high school students both decreased: B schools: 10.4 vs. 8.5 (N = 20), C schools: 7.6 vs. 7.0 (N = 40).

Scores on the written communication skills are below the goal of 75% scoring "yes" at the satisfactory level (labeled competent or accomplished). 39% of papers were scored with "yes" scores for logic and organization, 45% for accuracy, and 48% for purpose. 44% of the papers scored a composite written communication skills score at the satisfactory level.

Scores on information literacy are below the goal of 75% scoring "yes" at the satisfactory level (labeled competent or accomplished). 38% of papers were scored with "yes" scores for integration of sources, 42% for citation of sources, 48% for papers selection of sources, and 54% for formatting references. There is not a unified type of reference that students are asked to employ. The Lead LOL for humanities observed, "Most of us can agree that MLA is a fine choice as a default as it is ubiquitous at the college. Sometimes a professor assessing a paper isn't familiar with the style being used, and sometimes the students are unfamiliar. These are two potential barriers to success. Some professors require more research than others, on the false belief that Comp I prepares students necessarily for research. We have had a conversation about these facts to settle the truth."

For cultural and historical understanding, students are doing reasonably well at identifying specific historical objects and movements for analysis, but they are not effectively using those in their analysis. The Lead LOL for humanities observed, "This seems the core of what Humanities can offer students, so it is a concerning result."

## Next steps to improve student learning

For the 2017-18 assessment cycle the focus is on cultural and historical understanding and critical thinking. Students are identifying the appropriate sorts of movements and artifacts, but are not using those movements and artifacts effectively in their analysis. This may be a problem of insufficient critical thinking or insufficient modeling. A critical thinking module is being prepared as an optional resource for faculty.

To initiate a conversation on the nature of the multiple-choice questions, the Lead LOL is sending out the think-aloud interview data from fall 2015 to faculty for the discussion about whether the multiple-choice questions should be changed to remove discipline specific jargon that might distract. The faculty expressed some discontent with the current assessment's level of jargon. Whether or not to change the terms should be a vote of all humanities faculty. Faculty will also be reminded to teach the use of context and bias to understand a cultural practice beginning fall 2017. This may improve students' performance on the critical thinking indicators.

By the end of summer 2017, resources that discuss critical thinking, including using context to explain, will be collected for a learning module. It will be directly relevant to the students' development of critical thinking skills, should reinforce course learning, and should emphasize the importance of the students' ability to choose the best answer from among a range of choices. LOLs on each campus have been asked to speak to their faculty in the next division meetings. The LOLs will assemble the resources. The module will be available in spring 2017. LOLs will inform course leaders who will disseminate the information to all faculty who teach Introduction to Humanities (HUM 1020).

In addition to having the critical thinking module available for students, the materials will be available for faculty to move toward a more standardized way of teaching how to demonstrate cultural and historical understanding. Within the 2017-18 academic year increased exposure to these teaching materials will spur on a further conversation to troubleshoot more precisely why students are not consistently demonstrating cultural and historical understanding. The lead LOL uploaded sample papers that were and were not successful at the cultural and historical understanding indicators in the Blackboard course for assessment, and sent an email to faculty. The lead LOL also sends out announcements to let faculty know when the *Your Role in General Education: Evaluating with a Checklist* course is open. Making this General Education checklist training module more widely announced and recognized by faculty may foster a greater understanding of what the division is trying to assess with cultural and historical understanding.

## Year over year comparison

For critical thinking, the 2016-17 cycle was a repeat of the identical assessment from 2015-16. Students who participated in both the pre- and post-test averaged 58% on the pre-test in both cycles, and the post-test average for 2015-16 were 52% while 2016-17 showed a slight

improvement to 55%. The 2015-16 improvement plan included modifying current multiple-choice questions to strengthen questions, creating a committee that can work on developing questions going forward, and reaching out to course leaders to encourage faculty to take advantage of critical thinking workshops. Improvements were not made to the 2016-17 assessment, the committee was not formed, and the intention to improve the questions is restated in the 2016-17 improvement plan with the focus on removing distracting terminology. The 2016-17 improvement plan is stronger than the previous cycle due to its dedicated use of existing qualitative data from think-aloud interviews, instead of only creating a committee to develop questions. In addition, the improvement plan for 2016-17 provides a detailed timeline for developing and disseminating discipline specific resources intended for direct use by students and which will also inform a more standard practice among faculty.

For written communication, cultural and historical understanding, and information literacy the 2016-17 cycle was a repeat of the assessment from 2015-16. Students improved in all indicators for each outcome. The percentage of students performing at or above the satisfactory level in written communication skills improved for logic and organization from 32% to 39%, for accuracy from 23% to 45%, and for purpose from 24% to 48%. The percentage of students performing at or above the satisfactory level in information literacy improved for integration of sources from 20% to 38%, for selection of sources from 25% to 48%, for citation of sources from 18% to 42%, and for formatting references from 25% to 54%. At Assessment Day 2016 humanities faculty engaged conversation about how different faculty were understanding the information literacy indicators. Faculty expectations may have been very disparate, and if students weren't doing what the particular faculty member would have wanted in their own papers, the faculty members were marking the NO option. During our conversation, it became clear that different standards can still be legitimate standards. The Lead LOL observed, "The big change was faculty present on Assessment Day 2016 had a better sense of what other faculty were doing and so had a more comprehensive sense of what counted as a YES in the context of our department," for the 2016-17 assessment cycle.

The 2015-16 improvement plan included creating modules for all full and part-time faculty that include materials to instruct students on information literacy and discussing the question of why students aren't demonstrating their grasp of cultural and historical understanding at all assessment meetings until we come up with some ideas. An information literacy module was assembled and became available to faculty in their assessment resources for fall 2017. The 2016-17 improvement plan does not commit to developing resources for information literacy, but addresses how the new resources focused on critical thinking will lead to stronger discussions about how to improve cultural and historical understanding in the future.

## Mathematics—Overview of 2016-17 assessment activities

To measure critical thinking in algebra courses (MAC 1105), a question was administered as part of the final exam during spring 2017. A sample of 250 was requested, of which 158 were scored by faculty members, a 69% response rate (up from 68% in 2015-16).

To measure critical thinking and quantitative reasoning in statistics courses (STA 2023), a question was administered during a proctored final exam during fall 2016. A sample of 200 was requested, of which 139 were assessed, a 70% response rate (down from 80% in 2015-16).

To measure quantitative reasoning in liberal arts math courses (MGF 1106), two Questions were administered to students on a proctored exam during spring 2017. A sample of 100 was requested, of which 61 were assessed, a 61% response rate.

[Assessment instrument \(rubrics\) available in this Assessment Day Presentation](#)

## Results, including any relevant at-risk populations

In algebra, 31% of the algebra students are performing at or above the satisfactory level, well below the 70% goal. 25% of male students score at or above the satisfactory level, lower than the full sample. 35% of African American students score at or above the satisfactory level, higher than the full sample set and comparable to 34% of Caucasian students. After a few years of looking at data, talking to students, and giving them a survey last fall and this spring, the overall challenge in algebra is recalling the information. The Lead LOL for algebra observed, "It seems more of a memory issue than instruction issue. It requires time and effort to get the students to the level desired (competent or accomplished). So far it seems that student learning is short-term. We need to find a way to improve retention and the ability for students to recognize various mathematical models and to use the skills learn to use these models."

In statistics, only 22% of students scored at or above the satisfactory level for critical thinking and 27% for quantitative reasoning; both below the 50% goal. 14% of African American students score at or above the satisfactory level for quantitative reasoning, lower than the full sample set. 23% of African American students score at or above the satisfactory level for critical thinking, comparable to the full sample set. The Lead LOL for statistics observed, "In statistics, there is room for improvement to student performance as well as the quality of instruction provided by instructors." Students experienced difficulty properly calculating the test statistic, correctly drawing the sampling distribution diagram, and deriving the correct conclusion to the question. Students experienced difficulty listing the Central Limit Theorem conditions and deriving the correct conclusion to the question.

In liberal arts math, 54% of students scored at or above the satisfactory level, which is above the 50% goal. For many students, liberal arts math is their first math course in college. Students need more college-ready preparedness skills. The Lead LOL for liberal arts math observed, "We learned that we need to ask more specific questions from the students and if we want to see a certain type of solution, then we must specify that in the directions. Our most important finding is that we need to rework our questions so that we can more clearly determine if the students used quantitative reasoning or critical thinking successfully."

## Next steps to improve student learning

Algebra instructors will continue to use application packets and make changes to strategies related to critical thinking skills during spring 2018.

Statistics instructors will receive the statistics assessment question and associated rubrics to serve as an informal guideline as to the level of detail they should be teaching. Immediate instructional and assessment expectations have been implemented to improve instruction and student learning. Individual professors will demonstrate how to draw the sampling distribution diagram as a part of their core instructional strategy for hypothesis testing and will require students to perform this task as part of a formative assessment. Individual professors may or may not require students to draw the sampling distribution diagram as a part of the summative assessment for the hypothesis-testing procedure. Individual professors will demonstrate how to properly derive a conclusion for a one-sample mean hypothesis test as a part of their core instructional strategy for hypothesis testing and will require students to perform this task as part of both a formative and summative assessment. Individual professors will emphasize the importance of and demonstrate how to manually calculate the test statistic for a one-sample mean T-test. Individual professors will require students to manually compute the test statistic for a one-sample mean T-test at least once during the course as part of a formative or summative assessment. Individual professors will emphasize the importance of listing the CLT conditions for a one-sample mean T-test. Individual professors will require students to verify the CLT conditions have been met for a one-sample mean T-test at least once during the course as part of a formative or summative assessment.

Liberal arts math Learning Outcome Leaders will communicate with course chairs to share information and course activities that will improve students quantitative reasoning and critical thinking skills. The Lead Learning Outcome Leader will revise questions to more accurately measure student understanding of concepts learned in liberal arts math, and relay to instructors the type of questions students should be able to answer and the critical thinking skills students should be able to use.

## Year over year comparison

For critical thinking, the percentage of students performing at or above the satisfactory level for critical thinking is down from 41% in 2015-16 to 31% in 2016-17 for algebra students and down to 22% in 2016-17 for statistics students. The percentage of students performing at or above the satisfactory level for quantitative reasoning is up from 39% in 2015-16 to 54% in 2016-17 for liberal arts math students and down to 27% in 2016-17 for statistics students. The 2015-16 improvement plan stated that awareness of the issues was raised and all instructors were given access to a Blackboard shell where faculty share resources for adding or changing strategies related to critical thinking skills. Reminder emails were sent to all 84 algebra faculty at the beginning of each semester. Included in the Blackboard shell are activity packets which emphasize models that require critical thinking and quantitative reasoning which are also individually emailed to algebra faculty members. The 2016-17 The improvement plan for statistics is the most specific with very clear expectations for instructors and students about what they should be demonstrating in the classroom and opportunities for formative and summative assessment of critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills. The improvement is stronger due to identified resources across all three pathways and leaders identified as responsible for sharing resources specific to the students' greatest needs rather than just having a space where anyone could share as they saw fit.

## New Student Experience—Overview of 2016-17 assessment activities

To measure critical thinking in the New Student Experience course (SLS 1122), student scores for one item on the Academic Blueprint rubric were collected through BlackBoard using the software building block EAC Visual during fall 2016 and spring 2017. With 13,661 students expected, scores were collected from 7,732 students, a response rate of 57% (up from the 51% response rate in the previous cycle measuring the same outcome).

To measure oral communication in the New Student Experience course (SLS 1122), student scores for one item on the Final Story Project rubric were collected through BlackBoard using the software building block EAC Visual during fall 2016 and spring 2017. With 13,661 students expected, scores were collected from 7,747 students, a response rate of 57% (the same as the response rate in the previous cycle measuring the same outcome).

To measure interpersonal communication in the New Student Experience course (SLS 1122), student scores for one item on either the Personal Connection Co-Curricular rubric (onsite students) or the Career Interview rubric (online students) were collected through BlackBoard using the software building block EAC Visual during fall 2016 and spring 2017. With 13,661 students expected, scores were collected from 5,122 students, a response rate of 37% (down from the 57% response rate in the previous cycle measuring the same outcome using a different rubric).

[Assessment instruments \(rubrics\) available on the VIA website](#)

## Results, including any relevant at-risk populations

For critical thinking, 88.28% of students scored at or above the satisfactory level (top 2 of the 3 achievement levels) which is just above the 87% goal set based on success in previous assessments. There was a drop in students scoring “satisfactory” (top level of achievement) and a rise in students scoring “developing” (second level of achievement) from fall 2016 to spring 2017. Faculty are better able to help students learn critical thinking when they understand what they are looking for (norming). In February and March of 2017 (prior to when the assignment which assess for critical thinking was done in class) a set of professional development courses was held, Using Rubrics to Create Dialogue. Faculty stated that the course, which included a norming session, helped them to identify more errors which led to them scoring “developing” more often. This was echoed with the feeling that some instructors felt better equipped and better understood the assignment and what to look for in the spring. The Lead LOL for the New Student Experience observed, “The decrease is not a bad sign, as it shows what students are actually learning so faculty can better their practices to help them.” The most reported finding from faculty was that the numbers of “unsatisfactory” scores have not changed and they are curious as to why and how they can better support those students. One thought was that the assignment is so long and if they complete part 1 (compare) and 3B (term-by-term), is Part 4 just too much for them? Faculty want to compare Part 3B in future semesters (to identify if the difficulty is the writing and length for Part 4). They were informed that Part 3B data was coded for critical thinking and collected for the first time during the 2015-16 cycle so they could have that baseline data going into the next cycle.

Based on SFI data, students in the at-risk student population (African American Males who have earned a D, F, W, or I) report at higher rates that they have missed class (non-excused) and/or do not turn in every assignment. While assessment scores from the rubric are not disaggregated by race (currently) for students who score “unsatisfactory”, if the at-risk population does not submit every required assignment (and the Academic Blueprint Assignment is mandatory and very detailed) they fail the course. If a student did not submit the Academic Blueprint assignment, they would not have been scored as “unsatisfactory” because they would not have a rubric evaluation at all.

For oral communication, 95.97% of students scored at or above the satisfactory level (top 2 of the 3 achievement levels) which is just above the 85% goal set based on success in previous assessments. The data says that students are great at oral communication but while discussing the rubric data, faculty learned that the assessment of student learning in the oral communication area is inflated. Comments and feedback shared include that faculty are not grading oral communication fairly. Students are not performing as well in oral communication as the data shows. Faculty are concerned that oral communication is not being taught in the course and therefore, is being graded easier. Several faculty indicated that a norming session would be helpful and a better understanding of oral communication (how to grade, how to teach, what they are doing).

For interpersonal communication, 92.89% of students scored at or above the satisfactory level (top 2 of the 3 achievement levels) and since this was a new rubric there was not a goal set prior to implementation. By looking at the interpersonal communication data faculty learned that it is possible for students to assess themselves (whether all students do it well or not). This was new to faculty as they were used to assessing student skills, not assessing students on their ability to self-assess. One challenge was that it was the first year that faculty were provided resources for interpersonal communication. While this was a good improvement plan, it was identified that it takes time to become comfortable and that data should be expected to fluctuate a little while faculty become more comfortable in their practice and know that they are teaching the material correctly so that they can properly and honestly assess the students learning. Faculty discussed wanting more information\data: how do individual instructors teach interpersonal communication, which way is seeing better results, is the career interview a better assignment to assess and if so, should it be used in the face-to-face courses?

The data is new this cycle and faculty did not want to compare it to last cycle. Faculty wanted to compare co-curricular personal connection data to the career interview data. The career interview data had slightly higher percentages for scoring “satisfactory,” but there was a large difference between the number of students who were assessed with the personal connection rubric for the face-to-face courses versus the career interview rubric for online courses. One aspect of the Personal Connection co-curricular is a self-rating of likability. The guest speaker from UCF who presented at assessment day brought up that having students self-rate themselves on a scale of likability can be harmful to their success. For African American Males this is especially concerning since research shows that in their youth they are told negative things about themselves, about their ability to get an education, and they are overall marginalized. Requiring them attend a session where they are asked to rate how they believe they are viewed on a likability scale can reinforce the negative things they have been told.

## Next steps to improve student learning

On Assessment Day, ten faculty from various campuses formed a work team tasked with coming up with resources that can be shared with faculty (both full-time and part-time). They were instructed that a list of resources for faculty could include books, speakers, videos, seminars, etc.... which would work for the different types of learners, but that they could also focus on only a few resources or bring higher-order deliveries (such as a speaker). They will share out the information informally by the end of summer 2017 term and formally introduce their resources during Faculty Welcome Back meetings in fall 2017 which all full-time and part-time faculty are required to attend.

Several faculty including the former Lead Learning Outcome Leader planned to meet in summer 2017 to update the rubrics in the New Student Experience BlackBoard course shell so that the levels flow from highest to lowest (as per a vote taken at Assessment Day) and to make the levels of achievement names consistent. With rubrics all having the same levels of achievement and all flowing from high to low there should be fewer faculty changing the rubrics in the 2017-18 cycle. The old the rubrics were removed from the development space and course shell during the summer 2017 so that faculty would not download the rubrics early for the fall 2017 semester. Faculty will receive an email once the BlackBoard course shell has been updated (following the usual procedures).

## Year over year comparison

For critical thinking, the percentage of students performing at or above the satisfactory level is up from 86% in 2015-16 to 88% in 2016-17. For oral communication, the percentage of students performing at or above the satisfactory level is up from 85% in 2015-16 to 96% in 2016-17. For interpersonal communication, the percentage of students performing at or above the satisfactory level is up from 88% in 2015-16 to 93% in 2016-17.

The 2015-16 improvement plan stated that a work team with representatives from Learning Outcome Leaders, the New Student Experience Co-Curricular team, and the New Student Experience Curriculum team would work with the communication discipline to develop resources to support introducing and further developing interpersonal communication throughout the New Student Experience course, identify appropriate faculty development options (to include workshops), and to develop a training for summer 2016 in preparation for implementation for fall 2016. An existing faculty development workshop was tailored to the assessment in the New Student Experience and attended by the majority of full and part-time faculty. A LibGuide was developed for interpersonal communication and an instructor guide that went along with the LibGuide for faculty to be able to use in their own time. The 2016-17 improvement plan stated that two work teams with representatives across campuses would be formed. One to develop resources for faculty to focus on at-risk populations and one to improve the assessment tool with recommendations that support student learning and ease of data collection. The 2016-17 improvement plan is as strong as the 2015-16 plan since it identifies collaborative teams to work on a summer timeline to make improvements to faculty development and the assessment. The rubrics were updated and distributed to all faculty for use in their Blackboard courses. The added strength of the 2016-17 improvement plan is that it takes into account the overall satisfactory

scores and focuses instead on at-risk populations who may not be accounted for in those scores. The team working on improvements for at-risk populations continues into fall 2017.

## Science—Overview of 2016-17 assessment activities

To measure critical thinking in science courses (all AST, BOT, BSC, CHM, ENY, ESC, EVR, GLY, HOS, IPM, MCB, MET, OCB, OCE, ORH, PCB, PHY, PLP, PLS, and SWS prefixes), students were invited online to complete a short assessment which included a scenario and 4 questions on a science issue during fall 2016 and spring 2017. With 24,310 students invited, 4,273 students took four minutes or more on the assessment, a response rate of 18% (up from the 14% response rate in the previous cycle measuring the same outcome).

[Assessment instrument \(4 question multiple-choice exam\) available upon request](#)

## Results, including any relevant at-risk populations

46% of students scored at or above the satisfactory level (3 or more questions correct) in critical thinking which is below the 70% goal. The differences between students who completed the tutorials and those who did not were not notable. In addition, there is insufficient student and faculty participation. The Lead LOL for science observed, “Faculty know there are still deficiencies in students' ability to dissect and analyze components of the scientific method.” Disaggregated data indicates trends in differences between genders as well as trends in differences between race/ethnic groups within genders.

## Next steps to improve student learning

Learning Outcome Leaders and faculty plan to meet and discuss further ideas at the fall 2017 division meeting and finalize at an additional meeting in October 2017. The plan is a work in progress and will likely include specific assignments or a learning plan for use in the classroom, as well as student application of skills and possible addition of experiential learning (like fieldwork activities). The current plan for the fall 2017 is to implement the existing Physics assessment while further defining a course-based assessment that better reflects the direct application of scientific reasoning more effectively while improving learning in the classroom. Learning Outcome Leaders as well as faculty participating will be responsible for implementing supports in the classroom setting.

## Year over year comparison

For critical thinking, the 2016-17 cycle was a repeat of the type of assessment with new questions in a physics scenario. 46% of the students were at or above the satisfactory level for 2016-17, a slight improvement over the 34% in 2015-16. The improvement plan for 2015-16 stated that tutorials would continue to be made available to students to help them prepare for the assessment and science faculty were encouraged to give incentives to students to participate in the assessment. The tutorials were included in the Blackboard courses and links were embedded into the invitation to take the assessment with a note encouraging students to complete the tutorial before the assessment. Some faculty offered incentives for students who took at least 4 minutes on the assessment or based on their score. Faculty received an email after each

completion with the time spent and score in order to honor the incentives. The improvement plan for 2016-17 sets a timeline to discuss course-based assessments. The prior year improvement plan named a specific student resource and goals for faculty, while the current improvement plan takes into account time needed for faculty to develop formative and summative assessment rubrics that align with course content and lab work.

## Social Science— Overview of 2016-17 assessment activities

To measure ethical responsibility in introductory social science courses (AMH 2020, ANT 2000, ECO 2013, POS 2041, PSY 2012, and SYG 2000), students were invited to complete a ten-item test online during fall 2016. With 9,122 students invited, 2,421 students took the assessment, a response rate of 27% (down from the 31% response rate in the previous cycle measuring a different outcome, critical thinking).

[Assessment instrument \(10 question multiple-choice exam\) available upon request](#)

## Results, including any relevant at-risk populations

75% of students scored at or above the satisfactory level in ethical reasoning which is above the 70% goal. Most student responses align with student code of conduct on the first 5 questions of the assessment. Most students “agree” or “strongly agree” with the second 5 questions about learning in the course. Students in face-to-face courses report higher engagement with the questions about learning in the course.

## Next steps to improve student learning

To improve student understanding of concepts, faculty plan to build a Student Code of Conduct Module to insert into front door online social science courses. Faculty will incentivize students to read through it, perhaps in conjunction with the introductory/syllabus quizzes that many have their online students do in the first week of class. The Lead LOL for social science observed, “The faculty as whole were receptive to the idea of embedding a connected module into their online LMS.” Several individual faculty reported placing a greater emphasis on making students aware of the existence of the Student Code of Conduct following the first round of assessment in fall 2016 and during Assessment Day 2016 faculty reported on ways that they currently present the Student Code of Conduct in their classes.

## Year over year comparison

For ethical reasoning 2016-17 cycle was a new assessment. 75% of the students were at or above the satisfactory level. The improvement plan for 2015-16 was for critical thinking and stated that individual instructors could take action on improving student application of concepts and the discipline would offer a workshop for teaching critical thinking during the fall of 2016 for part-time faculty. The workshop was not offered, but in the spring of 2017 a faculty development workshop was offered tailored to social science faculty using critical thinking resources and data. The improvement plan for 2016-17 states that faculty will build a module for online courses and incentivize students to read through it. This improvement plan is stronger than the prior cycle because it identifies specific, direct-to-student resources and addresses how they will be

introduced to the resource. The added strength of the 2016-17 improvement plan is that it takes into account the overall satisfactory responses on the assessment and focuses on online students whose responses were somewhat less satisfactory.

## Speech— Overview of 2016-17 assessment activities

To measure interpersonal communication in interpersonal communication courses (SPC 1017), students were invited online to complete a 20 question self-reporting survey at the beginning and end of the spring 2017 semester. The survey was made up of statements to assess students' self-awareness skills. With 1260 students invited, 347 students took the pre- and post-assessment, a response rate of 28% (slightly down from the 29% response rate in the previous cycle measuring the same outcome).

To measure oral communication in speech courses (SPC 1608), students delivered their researched informative or persuasive speeches and instructors evaluated them on a scale (accomplished, attempted, not attempted) during spring 2017. With 3,300 of students expected, scores were collected from 2,996 students, a response rate of 91% (down from the 96% response rate in the previous cycle measuring the same outcome).

[Assessment instrument \(20 question self-assessment\) available upon request](#)

## Results, including any relevant at-risk populations

97.94% of students scored at or above the satisfactory level in interpersonal communication (defined as those students who scored in either the "maturing" or "advanced" categories on the post-test) which is above the 70% goal. In the post-test, student scores slightly improved to 98.26%. Students who scored "advanced" (between 80-100) in the pre-test represented 17.62% of the population and this improved to 25.03% in the post-test. The point range for categories on the assessment were too broad and LOLs will look at refining the categories. Students are self-reporting and faculty wonder if students are overestimating their competency. The findings may relate to students who are first time in college and/or students who are not successful in their first five courses. Self-awareness is a skill that is introduced in the New Student Experience (SLS 1122) course, so students who are taking this course prior to or at the same time as Interpersonal Communication (SPC 1017) would have been introduced to the concept before taking the pre-test.

50.3% of students scored "accomplished" (top 2 of the 3 achievement levels) in oral communication which is above the 40% goal based on the prior assessment cycle. Faculty had hoped to find a higher percentage of students using strong verbal citations during their researched informative or persuasive speeches. The Lead LOL for speech observed, "One of the challenges was students who do not follow the advice to practice their source citations prior to the presentation so that they can find a comfortable way to cite a source. Some students watched the video but then did not do what the video asked them to do." This course is often taken by students who are in their first five courses. Their success might be improved by using the citation video that was created.

## Next steps to improve student learning

Faculty suspect that students are overestimating their capabilities in the self-awareness aspect of interpersonal connection. Faculty also know that based on the student responses, they believe that self-awareness is an important and valuable skill to be continually refined. Learning Outcome Leaders will work during summer 2017 to review and refine the interpersonal communication LibGuide that was created during summer 2016, and add specific classroom activities to embed into midterm classroom assessment techniques. These can be used during the semester by faculty to reinforce the concepts that will be assessed near the end of the semester. To address the concern about how students interpret the statements on the survey, a volunteer faculty group will refine and contextualize the statements on the survey during summer 2017 and conduct a pilot in of the new statements in fall 2017.

Learning Outcome Leaders for speech will meet over the summer 2017 to finalize specifics of a plan to create an online module with activities for students to complete thinking about how their speech can and will connect with each target audience (from topic selection to use of supporting material to be included). During fall 2017 they will create the module and work on changes to resource sharing (such as course activities) and changes to strategies related to critical thinking. The module will be available in spring 2018 for faculty and students to use.

## Year over year comparison

For interpersonal communication the 2016-17 cycle was a new assessment based on the students' weakest area in the prior assessment cycle. 98% of the students were at or above the satisfactory level. The improvement plan for 2015-16 stated that faculty would create a LibGuide of resources and activities for faculty to use with their students about self-awareness. The LibGuide was created and available prior to spring 2016. The improvement plan for 2016-17 states that faculty will review and refine the LibGuide, and add classroom activities to embed into midterm classroom assessment techniques. There are also planned improvements to the statements in the self-assessment to address the reliability of students' self-assessments. This improvement plan is stronger than the prior cycle because it adds to existing resources with a clear focus on formative assessment to improve student learning.

For oral communication the 2016-17 cycle was a repeated of the identical assessment from 2015-16. 50% of the students were at or above the satisfactory level which is up from 41% in 2015-16. The improvement plan for 2015-16 stated that faculty would update their speech LibGuide with sample oral citation videos by students to be used by all faculty to improve student understanding and use of oral citations. The LibGuide was updated and available prior to spring 2016. The improvement plan for 2016-17 states that faculty will create an online module with activities for students to complete thinking about how their speech can and will connect with each target audience. The 2016-17 improvement plan is as strong as the 2015-16 plan since it identifies a new resource to provide to students directly aligned with the intended assessment focus.

# General Education Program

Assessments embedded in English, humanities, mathematics, and science provide evidence that students need further improvement. English faculty plan for a more consistent response to student learning, humanities faculty plan to make more resources available to faculty and students, mathematics faculty plan to develop more detailed instructions and require students to demonstrate skills, and science faculty plan to develop a course-based assessment that better reflects the direct application of scientific reasoning. The general education program at the college can be strengthened by these disciplines engaging in cross-disciplinary conversations to share the faculty resources and student supports that are most effective in changing results. Communication of the changes made as a result of assessment is one of the dimensions measured by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) within their Excellence in Assessment (EIA) designation which focuses on processes and uses.

Learn more at NILOA's website <http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/eiadesignation.html>

Assessments embedded in the New Student Experience, social science, speech, and interpersonal communication disciplines provide evidence that students are performing at the satisfactory level. Faculty plan to direct their focus on identified at-risk populations. The New Student Experience faculty plan to curate resources to better support African American males, social science faculty plan to add resources for online students, and speech and interpersonal communication faculty plan to disaggregate their assessments based on students who are not successful in one or more of their first five courses. As these disciplines are taking the lead in supporting Valencia's Impact Plan goal to "close performance gaps among students from diverse backgrounds" (Opportunity and Equity Goal #2) it would be beneficial if they convene conversations about the best practices they develop for supporting their identified at-risk populations.

Read more at Valencia's Impact Plan website <http://valenciacollege.edu/academic-affairs/institutional-effectiveness-planning/strategic-plan/>

## 2017-18 Learning Outcomes Map

**The Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in General Education 2017-2018**

General Education Learning Outcomes	Communications						
	NSE Assignments with Rubric All Students	English Assignment with Checklist Randomized Sample Comp I & II	Speech Assignment with Checklist + Self-Assessment All Students	Humanities Assignment with Checklist Randomized Sample	Mathematics Exam Randomized Sample	Science Exam All Students	Social Science Exam All Students
	<b>Critical Thinking</b>						
Quantitative Reasoning					X All Gen Ed. Math Classes		
Scientific Reasoning						X All Gen Ed. Science Classes	
Communications	Critical Thinking	Written Communication	X		X		X
		Oral Communication	X		X		
		Interpersonal Communication	X		X		
Ethical Responsibility							X
Cultural & Historical Understanding				X All Gen Ed. Humanities Classes			
Information Literacy		X		X			X

Additional information and resources available at the Valencia Institutional Assessment webpage <http://valenciacollege.edu/VIA>