

General Education Program Assessment Results and Recommendations—Summary

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. 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). 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.

CRITICAL THINKING & QUANTITATIVE REASONING SKILLS

"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," Travis Rogers, Lead LOL for humanities.

"In statistics, there is room for improvement to student performance as well as the quality of instruction provided by instructors," Jon Stevens, Lead LOL for statistics.

"The overall challenge in algebra is recalling the information. It seems more of a memory issue than instruction issue.... We need to find a way to improve retention and the ability for students to recognize various mathematical models and to use the skills learned to use these models," Magdala Emmanuel, Lead LOL for algebra

"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," Cathy Ferrer, Lead LOL for liberal arts math.

All students in the General Education program need stronger support in critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills. Since all disciplines reinforce critical thinking, there is an opportunity for collective efforts at identifying barriers to the students' ability to advance from introductory level critical thinking to higher-level expectations. In addition, the specialized strategies and skills needed for quantitative reasoning need to be a priority.

Read the full 2016-17 report on General Education Program Assessment Results and Recommendations. http://valenciacollege.edu/academic-affairs/institutional-effectiveness-planning/institutional-assessment/loa/outcomes_GenEd.cfm

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/>

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2017-18 Learning Outcomes Map

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

General Education Learning Outcomes		Communications			Humanities Assignment with Checklist Randomized Sample	Mathematics Exam Randomized Sample	Science Exam All Students	Social Science Exam All Students
		NSE Assignments with Rubric All Students	English Assignment with Checklist Randomized Sample Comp I & II	Speech Assignment with Checklist + Self-Assessment All Students				
Critical Thinking								
Quantitative Reasoning						X All Gen Ed. Math Classes		
Scientific Reasoning							X All Gen Ed. Science Classes	
Communications	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>