

College Success Skills

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In the late 1990s, Valencia began a transformational journey toward becoming a Learning-Centered College. Faculty and staff discussions centered on their role in this initiative. These conversations led to the adoption of the Core Competencies of a Valencia graduate: Think, Value, Communicate and Act. These competencies encompass student learning outcomes for their full program of study. At the same time, LifeMap was adopted as Valencia's developmental advising model – providing a model process of student progression through the college that explains to students what they need to do (and when) in order to accomplish their educational and career goals.

In 2007, further discussions continued as we searched to articulate specific program learning outcomes for each Valencia program. By 2008, faculty approved General Education Outcomes that further delineate student learning within a subset of the full program of study. In 2009, as part of the Developmental Education Initiative, faculty and staff collaborated to define specific skills for student learning readiness at the college level. The discussions focused on the college readiness work by David T. Conley, and themes which emerged from a faculty and staff summit. The end product focuses on academic, cognitive and behavioral skills that enable a student to achieve optimal learning gains – demonstrated in the Program Outcomes (A.S. degree, Certificate, Pre-Majors, General Education, etc.) and the Core Competencies. These skills are encompassed in the concept of LifeMap: College Success Skills.

LifeMap: College Success Skills

These college success skills, integrated across Valencia's curriculum, support the learning and development of Valencia students, facilitating success in college and achievement of the General Education Outcomes. Every moment is a teachable moment. These skills will be infused throughout Valencia's classrooms (online and face-to-face), advising sessions, and co-curriculum.

Key Cognitive Strategies

1. Possess a deeper understanding of the concept
2. Accept constructive criticism
3. Challenge personal views
4. Question views of others
5. Engage in active inquiry
6. Defend arguments
7. Analyze competing descriptions of events
8. Synthesize results of analysis
9. Present orally or in writing a description of analysis
10. Construct well-reasoned arguments
11. Develop multiple strategies to solve routine problems

Academic Knowledge and Skills (Key Content)

1. Learn to pre-write, edit, and rewrite
2. Apply appropriate college-level grammar
3. Evaluate appropriate sources
4. Access a variety of types of information
5. Build vocabulary
6. Utilize strategic reading techniques
7. Apply math to solve problems
8. Interpret math solutions back to context
9. Emphasize scientific thinking
10. Understand big ideas that order and structure detail

Academic Behaviors

1. Help students think about their thinking
2. Create an awareness about their mastery of subject
3. Reflect on what works
4. Reflect on how to improve
5. Persist when presented with a difficult task
6. Employ multiple learning strategies
7. Transfer learning from one area to another
8. Learn how to study
9. Learn how to manage their time
10. Learn how to take exams
11. Learn to take class notes
12. Understand how to speak to instructors

Planning and Decision Making

1. Develop a career goal based on their interests and talents
2. Develop an educational plan to reach their career goal
3. Understand degree requirements
4. Understand transfer options
5. Understand the financial aid system
6. Understand how to track their progress towards their career and educational goals
7. Understand the challenges of college level courses
8. Revise their career and educational plans based on their learning experiences
9. Interact with a diverse cross section of academicians and peers
10. Collaborate and work in a team

