Learning outcomes assessment model:

The people and the process

Valencia College adopted and has subscribed to a series of "Big Ideas," which serve as "fulcrums for change, signifiers for emerging organizational culture, and rallying points for action" (Shugart, et al., and n.d.). For almost two decades, the College has channeled efforts and transformed practices using these Big Ideas, one of which is focused on assessment: "The purpose of assessment is to improve learning." This Big Idea guides the authentic measurement of student learning and creates a culture of evidence that intends to be of use primarily to "the learner. And next to the learner, the most important user is the facilitator of learning" (see Valencia's Big Ideas). As part of its commitment to improving learning, in 2018 the College determined the need to review existing assessment practices and the effectiveness of the processes (see History of Learning Outcomes Assessment at Valencia College). While a consistent cycle of assessment and clear evidence of resultant curricular enhancements were evident, there were signs of waning or inconsistent faculty engagement and a sense of disconnect between the efforts and what identifiable actions to take.

In order to ensure consistent engagement and refocus assessment efforts on taking action to improve student learning, the College entered into a collaborative redesign, expanding on the Big Idea and stating clearly where the College expects to see the improvements—in the conditions for learning expressed in curriculum, assessment, and teaching practices. The proposed new model emerged from a year of research, critical reflection, and creative problem solving. The model is based on two measurable outcomes:

I. Stakeholders are engaged in a reflective process related to professional practice and student learning outcomes.

II.   Pedagogical, curricular, and co-curricular changes are made in response to and in alignment with assessment results.

These outcomes solidify learning assessment as a reflective practice for learning improvement and emphasize the value the College places on the practice of assessment in order to effect meaningful change for students, faculty, staff, disciplines, programs, and the institution.

Design Principles

Design principles for the new model were informed by roundtable conversations conducted in Spring 2019 and developed by the Program Learning Outcomes Assessment (PLOA) Model Design Team (see Work Group Proposal for Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Model Design Team):

1. Collect data that are meaningful and authentic.

    a. Related to professional practice and student learning outcomes

    b. Actionable to disciplines, courses, and programs

    c. Disaggregated

    d. Focused on what matters (deeply grounded in the discipline/course/industry)

    e. Collected close to the learner (faculty/students/learning supports)

2. Integrate multiple sources of data and decrease silos.

    a. A.S. and Bachelor's degree annual program review

    b. Course and subsequent course success data

    c. Transfer readiness

3. Design an assessment cycle and collaborative decision-making process that best utilize stakeholders' time together for conversations, reflection, and action. Infuse the process with a growth principle rather than a deficit model.

a. Celebrate successes

b. Encourage risk-taking

c. Highlight brave action toward improvement

Roundtable Conversations

During Spring 2019, roundtable conversations following a focus group protocol were conducted to engage participants in the evaluation of existing assessment practices. Faculty from each campus (n=86), along with deans and staff (n=42), responded to structured questions:

1. Does your current discipline assessment provide actionable information to improve student learning?

    a. If yes, what elements contribute to that?

    b. If no, what are the unrealized opportunities?

2. What types of collaboration on assessment with colleagues in your discipline and other disciplines are most important?

Participant responses were coded, categorized, and analyzed into 26 themes (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Roundtable Conversation Themes

Category	Themes	Faculty	Dean/staff
Actions in current model	Curricular enhancements: Libguides, modules, portfolios, rubrics, templates	Y	Y
	Interdisciplinary conversations	Y	
	Curriculum alignment and course changes		Y
Concerns (barriers, need support, not viable)	Faculty involvement	Y	Y
	Data not actionable	Y	Y
	Gen Ed Outcomes	Y	Y

Category	Themes	Faculty	Dean/staff
	Majors and non-majors assessed at the same level	Y	Y
	Inconsistencies and disagreements across the discipline	Y	Y
	Redundant/busy work	Y	
	Logistics	Y	
	Students don't transfer skills		Y
Unrealized opportunities	Pre/Post Tests/Capstone/Progress from beginning to end	Y	Y
	Course-based outcomes assessments	Y	Y
	Trainings/structure	Y	
	Learning Day	Y	
	Standardized tests	Y	
	Partnerships between A.S. and Gen Ed, also Bachelor's		Y
	Generalized testing tool for use across disciplines		Y
Optimum collaborations	K-20 conversations	Y	Y
	Co-curricular and curriculum initiative assessments	Y	Y
	Interdisciplinary conversations/assessments	Y	Y
	Involve students	Y	Y
	Workforce conversations		Y
Role of deans	Focus on assessment as a priority		Y
	Mentor, support role		Y
	Protect the integrity of instruction		Y

The Model

In April 2019, the PLOA Model Design Team (see Table 2) began the design process based on the themes from the roundtables (see Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Roundtable Conversations) as well as substantial literature from national organizations and peer institutions (see References).

Table 2.

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Model Design Team

Kristin Abel	Professor, Theater Technology, EAC
Karen Marie Borglum	Professor, Speech, EAC
Mark Collins	Dean, Social Science, EAC
Carl Creasman	Professor, History, EAC
Wendi Dew	AVP, Teaching and Learning, Academic Affairs
Emily Elrod	Professor, Mathematics, OSC
Diane Gomez	Professor, Nursing, WEC
Susan Gosnell	Professor, Radiologic and Imaging Sciences, WEC
Tim Grogan	Professor, Biology, OSC
Nichole Jackson	Director, Learning Assessment, Teaching and Learning
Edna Jones Miller	Dean of Students, DTC
Brandon McKelvey	VP, Analytics and Planning
Molly McIntire	Dean, Academic Affairs, WEC
John Niss	Professor, Mathematics, WPC and Faculty Council President
Heather Ramsier	Faculty, New Student Experience, OSC
Michael Robbins	Professor, English, PNC
Darren Smith	Director, Institutional Effectiveness, Analytics and Planning
Marlene Temes	Interim Dean, Humanities, OSC
Chris Tersigni	Professor, Nursing, WEC
Paul Wilder	Dean, Engineering, Computer Programming and Tech, WEC

The team collaboratively engaged in creative problem-solving activities facilitated by Katie Tagye, Valencia's Director of Organizational Design and Development (see Model Design Activities). After extensive meetings guided by the design principles, a model emerged that embeds full- and part-time faculty, deans, learning support, student services, advisors, and student representatives in a collaborative process to review and align course and program learning outcomes; conduct assessments based on shared indicators; analyze data to develop improvement and implementation plans; and report on the results of the changes made or strategies implemented. The model is intended to validate course-level processes where students are active participants in their learning and make meta-cognitive gains through transparent layers of assessment.

Campus Forums

During Fall 2019, the proposed new model was presented in nine campus forums for participants (n=133) to articulate concerns and challenges, determine the strengths, and ask questions about the model (see Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Campus Forums Feedback). Participant responses were coded, categorized, and prioritized (see Table 3 and Table 4). At the end of Fall 2019 and the start of Spring 2020, the model design team met for three sessions to respond to the concerns with revisions to the model and answer the questions about the proposed model (see Change Document and Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Forums Results and Responses).

Table 3.

Campus Forum Model Strengths

Strength	Frequency
Cross-discipline ability	14
Assessment included in onboarding	11

Strength	Frequency
LOBP, ASMT, and other PD	8
Course-based assessments	8
Consultation teams	8
Connection to HIP, SOTL, annual program review, and other work	8
Outcomes alignment	5

Table 4.

Campus Forum Model Concerns

Concerns categorized	Frequency
Course outlines and outcomes review	17
Assessment Day coordination	11
Transparency to students	11
Cycle in two years	10
Support team preparation	10
Librarians on teams	10
Flexibility creates impasses	9
Part-time faculty engagement	9
General Education outcomes	8
Faculty development course offerings	7
Faculty time, space, and effort	7

The three defining characteristics of the new model are as follows:

- Course-level assessment mapped to program outcome and/or General Education

  outcomes

- Biennial Assessment Cycle

- o Year 1: Review outcomes, develop assessment plan, and implement assessment

- o Year 2: Review results, develop improvement plan, and implement improvement

    1. Programs with four or more outcomes may designate a portion of the outcomes to be assessed in the next cycle, ensuring all outcomes are assessed within two cycles, to a maximum of five years.

    2. Disciplines or programs may designate one additional year in the cycle in order to implement interdisciplinary assessment/improvement plans.

    3. Disciplines or programs may designate one additional year in the cycle in order to implement assessment/improvement plans where courses are not offered every academic year.

    4. Disciplines or programs engaging in this new model for the first cycle may designate one additional year for planning.

- Assessment Coordination Committee, which approves the assessment plans (see [Workplan for Assessment Coordination Committee](#))

The five elements of the model are 1) outcomes and alignment; 2) assessment plan, method(s), and criteria; 3) results, improvement plan, and implementation; 4) collaboration and communication; and 5) support structure (see [Expectations of the Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Model](#)). The PLOA Model Design Team articulated the required components of each element and the intended strengths of this model (see [Strengths of the Model](#)).

Outcomes and alignment

- Programs and General Education disciplines conduct a review of their course learning outcomes and map connection(s) to program and/or General Education outcomes at the beginning of each cycle, refining the number and scope of course learning outcomes as

necessary. Faculty Development and Teaching/Learning Academy (TLA) will provide support for writing measurable outcomes.

- Course learning outcomes and connected program learning outcome(s) and/or General Education learning outcomes are included in each course outline in the Course Information Management (CIM) system.

- Course learning outcomes should reflect alignment with course descriptions from the State Course Numbering system (SCNS) and institutional Gordon-rule designations.

- Core General Education course learning outcomes (see Florida State Board of Education Rule 6A-14.0303) should align with the critical thinking outcome and the statewide General Education common competencies (see General Education Core Course Options) associated with the subject area (see Florida Statues Section 1007.25).

- Institutional General Education courses should align with the primary and secondary General Education outcomes in the most recently approved course outline as designated in CIM. Proposed changes to the primary or secondary General Education Outcomes should be brought to the College Curriculum Committee (CCC) with an updated opt-in plan.

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs should complete these steps:
  - align learning outcomes with the state curriculum framework standards
  - appropriately stack certificate learning outcomes within degree learning outcomes.

- Courses not designated as General Education can be included in assessment plans aligned to course learning outcomes each cycle. Counselors and other Student Affairs staff can

choose to develop co-curricular learning outcomes and contribute to assessment plans

each cycle.

Assessment plan, method(s), and criteria

- Each course, set of courses, discipline, or program prepares one assessment plan to

  address all program and/or General Education learning outcomes as designated in CIM.

  Courses, disciplines, or programs assessing the same outcomes are encouraged to

  coordinate plans.

- Course learning outcomes assessed within courses are mapped to program and/or General

  Education learning outcomes. This can be accomplished through multiple methods, but

  should be aligned to a single criterion.

- External stakeholders can participate in the development of the assessment method(s),

  criteria, and in the assessment of student artifacts.

- Course learning outcomes, relevant program and/or General Education learning

  outcomes, and assessment method(s) should be transparent to students in course

  materials.

- The assessment plan template may include a plan for interdisciplinary assessment (e.g.,

  coordinate indicators across disciplines, connect disciplines with common program level

  outcomes, or connect General Education and A.S./B.A.S./B.S. faculty).

Results, improvement plan, and implementation

- Learning outcomes data and other related data (course success, subsequent course

  success, and annual program review) are available to stakeholders and disaggregated by

  key student characteristics.

- College-wide stakeholders meet to draft, develop, and commit to a data-informed improvement plan that incorporates assessing and reporting of the results.

- Improvement plans are directly tied to assessment data and include documentation of the timeline and individuals responsible for implementation.

- Improvement plans can be implemented to address program learning outcomes or course learning outcomes aligned to program learning outcomes. Subsets of faculty can attempt different interventions as long as the assessment criteria are the same.

- Results of the implementation of improvement plans are reported in a system accessible to stakeholders, disseminated college-wide, and discussed with stakeholders. For CTE programs, this process should be integrated within the Annual Program Review.

- Improvement plans can be connected to UCF alignment conversations, Valencia Bachelor's degree alignment conversations, Endowed Chair activities, Faculty Incentive Plan High Impact Practices, Teaching and Learning Academy candidate portfolios, and other Scholarship of Teaching and Learning practices at the College.

Support structure

- Assessment Leadership Teams coordinate activities, collaboration, communication, and support to ensure a meaningful assessment cycle. Each discipline or program has an Assessment Leadership Team made up of Faculty Leads from the discipline/program, a Fellow for Data and Assessment, a Faculty Developer/Instructional Designer, and relevant consultants as appropriate (e.g., librarian, Student Affairs). The Teaching and Learning Division coordinates the distribution of Faculty Fellows for Data and Assessment and Faculty Developer/Instructional Designers (FDIDs), who receive additional development in assessment practices and procedures.

- o Faculty Leads are tenured/tenure-track faculty or annually appointed NSE faculty, sufficient in number to provide diverse content expertise and represent the interests of each region where disciplines/programs reside. Faculty Leads may or may not be discipline coordinators or chairs and will be designated by deans with faculty support. In areas where there are no tenured/tenure-track faculty, annually appointed faculty (10 or 12 month) may serve. Faculty Leads facilitate and coordinate the development and implementation of meaningful assessment, ensure engagement from all campuses as appropriate to the program, coordinate meetings, and initiate feasible improvement plan(s). Faculty Leads will serve two- to three-year terms aligned to an assessment cycle as a part of service to the College.

- o Faculty Fellows for Data and Assessment and Faculty Developer/Instructional Designers are members of multiple Assessment Leadership Teams to support writing measurable learning outcomes and indicators, advise development and implementation of meaningful assessment, support analysis and interpretation of results, support development of feasible improvement plans, and support facilitation of meetings.

- o Consultants are experts in fields that align to the learning outcomes (e.g., librarians for assessments of information literacy) and/or the student experience (e.g., learning support, student affairs). These consultants support the review of learning outcomes, support development and implementation of meaningful assessment, and assist with determining the effectiveness of improvement plans.

- Deans understand the assessment cycle, provide feedback to faculty on the assessment/improvement plan, support progress on the assessment/improvement plan, and collaborate with faculty and dean colleagues to maximize faculty engagement in implementation. The Teaching and Learning Division supports dean development in program assessment through existing models of support for deans.

- Faculty Development provides professional development and mentoring programs to all faculty in Assessment (ASMT), Learning Outcomes Based Practice (LOBP), and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL). Faculty Development will build, enhance, and revise offerings according to needs. These may be repeated for credit but are not required.

- The Learning Assessment Office will work with the Assessment Coordination Committee (ACC) to support modifications to assessment technologies (e.g., Xitracs), as needed, to facilitate offset cycles and streamline reporting.

- The ACC approves assessment plans and oversees assessments for A.S./B.S./B.A.S./A.A. degrees and General Education and provides an annual interdisciplinary opportunity for presentations of innovative plans, lessons learned, unsuccessful interventions, and successful results that signal potential for further impact if adopted by other areas. ACC members will serve two- to three-year terms and will complete required assessment training. ACC is responsible to Learning Council for ongoing, holistic assessment of the College's assessment process related to the two identified outcomes:
    o Stakeholders are engaged in a reflective process related to professional practice and student learning outcomes.

- Pedagogical, curricular, and co-curricular changes are made in response to and in alignment with assessment results.

Collaboration and communication

- Assessment Leadership Teams will follow the assessment plan template, which must include a plan for collaboration, a communication plan, and a plan for faculty engagement, each with specific considerations for annually appointed and part-time faculty.

- Assessment plans are included in full-time and part-time faculty onboarding within divisions by deans, program chairs, or discipline chairs.

- Intentionally timed, annual college-wide meetings within disciplines and programs occur at milestones within the assessment cycle and within contracted workdays. The ACC will provide a standard timeline of meetings from which Assessment Leadership Teams can deviate to align with accreditation or other obligations, though they will still be expected to keep pace with the assessment cycle.

- Additional meetings for review of assessment plans can occur at campus-level discipline-specific meetings, interdisciplinary regional conversations, or other college-wide meetings.

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Appendix
Artifacts of Collaboration

History of Learning Outcomes Assessment at Valencia College

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Roundtable Conversations

Work Group Proposal for Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Model Design Team

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Model Design Activities

Workplan for Assessment Coordination Committee (ACC)

Expectations of the Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Model

Model Design Team Strengths of the Model

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Campus Forums Feedback

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Campus Forums Strengths

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Campus Forums Concerns

Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Forums Results and Responses

The Cycle Graphic

Change Document

Annotated Glossary for Learning Assessment Model