



# Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes at a Community College

ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE

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# Learning Outcomes



DESCRIBE ASSESSMENT BEST  
PRACTICE



DISCUSS COMMON  
ASSESSMENT PROBLEMS



BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS  
TO ASSESSMENT PROBLEMS

# Overview of Delta College

- ▶ Community college in the Mid-Michigan serving approximately 10,000 students annually from three different counties.
- ▶ Integrated general education model, embedded in all degrees, instead of the traditional distributed model.
- ▶ Two faculty led assessment committees:
  - ▶ SLAC – Program Assessment
  - ▶ GECAC – Gen Ed Assessment
    - ▶ Faculty Resource groups exist for each Gen Ed outcome.
- ▶ Assessment Office:
  - ▶ Dean of Teaching and Learning, SLAC Chair, GECAC Chair, and one amazing Administrative Office Professional!

# General Education Curriculum and Assessment Committee (GECAC)

- ▶ Oversees college wide assessment of the six General Education Learning Outcomes.
- ▶ Representatives from all five academic divisions and SES
- ▶ Work in partnership with the resource groups for each general education learning outcome
- ▶ Support from the Assessment Office



What are some best practices for assessment of student learning?



# Gen ED Assessment Best Practices

- ▶ A course or program should have 4-8 student learning outcomes
- ▶ Attempt to assess students near the end of the program
- ▶ Assess all outcomes in a 4-5 year cycle
- ▶ Assessment tool is valid and reliable
- ▶ Align the tool to the outcome
- ▶ Authentic and relevant
- ▶ Student work is evaluated against a standard
- ▶ Data collected is used to make changes to improve student learning = Closing the loop!

# Learning Outcome Best Practice

- Consistent with course (program) mission
- Supported by the curriculum
- Realistic, not aspirational
- Use *verbs* from Bloom's Taxonomy
- Focus on high-priority learning (the most important things)
- Avoid compound outcomes with multiple lines of evidence – it should be a *single* assessable item
- Assessed in a 4-5 year cycle

# Assessment Problems at Delta College

- ▶ Too many outcomes
- ▶ Inconsistent scoring
- ▶ Collecting only numerical data
- ▶ Lack of faculty participation
- ▶ COVID-19 global pandemic!!





# Assessment Solutions



Revise and reduce learning outcomes



Create a common rubric and standard of evaluation



Ask for qualitative comments



Use course embedded assessments



Be creative

# General Education Learning Outcomes

| Gen Ed Outcome                        | Description of outcome   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Think Critically</b>               | Produce a defensible conclusion or solution using critical or creative thinking.   |
| <b>Communicate Effectively</b>        | Communicate effectively in oral, written, or symbolic expression.  |
| <b>Think Civically</b>                | Demonstrate an understanding of diverse societies, ranging from local to global, in order to engage effectively in civic life. |
| <b>Cultivate Wellness</b>             | Demonstrate an understanding of wellness principles to promote physical and personal health.                                   |
| <b>Utilize Technology Effectively</b> | Solve a problem or accomplish a task using technology.   |
| <b>Reason Quantitatively</b>          | Use quantitative information or analyze data within context to arrive at meaningful results.                                   |

# How we do Gen Ed assessment

1. 3-year cycle, one outcome per semester.
2. Identify all students that meet assessment criteria.
  - ▶ In classes that have an M for the outcome to be assessed
  - ▶ With more than 45 credit hours (close to graduation)
3. Ask faculty of the students identified to score and provide qualitative comments for each student listed on the spreadsheet.
4. Assessment Office randomly selects a subsample of students to have artifacts sent in for scoring by the Resource Group and GECAC.
5. Resource group:
  - ▶ Scores the samples of work and compares with instructor scores.
  - ▶ Prepares assessment report for the assessment database.
  - ▶ Makes recommendations for professional development to improve student learning.

# Course Planning Grid

- ▶ Shows what students will learn, how the course will be structured to promote this learning, and how learning will be assessed.
- ▶ Focus on what students will do to develop the competence and an explicit plan for giving feedback about their mastery when determining grades

| General Education Learning Outcome | Activity                   | Assessment  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Reason Quantitatively              | Diet Analysis (LW 221)     | Students will collect calorie and nutrient information on all foods consumed for three days. They will determine if their diet is in acceptable ranges and what they can do to improve. |
| Reason Quantitatively              | Obesity Problem (MTH 122W) | Students determine the best model to represent obesity data for Americans and then construct that model. They will use their model to estimate values not included in the data set.     |

# Gen Ed Assessment Rubric & Targets

| Level X - Dropped                 | Level 0 - No Evidence | Level 1 - Emerging  | Level 2 - Developing  | Level 3 - Mastery                              |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|--|
| Student dropped before submission | No evidence           | Does not meet expectations: has major errors, omissions, or inappropriate expressions | Meets minimal expectations: has minor errors, omissions, or inappropriate expressions | Shows proficiency in demonstrating the outcome |

- ▶ Cycle 1 (2017-2019): 70% of students will score at a 2 or 3 by their instructors
- ▶ Cycle 2 (2020-2022): 80% of students will score at a 2 or 3 by their instructors

# Cultivate Wellness

- ▶ Demonstrate an understanding of wellness principles to promote physical and personal health.
  - ▶ Wellness: An active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life in any of the six dimensions of wellness: physical, social, psychological, environmental, intellectual, and spiritual.
  - ▶ Health: A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization).

# Cultivate Wellness Results

## ▶ Next Steps

- ▶ 12 faculty will continue to monitor
- ▶ 2 faculty changed a class assignment or activity
- ▶ 2 faculty updated course content
- ▶ 1 faculty changed materials provided

|                  | Winter 2017 | Fall 2020 | Change          |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Scores requested | 509         | 396       | Decrease        |
| Scores returned  | 246         | 362       | Increase        |
| Return Rate      | 48%         | 91%       | Increase        |
| % at 2 or 3      | 89%         | 87.5%     | Slight Decrease |
| Target met?      | YES         | YES       |                 |

# Reason Quantitatively Outcome

- ▶ Use quantitative information or analyze data within context to arrive at meaningful results.
  - ▶ “Quantitative Information” could be summary statistics, values with units, or formulas describing relationships between concepts using numbers, rates, ratios, or proportions.
  - ▶ “Data” could be raw data in list, tabular, or graphical format.
  - ▶ “Context” could be any example, real or artificially constructed, that models the relationships between relevant concepts that could be found in a discipline, job environment, or everyday life.
  - ▶ “Meaningful” means reasonable or useful.
  - ▶ “Results” could be a conclusion, decision, solution, inference, or interpretation.



# Reason Quantitatively Results

- ▶ Next Steps
  - ▶ 48 faculty will continue to monitor
  - ▶ 11 faculty changed a class assignment or activity
  - ▶ 3 faculty updated course content
  - ▶ 4 faculty adjusted a grading rubric

|                  | Winter 2018 | Winter 2021        | Change          |
|------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Scores requested | 1139        | 921                | Decrease        |
| Scores returned  | 941         | 714                | Decrease        |
| Return Rate      | 83%         | 78%                | Decrease        |
| % at 2 or 3      | 80.1%       | 79.5%              | Slight Decrease |
| Target met?      | Yes         | Just shy of target |                 |

# Don't forget to close the loop!

- ▶ Assessment data should be used to improve student learning
- ▶ Changes made a result of assessment data include:
  - ▶ Updated outcomes
  - ▶ Updated course content
  - ▶ Changes to a class assignment or activity
  - ▶ Changes in materials provided
  - ▶ Adjustments to the rubric



# Discussion Questions

1. What issues have you experienced at your institution when developing and/or implementing a General Education assessment model?
2. Do you have any questions or suggestions?
3. What is working well for you at your institution?
4. How have you improved your assessment model?
5. How have you adapted to virtual learning and working remotely?

# Thank you!



Thank you for attending our presentation on General Education Learning Outcome assessment.



The second cycle of assessment will be completed in Winter 2023 and our results will be part of the monitoring report due to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in Sept. 2023.



This work is vital to the accreditation of the college and helps us focus on our common goals as educators.

# References

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[https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/AiP\\_FaleskiHandley-Miller.pdf](https://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/AiP_FaleskiHandley-Miller.pdf)

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