Learning Matters

The LaGuardia Community College

Academic Assessment Guide

Revised March 2020

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

This Guide offers resources for LaGuardia faculty, staff, and students engaged in our common work with the *Learning Matters* Core Competencies and Communication Abilities.

In this Introduction, we'll explain "Learning Matters," an umbrella term for LaGuardia's initiatives around curricular cohesion, outcomes assessment, and General Education. The Guide will also:

- ✓ dive deeper into our signature modes of assessment for Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), including for both general education and program majors

- ✓ describe assessment resources available for faculty, staff, and students

- ✓ suggest ways to design assignments that incorporate the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities

- ✓ answer Frequently Asked Questions about assessment related activities like depositing student work for assessment, Periodic Program Reviews (PPRs), and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

The Guide seeks to improve communication with students and faculty about the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. It also contextualizes how the Competencies and Abilities inform our broader philosophy of Outcomes Assessment, including how administrative and educational support (AES) units contribute to Student Learning Outcomes, and what Institutional Effectiveness (IE) means at the College.

The Guide will also provide information about Periodic Program Reviews, Institutional Effectiveness, and CUNY mandated policies for accreditation and assessment.

Learning Matters

LaGuardia Community College serves a vibrant student body, enrolling 20,000 degree students and 30,000 continuing education students annually. Students come from more than 150 countries and speak 100 different languages. Two thirds are women; large majorities are low-income and the first in their families to attend college.

To serve these students, LaGuardia has become a national leader in educational innovation. While our graduation rates are far above the national community college average, however, they are still unacceptably low. Students spend too much time in remedial courses and courses that don't count towards their majors. Many get lost on the way to graduation and drop out, representing a major setback for the student, the College, and our society.

To address this challenge, LaGuardia has drawn on the best new research (such as Bailey's *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success*) to launch a multi-pronged effort to structure guided pathways from enrollment to graduation.[1] With funding from the USDOE and the Teagle Foundation, LaGuardia has re-invented its First Year Seminar and accelerated remedial education; data shows that both efforts are making a dramatic difference. LaGuardia is also deploying digital technology and improved advisement to guide student progress.

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[1] Thomas Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggers and Davis Jenkins, *Redesigning America's Community Colleges: A Clearer Path to Student Success* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015)

LaGuardia focuses its primary assessment on authentic examples of student work, rather than standardized national tests, because we believe that this provides a clearer and more meaningful way to understand student learning, and better supports faculty efforts to make the changes needed to strengthen student progress.

We assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLOSs) at LaGuardia through three primary areas:

1) General Education Assessment. During annual Benchmark Readings, faculty and staff score student work related to the General Education Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. The College shares this data with faculty and programs, who reflect on the results to make necessary changes that strengthen student learning.

2) Periodic Program Reviews (PPR). All academic programs conduct Periodic Program Reviews. PPRs are led by program faculty who use their findings to recommend and implement changes in programmatic learning.

3) Administrative & Student Support Units. The systematic assessment of LaGuardia's administrative and educational support (AES) units is a central component of institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, and student learning outcomes assessment aligned with the College's mission.

One of the primary frameworks for promoting student learning and graduation at the College is called "Learning Matters." At the center of *Learning Matters* are our Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. Identified and designed by faculty and approved by college governance, these Competencies and Abilities focus college-wide attention on shared objectives that address central dimensions of learning often associated with liberal arts education, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, global learning, self-reflection, and effective communication, including oral, written, and digital. When adapted to programs and majors in the disciplines, a college-wide focus on these objectives helps our students develop the higher order thinking and adaptive learning capacities needed for success in advanced education and 21st century careers.

To support this focus on shared objectives and help faculty examine course and program effectiveness, the *Learning Matters* Competencies and Abilities structure LaGuardia's outcomes assessment system.

> **Outcomes assessment is a set of processes that accredited institutions of higher education are required to undertake. The purpose of outcomes assessment is**
>
> 1) to identify college-wide learning priorities, or student learning outcomes, including for General Education, the program majors in the disciplines, and the administrative and educational support (AES) units;
>
> 2) to collect data that documents student learning in General Education, the program majors in the disciplines, and administrative and educational support (AES) units;
>
> 3) to use data to innovate changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and AES units that improves student learning and experience.

Learning Matters activities and initiatives inform a multitude of on-going projects that advance outcomes assessment of academic programs and General Education:

- ✓ The development of programmatic curriculum maps that identify key places to build learning in the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities in addition to program learning goals.
- ✓ Seminars in the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) that help faculty build familiarity with the Competencies and Abilities and design ways to address them
- ✓ Mini-grants for programmatic development, including "closing the loop" activities
- ✓ Focused inquiry projects in the Provost Learning Space
- ✓ Data-guided cycles of inquiry and assessment for the Periodic Program Review process
- ✓ Faculty and staff participation in annual benchmark readings that score student artifacts for programs and General Education

Learning Matters helps faculty across all majors work together to integrate the Competencies and Abilities into key courses in their majors, and also encourages programs to clarify, assess, and improve their unique programmatic competencies. Together, the mission of "assessing for learning" addresses the need for coherent curriculum frameworks that offer rich classroom learning and teaching through assignment design and authentic assessment.

Learning Matters helps programs engage in a sustained process of curricular transformation by promoting the creation of curricular resources that align the everyday practices of teaching and learning with a cohesive curriculum framework. Ultimately, *Learning Matters* strengthens LaGuardia's effort to address its primary goal: effectively advancing students to graduation, transfer, and life-long learning in the careers and communities they choose.

A Learning College
LaGuardia's outcomes assessment processes have emerged organically from sustained work by faculty and staff over the past two decades. At the core of LaGuardia's Mission Statement "**to educate and graduate**" one of the world's most diverse student populations is an idea that rests in the heart of the mission of the City University of New York (CUNY): **opportunity**. The central mission of CUNY provides students with the higher-order abilities and/or competencies they need to create new opportunities for themselves — and in the process to change their world.

This mission contextualizes the kinds of disciplinary knowledge students pursue in their program majors. The Associate's Degree reflects a student education that includes program knowledge and their attendant skills, but also includes a core set of competencies, abilities, and skills that anchor each degree no matter a student's major or career trajectory. This Degree is meant to provide students with the lifelong learning skills they will need to adapt to rapidly changing industries, economies, and social realities in the present and future.

At LaGuardia, five **Core Values** anchor our mission to educate and graduate our student population: diversity, responsibility, opportunity, innovation, and learning. This last value, **learning**, speaks to the philosophy behind LaGuardia's culture of assessment, which follows national models for accreditation *and* what's called "assessing for learning." The latter refers to the cycle of inquiry, data collection, feedback, and evidence-based action that asks faculty and staff to improve pedagogy and curriculum continuously, partly with the expectation that the process will lead to improved student success.

The concept of "assessing for learning" goes beyond student learning. LaGuardia strives to be a "learning college" by asking faculty, staff, and administration to assess their practices in order to learn more about ways to improve pedagogy, services, and management. A learning college encourages each person with a responsibility toward students to assess their mission, goals, and outcomes on a regular basis in order to make improvements that propel student success. LaGuardia is a college that is continuously examining, learning, and improving support for student learning and development.

LaGuardia is committed to a tradition of excellence in teaching and learning that goes beyond complying with the minimum expectations of national norms and accreditation priorities. While outcomes assessment is also a process that institutions of higher ed are required to undertake by regional accreditors like the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (Middle States), they are also processes that encourage best practices, professional reflection, and evidence-based actions to improve our collective efforts to help students graduate and prepare for their next steps.

Our assessment processes answer questions such as:

- ✓ What do we want our students to learn?
- ✓ What are our common learning priorities as a College?
- ✓ How do we know our students are learning?
- ✓ How can we use empirical evidence to improve learning for all students?

These questions have a comprehensive scope. They seek to consider:

- ✓ The *entire* purpose of college education, from first to last semesters.
- ✓ The teaching that takes place inside *and* outside the classroom.
- ✓ The learning that happens *within* and *across* programs, majors, or disciplines.

The assessment of General Education is crucial to improving and transforming student learning at the College because it allows us to read, score, and reflect on student work across the College. As a result of this process, we can create data that gives faculty from all programs the chance to take evidence-based actions to improve the teaching and learning in their classes. The primary goal of Outcomes Assessment is to constantly improve what we do, which is especially important in an always evolving world.

LaGuardia's Outcomes Assessment plan is designed to address learning goals within our Institutional Effectiveness (IE) framework, and also to use data to improve activities in academic and administrative support units (AES). Throughout the processes, we use a variety of tools to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. A central feature of the assessment plan is an emphasis on interdisciplinary skills development that informs every degree the College awards. This is one reason why our required Competencies and Abilities are adapted and assessed across all disciplines.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (IE)

Institutional effectiveness is the process through which an academic institution demonstrates – via planning and assessment – that it is making progress towards achieving its stated mission. "Planning" refers to the conscious processes used to develop mission-based goals and strategies for growth and improvement at institutional level. "Assessment" of institutional effectiveness is the process of gathering qualitative and/or quantitative data to evaluate and monitor the degree to which such the goals and their related outcomes met, and whether institutional efforts actually brought about the desired results. An assessment of institutional effectiveness is used to improve student learning, to facilitate academic and institutional improvements, and to gauge where to invest future efforts and resources. The success of an institutional effectiveness plan requires the commitment of all constituents across campus, including campus leaders and administrators, academic departments and programs, faculty, staff and students.

Essential elements of an institutional effectiveness plan include:

- Clear statements of institutional mission and of institutional goals consistent with the mission

- Identifying clear and measurable outcomes and objectives tied to these goals

- Clearly articulated plans for achieving these outcomes – overall strategic, operational, and academic plans as well as unit level plans

- Well-defined systematic, comprehensive and sustainable assessment to evaluate the extent to which the goals were actually achieved; and

- Using the results and the assessment and evaluation to inform budget priorities and institutional improvement

LaGuardia Community College's institutional effectiveness process is an ongoing college-wide process integrating institutional assessment alongside assessment of academic achievements, programs and services, with overall emphasis on the institution's ability to achieve its mission to provide accessible, affordable, high quality education. The degree to which LaGuardia is achieving is mission is evidenced by annually tracking the progress made in achieving these goals at the institutional and program level, assessing the attainment of student learning goals, and evaluating the quality of programs and services.

Assessing Administrative & Educational Support Units (AES)

The systematic assessment of LaGuardia's administrative and educational support (AES) units is essential for ensuring that a quality educational experience is provided to all students. Assessing AES units is a central component of institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, assessment of student learning outcomes, and achieving our college mission.

AES units need to define their mission, establish goals, and determine how to measure outcomes associated with those goals. Through this process, units can improve on a continuous basis, and can meet the needs and expectations of students, parents, employers, faculty, and other stakeholders. One benefit of measuring the performance of AES units is that the assessment informs others about the contributions of the unit, demonstrates accomplishments and mission, and establishes directions for improving quality and student satisfaction.

At LaGuardia, the assessment of non-academic units builds upon the strong foundation already established in the assessment of student learning outcomes. This process of inquiry encourages substantial discussions among the participants of each unit, and encourages them to reflect on their practices, and assess how they are doing it. While highly systematic and incremental in nature, the unit review process must be flexible and able to contextualize and customize. Staff from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) provides on-going support and facilitation for the process.

The process started in 2018-19 with 30 units organized by their divisions – Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Adult and Continuing Education (ACE), Administration, Information Technology, Institutional Advancement and the President's Office). The aim was that by the end of 2018-19 all units will establish their mission and goals of (31 out of the 35 AES units did). Ten of the 35 units also submitted assessment plans, including panned activities and the rest of the will provides their assessment plans in 2019-20.

SIGNATURE ASSESSMENT AT LAGUARDIA

LaGuardia has drawn accolades from the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment and the Association of American Colleges & Universities for its ability to use outcomes assessment to help faculty make changes that improve student learning.[2] Since 2002, LaGuardia has steadily built broad faculty engagement with an outcomes assessment process centered on a common set of outcomes addressed in both General Education courses and key courses in the majors. Assessing authentic learning artifacts gathered in students' ePortfolios, faculty engage in an inquiry process that has been shown to support effective changes in curriculum and pedagogy.[3] In 2012, Middle States commended LaGuardia for our exemplary work in building broad faculty engagement in outcomes assessment.

Outcomes Assessment fosters a culture of learning for both students and faculty wherein faculty use the information from assessments to revise curriculum, pedagogy, and assignments in an effort to create an even stronger institution of learning for students. The College's Core Competencies and Abilities have been determined and evaluated by the faculty, although many program competencies are set by outside accreditors (for example, in many of the programs associated with the Health Sciences).
Our academic Outcomes Assessment measures student learning in two main ways:

- ✓ **General Education.** The College's agreed-upon General Education Core Competencies and Communication Abilities apply to all students, and are integrated into the curriculum of every major. They are evaluated through the process known as our annual Benchmark Readings.

  - **Core Competencies: Inquiry & Problem Solving; Integrative Learning; Global Learning.**

  - **Core Abilities: Written, Oral, and Digital Communication.**

Each of these Core Competencies and Communication Abilities has an associated rubric that defines its meaning, outlines their dimensions and elements, and conveys a range of learning that reflects differing levels of engagement and development in student work, on a 1-4 scale. More details about the assessment scoring process follow in this document.

- ✓ **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOS).** Developed within each major, PLOs are assessed in order to improve teaching and learning specific to each program. All academic programs conduct Periodic Program Reviews (PPRs) that address both Program Learning Outcomes and General Education. The PPRs are mandated by CUNY, but they are also the primary way programs assess and improve teaching and learning in the majors. PPRs are led by program faculty and take place on a cyclical seven-year timeline. Program faculty choose the methods of direct assessment of Program Learning Outcomes, which varies according to the courses and program goals.

LaGuardia's Assessment History
LaGuardia's Outcomes Assessment processes emerged from sustained work by faculty and staff over the past two decades. During the 2001-02 academic year, an Outcomes Assessment Plan was approved by

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[2] Stacey Provezis, "LaGuardia Community College: Weaving Assessment into the Institutional Fabric" In *Using Assessment Results: Promising Practices of Institutions That Do It Well,* ed. G.R. Baker (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2012). http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/LaGuardiaCC.pdf
[3] Paul Arcario, Bret Eynon, et al., "Closing the Loop: How We Better Serve Our Students through a Comprehensive Assessment Process," *Metropolitan Universities Journal* 24 (2013). http://www.niu.edu/p20network/readiness-activities/ePortfolio-materials/Arcario-Eynon-Klages-Polnariev-Closing-the-Loop-MUJ-fall-2013.pdf

the College's governance bodies. Guidelines for the CUNY-mandated Periodic Program Review (PPR) process have been revised to reflect this Outcomes Assessment Plan.

In 2013, then Provost Paul Arcario charged a task force with rethinking our General Education core competencies. The Task Force assembled faculty and academic chairs, Senate members, and Student Affairs professionals. They gathered college input, reviewed best practices, and designed a plan to address the College mission and prioritize the kinds of learning LaGuardia values most. Between 2013-2015, LaGuardia built on its successful assessment work by engaging more than 200 faculty, staff, and students in developing an updated set of Core Competencies, designed to fit with CUNY Pathways and advance higher order thinking.

LaGuardia's Core Competencies & Communication Abilities

As a result of the Task Force recommendations, in 2014 the College adopted three Core Competencies: Inquiry & Problem Solving; Global Learning; and Integrative Learning to be demonstrated through three Communication Abilities: Written, Oral, and Digital Communication. This *Learning Matters* framework was passed unanimously by College governance. Through broad study and debate, LaGuardia faculty identified three overarching Core Competencies:

- ✓ *Inquiry/Problem Solving* asks students to seek and use disciplinary and cross-disciplinary content knowledge to address challenging issues; they weigh evidence and draw conclusions through a process of synthesis and evaluation.

- ✓ *Global Learning* asks students to approach the world's challenges and opportunities from multiple perspectives and wrestle with issues of diversity, identity, democracy, power, privilege, sustainability and ethical action. Encompassing multiple dimensions, such as intercultural communication and ethical decision-making, Global Learning helps students prepare for life and work in complex global future.

- ✓ *Integrative learning* asks students to make connections between ideas and apply them to new contexts, within and beyond campus and over time. It supports the transfer of academic content knowledge across semesters and disciplines, as well as the higher-order processes of synthesis and application often described as "learning for understanding."

Our three higher-order Core Competencies are composites of skills, attitudes, and knowledge: they each promote dimensions of learning that require exposure, time, process, and reflection. They are not the kinds of skills that one can purchase for credentialing or certification or accumulate quickly, but instead they offer methods for interacting with complex problems, new cultures, and changing selves. Our communication abilities give students the tools, voices, and genres for teaching others everything they're learning and all that they already know.

Students demonstrate Core Competencies using one of three Communication Abilities: Written, Oral or Digital. Writing with power and clarity—the ability to combine vocabulary with grammatical proficiency, fluency, and cogent organization— has long been a hallmark of liberal education. LaGuardia faculty decided that oral communication— encompassing language, delivery and logical organization—was equally crucial for student learning. And LaGuardia faculty also recognized the importance of helping students develop the ability to harness the affordances of digital media to communicate their knowledge and ideas in a fast-changing world. *See below for a deeper description of each.*

The Competencies and Abilities apply to all students and are addressed in General Education courses (the *CUNY Pathways* Required Core) and in select courses in every major at the College. Following the Senate approval of the *Learning Matters* framework, nearly 200 faculty drew on the AAC&U's VALUE rubrics, to develop and test rubrics for this Competency framework. The rubrics provide the structured definitions faculty need to address the Competencies in disciplinary courses and majors, from Nursing to Biology to Education and Engineering. Like the democratic process of selecting Competencies, the rubric development process built support for the framework across the faculty community.

LAGUARDIA'S CORE COMPETENCIES & COMMUNICATION ABILITIES

- **Inquiry & Problem Solving.** Inquiry is a systematic process of exploring issues or questions by collecting and analyzing evidence that results in informed conclusions or judgments. Problem solving refers to the ability to design, evaluate, and implement strategies to answer open-ended questions, overcome an obstacle, or achieve a desired goal. Analysis is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain better understanding, often through processes of revision, rethinking, and reorganization, to advance a claim hypothesis, or solution. Inquiry, analysis and problem-solving combine to form a habit of mind critical to academic and career advancement, and sustained, life-long learning.

- **Integrative Learning** makes connections among ideas and experiences, across the curriculum and co-curriculum, to synthesize and transfer learning to new situations within and beyond campus.

- **Global Learning** focuses on transnational economic, political, environmental, physical, social and cultural issues and their implications. It enables students to advance knowledge and understanding of global issues, events and histories; strengthen knowledge and understanding of divergent global perspectives and thoughtfully communicate across difference; and apply learning and consider opportunities for ethical engagement, identifying how actions affect both local and global communities.

- **Written, Oral, and Digital Communication Abilities.** Clear communication imparts messages to others, constructs knowledge, fosters understanding, and/or influences opinion. The ability to communicate can be demonstrated in many ways, including through essays, poems, narratives, dialogues, presentations, formal and informal speaking, digital platforms, and other varieties of methods.

LaGuardia's Outcomes Assessment process places a strong focus on a systematic and longitudinal examination of authentic student work as collected on their ePortfolios or in the assessment depositing area of the Digication ePortfolio platform. LaGuardia focuses its academic assessment on authentic examples of student work, rather than standardized national tests, because the College believes that authentic student work provides a more meaningful way to understand student learning, and better supports faculty making the changes to strengthen student success.

Designing assignments, activities, and pedagogy to address the *Learning Matters* framework recursively builds the capacities students need to achieve success at LaGuardia and transfer colleges. At the same time, our work empowers our students as engaged citizens confronting a challenging world. Research shows that these same capacities – problem-solving, communication, collaboration across difference, and the ability to apply academic knowledge in new, real-world situations -- are the qualities that employers increasingly seek.[4] Across disciplines, faculty and staff use the framework to help students prepare for more successful futures in their education, their communities and their careers.

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[4] See, for example, the Career Readiness Competencies developed, based on extensive research, by the National Center for Colleges and Employers, accessed at http://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/ ; or *IT TAKES MORE THAN A MAJOR: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success,* research conducted by Hart Research Associates for the Association of American Association of Colleges and Universities (Washington DC: 2013).

With many new initiatives at the College over the past few years, including our new credit-based First Year Seminar and our shared advisement model, our Core Competencies and Abilities have played a vital role in informing growth and change in and across our academic and co-curricular programs. As we've been "closing the loop" at an institutional scale, we've had to shift what we measure and how we measure it. We now see ourselves "Evolving the Loop" into exciting new directions as **a 21st century Learning College**: a College that not only demonstrates evidence of student learning over time, but a College that continually adapts to those students, and learns from empowering them and providing them with ever richer and more meaningful opportunities.

Find more about the history and process of assessment at LaGuardia at the College's Assessment website: http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/assessment.

Communicating the Competencies & Abilities to Students

LaGuardia's *Core Competencies & Communication Abilities* focus on the 21st century learning skills you need for a Bachelor's degree, a good job, and life-long learning. They ask you to develop your ability to use knowledge from your classes in new ways to build the thinking and problem-solving skills colleges and employers value. Students in all majors will strengthen theses area in their time at LaGuardia.

Core Competencies			
Competency	Definition	In College	Beyond College
Inquiry & Problem Solving	Gather & weigh evidence to draw conclusions	✓ Ask smart questions, dig deeper into issues & problems ✓ Evaluate & synthesize information to solve problems	Apply problem-solving skills that employers want. Make more effective life decisions.
Global Learning	Approach the world's challenges and opportunities from multiple perspectives	✓ Engage with issues of diversity, identity, power and privilege ✓ Communicate across differences	Ability to work in diverse global environments, communicate across differences, and navigate a changing world.
Integrative Learning	Make connections between ideas and apply them to new contexts	✓ Apply learning across courses ✓ Reflect on your own learning ✓ Connect life, academic, and college activity experiences	Develop a strong sense of personal and professional identity

Communication Abilities		
Ability	Definition	In College/Beyond College
Written Communication	Write with power in a range of styles	Reports, essays, requests, personal narratives
Oral Communication	Speak clearly to different audiences	Presentations, interviews, speeches, networking
Digital Communication	Combine images, text, video or other media in effective digital presentations	Web pages & portfolios, social media, personal branding, professional tools

LAGUARDIA'S OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PROCESS

LaGuardia focuses outcomes assessment on authentic student work, rather than standardized national tests, because we believe it provides a clearer, more meaningful way to understand student learning, and better supports faculty efforts to make the changes needed to strengthen student progress.

LaGuardia has a long tradition of faculty leadership to strengthen learning within and across majors. LaGuardia's **Benchmark Readings** are a powerful part of that tradition, in which faculty, staff, and administrators come together to read and reflect on our framework for General Education. We define our General Education teaching and learning through the Core Competencies expressed through the Communication Abilities. The College's General Education Core Competencies and Communication Abilities apply to all students. They are integrated into the curriculum of every major, and in turn are evaluated during our annual Benchmark Readings.

The assessment of our General Education framework is crucial to improve and transform LaGuardia student learning because it allow space to read, score, and reflect on student work at the College. As a result of this process, we can create data that give faculty from all programs the chance to take evidence-based actions to improve teaching and learning in their classes. The primary goal of Outcomes Assessment is continuous improvement, which is especially important in an ever-evolving world.

Our work in assessment means continually examining our mission and values as a College by collecting authentic student work from our classrooms in the beginning, middle, and end of our students' college careers. With support from the Center for Teaching & Learning, we design and implement changes in curriculum and pedagogy intended to improve student learning – a process we call **"Closing the Loop."** Closing the Loop on our collective practices is at the core of our identity as a Learning College.

Depositing Artifacts

LaGuardia's Outcomes Assessment process places a strong focus on systematic and longitudinal examination of authentic student work collected on their ePortfolios or in the assessment depositing area of the Digication platform. Our nationally recognized ePortfolio pedagogy and practice offer a virtual space for students to share their work, demonstrate learning, and reflect on their growth.

To support the process of assessment in General Education and in the programs, students "deposit" their authentic work into our ePortfolio platform by uploading files for collection, which we submit for scoring by faculty and staff readers trained in our norming process.

Benchmark Readings

Each year, faculty, staff, and college administrators convene to read and score samples of student work. Starting with norming sessions, teams convene based on the Competency or Ability to discuss rubrics, look at range-finder examples of student work that correspond to scores on the rubric, and debate unscored samples of student work to test the efficacy of the range-finder discussion. The norming process ensures that a minimum level of consensus exists around the meaning of the rubrics.

Norming session activities help readers recognize a range of outcomes found on the rubric. Our Gen Ed Outcomes Assessment process employs a scale of 1, 2, 3, or 4 (Novice to Proficient); this approach

reflects national norms and is considered statistically and intuitively feasible, reproducible, and scalable within the field of Outcomes Assessment. After norming, participants should agree within 1 point on what constitutes various levels of learning.

The Benchmark Reading process incorporates "sympathetic holistic scoring," meaning that on a 1-4 scale, consensus is achieved if readers rate within *one* point of each other. For example, it is acceptable if someone gives the work a 1 and another scores it a 2. Where there is *more* than a one point difference, e.g. a 1 and 3, a third reader will score the sample. Ultimately, we look for graduating LaGuardia students to reach at least a score of 3, or "Competent." It does <u>not</u> expect that entering students or baseline artifacts reach this level.

Once "normed," readers score student work on their own. All scoring takes place in the Digication ePortfolio system, where readers are assigned a name and password to access the system and complete the scoring.

> <u>To summarize, the purposes of norming sessions are</u>:

- to define what constitutes student learning relative to the learning objectives and dimensions of the assessment tool;

- to promote agreement about how an assessment tool measures student work;

- to inspire consensus about how student work scores across the rubric scale.

> <u>Effective norming session, provide participants with the following</u>:

- <u>An assessment tool</u>, usually a rubric, that contains a definition, framing language, glossary, and a matrix or grid that defines learning outcomes on an 1-4 scale.

- <u>Range-Finders</u>, or examples of student work at each scoring level (1-4) so that scorers have models.

- <u>Norming Samples</u>, or unscored samples of student work for faculty to read, score, and discuss.

> <u>A Norming Session typically includes the following</u>:

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Discussion of tools or rubrics in order to surface clarifying questions and define terms

3) A reading of annotated student work in the Range Finders; annotations explain why the work scored a 1, 2, 3, or 4 (or why it doesn't score on the rubric)

4) Leaders solicit discussion about the Range Finders

5) Participants read unscored Norming Samples and discuss scores until consensus is reached within 1 point (NOTE: Leaders select Norming Samples in advance to guide consensus.)

6) Leaders ask participants to share their scores in order to discover why samples received a particular score. Leaders also help participants understand why samples were selected with a particular score in mind.

GEN ED, PLOs, & PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEWS

Outcomes Assessment is a process that addresses all the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) at the College. The mission of LaGuardia's college-wide Outcomes Assessment process is:

- ✓ to identify college-wide learning priorities and goals, or student learning outcomes, including for General Education, the program majors in the disciplines, and the administrative and educational support (AES) units;

- ✓ to collect data that documents student learning in General Education, the program majors in the disciplines, and the administrative and educational support (AES) units;

- ✓ to use data to make changes in curriculum and pedagogy that measurably improve student learning, in part by studying the effects of the changes made through the actions.

Outcomes Assessment fosters a culture of learning for both students and faculty. Our faculty use the information from assessments to revise curriculum, pedagogy, and assignments in an effort to create an even stronger institution of learning for our students.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at LaGuardia takes place through four areas:

1) General Education (Gen Ed): On an annual basis, faculty and staff join together to read and score student work related to the General Education Core Competencies and Communication Abilities during our Benchmark Readings. The College shares this data with faculty and programs, who use this to strengthen student learning. The College is mandated by its accreditors to organize and assess a General Education for is students.

2) Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): On an annual basis, faculty assess one of their Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which define the learning objectives of each program and major. Program Learning Outcomes are articulated as part of the Mission Statement of each program. They are defined individually, and each program usually has between three and five. The College is mandated by its accreditors to assess one PLO each year.

3) Periodic Program Reviews (PPR): All academic programs conduct Periodic Program Reviews. PPRs are led by program faculty who use the findings to recommend and implement changes in programmatic learning. Some programs that do not have majors – such as composition and urban studies – must also be assessed because they serve thousands of students, make claims to be part of disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields, and exist in departments that don't assess their courses through any other processes or PPRs.

4) Admin & Ed Support Units: The systematic assessment of LaGuardia's administrative and educational support (AES) units is a central component of institutional effectiveness, strategic planning, assessment of student learning outcomes, and achieving our college mission.

Assessing Gen Ed
At LaGuardia, each program has identified courses along the curriculum pathway that incorporate assignments connected to the College's Core Learning Competencies and Communication Abilities. In these courses —"earmarked for deposit"— students complete high-stakes assignments linked to our *Learning Matters* rubrics and then deposit them into our ePortfolio system.

By mapping assignments across the curriculum, the College is able to capture students' progress on the Competencies and Abilities at various stages of their degree, from the First Year Seminar, through key courses at the early, mid and late stages, culminating in the Capstone course experience. By bringing groups of faculty together to read and score these artifacts of student learning, programs can answer important questions about the impact of the curriculum over time.

All three Core Competencies and three Communication Abilities must be addressed at three places (early, middle and late) in each program. Program Directors provide program deposit map**,** and use data from the Benchmark Readings or programmatic benchmark readings to identify places to strengthen learning in these areas. Ultimately, the report answers the question: How do we know students in the program are graduating with competency and proficiency in General Education?

Assessing Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

Program Learning Outcomes are outcome statements that describe "what students should be able to demonstrate, represent, or produce based on their learning histories" throughout the course of their education in the program (Maki 88).[5] They align with General Education and institutional intentions for student learning across the curriculum and co-curriculum (Maki 88). They should flow from and support the mission of the College and the department. They should be mapped to the curriculum showing where each PLO is introduced, reinforced, and mastered at the level of course and assignment. They should be "collaboratively authored" and reflect the best practices of the discipline, field, professional organization, and articulated institutions. Direct evidence of each PLO should be quantitatively and/or qualitatively assessed on a regular basis.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are developed by each program and assessed in order to improve program-specific teaching and learning. The methods of direct assessment of PLOs are chosen by faculty and vary according to courses and assignments. They are articulated as part of the Mission Statement of each program. They are also defined individually; each program usually has between three and five. They are instrumental to the five-year cycle of programs called Periodic Program Review (PPR). During program reviews, programs reflect on their missions, learning outcomes, student success, and pedagogy in order to assess the need for changes and actions for the future.

Each year, programs assess one of their PLOs in order to determine if program pedagogy or assignments should be modified in order to improve student learning. During PPRs, programs evaluate whether or not those improvements have been effective, and study the need for changes to their objectives. Some programs study their program outcomes through their own benchmark readings. Other programs receive their own accreditation separately from Middle States, the peer review regulatory body that accredits LaGuardia as a college. These programs, such as those in the Health Sciences, must often meet very specific industry criteria, and their program learning outcomes reflect these objectives.

These priorities are guided by the following questions:

✓ Where in the program do students learn the Gen Ed Core Competencies and Communication Abilities, and where are Programmatic Learning Outcomes introduced and mastered?

✓ How do we know all students are graduating with competency and proficiency in General Education, and how does the program assess the effectiveness of its PLOs?

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[5] Peggy L. Maki, *Assessing For Learning.* Virginia: Stylus, 2010.

Each program will provide maps that show where the General Education Core Competencies and Abilities are taught in the program, and where their Program Learning Outcomes are taught in their program. Reports will also provide methods of assessment for each Program Learning Outcome.

Periodic Program Reviews

All majors, programs, and options conduct Periodic Program Reviews (PPRs) that address both Program Learning Outcomes and General Education; PPRs are mandated by CUNY, but are also the primary way that programs assess and improve teaching and learning in their majors. The PPR process is led by program faculty and takes place according to a regular schedule.

Periodic Program Reviews reflect LaGuardia's core value of "learning," with the understanding that learning is not limited to students, but is also a disposition of faculty, staff, and administration. The learning college embodies the values of "responsibility" and "learning" — faculty and staff take responsibility for collectively strengthening the education that the College provides to our students by learning how to continually improve pedagogy, curriculum, and student support.

PPRs are an opportunity for faculty to reflect on and study their program learning goals, pedagogy, and curriculum. The PPR process allows faculty to assess strengths and weaknesses, make evidence-based evaluations, and plan for future actions. It is a time to look at the bigger mission and future of a program, as well as to identify new tools for student success. It is a unique chance to have a dialogue with College leaders, share accomplishments, and articulate needs. It is also a chance for all faculty in a program to collaborate on the goals, outcomes, politics, and plans for student learning in their program.

Periodic Program Reviews are also opportunities for the College to offer perspective to program leaders and faculty, and to evaluate the contributions of the program to the larger College and its Mission. PPRs are occasions for programs to assess the following:

- ✓ A mission statement that speaks to overall program goals (based on a synthesis of the already existing performance objectives for each course in the curriculum).

- ✓ Program Learning Outcomes, or the learning objectives that reflect the common learning priorities or goals for students specifically in the program

- ✓ The effectiveness of student learning in relation to the General Education Core Competencies and Communication Abilities.

PPRs are mandated by the CUNY Board of Trustees, and each academic program must complete PPR reports within the mandated assessment cycles. PPR reports are submitted to the Provost and assigned dean in Academic Affairs and provide the College with primary evidence and documentation for accreditation. A site visit by external reviewers who are <u>not</u> affiliated with CUNY to read the PPR report and make recommendations for future actions is required for programs without an outside accrediting body. PPR reports should be between 20-30 pages, include relevant appendices, and address the Report Guidelines provided in this document as close to the required timeline as possible. Programs that submit incomplete reports will be asked to make revisions until the reports reflect the guidelines.

Periodic Program Reviews foster a culture of learning for both students and faculty, wherein faculty use the information from assessments to revise curriculum, pedagogy, and assignments in an effort to create an even stronger learning experience for all students.

Curriculum Coherence: A Case Study

LaGuardia's *Learning Matters* process helps faculty develop creative but connected assignments in a wide range of courses. This process is one element of curriculum coherence that provides 'guided pathways' throughout a student's academic and co-curricular programs. The pathway reinforces the common learning goals of their education and helps to promote retention and graduation.

To conceptualize this, consider how an Accounting student, Estefany, encounters the Competencies as she progresses through her coursework:

In her first semester, Estefany takes BTF101, the First Year Seminar for Business, *where the program begins to build* Global Learning. *Estefany's professor may ask her to examine a piece of her clothing manufactured abroad and explore resources on global sweatshops; she writes a short essay that links questions of fashion with economics and business ethics. In* BTI121, People, Work and Organizations, *her professor builds* Inquiry & Problem Solving *by having Estefany research the career prospects and work cultures in different accounting and business fields. Using her ePortfolio, Estefany develops a research-based digital presentation and reflects on implications for her educational and career goals.*

While taking Business and Accounting courses, Estefany takes courses in the Pathways/ General Education core, which also address the Competencies. For example, to build Integrative Learning *and* Written Communication, *her* ENG101 *instructor might have her read Solomon Northrup's* 12 Years a Slave *and consider its dual nature as a piece of literature and an artifact of history. "What does Northrup's experience illustrate about the role of choice and historical circumstance in life? What choices does he make?" And, helping Estefany make connections to her own experience, "What lessons can you take away from Northrup's life? How do you confront circumstance and make choices in your own life?"*

Other Gen Ed courses help Estefany grow. In MAT120, Introduction to Statistics, *she builds* Inquiry & Problem Solving *by analyzing statistics related to economic change in the NYC area. She takes* HUC101, Introduction to Human Communication, *which addresses* Integrative Learning *and* Oral Communication, *where the instructor asks her to select and analyze a TED talk related to her major, and make a presentation identifying the effective speech techniques she observed and what she learned about her field. And in* SSN187, Urban Sociology, *which address* Global Learning, *her instructor has her conduct community-based research and write a paper about immigrants and housing quality in Corona, Queens.*

In her final semesters at LaGuardia, Estefany takes Accounting courses that help her not only deepen her skills as an accountant, but also draw together and apply what she has learned in across her coursework. In BTA202, the Accounting Capstone, *designated to address* Integrative Learning, *her instructor might ask her to uses statistics and knowledge about business decision-making to complete a case study of a hypothetical company:*

Presented with a situation where they serve as an advisor for a company whose products (5% - based on sampling) could pose serious risks to its customers, students are asked to consider factors such as sales, revenue, the fact that the company operates in a global marketplace, etc., and to (a) identify and reflect on the ethical dilemma, (b) consider alternatives, and (c) make a decision on how they would advise the company to deal with the ethical dilemma.

Placing her work in her ePortfolio, Estefany identifies ways that, in completing this assignment, she applied skills and knowledge gained from previous courses. Her final reflection helps her to think about her learning and growth, what tools will help her be a life-long learner, and her next steps as an accounting professional.

While the case outlined above provides only a sample of the courses Estefany takes on her journey towards graduation, it suggests ways that the Core Competency framework can help faculty focus on shared goals and build more cohesive educational experiences. The examples below have been designed across programs and disciplines at LaGuardia:

✓ Students in <u>Philosophy</u> fulfill a program requirement by taking *HUP114 Medical Ethics*. Building *Inquiry & Problem-Solving*, they select a topic from a list (including such topics as use of animals for medical research, medical treatment in prisons, and physician-assisted suicide) and create a well-cited scholarly research paper on the ethical issues involved.

✓ <u>Occupational Therapy Assistant</u> majors taking *SCO101, Introduction to Occupational Therapy*, begin to consider *Global Learning*. Asking students to consider their role as health providers in a global community, they explore issues of cultural diversity, cultural competence, and cultural identity in health care, as well as ethical challenges related to global disparities in health care access.

✓ In their capstone course, *HUT299 Experiential Learning in Theatre*, <u>Theatre</u> majors deepen their *Integrative Learning* as they mount Chekov's play, *The Cherry Orchard*. An assignment asks them to create a digital collage that shows ways that personal experience and "classes in Theater and other classes (such as English, History, Psychology, or Human Sexuality) help [them] think about and prepare to play [their] character."

FAQs: Gen-Ed Benchmark Reading & Norming Sessions

What are Benchmark Readings?
Benchmark Readings are an essential part of what's called Outcomes Assessment, which is a national practice of every College and University. Outcomes Assessment is the process by which the College quantifies student learning as an output of classroom instruction. That is to say, this process tells us what common skills and common higher-order learning has occurred at the College. It also tells us about how this learning has grown over time.

There are two kinds of Benchmark Readings. Our annual Gen-Ed Benchmark Reading process involves reading and scoring student artifacts from across every discipline deposited in courses for the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. It's an excellent opportunity to learn more about our common teaching and learning goals for Inquiry & Problem Solving, Integrative Learning, and Global Learning, as well as Written, Oral, and Digital Communication.

In addition to the Gen-Ed Benchmark Reading, programs can conduct Benchmark Readings to learn more about their Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Instructions for program Benchmark Readings can be found in the Appendix to this Guide.

Who should participate in Benchmark Readings?
We urge all faculty and staff to participate in this process, whether you have done so recently or would be doing so for the first time. It's a great way to understand student learning at the College across the disciplines, and to see expressions of our common goals.

Our Core Competencies & Abilities are crucial for shaping student success, life-long learners, and job-ready graduates. Participating in this process is an important complement to the on-going work of building and implementing assignments, some that are now available in our Assignment Library.

How long do Benchmark Readings take?
The Benchmark Reading process involves attending two meetings over Fall II/Spring I for norming and reflection, as well as the time it takes to score student artifacts, which you can do anywhere at your convenience.

Recent Benchmark Readings have asked readers to score anywhere from 60-100 artifacts. The length of time it takes to evaluate an artifact can vary from artifact to artifact, and shifts depending on the competency and ability. The scoring process can also become faster once a rhythm has been established. In general, scorers should track how long it takes them to score their first 10-20 artifacts, and then budget their time accordingly for the remainder of the process. In general, the entire process usually takes 10-12 hours, including 5 hours of meetings and 5-7 hours of scoring. One recommended practice is scoring a certain number of artifacts per week over the 3-4 weeks of scoring time, so that the activity of scoring is broken up into reasonable amounts of time. Some people do the entire thing in one day. Ask your norming leaders for more help budgeting time for this process.

Should programs do their own Benchmark Readings?
Programs could do their own Benchmark Readings or join in the college-wide process. The advantage of doing their own readings is threefold: a) immediate access to data about student learning; b) a deeper

understanding by program faculty about how their assignments are working; and c) a deeper understanding by program faculty about the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities.
An alternative to a program conducting a Benchmark Reading is for the program to request that the Assessment Leadership Team collect additional data from courses on the program curriculum map. The Assessment Leadership Team (ALT) can help plan and support program Benchmark Readings, as well as provide materials and resources.

Why don't we look at assignments when scoring artifacts of student work?
There are philosophical reasons both *for* and *against* the practice of reading assignments in assessment. At LaGuardia, it's not our practice and we make no exceptions for it.

One key reason we don't read assignments is because we are measuring the artifact as an *outcome* of student learning, not the *intention* or *prompts* that led to it.

Secondly, we do not read faculty assignments as part of the process because formal evaluation of faculty assignments should be undertaken with careful concern for contractual obligations, and in dialogue with faculty, chairs, and program directors.

Reading faculty assignments for *Learning Matters* Mini-Grants, CTL seminars, and in program workshops or department meetings *can* be an informative and rewarding way to understand how student work deposited for assessment addresses the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities.

What should we score student work that only addresses one or two dimensions?
The most important thing to know about scoring is that the College's Outcomes Assessment uses "Sympathetic Holistic Scoring," which means that scorers assign student work a 1, 2, 3, or 4 (Novice, Developing, Competent, Proficient) based on the entire artifact. They do not assign each dimension of the rubric a different score based on the artifact, although many scorers do consider this technique in arriving at their score.

With this in mind, in general it is not possible for an artifact of student work to receive a "4" (Proficient) if it doesn't address all of the dimensions on a rubric. Likewise, an artifact of student work that is "Proficient" in three of our dimensions is also *not* necessarily "Proficient" holistically: it is only likely a "3" (Competent).

Following this logic, an artifact of student work that scores a "2" (Developing) in two dimensions is no higher than a "2" holistically, and possibly a "1" (Novice). Different scorers may decide to holistically score it a 1 or a 2. These represent the range of possible scores in this case. Such an artifact will never score a 3 or 4.

How difficult should it be for student work to achieve a "4" on the rubric?
What the rubric calls "Proficient" (4) reflects high but achievable expectations for graduating LaGuardia students. For entering students, Developing (2) might be a more appropriate level of expectation. For students taking a capstone course, or doing advanced work in their second year, a "4" is not an unreasonable expectation for excellent work.

As faculty teams created our rubrics, they were careful to create an "achievable 4." The Assessment Leadership Team reviewed draft rubrics to align them with national standards for two-year colleges. To learn more about shared expectations for student work, all faculty and staff are encouraged to

participate in LaGuardia's annual Benchmark Readings, a valuable opportunity to connect the rubrics with college-wide examples of student learning.

How do we score an ePortfolio?
When looking at an ePortfolio, score the *entire* artifact unless otherwise instructed. If faculty want only a particular page to be scored, that needs to be indicated during the submission. An ePortfolio can provide a powerful site for students to demonstrate Digital Communication. The new Digication interface permits great flexibility in digital design. Students can use different elements of multimodal composition -- color, images, videos, and page design -- to communicate with power.

An ePortfolio can also be a way to build and document Integrative Learning. Because an ePortfolio is a connected collection of artifacts, and Integrative Learning is all about connection and reflection, the two can meld together in a powerful synthesis. It is possible to use the ePortfolio to connect multiple artifacts for deposit. For more information, contact the ePortfolio staff.

How do we score PowerPoints?
Faculty are likely to encounter PowerPoints when assessing for Digital Communication. As for all assessment, the first thing to do is closely re-read the relevant rubric.

As with any Communication Ability, the purpose, organization, and audience for the PowerPoint should be evident. As the rubric suggests, forms of communication that make claims with supporting evidence generally score higher than communication that summarizes, recites, or reports information. The same is true for PowerPoints.

In terms of Digital Communication in particular, PowerPoints typically address the "multi-media" or "multi-modal" element of what the college values as "digital." This means that the PowerPoint should contain a balanced composition of different media, usually images, graphs, tables and text that advance the purpose of the overall communication taking place. Scores should comfortably intuit the connections between different elements of the PowerPoint.

What if we encounter work that uses digital media that already has multimodal elements embedded in the platforms (eg. Prezi presentations, Autocad, etc...)?

When considering scores for digital work in different platforms, remember to review the rubric. Students should make an *intentional* effort to utilize digital components to the already existing digital components, but should do so in a way that satisfies the overall purpose of the assignment. For instance, a computer programming language artifact using multifaceted digital tools should be accompanied with explanations that convey the content to a general audience.

What is an 88? When do I assign an 88?
An "88" refers to the scoring code for Benchmark Readings assigned to student work that does not meet *any* of the dimensions on a rubric. Not all artifacts will meet every dimension or criteria on the rubric. An artifact is scored an 88 when it does not address the rubric *in any respect.* If an artifact addresses at least one dimension of the rubric, it should not be scored an 88: it deserves a score of at least 1. The purpose of norming sessions is to determine the score of an artifact that doesn't address all the dimensions on a rubric.

How do we score artifacts in a language other than English?
Non-English language artifacts get a score of "77." No one is obligated to score artifacts in a language other than English. In some cases, programs that operate in non-English languages may want to conduct their own Benchmark Readings with fluent faculty members to assess student learning in their program.

How should faculty score an artifact of student work that they don't understand or in which there are recognizable inaccuracies?
Artifacts of student work deposited for Outcomes Assessment should be legible to a college-wide audience. If the artifact is simply unrecognizable alongside one of the rubrics, it should generally be scored an "88." There are some exceptions to this, but those exceptions can be addressed through the norming of scorers for Benchmark Readings.

If there are recognizable inaccuracies that you recognize based on your disciplinary expertise, these may or may not affect the holistic score related to the Core Competency and/or Communication Ability. The primary elements being scored for an artifact of student work are its expressions of dimensions connected to the rubric. Scorers should use their expertise and judgment to make their best assessment. When it comes to the Communication Abilities, however, part of the rubric explicitly addresses whether the artifact of student work is able to distinguish fact from opinion. When scoring on these rubrics, scorers should factor inaccuracies into their holistic score.

Are annotated bibliographies OK for depositing?
It's hard to say. Artifacts of student work should address as many dimensions on the designated rubric as possible. It's difficult to see how a traditional annotated bibliography could be scored as Inquiry & Problem Solving. It's possible that by summarizing different texts alongside some kind of personal reflection a student *might* address one dimension on either the Global Learning or Integrative Learning rubric, and perhaps one or two dimensions on the Written Communication Ability rubric.

The Assessment Leadership Team does not recommend a traditional annotated bibliography as a robust artifact of student work that addresses meaningful student learning associated with the College's Core Competencies.

How do I deposit assignments for Benchmark Readings?
If you need help, the ePortfolio Program will offer in-class workshops to guide your students through the entire depositing process. If you want help, please complete this form:

http://www.laguardia.edu/ctl/eportfolio_workshop_request/

Also, the Program makes open labs available during the last week of classes and finals so that students can come on a need-by-need basis. Here's the schedule available.

If you want your students to deposit on their own, these tutorials will be very helpful:

   A. How do I deposit assessment assignments in Digication?

   1. Video Format: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzmpANxndD4

   2. Web Format: https://spark.adobe.com/page/7NoMzpKEKkHMB/

B. *What are the guidelines for video recording?*

1. <u>Word Format</u>:

   http://eportfolio.lagcc.cuny.edu/support/doc/video_taping_protocols_06_2017.docx

2. <u>PDF Format</u>:
   http://eportfolio.lagcc.cuny.edu/support/doc/video_taping_protocols_06_2017.pdf

Faculty should assessment deposits from students by following this guide. This will help faculty identify if students have deposited their work.

1. <u>Web Format</u>: https://spark.adobe.com/page/uVhhJLaRBdfS4/

For additional help, please visit the ePortfolio website at <u>www.laguardia.edu/eportfolio</u>.

FACULTY RESOURCES FOR ASSIGNMENT DEVELOPMENT

Assignment design and development is at the heart of a powerful curriculum. Faculty expertise and their intentional revision of assignments are crucial to student learning. The student artifacts that emerge from faculty-generated assignments provide more meaningful information for improvement than external forms of assessment. In this section, we offer some background on assignment design and list some available resources and materials. These resources are meant to provide faculty with support for our discussion in the subsequent chapter on step-by-step assignment design.

This chapter cannot replace the intellectual pleasure and intensity of discussing your assignment in a department workshop, a college-wide Charrette, a CTL seminar, or a Mini-grant. This is a Guide to supplement – and not to replace – a range of face-to-face *Learning Matters* activities led by faculty. But we hope to make your process easier by pointing out materials and resources that might give you a fuller sense about how some of your colleagues approach assignment design.

Start with Rubrics

The only resource you absolutely *need* for assignment development or revision is a relevant rubric. Therefore the most important action faculty can take before beginning to create or revise an existing assignment is re-familiarizing themselves with the relevant Competency and Communication Ability rubrics the assignment incorporates. In particular, we suggest you consider any lingering questions about a word, phase, or concept by contacting someone from LaGuardia's Assessment Leadership Team, or a colleague from your program with knowledge of the rubric. We also hope other sections of this guide and the resources described below help increase your comfort with the rubric you've chosen.

When it comes to rubrics, please keep a few things in mind. The most important elements to consider are the *dimensions* listed in the left column of the grid on the second page of the matrix. This column contains the basic dimensions, or elements, that define the relevant Core Competency or Ability in practical terms. As you familiarize yourself with these dimensions, be sure to observe the range of possible student work along the 1-4 scale connected to each.

Curriculum Maps

As you consider how you might scaffold, or stage, the various rubric dimensions into your assignment, keep in mind how your course fits overall into the various maps that situate the course within a student's course sequence, where they deposit their work for Gen Ed assessment, or where they submit work for the assessment of Program Learning Outcomes. Building on CUNY Pathways and the *Learning Matters* framework, program directors in all majors have finalized a variety of curriculum maps:

- Degree Map: A Degree Map provides the program-specific sequence in which courses are taken in the major over time.

- Comprehensive Curriculum Map: This map provides a complete picture of courses required to earn a degree in a major. It gives an overall picture of the major and a foundation to see the connections among Gen Ed courses, Pathways required core, and the Program Core. They identify key courses in the major and the Pathways required core where faculty help students build learning associated with specific Competencies and Abilities.

- Gen Ed Assessment Deposit Map: This map identifies key courses in the Program Core in at least three places – early, middle, and late – to address each Core Competency and Communication Ability. These key courses are identified on the Program Core Curriculum Map as places where assignments have been developed to target a particular Core Competency and Communication Ability to support learning, longitudinal growth, and assessment. Each course identified in the Deposit Map utilizes the Assessment section of Digication to upload or "deposit" student work or "artifacts". These artifacts, in turn, are utilized for scoring in the Benchmark Reading process for College-wide assessment of the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities.

  The best practice for devising or revising Gen Ed assignments is to contact your program director, Chairperson, or someone on the Assessment Leadership Team. Additionally, you or your colleagues may also have participated in a recent *Learning Matters* Mini-Grant, or attended an Assignment Design Charrette, or participated in a seminar with the Center for Teaching & Learning. These are all spaces where faculty have developed, revised, and even tested assignments related to our Competencies and Abilities. We're sure any of these points of contact can link you to someone who can help you think through assignment design to support LaGuardia's student learning goals.

  Faculty teaching intro-level courses might want to understand the limitations of work that achieves a novice or developing score in Competencies and Abilities (1's and 2's), while those teaching Capstone courses might look closer at work that achieves proficiency and mastery (3's and 4's).

- Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) Map: This PLO map identifies key courses in the Program Core of the curriculum where specific, terminal learning outcomes in each program are identified and assessed. The PLO's were devised by program directors and faculty in each program to articulate and communicate what skills and attributes students will demonstrate after completing the program to students, faculty, and the College.

> We suggest reviewing both the Gen Ed and PLO maps – and orienting assignment and course objectives within a student's graduation trajectory – as they may affect how you devise and revise an assignment, or engage with dimensions on a Gen Ed rubric or PLO assessment. For instance, in a First Year Seminar or introductory-level course, faculty might build the capacity for learning by addressing one or two dimensions of a Core Competency at a time through a low-stakes assignment rather than all four dimensions in one high-stakes assignment. They might then scaffold that work into a high-stakes assignment that, collectively, addresses all dimensions of the rubric.

If you haven't seen recent assessment maps, email your program director or chair. The maps are useful for showing how students progress based on the Core Competencies. The maps have become a key resource helping LaGuardia faculty build a cohesive focus on deep learning and liberal arts education, in and across disciplines. *Learning Matters* leverages this framework to help faculty across disciplines work together to make coherent curriculum a reality college-wide.

It is possible that faculty who design assignments for the Competencies and Abilities do so for courses that don't appear on any maps. Perhaps they choose to design an assignment in a class not designated for Outcomes Assessment or deposit. Maybe they are simply curious, or have disciplinary or professional interest in aligning a course objective with, say, Global Learning. We more than welcome all faculty to think along with the rubrics, or even a dimension or two, no matter what courses they're teaching.

Learning Matters Assignment Library

LaGuardia established the *Learning Matters* Assignment Library (LMAL) in 2017 to feature model LaGuardia course assignments to help guide programs and individual faculty as they develop course materials. The Assigment Library grew out of faculty requests for examples of assignments directed toward our Competencies and Abilities. The Assessment Leadership Team and the library curator organized Assignment Showcases to relate examples of such assignments, and through the support of the Teagle Foundation the library is now close to sharing sixty such assignments on Academic Works.

The CTL supports the creation of the *Learning Matters* Assignment Library by creating opportunities for faculty to advance scholarly teaching and publish well-crafted assignments that build student competencies and advance their progress along a guided pathway. Faculty work shared in the Assignment Library is recognized as a college contribution in the promotion and tenure process, helping to ensure that it becomes a robust resource for broadening the impact of the *Learning Matters* process.

Please feel free to contact any member of the Assessment Leadership Team for details or questions, and check our website for updates on accessing the Library to help inform your work. All faculty should consider submitting something in the future. For more, faculty can look at the Assignment Library located on Academic Works: shortlib.org/s/assignmentlibrary.

Assignment Design Charrettes

The Assignment Design Charrette is a central element to our design approach; it is a proven faculty engagement process developed by Pat Hutchings of the Carnegie Foundation and the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment. Built around structured peer review of draft assignments that are linked to a designated Core Competency, the charrette puts responsibility for curriculum cohesion in the hands of faculty, moving participants from initial conversation to ownership and productive action. Hutchings, who has helped AAC&U leverage the power of the charrette in its LEAP Multi-State Collaborative and VALUE projects, calls it a "place of connectivity." In her experience, she found the charrette generates broad faculty engagement with these results:

- ✓ Animates high-level outcomes for students and faculty

- ✓ Creates a 'pedagogical trading zone'

- ✓ Surfaces connection across courses/contexts and promotes coherent pathways for students

- ✓ Provides rich, authentic evidence to inform improvement

- ✓ Makes visible and brings value to the intellectual work that faculty do as teachers[6]

Before and after the Assignment Design Charrette, faculty can read student work against Core Competency rubrics. The first scoring session, held prior to the charrette, helps faculty identify gaps or areas that need improvement. After the charrette, faculty test their assignments with students; a second reading of student work helps faculty assess and finalize their assignments. As faculty examine the impact of curricular choices on student learning, *Learning Matters* ensures that program objectives are well-aligned, and that assignments effectively advance student learning and growth.

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[6] Hutchings, P., Gambino, L., Mello, B. & Jankowski, N. "Assignment Design as a Hot Spot for Faculty and Institutional Collaboration: Lessons from NILOA's Work with the Degree Qualifications Profile and Tuning," AAC&U Annual Meeting, January 2016. Accessed at https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/AM16/HUTCHINGS%20%20et%20al%20PPT.pdf

STEP-BY-STEP HIGH STAKES ASSIGNMENT DESIGN

There are several ways to approach step-by-step assignment design. Some of the most constructive ways are face-to-face workshops in a Center for Teaching & Learning seminar, or attending an Assignment Charrette, or sipping coffee with a colleague. You might also consider applying for a *Learning Matters* Mini-Grant and discussing this work over with other colleagues. ☺
An alternative approach to assignment design, however, is the purpose of this Assessment Guide. We hope by postulating some steps below – framed around a sample assignment – that you'll be able to develop a better sense for approaching the Competencies and Abilities in your own courses, and that you find some combination of activities that works best for you. Whether you're building experience practicing a Core Competency or constructing an assignment meant to solicit maximum proficiency, we hope faculty find these tips useful for creating high-stakes assignments as they consider their courses.

> ### *A Note on this Example*
> *For our purposes here, we're basing our example of step-by-step on an Urban Studies, Writing Intensive course (ENN 195). This course has been designated for Global Learning and Written Communication. In this example, the instructor decided to address all four dimensions of Global Learning in a high-stakes assignment, as well as the dimensions of Digital Communication. The assignment also incorporates dimensions of Written Communication, Oral Communication, and Integrative Learning.*

Designing a High-Stakes Assignment

- **Step 1: Focus first on the Core Competency or the Communication Ability**

All courses designated with a Core Competency are also linked to a Communication Ability. It's difficult to design or revise an assignment with both a Competency and Ability in mind at the same time, so we recommend beginning with the Core Competency in question and then tackling the Communication Ability second. This approach reflects the trend of assignment development at the College since we created the rubrics. Of course, at some point, the Ability will shape the assignment, which may or may not in turn provoke revisions to how the Competency is taught.

- **Step 2: Decide how you want to address the dimensions on the rubric**

Depending on the course in question, you'll want to proceed with tentative decisions about how you address the dimensions on the rubric, in the context of the course as a whole. Do you want to focus first on a low-stakes assignment that addresses one or two dimensions? Do you want to scaffold your low-stakes assignments into a final high-stakes assignment? Do you want to address all the dimensions in a single high-stakes assignment?

It might be helpful to glance again at the Global Learning rubric and its three dimensions:

Dimension	Proficient - 4	Competent - 3
Understanding Global Issues and Events *Analyzes global issues and events, and identifies their interdependent implications on the natural, social, cultural, economic, and political world.*	Analyzes the dynamics of a global issue or event. Identifies and connects the most relevant shaping forces and repercussions of global issues or events locally and globally. *(e.g., demonstrates knowledge of several interdependent dimensions of global events and discusses how they manifest locally and globally).*	Identifies and discusses a global issue or event. Makes knowledgeable connections between local and global events and their repercussions. *(e.g., recognizes how interdependent influences of a global event manifests in various localities).*
Communicating Knowledge in Global Contexts *Awareness of how diverse cultural perspectives are shaped within global contexts.* *Ability to communicate across difference.*	Employs knowledge of diverse worldviews and cultural practices in communication. Considers and negotiates diverse perspectives to communicate appropriately across differences.	Presents knowledge of diverse worldviews and cultural practices. Considers divergent perspectives in the communication process.
Ethical Engagement and Global Self-Awareness *Recognition of ethical dimensions of global issues (e.g., environment, education, housing, healthcare, etc.).* *Articulation of global self-awareness.* *Analysis of human action on global issues and events.*	Analyses the ethical consequences of global issues or events and proposes ethical responses and a range of actions or solutions (individual and collective). Analyses personal attitudes and actions within a global framework, applying an understanding of the role of individual and collective action in shaping global issues or events.	Discusses the ethical consequences of global issues and events. Discusses personal attitudes and actions within global issues or events. Discusses ways human actions influence local and global issues or events.

Faculty will also want to consider the level of students in their class, and what's appropriate for them. Does an entry level course suggest Novice or Developing (1 or 2)? Does a capstone or upper level course suggest Competent or Proficient (3 or 4)?

- **Step 3: Consider the Core Competency and assignment within the context of your course syllabus, course learning objectives, and course proposal form.**

As you know, it's helpful to think about where your assignment goals fit into the overall course objectives. That's true for this process, too. You might consult the course proposal form for more details, or to verify your direction. Also consider the different moments where you might build the competencies into your course over a semester. Which assignment works best toward advancing the dimensions of the competency and the course objectives your assignment addresses?

- **Step 4: Build dimensions from the Core Competency into your assignment goal**

Your revised assignment might consider three elements LaGuardia faculty and staff have found beneficial to supporting student learning. Much of this information, such as instructional goals, can be found on course proposal forms. Your assignment, in turn, should contain

- ✓ a clearly stated and comprehensive **goal**;
- ✓ a **description** of that goal, with clear directions for students;
- ✓ and a clear sequence of **staging**, with a task timeline.

Our ENN 195 example comes from a course themed around cultures and politics of the global war in the United States, Mexico, and Colombia. This course surveys the depictions of various types of violence and the use of violence as a theme or metaphor in North American literature, art, and popular culture. The assignment asks students to compose an argumentative, thesis-driven essay that fulfills the similar criteria of both writing intensive courses and Written Communication. The assignment addressed the criteria of Digital Communication by asking students to compose multimedia "digital essays," with sourced images and videos supplementing their argumentative claims.

In the assignment, the professor stressed Global Learning's emphasis on understanding global issues, communicating knowledge in a global context, and global self-awareness.

Take a look at the assignment goal and description, below, intended to prompt claim-driven paragraphs addressing two dimensions of Global Learning. Please note that the assignment echoed some of the key language from the rubric.

Assignment Goal: Your goal for this semester-long, multi-staged assignment is to create a working "digital essay" that makes argumentative claims about one to three dimensions of global narco-violence. You will support your claims with visual and textual evidence.

Assignment Description: This digital essay will create two or three intertwined essays as one semester-long project. It will examine the complicated global relationships between drugs, politics, and different regional and national cultures. By "digital essay," I mean an essay that uses scholarship, literature, visual media, and video evidence to support your claims. These claims will speak to three sections connecting different aspects of drugs, politics, and culture.

We will write each section on each area one at a time. You will use LaGuardia's in-house ePortfolio platform to build your digital essay over the semester. We will use our lab time in a computer lab to accomplish this. Each section, or individual three-page essay, will be due in two week intervals; see the syllabus for details.

Our course will inquire into three parts of the global narco-violence, which we'll build one section on at a time, and layer together over time, while looking at both different cultural media and historical essays and book chapters. You will add an additional (third or fourth) part to your digital essay: a reflective conclusion, which you can create as an oral segment for extra credit. This extra credit segment speaks to the College's Integrative Learning Core Competency and Oral Communication Ability.

PART 1: racial policing and mass incarceration (rap music)
PART 2: immigration and the novel Signs Preceding the End of the World (fiction)
PART 3: the Colombian civil war (video and visual arts)
PART 4: A 2-page reflection

For Part 4, you will write a reflective conclusion for your digital essay. For extra credit, you will speak your reflective conclusion in an audio recording that we can add as a file to the digital essay. Your voice will be a powerful way to conclude our work.

As indicated here, one option for assignment design is to purposely echo language from the dimensions on the relevant College rubric. Here, the goal and description stressed the first dimension of Global Learning rubric (Understanding Global Issues) through its transnational comparison and contrast; the second dimension (Communicating Knowledge in a Global Context) through an analysis of cultural objects that examine different facets of the drug war, as well as the third dimension(Global Self-Awareness) through the concluding reflection. Note how different parts of the digital essay addressed different dimensions of the rubric. Also note that the professor adapted the rubric to their own assignment-specific terms by adapting the rubric to the specific concerns of the class.

- **Step 5: Clarify the role of Core Competency dimensions in the assignment description**

In the assignment description, the professor clarified the stakes of the learning objectives. This meant addressing the assignment as both the argumentative essay and Global Learning in three ways:

- ✓ By **defining key terms**

- ✓ By **linking the terms to key questions**

- ✓ By **offering suggestions for approaches to the assignment**

Consider how each part of the assignment was directed:

Part 1: The Sound of the New Jim Crow (Racial Policing and Mass Incarceration)
Assignment Goal: For this section of the digital essay, you will focus on a rap, hip-hop, or other music video that focuses on racial policing and mass incarceration. Your goal is to describe ways that the artist or artists who created the music (and/or) video speaks to two of the texts from Weeks 1 and 2, which is to say what the artist is able to tell us about the drug war from his or her perspective in the song.

Assignment Description: In your thesis statement, you will craft a claim that explains how the music video connects to specific ideas from course texts, such as The New Jim Crow, including the ways the video communicates across difference, which is an important element of Global Learning. You will state the relationship between the music video and texts, and make specific links to lyrics and moments in the video and specific quotations from the texts. You will use this part of the essay to discuss the ethical consequences of global issues or events, which is another dimension of Global Learning.

Let's think about what this assignment requires first as an argumentative essay. In your thesis statement, you will craft a claim that explains what argument the music video connects to specific ideas from course texts, such as The New Jim Crow and Are Prisons Obsolete?. You will explain how the song addresses racial policing or mass incarceration, and then also highlight the main ideas between the song and the

course texts, and make specific links to lyrics and moments in the video and specific quotations from the texts. You will use this part of the essay to discuss the ethical consequences of global issues or events.

Part 2: Violence and Borders (Drugs, Immigration, and Migration)
For our second essay, you will write a thesis-driven argumentative essay about Yuri Herrera's Signs Preceding the End of the World.

Assignment Goal: Your goal is to argue about how the novel addresses events threats, and sensations of "violence" surrounding the main character Makina. You will argue about the meaning of actual, literal violence that occurs in the novel, but also argue about the ways the US-Mexican border, and Makina's status as a migrant searching for her lost brother, manages to accomplish what literal violence cannot: the breakup of her family, her lonely search, and the loss of multiple places and persons in her life.

Assignment Description: This essay looks at the experience of migration to the United States from Mexico as a kind of literal and figurative journey for Makina. In the context of our class, we see how the novel begins with two parallel plots: Makina is supposed to deliver a secret parcel between two narco traffickers, and at the same time find her brother who stopped communicating after he migrated while running a similar errand.

Rather than focus on the violence of the drug war, narco-trafficking, and cartel wars near the border, we're reading Herrera's novel for a larger story about the cultures on both sides of the border that feed, police, supply, and live in two of the most powerful and violent narco-states on the planet, Mexico and the United States.

One benefit of focusing on this kind of story is that it allows us to see new sides, and new genders, of the American drug economy. Instead of listening to the frequently male hustler of rap music, this novel allows us to contemplate another part of this same world through the eyes of a young woman.

With an eye toward Global Learning, in your thesis statement and supporting paragraphs you will craft claims that discuss the ethical consequences of American migration, and analyze the dynamics of what's sometimes called the "immigration crisis." Part of your task here is to analyze violence both as an event, such as the chapter where Makina is shot, but also as a culture, situation, atmosphere, and system. In other words, not every chapter in the book is about physical violence. But if we think of violence as something that causes pain, loss, and bodily risk, then nearly every chapter is about violence.

It's essential that in this paper you think carefully about violence and define what it means, how it works, how we know it, what causes it, and what its effects are. This definition should occur in the introduction, likely as your thesis statement, and/or throughout your paper, likely as your topic-sentence claims.

In your conclusion, if not in your body paragraphs, I want you to think carefully about what causes Makina harm in the novel – both in little ways and in big. Give a name to the causes that you think ultimately motivate harm against her, and consider whether those causes are systemic. Then connect the systemic causes to what we studied in our first section on mass incarceration and racial policing. Ask yourself: is the character rapping in the song you wrote about also rapping about the systemic causes affecting Makina? What's similar and what's different? What might Makina say to that character?

Part 3: The Colombian Civil War (Visualizing and Remembering Violence)
Assignment Goal: Using two of the three videos we studied on or about the unique experience of the drug war in Colombia, your goal for our third argumentative essay is to explain how those videos/art reveal to us important ideas about the violence or experience of Colombia drug culture.

Assignment Description: For our final area of study we will look closely at readings about the history of the Colombian civil war and its relation to narco-trafficking and production, and cocaine in particular. On the one hand, this gives us the opportunity to examine Global Learning by thinking about a country where drugs like cocaine were produced for global markets, and especially the United States. This trafficking drove both sides of the Colombian civil war and remains a critical part of the war's legacy today. On the other hand, this assignment also gives a new set of visual texts from which we can understand the violence of the drug wars from another global location, and which asks us to make different connections between drug war violence, the global war on drugs, and the consequences for everyday people. By practicing this kind of thinking, we can become better Global Learners.

For this essay, you will choose two of the following art videos to analyze in light of our themes:

1. "Bolívar's Tray." A video in which an artist destroys a white porcelain tray, turning it into a powder that looks like cocaine. It's on the nose, but good: the tray is a replica of a national treasure.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRg2wNmAqx4

2. "Mouths of Ash." A classic and heartbreaking work. An 18 minute video of massacre survivors singing songs that they have composed themselves about the massacres. Good for talking about the victims of war in Colombia.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IG1X8Bey3fI

3. Édinson Quiñones' art

http://vkgaleria.com/es/artista/edinson-quinones

Thesis: Your thesis should make claims about the art as artifacts of the Colombia drug war culture. What do they tell us? What themes and ideas do they express? What are they trying to say?

Evidence: You should be able to identify and specify the specific parts of each object, or the parts that contain meaning for your claims. Note where these parts occur in the video, and relate them so that a viewer would know what you're talking about.

Critical Thinking: In your introduction, if not in your thesis, you should be able to refer to the links between the art and other readings and films we've consumed about the drug war and economy. In your body paragraphs, you will make connections between the art/videos and these readings. You should include at least two other sources in this paper.

Conclusion: For your conclusion, please reflect on the following questions and answer them. Address your answers to readers who are not from our class. This means you should not take for granted they know what you're discussing or referring to. If you mention a name, song, idea, or text, re-introduce them to it. Please refer to texts and ideas as you answer the questions, although whether you choose to employ direct citations is up to you.

1. *How do the themes you address in this essay about Colombian art connect to speak to themes or ideas you discussed in your first two essays about the New Jim Crow and Signs Preceding the End of the World?*

2. *How would you describe the problems of the New Jim Crow as part of a global issue that also involves the themes and ideas you found in the Colombian art, as well as the themes of violence we see in Signs?*

Can you give examples?

3. What are the implications of understanding the New Jim Crow, the violence associated with migration, and the ideas from the Colombia art as a global issue or event? How does our understanding of one influence our understanding of another? In other words, what is the significance of realizing that rap songs about the drug war are related to the violence described in Signs, which are also related to ideas we find in the Colombian art?

Part 4: Conclusion: What is to be done?

In your 2-page conclusion, you will draw connections between all three parts of the digital essay. You will also address covert operations in the drug trade or money laundering in the United States. You will be strongly encouraged to revise each part of the essay as the semester unfolds, however, to make the links you find between these parts explicit and clear. Here, you will also analyze the ethical consequences of global issues or events and propose solutions. Students are strongly encouraged to read and revise their conclusion into a spoken "oral conclusion" that will add an audio dimension to the digital essay. Students that choose to do this will receive extra credit on the assignment.

- **Step 6: Consider addressing dimensions in different sections of the assignment**

As you can see from the above description, one trick to integrating multiple dimensions *is folding them into different parts* of the assignment. For the example essay, the professor uses the conclusion to address one of the dimensions not necessarily addressed by the thesis questions for the assignment goal. In this case, this is where the instructor decided to address other aspects of Global Learning, "Global Self-Awareness." Note how questions for the Conclusion echo the rubric for Global Learning.

- **Step 7: Create in-class opportunities for addressing each of the important elements**

For the class in question, the instructor designated one large block of class time each for:

- ✓ a directed **discussion** of the text that contained Global Learning prompts
- ✓ **group-work** that prompted students to share their personal reflections
- ✓ and **in-class writing** time for each of the main tasks associated with this assignment, including time to consider connections to other disciplines and courses

Each paragraph of the essay might generate its own class activity, group conversation, and/or in-class writing in a low-stakes setting. At the end of these sessions, the instructor and students could decide how to transform in-class learning into out-of-class revisions for the formal essay.

For this assignment, the professor used multiple class activities. This class time was budgeted alongside other time for addressing other course objectives around argumentative essays, such as thesis statements, topic-sentence claims, integrating textual evidence, quoting and citing sources, analyzing sources, and developing critical thinking.

- **Step 8: Share and discuss the rubric and other assessment-materials with students**

At an early, middle, or late stage of the assignment, you might consider sharing the relevant rubric with your students – either when you introduce the assignment, or during an in-class activity connected to the assignment.

You may want to give them the next chapter of this Guide, which frames the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities for students. Some faculty may want to share such materials and open them for discussion, while others may simply attach them to the assignment as take-home material.

- **Step 9: Deposit student work in Digication for formal assessment**

One of the most important parts of the assessment process comes after the hard work is done! Please remember to encourage your students to deposit their work for our next Benchmark Reading. Directions and support for depositing is at the end of this guide.

DESIGNING LOW & MEDIUM STAKES ASSIGNMENTS

In this example of addressing one dimension of a rubric, the English professor chose a dimension of Integrative Learning in a medium-stakes, in-class final reflection that was worth 5% of the final grade. As you'll see, the prompts could easily have been broken into low-stakes assignments addressed at different points in the semester. Each faculty will find a strategy that works for them.

- **Step 1:** For medium- or low-stakes assignments, we suggest aligning an activity or prompt with one or more dimensions, either separately or in sequence. We can see from the example below how closely this instructor hewed to the rubric:

    Directions: Answer the following questions in 4-5 sentences each. Use examples to support any claims or statements you make. This is open book, open-note, open-essay.

    1. How did this class connect to your other courses? State general connections and provide two examples.

    2. How did this class connect to your life experiences outside the college? State connections and provide one or two examples.

    3. How can you take an idea, lesson, or text from this class and use it to solve problems in another class, or in your chosen program or major?

    4. How did this class prepare you as a learner and/or writer for your future? How did it change you as a learner and/or writer?

- **Step 2:** To be clear, for the final reflection this professor took each dimension of Integrative Learning and stressed one element to create prompts that might solicit relevant writing from students, which meant asking students to reflect on the course as a whole.

For example, for the first dimension of Integrative Learning (Connections Between and Among Academic Disciplines) he asked, "How did this class connect to your other courses? State general connections and provide two examples."

In reply, a student from China wrote:

> The text 12 Years a Slave give me a better understanding about slavery, which is one of the main topics of my SSH101 class (Themes in American History to 1865). In this class and SSH101, we both discuss about slavery, urbanization, women's role in society.

For the question addressing the second dimension, he asked, "How did this class connect to your life experience outside the college?" A student from Ecuador replied:

> The first way was it kind of helped me see who I am really trying this hard for. I am not only trying hard in school and outside of school for myself, but also for my daughter and throughout my writing, it helped me realize this. The second way is that this class opened up my eyes to certain things going on in the world. I was not a big fan of world news or the news in general, but this class helped me rethink my ways. Not only reading books are essential but a newspaper informs us a lot about the world, and we take this type of freedom of press for granted.

COMMUNICATION ABILITY ASSIGNMENT DESIGN

All of the Gen Ed Core Competencies must be communicated through one of the Abilities: Written, Oral, or Digital Communication. While the Gen Ed assignment design process typically favors the Core Competencies, we want to provide guidance on ways to incorporate the dimensions of the Communication Abilities in your assignments. Following this general overview, we provide an example for creating an assignment that uses our latest Ability: Digital Communication.

1. Decide how you want to address the dimensions on the rubric
2. Decide how the dimensions fit into your overall course
3. Build dimensions from the Communication Ability into your assignment goal
4. Define the relationship to Communication Ability dimensions in the assignment description
5. Structure dimension-specific language into the assignment, such as "purpose, audience, and genre," or "tone, volume, pace, and eye contact."
6. Scaffold the assignment to create in-class opportunities for addressing each of the important elements
7. Share the rubric and other assessment-materials with students
8. Deposit student work in Digication for assessment

Teaching the Digital Communication Ability

This section is a resource for faculty who are teaching what LaGuardia calls the Digital Communication Ability. It will define the Digital Ability as part of the College's General Education Core Competency and Communication Abilities framework. It will also offer "Step-by-Step" directions for students composing with digital tools.

Faculty are encouraged to adapt the steps for their own assignment design, or for ideas about how to scaffold digital composition into their courses.

The Digital Ability: Like other forms of communication, digital communication imparts messages to others, constructs knowledge, fosters understanding, and/or influences opinion. Digital communication employs an evolving range of digital tools and platforms for purposeful composition, including but not limited to websites, ePortfolios, PowerPoint presentations, multimedia blogs and social media platforms, and digital stories. Effective digital composition will advance the content and purpose of the communication through creative juxtaposition of media as part of a balanced, purposeful visual design.

Why the Digital Ability matters: Teaching the digital ability strengthens our students' ability to effectively use digital communication in their ongoing education and career development. Designing and interacting with blogs, websites, and digital materials in general are and will be part of many jobs for students. Engaging in the digital world of blogs, comments sections of articles, and social media posts are a big part of how we are civically engaged today, so teaching our students to do so productively and respectfully helps our students to be good global citizens.
Using 21st century tools and platforms can propel students to design new ways to circulate their voice and visions to others. We want students to create compositions that look, sound, and feel like the media

they consume. We hope in the process that they become more discerning consumers of digital media, since that's the primary way that students are getting news, interacting with peers, and communicating with institutions. Our aim is for students to become active problem-solvers about key issues in digital communication, including audience, privacy, publicity, fair use, and citation.

Adapting digital tools: Faculty in different programs will integrate digital tools, platforms, and elements into new or existing assignments after carefully considering what works best for them.

When considering what tool(s) add to your curriculum, remember we're not using technology for technology's sake, but because digital tools can advance purpose and content when and where appropriate. There is such thing as digital overload, so faculty should consider emphasizing those tools that really add richness to an assignment.

Choosing digital tools: While this handout addresses Digitation ePortoflio specifically, faculty selecting tools in general might consider a few things:

- ✓ **Access**. Does the tool require another login? How many logins are the students managing for your course? If you're using Blackboard or a course blog, can it be easily plugged in or integrated in another way?

- ✓ **Learning Curve**. How easy is the tool to navigate and to pick up? How should the tool or platform be scaffolded into the course? What kinds of instructions are necessary?

- ✓ **Design**. What features or design elements will you emphasize? Are there templates or best practices to be considered? These considerations will impact your students' sense of enjoyment/ satisfaction in using the tool.

The steps here address some tactics faculty may find helpful.

Step-by-Step Assignment Design: Strategies for Multimodal Composition & Holistic Design
These steps were written with a high-stakes 'digital essay' in mind using Digication ePortfolio. Considering all the steps of composing from pre-writing to revision, faculty will want to decide when the introduction and integration of a digital platform should take place for their assignment. For those interested in step-by-step assignment design for a Core Competency, please see our Assessment Guide. Most of the steps are directed at a student actively composing in a digital platform.

1. *Consider the composition process.* As with most high-stakes writing, digital composition may require multiple drafts instead of a clear delineation between pre-digital and post-digital versions.

   - Some students and/or faculty might feel that it's important for students to begin with a clear idea of what they want to argue, and to understand the purpose of their project before they begin "making it digital." For some, it can be helpful to have a written draft in place as a student imagines where and how multimodal elements might strengthen their purpose, and how design choices, from background color to banner images, will enhance the main ideas of their project. It's easier to decide what tools to use, and what media to integrate and where, once the project is clearly defined and the parts of the project are in place.

   - On the other hand, some students and/or faculty may find it useful to begin composing within the platform. They may feel that there's something to be said for the "thinking in public" that

digital tools allow. So, for instance, in Digitation ePortfolio, students could do peer review of drafts using the in-line comments, or you could have students draft and do peer-review using Google docs before going live.

- Faculty might ask students to try story-boarding or write an assignment asking students to reflect on the visual rhetoric of their composition to develop their work process.

- As students begin the process of incorporating media and design, it will be important to continually ask how the process of multimodal media might shift certain aspects of the student's writing, argument, or organization. The writing process will evolve their ideas, but composing with digital tools might also change what they argue and why.

2. ***Plan your digital interventions.*** Looking at a draft, note the potential places where you'd want to enhance an argumentative claim, illustrate a summary of a source, or deepen a critical reflection on the evidence with forms of digital media. What would work best and why? A photograph? A data graphic? A link to a website? A video? An audio file? Once you've provisionally located where you want to enhance or illustrate ideas in the paper, it's time to select the kinds of media and data you'd like to use.

3. ***Track your sources***. As you conduct web searches, create a new document where you can paste links to web sources, sites, images, and videos you'd like to use. It's essential to track the origins of everything you use. You will need a comprehensive bibliography that will cite everything you incorporate from the web.

4. ***Choose the best media for your purpose.*** As you search, avoid grabbing what you see first. Filter your searches by asking yourself why a particular image, link, video, or graphic is best suited to enhance or illustrate part of your project. One way to practice this filtering technique is to find two or three choices for every decision, and then make a decision defined by why one particular image, link, video, or graphic is better suited to your project than the other options. Nonetheless, save those other choices because they might be better choices for other parts of the project.

- You may want to ask yourself, how can an image or collage of images communicate something that may be difficult to communicate in words? How does the overall combination of visual elements shape the viewers' feelings, as well as their thinking?

- Some faculty may want to direct students to search for materials in the public domains, licensed for educational use, or in academic and digital commons.

5. ***Design your project for the platform.*** Before integrating any digital tools or media into your project, first design how you want to use the platform you've chosen. This may take the form of an outline, or a written map of the project.

- In the case of ePortfolio, before building your digital essay you might first sketch out your plan on a piece of paper. Please consider adding a landing page (or splash page) and decide on an "about me" page. You'll also need a comprehensive bibliography page (one that includes all textual and media sources). You might also want to decide a couple core background colors, design elements, or page layouts for the sake of consistency.

6. ***Design your text for a viewer's thoughts and feelings.*** Once you've decided on the core page elements, look at your paragraphs and think how you might arrange the text so that your readers can easily understand both the text and follow the sequence of your thoughts. You'll likely need to play with the size of the text as font, the size of the text heading (a kind of mini-title, title, or headline for each page), the number of sentences per paragraph, and the location of the text on the page.

   • You may want to ask yourself how different colors or color combinations contribute to your overall message. How do your design choices shape a viewers' perception? How does the combination of visual and design elements shape their feelings, as well as their thinking?

7. ***Clarify the textual and multimodal elements for an outside audience.*** After you've incorporated multimodal design into your pages and organized your site, consider what new texts, graphics, images, or videos need captions or other forms of written explanation. Do you want to explain the meaning of what you chose in a caption? Do you want to refer to the images, videos, or graphics within the body of the writing itself? There should be a clear connection between what you chose to illustrate, support, advance, and/or enhance your writing and what you wrote. Readers and viewers should not have to guess the meaning or relationship between what they're seeing and what you're arguing and discussing in your writing.

8. ***Peer Review your digital composition.*** Once you believe you've successfully arranged and designed your site, show it to someone else and ask for feedback. You might want to receive feedback on the following elements:

   • Would an audience, reader, or user from outside the class have a clear understanding of what you're doing if they came to your site without any prior knowledge?

   • Does the overall design feel accessible and readable?

   • Do the multimodal elements have a clear relation to what you're arguing and/or writing?

   • Are there any aspects of the design that could be strengthened?

   • Are all the sources of information, data, images, and video properly cited, sourced, and linked? Are they part of a comprehensive bibliography that also includes the sources you're using for the essay?

9. ***Polish your composition for audience.*** Before make the project public, review it to make sure your arguments are clear, your summaries of textual sources are directed toward an outside audience, your core evidence is clearly quoted and correctly cited, and your interpretation of evidence and critical thinking adequately expands on the meaning of what you're saying in ways that are logical, original, and fresh.

10. ***Polish your composition for accessibility.*** To ensure that your composition is as accessible as possible to the broadest audience, including those with disabilities, you should format with the principles of accessibility in education in mind, which you can learn more about on CUNY's IT Accessibility Statement and Resources site (See links along the left-hand side of the page for more information).

- Practically speaking, this means that you should provide alternative text (alt text) for images and video, and use real hyperlinks, instead of "click here" or the entire URL, when linking to other websites. Alt text is a way to describe an image to ensure all users, regardless of visual ability, can access your content. Alt text should explain anything you want the reader to get out of the image, including data if the image is a chart with important information. Describe the image or video you've chosen in relationship to the theme or claim you're making in your writing. See this site for step-by-step instructions on how to add alt text in Digication ePortfolio.

- In addition to or instead of alt text, you can also include a caption for the image or a transcript of a video in the text of your document. Such captions can complement the areas in your prose where you explain the relationship between your visual media and the purpose of your claim, paragraph, evidence, or critical thinking. When using hyperlinks, use meaningful text instead of "click here" or the entire URL, so that users accessing the page with a screen reader will be able to understand what the link will lead to. See this site for instructions on how to add hyperlinks in ePortfolio.

11. **Reflect on your work.** Once you're done, you may want to ask yourself what you learned about digital communication. What's most effective about it? How is it similar to – and different from – written and oral communication? What should other students keep in mind who design similar projects? How has your experience designing with digital tools shaped your experience of consuming digital media?

FAQs: Outcomes Assessment & Assignment Design

What resources exist for faculty to design assignments?
In addition to this Assignment Guide, faculty have access to several types of resources. At the most immediate level, faculty can consult curriculum maps, course proposals, program directors, and colleagues. The assessment webpage for the College has additional resources, including the Gen-Ed rubrics.

For initial assignment design, there are *Learning Matters* workshops and charrettes organized by the Center for Teaching and Learning. For more sustained assignment revision, there are *Learning Matters* and Closing the Loop Mini-Grants and Center for Teaching & Learning seminars.

For assignment models, faculty can look at the Assignment Library located on Academic Works: <shortlib.org/s/assignmentlibrary>.

Examples of student work at each level of the rubric's learning points (1- Novice, 2- Developing, 3- Competent, 4- Proficient) can be found as "Range-finders" in the College's Norming Packets. These could be helpful for faculty wishing to see examples of student work.

For conversations and consultations, faculty also can contact their department liaison to the Assessment Leadership Team, as well as the Faculty Co-Directors of Assessment and Institutional Learning.

Should programs design assignments for all faculty to use?
Each program will decide on the best ways to create assignments that meet program, course, and institutional learning objectives. Some programs might find it helpful to create assignments or templates for full and/or part-time faculty. It's more important for faculty to workshop and discuss their assignments with other faculty, both in their program and beyond, in order to receive diverse feedback.

Should programs set standard parameters for assignments?
Each program will decide on the best ways to create assignments that meet program, course, and institutional learning objectives. The closest idea to setting "standard parameters" for assignments is probably the dimensions on the rubrics for the competencies and abilities.

Should we align Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) with the Core Competencies and/or Communication Abilities?
The College does not insist that program PLOs align with the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. Having said that, faculty often do so, and they can develop ways to link them by thinking carefully about the objectives of each, and pairing them in assignments and courses where they make sense to be incorporated together. In the best case, PLOs and Core Competencies will reinforce each other or complement one another.

In addition to consulting this Guide, faculty have multiple options for revising assignments alongside both PLOs and Gen Ed rubrics. First, they can look over their syllabus in consultation with their Program Director and decide how their PLOs connect with the dimensions of the designated Core Competency and/or Communication Ability. Syllabi should in turn carefully reflect where course objectives and dimensions are addressed, and how they are staged into assignments.

Further questions about incorporating dimensions into a specific course can also lead to consultations with their department's liaison from the Assessment Leadership Team.

Should faculty provide students with the rubric alongside the assignment?
The decision to share the rubric is up to individual faculty, but the Assessment Leadership Team (ALT) encourages faculty to familiarize students with the Competencies and Abilities. Identifying points of connection between assignments and rubrics can provide students with a more advanced understanding of the goals of their classroom assignment and the overall course objectives. Setting aside some classroom time to let the students work out the meaning of the designated Competency and Ability can signal our commitment to shared learning objectives across time and across courses.

How many dimensions on the rubric does my assignment have to address?
Our faculty-created rubrics represent our shared definitions of our Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. Each dimension is a vital element. In crafting high stakes assignments, it's up to faculty, program directors, and department chairs to design the most appropriate ways to integrate the full dimensions of the Competency with course objectives and good pedagogy.

During Benchmark Readings, artifacts of student learning will be scored holistically, on their demonstration of all dimensions. The number of dimensions addressed will shape the overall score given by readers.

In some cases, faculty teaching introduction level courses may decide to focus on building capacities with the competencies and abilities across a range of assignments, rather than address them all at once. A collection of assignments can be deposited for scoring if they are all included on a page in the ePortfolio. If you're interested in this, talk with the ePortfolio team about how to do it.

How many Competencies and Abilities should be taught in First Year Seminar?
Ideally, all the competencies and abilities should be addressed in FYS courses using a range of assignments and activities from low stakes to high stakes, graded and ungraded. In terms of deposits for assessment, that varies and depends on the FYS course. For example, in LIF101, one deposit is made for the Integrative Learning competency and Digital ability.

What is the "core ePortfolio"?
Thousands of LaGuardia students create ePortfolios each year in their First Year Seminar (FYS). After creating their ePortfolio from a customized, discipline-based template introduced in FYS, students add to it across the curriculum, integrating their coursework with co-curricular and significant life experiences, making connections within and across disciplines, and reflecting on their growth as learners. Every FYS template includes a Planning for Success section with advisement tools that help students stay on track, as well as career-planning and transfer modules, and assignment prompts for key courses on the curriculum map.

A new, easily-customized and visually-appealing interface also provides greater capacity for the juxtaposition of diverse media elements and a cohesive graphical display. This allows students to develop a personal "brand" they can adjust over time as they update their portfolios. And the tool's flexibility allows students to add assignment modules from key gen ed courses from outside their discipline, thus maintaining ePortfolio practice by faculty teaching courses outside the majors.

Is the "About Me" a good assignment for Integrative Learning?
An "About Me" assignment that addresses each of the rubric dimensions for Integrative Learning would make an excellent one for Integrative Learning.

An "About Me" assignment that doesn't address the rubric dimensions would likely be a poor choice. Faculty teaching First Year Seminar (FYS)?? or introductory courses should be careful to create assignments that address as many dimensions as possible, even if expectations are framed for "Novice" (1) and "Developing" learners (2).

What counts as Written Communication?
In consultation with the rubric, any artifact of student work that communicates a purpose through an organized structure to an audience could possibly be scored as Written Communication.
Works that are not written would not count, such as videos, oral presentations, audio files, or the like.

What's the difference between Digital Communication, digital literacy, and digital learning?
Digital literacy refers to the ways students acquire and use different digital skills, and may have nothing to do with communication per se. For example, learning how to use email, Blackboard, and Excel are important skills for students to have – but these skills aren't about conveying a purposeful message to an audience using some sort of digital tool. In other words, knowing how to create an Excel graph is useful, but what the College defines as Digital Communication is closely related to a student's ability to successfully inform, persuade, and/or teach an audience. Therefore digital communication is not the same as the student digital learning, and manipulating an Excel graph by playing with the different Excel features isn't the same as incorporating that graph to support claims made in an essay or presentation.

Do videos count as Digital Communication? When does it count as Oral Communication?
Video is a versatile medium that can count for both, or either, Digital and Oral Communication.
The reason it counts for Digital is that it addresses what the Digital Communication rubric calls the "multimedia" or "multimodal" element of the digital ability – that is, as an an *audiovisual* text video combines image, text, and sound to communicate purpose and organize ideas for an audience.
When used to address Oral Communication, video should primarily present student's oral abilities. Reviewing the Oral Communication rubric should clearly indicate how the video should document a student's oral ability.

How do we think about design and balance for composing Digital Communication?
In terms of the multimedia element of Digital Communication, it's preferable that the juxtaposition of different media (text, image, sound, etc.) be balanced with one another.

For example, one illustrative image accompanying eight pages of text, with little discernable relationship between the two, would probably score very low as an artifact of the student's digital ability. If the text engaged more creatively with that image, and thus the two forms of media relayed meanings together more forcefully, this would presumably advance the purpose of the communication better – and at the same time, reveal more of the student's digital ability.

In terms of holistic design, we might think in the same spirit. The design elements on an ePortfolio, for example, should work in balance with the content, purpose, and organization of information being communicated. They should work together to advance the communication by the student. Design

elements should not be purely decorative, visually appealing, or complex for their own sake. Instead, they should enhance and advance the purpose, organization, and content of the matter being communicated. The same is true for video – whatever editing and effects are included should enhance and advance, and not distract, from the message or content of the piece.

What constitutes Oral Communication?
With effective oral communication skills, students can share ideas and information with one another, identify and discover new ideas, and solve problems. They will also convey their beliefs, thoughts, feelings and experiences in an organized and knowledgeable manner.

Oral Communication can be captured by audio or video. For face-to-face presentations students should be able to build, express, and justify a claim while adapting messages to varied situations and contexts. In addition, for video presentations, students should also demonstrate an awareness of the audience. When scoring and assessing, Benchmark Readers will take into account how effectively students address the audience, situation, and context. Please consult the rubrics for details.

Should we deposit low-stakes assignments?
No. Low-stakes assignments usually address fewer dimensions on the rubric, and often emerge from in-class situations where students are building capacities rather than demonstrating advanced learning. When low-stakes assignments get deposited, it creates confusion and skews the Benchmark reading results.

Should assignments be included with deposits?
No, assignments should be not included for deposit. The purpose of Outcomes Assessment is to assess student learning over time in relation to the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. The purpose of our assessment is *not* to evaluate the intention of an assignment, its goals or objectives, or its incorporation of the competencies and abilities. Assignments that address the dimensions on the rubrics of the competencies and abilities should tend to create student work that addresses those dimensions.

Can programs vet assignments for deposit purposes?
It's a good idea to periodically discuss assignments intended to generate student work for deposit. This discussion will take place differently in different programs. Faculty and program directors should consult one another on a regular basis about how effectively assignments work in addressing the dimensions of the competencies and abilities. All programs can learn more about how their assignments work by requesting program-specific data from the College's annual Benchmark Readings, or by conducting their own Benchmark Reading.

Why do assessment people use the word artifact?
The word artifact refers to the student work deposited for scoring (for example, a student paper deposited to be scored against the Written Communication rubric). This is simply just Outcomes Assessment nomenclature.

1. Write outcome statements that flow directly from, and support the program goals and the mission of the college.

2. Write outcome statements that relate directly to the academic discipline and reflect the knowledge and skills students should acquire through both general and discipline-specific courses.

3. Write outcome statements that relate directly to the Gen Ed core competencies and communication abilities.

4. Write outcome statements that are specific, observable and measurable:

   a. Focus on definite observable actions rather than what students think, understand, appreciate, etc. We cannot measure what students know or understand, but we can measure how they demonstrate evidence of knowledge and understanding.

   b. Avoid outcome statements that say, "Students will know …," or "Students will understand …." When you're tempted to use these, think about what students who *know* or *understand* can **DO** with that knowledge or understanding. Avoid unclear verbs (e.g., know, appreciate, etc.). (***Refer to the attached Bloom's revised taxonomy for solid and effective action verbs***)

5. Write outcome statements that focus on knowledge and skills graduates should possess (outputs) rather than curriculum design, department resources, faculty characteristics, or instructional methods (inputs). Express learning outcomes in terms of what students will be able to do.

6. For programs that have specialized accreditation or certification, write outcome statements that take those assessment expectations into consideration.

7. Write outcomes that communicate a single outcome rather than combine multiple outcomes into a single statement.

8. Write outcome statements in the form of "Students of the program will be able to _____;" or "Students of the program will be prepared to _____."

➢ When creating Program Learning Outcomes please remember that the outcomes should clearly state what students will do or produce to determine and/or demonstrate their learning. Use the following learning outcomes formula:

***Students will be able to + Behavior + Resulting Evidence***

Adapted from: http://www.asu.edu/oue/outcomes.html
https://drexel.edu/provost/assessment/outcomes/developing-program/

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) Checklist

Draft Program Learning Outcomes:

Do the PLOs accomplish the following?

- ☐ Support the program mission statement and the college mission
- ☐ Directly relate to the academic discipline
- ☐ Align with Gen Ed Competencies and Communication Abilities
- ☐ Specific, observable and measurable
- ☐ Focus on acquired skills and knowledge (outputs) rather than curriculum design or instructional methods (inputs)
- ☐ Consider external standards, such as accreditation or certification, if any
- ☐ Communicates a single outcome rather than multiple outcomes
- ☐ If the program is a Liberal Arts Option, the PLOs align with the Liberal Arts PLOs

Use the space below to write your **final program outcomes:**

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy

create
Produce new or original work
Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate

evaluate
Justify a stand or decision
appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh

analyze
Draw connections among ideas
differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test

apply
Use information in new situations
execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch

understand
Explain ideas or concepts
classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate

remember
Recall facts and basic concepts
define, duplicate, list, memorize, repeat, state

Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching

From: https://uoeee.asu.edu/assessment

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy Action Verbs

I. Remembering	II. Understanding	III. Applying	IV. Analyzing	V. Evaluating	VI. Creating
Exhibit memory of previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers.	Demonstrate Understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.	Solve problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way.	Examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes. Make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations.	Present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas, or quality of work based on a set of criteria.	Compile information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions.
Choose Define Find How Label List Match Name Omit Recall Relate Select Show Spell Tell What When Where Which Who Why	Classify Compare Contrast Demonstrate Explain Extend Illustrate Infer Interpret Outline Relate Rephrase Show Summarize Translate	Apply Build Choose Construct Develop Experiment Identify Interview Make use of Model Organize Plan Select Solve Utilize	Analyze Assume Categorize Classify Compare Conclusion Contrast Discover Dissect Distinguish Divide Examine Function Inference Inspect List Motive Relationships Simplify Survey Take part in Test for Theme	Agree Appraise Assess Award Choose Compare Conclude Criteria Criticize Decide Deduct Defend Determine Disprove Estimate Evaluate Explain Importance Influence Interpret Judge Justify Mark Measure Opinion Perceive Prioritize Prove Rate Recommend Rule on Select Support Value	Adapt Build Change Choose Combine Compile Compose Construct Create Delete Design Develop Discuss Elaborate Estimate Formulate Happen Imagine Improve Invent Make up Maximize Minimize Modify Original Originate Plan Predict Propose Solution Solve Suppose Test Theory

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing, Abridged Edition. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon. Medical Education Simulation Center 2017 (c) UC Regents, All Rights Reserved.

Adapted From: *https://uoeee.asu.edu/assessment*

Appendix B

Guidelines for Program Benchmark Readings

NORMING & SCORING

Norming sessions can be a meaningful way for faculty to address Student Learning Outcomes, whether the Gen Ed Core Competencies and Communication Abilities or one of their own Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Program Benchmark Readings are powerful learning experiences that help faculty and staff readers more deeply understand the learning outcomes being discussed.

During a norming session, faculty read and discuss the assessment tool (usually a rubric). Then they look at examples of range finders, or student work that constitutes different scores on the rubric (usually 1-4). Next, they look at unscored examples of student work and form a consensus on what each should score. Readers should be able to agree (within 1 point) on what constitutes different levels of student work. Once "normed," readers can then score student work by themselves.

The purposes of norming sessions are:
- to define what constitutes student learning relative to the learning objectives and dimensions of the assessment tool;
- to promote agreement about how an assessment tool measures student work;
- to inspire consensus about how student work scores across the rubric scale.

For an effective norming session, provide participants with the following:
- An assessment tool, usually a rubric, that contains a definition, framing language, glossary, and a matrix or grid that defines learning outcomes on an 1-4 scale.
- Range-Finders, or examples of student work at each scoring level (1-4) so that scorers have models.
- Norming Samples, or unscored samples of student work for faculty to read, score, and discuss.

A Norming Session agenda might look like:
1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Discussion of tools or rubrics; surface clarifying questions and define terms
3. A reading of annotated student work in the Range Finders; the annotations should explain why the work scored a 1, 2, 3, or 4 (or doesn't score on the rubric)
4. Leaders solicit discussion about the Range Finders
5. Participants then read unscored Norming Samples and discuss scores until consensus is reached within 1 point (NOTE: Leaders should select Norming Samples in advance to guide consensus.)
6. When leaders ask participants to share their scores, why discover why participants gave certain work that particular score. Leaders also help participants understand why that sample was selected with a particular score in mind.

NOTES ON RUBRICS & SCORING

When scoring for the Gen Ed LaGuardia's Core Competency and Communication Abilities, a 1 means Novice and a 4 means Proficient. Nationally, a four-point score is considered statistically and intuitively feasible, reproducible, and scalable. The College's goal is for graduating LaGuardia students to reach at least a score of 3, or "Competent." It does not expect that entering students or baseline artifacts reach this level.

For scoring, the College uses sympathetic holistic scoring. This system means a reader comes up with an overall score that takes each of the multiple dimensions on a rubric into account. This is in contrast to a specific score for each dimension that's then averaged.

On a 1-4 scale, it is reasonable if readers come within *one* point of each other on their overall or holistic score for any given artifact. For example, someone gives the work a 1, while the other person assigns it a 2. Where there is *more* than one-point difference, such as an 1 and a 3, discussion must ideally bring the conversation into a one-point difference.

The "norming" process should help readers more effectively align their shared assumptions and understandings of the rubric.

Suggestions for Interpreting and Presenting Benchmark Data

The purpose of assessment is to examine growth over time, and to create meaningful data that can inform action steps. As programs plan norming sessions for Periodic Program Reviews (PPRs), *Learning Matters* Mini-Grants, or other initiatives, they should strategize about the data they create, and how they'll interpret and present it. Benchmark Reading leaders might consider the following guidelines and questions, below.

Suggestions for Scoring and Data Compilation

Plesae keep in mind the following:

1. Artifacts receive two scores from different faculty.

2. Artifacts with divergent scores (88 and a numbered score; difference of more than 1 point (1 and 3, 2 and 4) receive third score from third reader).

Suggestions for Analysis and Presentation

As the PPR leaders review and analyze their data, keep these questions and suggestions in mind:

1. What are the primary questions involved about student learning? What is the PPR team hoping to learn from this process? What issues does the Program already know about that it is hoping to examine or better understand?

2. Consider your audience. Are the report authors presenting to other faculty in the program, or to an audience outside the program? They might make adjustments depending on the answer.

3. As the team compiles and reviews scores, it should ask: what do these data mean? What can the program learn from them? Is the data what was expected? Take note of the difference between expectations and results.

4. Where did tension emerge? What was the difference between 1s and work that didn't score? What was the difference between a 2 and a 3?

5. Consider the role of assignment(s) in building student learning and generating the student artifacts you've scored. Does the assignment effectively address the dimensions of the relevant competency and ability?

6. What data could provide the findings with context and framework? Is there contextual college-wide data that can be used for comparison? What such a comparison look like? What conclusions can be drawn from that comparison?

After the participants have scored, the PPR team lead a reflection conversation with the scorers. In the discussion, the team might consider the following clusters of questions, designed to enhance assessment as a learning process.

✓ **Student Artifacts**. What did the readers learn from scoring the artifacts? What did they learn about assignments designed to address the rubric, or Competency/Ability? What factors contributed to higher scores? How could assignments be tweaked to create higher-scoring artifacts?

✓ **Learning Objectives**. Have the scorers' understanding of the learning objectives changed? Were some dimensions easier to score than others? What were some of the factors that contributed to 3s and 4s?

✓ **Action Steps**. What advice would they give faculty and program directors who are teaching to the learning objective measured by the rubric? How can the College best support faculty in assignment development for the learning objective? How can the College use what has been learned to shape teaching and learning at the College?

✓ **Faculty Insight**. What insights from the discussion would be important for bringing stronger teaching and learning back to the classroom? How might this discussion inform faculty's work with the learning objective? How might these insights inform the program's engagement with the learning objectives, whether PLOs or Core Competencies and Communication Abilities?

For those interested in setting up Benchmark Readings in their program or department, please see the following process steps.

I. **Information Gathering**: If you are the lead faculty or staff member requesting assistance, please ascertain the following:

    a. Number of artifacts to be scored.

    b. Whether artifacts are to be randomly selected from across the curriculum or only from particular courses. If the latter, get the list of course codes and have them ready so we can send to Digication.

    c. The Competency/ies or Communication Ability/ies, or the Program Learning Outcome, that you're targeting.

    d. Names and email addresses of people who will be scoring (see sample below*), and who will be the team or teams.

    e. Note: each document is usually scored twice.

    f. Timeline: Make sure faculty or staff members know that Digication's process is not fast, so plan early by a few weeks.

    g. Make sure the faculty/staff leader has organized the appropriate norming session/s prior to scoring.

II. **Working with Digication**

    a. Send Digication (support@digication.com) a list of the teams, including the correct email address for each scorer (see sample below), and the relevant rubric/s.

b. Digication needs to know the number of artifacts that will be scored.

c. If samples are to come from particular courses, or any other subset of students, make sure to include that information in your email.

III. **After Samples Are Set Up**

a. Remind faculty or staff leader to send emails to scorers notifying them that the samples are ready and providing appropriate instructions (see sample below*).

b. Faculty/staff leader should send follow-up email reminding faculty of the deadline as appropriate.

IV. **Compiling Score Reports**

a. Once faculty have completed scoring, they can download the data from the Digication interface.

   i. Login to the system
   ii. Click on the appropriate set of samples
   iii. Click on "Download Assessment"
   iv. Click on "Generate CSV"
   v. Save as a CSV or Excel file

b. Scores can be given to staff in Academic Affairs who will compile the score report.

c. using the usual credits accumulated at the time of deposit categories.

Sample Team Info for Digication

Digital Communication - Norming: January 11 - 2:00-4:00 PM

DCA Team 1	Justin	Rogers-Cooper	jrogers@lagcc.cuny.edu
DCA Team 1	Mary Anne	O'Reilly	moreilly@lagcc.cuny.edu
DCA Team 2	Jose	Fabara	fabarajo@lagcc.cuny.edu
DCA Team 2	Amit	Aggarwal	Aaggarwal@lagcc.cuny.edu
DCA Team 3	Jade	Davis	jadavis@lagcc.cuny.edu
DCA Team 3	Maria	Entezari	tentezarizaher@lagcc.cuny.edu
DCA Team 4	Josephine	Corso	jcorso@lagcc.cuny.edu

Appendix C

Step by Step Scoring in Digication

- **Step One: Log into the Digication program assessment site:**

https://program-assessment.digication.com/

Please use the Firefox, Safari or Chrome web browser; do not use Internet Explorer. Your assessment login credentials are separate from your Digication ePortfolio login and are valid only for the duration of the scoring process. Type the individual password assigned to you.
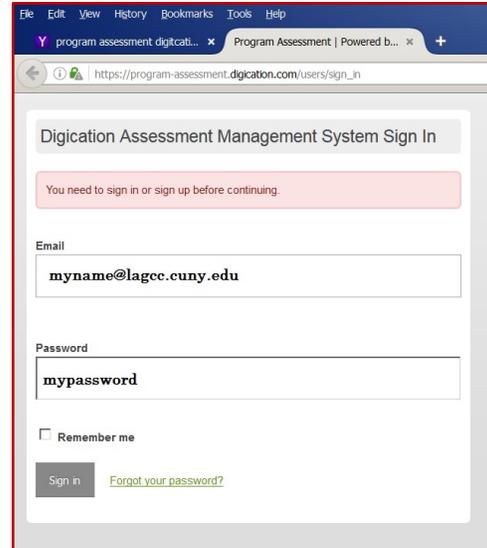
- **Step Two: Select Your Competency/Ability (Click on the Link)**
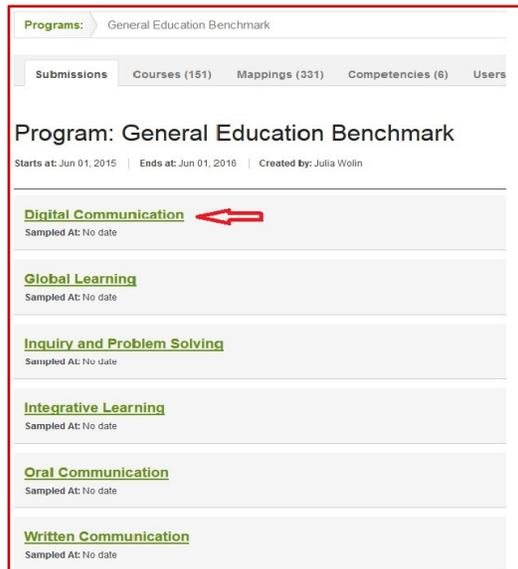
- **Step Three: Click on the Sample Number to Open the Sample Artifact**

- **Step Four:** **Click on the name of the file to open the artifact**
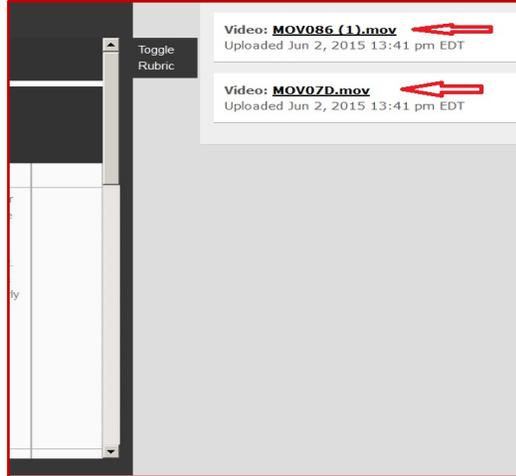
- **Step Five: To score follow these steps or refer to the graphic below:**

1. To see the rubric and enter your score, click on the "Toggle Rubric" button in the upper left corner.

2. You'll see the rubric for the competency/ability that you are evaluating.

3. Use the scroll bar to go all the way to the bottom of the rubric where you will see a box to enter your holistic (i.e., overall) score.

4. Enter a holistic score in the bottom right hand corner.   *Please note:* You are not giving a score for every dimension of the rubric. Rather, consider the whole. Overall, does the sample seem like a 4? Like a 3? Etc. *Remember:* You are not grading this. You are giving your general impression on how well the sample addresses the dimensions of the rubric.   Many people like to consider the final score as an average. If that works for you, that's fine. For example, if you would give the sample a score of 4 for the first dimension, 3 for the second, 2 for the third, and 2 for the first, the average would be 2.8.   If you round up, you'd give this a holistic score of 3.

5. There's also a place to enter a comment if you want to do so. This is optional.

6. Use the "Save and Next" button to go back to your list of samples.