



LET 2004-2005 ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted by:

Emily Hooker, Learning Evidence Associate

Roberta Vandermast, LET Co-chair & Humanities Professor

Origin of the Learning Evidence Team (LET)

The Learning Evidence Team was established in the Spring Term, 2004. Meetings began in February 2004. Reporting to the Chief Learning Officer, the LET was charged to provide leadership for the collegewide initiative to accomplish Goal 4 of the Strategic Learning Plan.

Membership

Members included full-time faculty, deans, members of Academic Affairs staff, and other administrative and professions staff with responsibilities closely related to the assessment of learning. Faculty members were appointed by the Faculty Council with an eye toward campus and discipline distribution. Faculty and dean members are rotating positions while the others are permanent support. The primary responsibility for the work of the team rested with the faculty members who were paid a stipend of \$500.00 per term; however, significant contributions were made by other members.

Charge to the Learning Evidence Team:

- Foster a culture of evidence at the college...
- Articulate a philosophy of assessment of student learning...
- Envision a long-term plan...that will bring coordination to the program of learning and development at the College.

Some rotation of membership has occurred. A cumulative list of members who have served during any portion of 2004-2005 follows:

Full-time Faculty:

Andrew Alexander
Linda Anthon
Jim Belcher
Kira Bishop
Philip Bishop

Judi Delisle
Jackie DiMartino
Suzette Dohany
Maryke Lee
Melissa Pedone

George Rausch
Allison Sloan
David Rogers
Roberta Vandermast

Deans:

Karen Borglum
Aida Diaz

Tim Grogan
Shawn Robinson

Administrative and Professional Support:

Nick Bekas
Mike Bosley
Helen Clarke
William Johnson

Bill LeBlanc
Patrick Nellis
Ron Nelson
Louise Pitts

Ann Puyana
Barbara Shell
Cheryl Robinson

Consultants:

Peggy Maki June 11, 2004
Susan Hatfield February 3 & 4, 2005
Randy Swing April 15, 2005 (in cooperation with *Connections*, Title III, East)

Readings and Resources Consulted:

"Doing Assessment As If Learning Matters Most" by Thomas A. Angelo,
This article examines the transformative nature of assessment and outlines Angelo's four pillars of transformative assessment.

"AAHE Assessment Forum Definitions of Assessment" a draft and responses compiled by Thomas A. Angelo, then Director of Assessment Forum, American Association of Higher Education.

"Beyond Confusion: An Assessment Glossary" by Andrea Leskes, *Precise definitions of a vocabulary of assessment with examples.*

"Teaching and Learning Academy, Valencia Community College: Glossary." *Definitions of the vocabulary of assessment as it is currently used at Valencia.*

"Developing an Assessment Plan to Learn About Student Learning" by Peggy L. Maki, *This article contrasts assessment motivated by accreditation with assessment motivated by institutional curiosity. An assessment Guide is included to assist institutions as they conceptualize a plan to integrate assessment into their culture.*

"Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes at Mount Royal College" by the Faculty Curriculum Group of Mount Royal College, Calgary, Canada. *This document is the Assessment Plan for Mount Royal College.*

Selected Accomplishments:

To access see: <http://www.valenciacc.edu/learningevidence/products.asp>

Concept Map of Assessment

Created by the team based upon readings, discussions, research, and clarification of the answer to, "*What do we mean by assessment at Valencia?*"

Glossary of Assessment Terms

Definitions of assessment and assessment-related terms agreed upon as a result of research and discussion and aligned with terminology used by TLA

Principles, Purposes, and Philosophy of Assessment

Written and adopted by the team based upon research, discussion, and Valencia's values and mission

Inventory of Assessments

A list of assessment-related activities currently underway throughout the college at the program level and higher. Information was solicited from all divisions, deans, and programs.

Learning Evidence Plan for Transformative Assessment

A draft plan for the College that reflects the following decisions made by the LET:

- To incorporate concepts found in the literature of transformative assessment
- To view and describe assessment at Valencia in terms of four levels: student level, course level, program level, college level (institutional effectiveness)
- To limit the work of the LET to the program level and above
- To focus our work on gathering evidence of student learning related to the Valencia student core competencies: TVCA
- To incorporate a phased-in approach beginning with the assessment of THINK and adding emphasis upon an additional competency each year
- To build a framework that could reflect the assessment plans and key indicators at all levels and as envisioned by all entities at the College

Valencia Thinks Webography

A web-based clearinghouse for scholarly sites related to critical thinking, the work of Valencia faculty members, and evidence of student learning related to THINK

THINK Rubric

A holistic critical thinking rubric based upon the indicators specified for Valencia's core competency Think. To be used to gather evidence at the institutional level, not the classroom level. (copy attached)

Contributed to the following projects:

Course Outline Builder
Process for Approving Course Outlines
Analysis of CCSSE results

Self-assessment and Evaluation of LET

LET members completed a Flashlight survey that provided an opportunity to self-assess the structure, schedule, meeting format, leadership, accomplishments, and challenges of the team. Results indicated the following patterns:

Strengths:

Equitable campus and position (category of employee) distribution
Size is right to too large
Schedule of alternating work group meetings with entire LET meetings with work groups being somewhat more effective than whole group
Leadership generally effective
Collaborative climate and team mindset
Membership is pleased with the work accomplished and plans for upcoming year
100% indicated that the LET has benefited the College and should continue

Challenges, suggestions and growing edges:

The implementation of the THINK Project
Rollover of participants
Communication of our work to the broader College community
Maximizing inclusive dimension to our work without over meeting
The dysfunction of paying some members and not others

Recommendations

1. Reconsider the practice of paying a stipend to some LET members and not to others. Consider project-based stipends to individuals who take responsibility for projects that cannot be completed within regular work schedule.
2. Establish a thoughtful method for rotating members that will maintain a balance of campus and discipline representation while meeting the needs of the team for individuals with specific expertise related to projects and goals.
3. Explore meeting formats to maximize time on tasks and minimize travel
4. Explore methods to improve communication and marketing of our work

GOALS FOR 2005-2006

"A culture of evidence is characterized by institutional practice that promotes competence in the skilled, intentional gathering and use of information... (it) reflects the value of using evidence for making decisions and for formulating and solving problems, in a spirit of ongoing reflection and continuous improvement based on data....it provides incentives...to work together to add value to the assessment process at the institution."

-- Brown, Ehrmann and Suter, "Transformation and Assessment: A Conceptual Framework"

- Refine, test and publish an institutional level THINK rubric that can be used to evaluate student work at the program level and higher, and that can be used as a source from which to derive discipline, course or individual Think rubrics.
- Gather and evaluate student work for evidence of Think, using our institutional rubric, to provide evidence of the inclusion of core competencies in the general education curriculum.
- Gather and evaluate direct and indirect evidence of students' ability to think. Interpret and publish these findings college wide to spread awareness of achievements and shortcomings.
- Sponsor the development of discipline and/or course level Think rubrics that will be used to evaluate students work and to help bring coherence to the general education curriculum.
- Gather and publish assignments that highlight Think in order to promote best practices.
- Populate, revise and refine our webography and searchable database about our core competency, Think, and publicize this college wide.
- Plan and hold a kick-off banquet and celebration banquet for Think to draw attention to student, faculty and staff achievement centered around Think.
- Improve the communication of our work to College in order to spread knowledge of our work and to include more voices in this work.
- Revise and expand our LET Action Plan to include the information currently captured in our Assessment Inventory in order to make it clearer and more useful.
- Form a work team for Communicate and a plan to measure Communicate in student work, college wide, in order to promote awareness of the core competencies and to bring coherence to the general education program at the College.

