National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
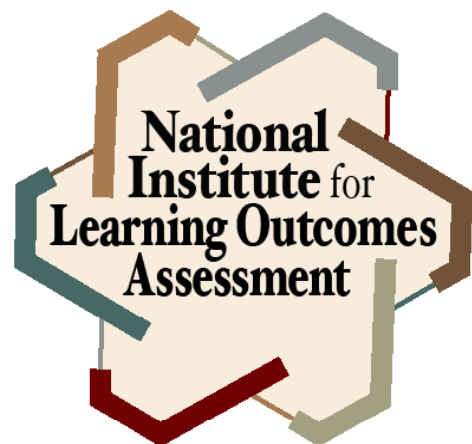
Evolving the Loop: The Role of ePortfolio in Building 21st Century Student Learning Outcomes

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Contents

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NILOA Mission

The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), established in 2008, is a research and resource-development organization dedicated to documenting, advocating, and facilitating the systematic use of learning outcomes assessment to improve student learning.
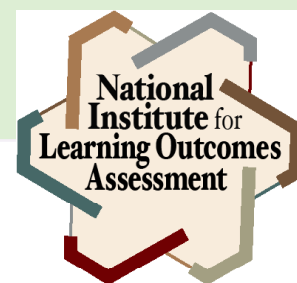
Abstract

One of the many new directions to explore in ePortfolio practice is the relationship between ePortfolio as a classroom pedagogy and its potential to advance general education outcomes assessment. This direction is especially urgent in relation to the increasing demands by employers for competency-focused, higher-order skills, as well as demands by accreditors for evidence of growth in student learning during degree completion. In this paper, we discuss how two- or four-year colleges might address these demands through our experiences at LaGuardia Community College (City University of New York). The recent redesign of our college's outcomes assessment process through an innovation cycle we call "Evolving the Loop," in addition to simultaneous and intentional innovations in our assessment and ePortfolio practice reinforced the culture of LaGuardia as a learning college. A key decision we made was in adopting new Core Competencies and Communication Abilities, especially Digital Communication, to better collaborate with our next generation, Digication ePortfolio platform. Beginning with an overview of the program, we describe the program's journey of Evolving the Loop through the creation of Core ePortfolios and provide concrete examples of how interlinked assessment and ePortfolio practice can support twenty-first century student learning outcomes.

Evolving the Loop:
The Role of ePortfolio in Building 21st Century Student Learning Outcomes

Regina M. Lehman & Justin Rogers-Cooper

When the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) identified ePortfolio as an 11th high-impact practice for higher education, it signaled a watershed moment in a "new ePortfolio era" (Watson, Kuh, Rhodes, Light, & Chen, 2016, p. 65; Eynon & Gambino, 2016; Eynon & Gambino, 2018). In an editorial on this new era published in the International Journal of ePortfolio, prominent scholars of student learning wrote that while ePortfolios do not depend on any one platform, ePortfolio pedagogy shares a common "framework for organizing learning…designed to be owned and developed by the student learner" (Kuh et al, 2016, p. 65). With student learning at the center, ePortfolio practice can also facilitate dispositional learning, including the interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies related to expressive and emotional communication (Kuh, Gambino, Ludvik, & O'Donnell, 2018, p. 6). Indeed, one practitioner and scholar contends that ePortfolio can act to develop "the student as a complete person where the academic and the personal are integrated" (Kapetanakos, 2018, p. 255). This new era clearly presents many opportunities.

As many educators also note, this era of opportunity comes with high stakes, particularly in relation to outcomes assessment. As Susan D. Phillips and Kevin Kisner (2018) warned at the 2018 annual conference for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the accreditation process in higher education is "on the edge" of change—both in terms of public pressure for accountability, and in terms of innovation and transformation; such stakes are likely even higher now due to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. The power of ePortfolio practice to shape the national conversation on student learning assessment has thus never been more urgent. The moment presents us with opportunities to rebut critics (Gaston, 2014; Kuh, Gambino, Ludvik, & O'Donnell, 2018; Richman & Ariovich, 2013), to defuse anxiety over the specter of artificial intelligence in pedagogy (Bass, 2018), and to harness the power of organizations that promote high-impact learning practices across institutions. We might also think carefully about the opportunities for proven digital pedagogies in the wake of widespread transitions to remote and distance learning technologies brought on by Covid-19.

One direction for continued emphasis, however, should involve the use of ePortfolio practice as a technology for deep and sustained higher-order learning in the context of outcomes assessment (Maki, 2015; Bass, 2012). The use of ePortfolio as a tool for capturing student learning over time is well established (Suskie, 2009; Banta & Palomba, 2014). More than a decade ago, Paul Arcario and James Wilson described using ePortfolio practice to "capture a rich, longitudinal picture of student development" (Arcario & Wilson, 2007, p. 208) by evaluating student work deposited in an ePortfolio system. Placing ePortfolio practice at the center of a college assessment culture, however, also means emphasizing the centrality of faculty-created assignments, and the scoring of authentic student work in a pedagogy of "assessment FOR learning" (Eynon & Gambino, 2017, p. 97; Maki, 2015).

> The power of ePortfolio practice to shape the national conversation on student learning assessment has never been more urgent.

This paper describes our experiences at LaGuardia Community College (CUNY) constructing ePortfolio practice within an assessment for learning framework. We relate how we utilized this framework through the process of embedding new Core Competencies and Communication Abilities, including Integrative Learning and Digital Communication, into our general education curriculum. We illustrate the ability of ePortfolio practice using to guide a redesign of competency-focused general education at LaGuardia using authentic assessment, particularly in regards to faculty-driven professional development activities such as assignment design and curricular revision. We describe how embedding high-impact ePortfolio practice at iterative and intentional points in program teaching promotes curricular coherence, and can advance students in their guided pathways toward graduation.

We highlight some of the common characteristics of effective faculty professional development in relation to assessment (McEady, 2006), particularly those emphasizing the "connection between teaching and learning" and the collegewide "rethinking practice[s]" that "create a supportive environment of risk-taking" (Bass & Eynon, 2016, p. 43). We illustrate our redesign of outcomes assessment through what we imagined as an 'Evolving the Loop' cycle, and relate how simultaneous 'evolutions' in assessment and ePortfolio practice together reinforced broader shifts in LaGuardia's culture as a learning college (O'Banion, 1997; Bass & Eynon, 2016). We contend that encouraging ePortfolio practice for classroom learning catalyzes student and faculty engagement with higher-order competencies like Integrative Learning, as well as strengthens students' capacities for twenty-first century skills by encouraging a key skill of our general education: Digital Communication. In the second part of this essay, we offer concrete examples of broader changes illustrating our Evolving the Loop framework by focusing on the recent success of our Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program. We consider how an intentionally designed, carefully structured curriculum with a centered ePortfolio practice can promote program-centered, competency-focused student learning, and focus on assignments the OTA program developed for Integrative Learning and Digital Communication.

Evolving the Loop at LaGuardia

LaGuardia is one of eight City University of New York (CUNY) community colleges. The college mainly serves low-income, under-represented, and first-generation students. As of Fall 2018, this included approximately 19,000 credit students and 14,000 continuing education students annually. Around 70% of full-time students received aid in 2017-18; two-thirds reported annual family incomes below $25,000. Most students are immigrants or the children of immigrants, hailing from 150 different countries and speaking 100 different languages.

Serving our diverse student body and supporting their learning requires that faculty and college leadership constantly innovate. Making decisions about how to innovate is impossible without different types of formative assessment. Assessment for learning has driven the institutional philosophy at LaGuardia for more than a decade. The "Closing the Loop" cycle of assessment of gathering evidence, assessing student work, and designing change defines how LaGuardia has approached our general education, and is probably familiar to many; it has long guided the programming at the college's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) [see Figure 1]. The Closing the Loop cycle remains a key frame for our design and practice of professional development, of course.
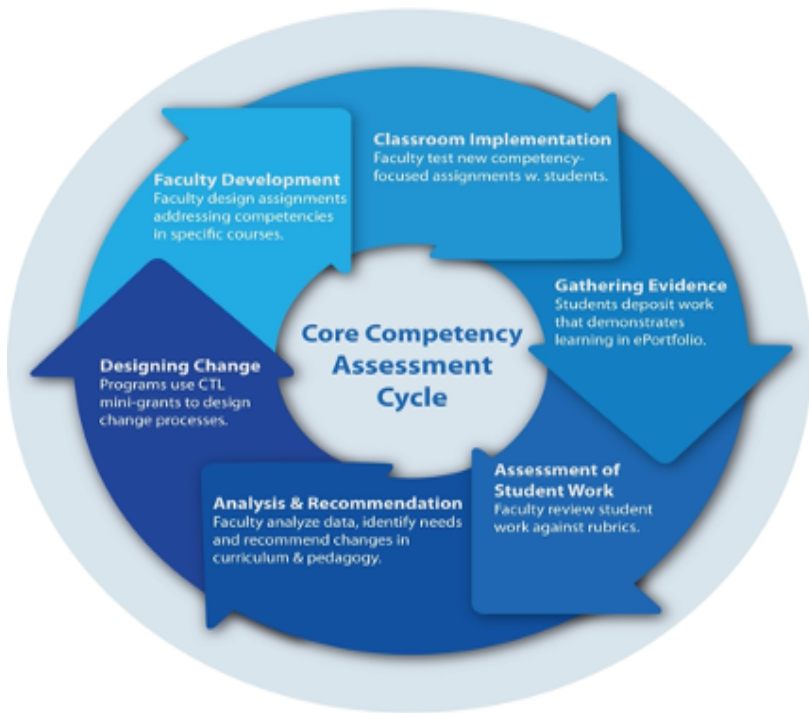
Figure 1. Core Competency Assessment Cycle.

At the same time, our continuing redesign of our outcomes assessment led us to new opportunities for re-imagining the full implications of the Closing the Loop cycle. We came to call the intensive redesign cycle of institutional innovation, particularly the large-scale changes we implemented after our last Middle States accreditation in 2012, as "Evolving the Loop." If Closing the Loop refers to "taking action based on evidence-based recommendations" (Eynon & Gambino, 2017, p. 106), then what we call Evolving the Loop refers to meta-actions that redesign the learning goals and structures of those shorter cycles. For us, Evolving the Loop is a meta-framework for visualizing those periodic institutional evolutions that also emerge when shorter cycles of "Closing the Loop"—from assignment charrettes to annual program learning assessment—spark more fundamental strategic shifts in the college's learning goals. Thus, when the categories of assessment evolve, the entire institution must follow. Evolving the Loop, then, suggests a redefinition and redesign of the norms and practices that drive the signature work of an institution's outcomes assessment framework, in part by setting new goals and expectations for that assessment. At LaGuardia, these innovations developed partly from LaGuardia's realization that we needed to define and assess Digital Communication, and partly so we could better improve our ePortfolio practice. We have tried to map out this meta-cycle in Figure 2 [see Figure 2].

Core Competencies
- *Integrative Learning*
- *Global Learning*
- *Inquiry and Problem Solving*

Communication Abilities
- *Written*
- *Oral*
- *Digital*

21st Century Learning Outcomes

Program Pedagogy
- **Assignment design**
- Curriculum map
- Program Learning Outcomes
- Early, middle, late deposits
- Connecting FYS to the Capstone
- Evidence in the ePortfolio
- Course, Program alignment

Learning Matters

The Learning College

Professional Development
- Assignment Revision
- Learning Matters Mini-Grants
- CTL Seminars
- Assignment charrettes

- **Evaluation of Evidence**
- ePortfolio/Digication
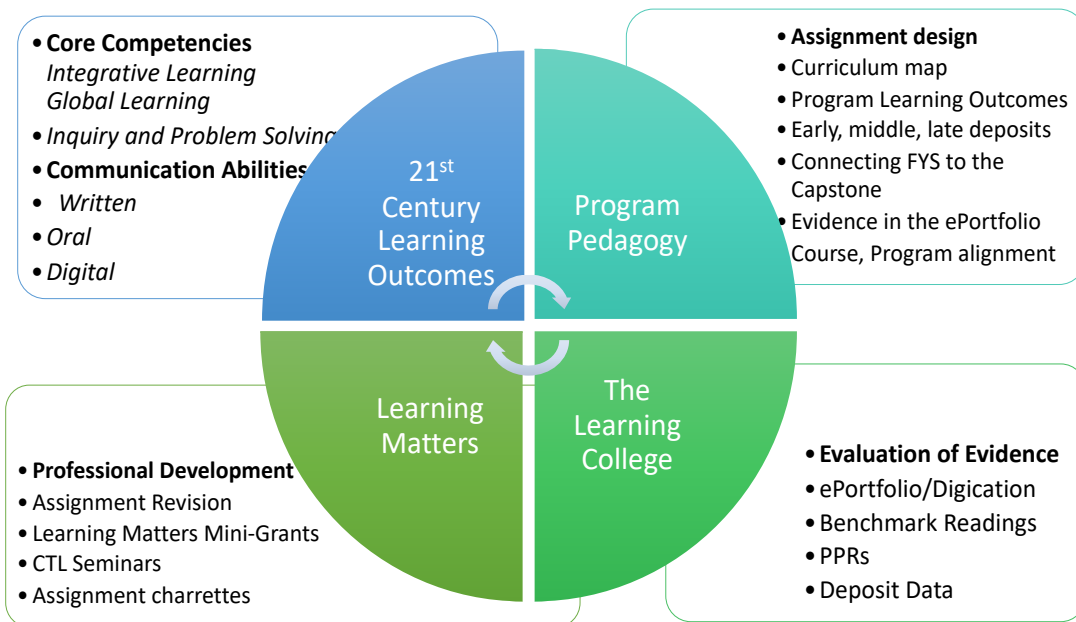- Benchmark Readings
- PPRs
- Deposit Data

Figure 2. Student Learning & Assessment: An Education for the 21st Century

Our experience Evolving the Loop confirms the importance of those critical periods during and after periodic accreditation when institutions can leverage self-inquiry to redesign the architecture of learning. In key respects, the redesign of LaGuardia's outcomes assessment and student learning goals emerged from this accreditation-driven evolution in this cycle. In the aftermath of our 2012 Self-Study for our regional accreditor, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, we undertook a transparent and collegewide discussion about our core competencies, which are core learning goals for our general education curriculum. Our Middle States Self-Study recommendations urged us to develop new, higher-order core competencies that better reflected our diverse student body. This redesign also came in response to feedback informed by a post-accreditation online "jam," where over 100 faculty and staff shared ideas about how to identify those new learning goals. In response, LaGuardia seized the opportunity to change what and how students learned; instead of Closing the Loop on our former core competencies, we redesigned what those competencies could be—we 'Evolved' the Loop.

This process helped LaGuardia broadly reimagine our institutional learning goals. A newly convened Core Competency Task Force wrote and released a report that identified a consensus about our new Core Competencies: Inquiry and Problem Solving, Integrative Learning, and Global Learning. These new competencies would be expressed through three new "Communication Abilities," Written, Oral, and Digital. The report claimed these new competencies and abilities would enhance the "higher-order thinking capacities our students need for success in education, career, and beyond" (Eynon, Klages, & Vianna, 2013, p. 2). The new Core Competencies and Communication Abilities would be complementary and mutually reinforcing, and the new framework addressed what both our external and internal constituents desired from next-generation student learning: they promoted higher-order thinking, pushed students to develop their capacities for life-long learning, and reflected the kinds of deep learning dispositions and skills that employers expressed for 21st century workers. The new framework subsequently went through governance, winning unanimous endorsement from LaGuardia's Senate.

Next, we created new rubrics for our Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. Drawing from the AAC&U VALUE rubrics, committees of faculty and staff collaborated to develop framing language, glossaries, scoring dimensions, and rubric dimensions. In 2015, faculty and staff tested the rubrics against student work, and suggested they be better calibrated for two-year college students. After revising them in consultation with the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), faculty on the college's Assessment Leadership Team felt confident that they were better intellectual tools for LaGuardia. They subsequently guided future professional development seminars for the college's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the new annual Learning Matters Mini-Grants, new program curriculum maps, periodic program reviews, and the new credit-bearing First Year Seminar.

ePortfolio and Assessment at LaGuardia

The institutional capacity to risk resetting a college's learning goals signals the heart of an "adaptive learning college" (Arcario, Eynon, Klages, & Polnariev, 2013, p. 35). A college's support structures and resource allocations are key to adaptation, and assessment is the crucial practice for determining whether the adaptation is working [see Figure 3]. Since supporting faculty professional development is an important behavior of learning colleges, during periods of dynamic change an institution must be flexible about generating change at scale, including across majors and co-curricular events. We also have to design new changes across a student's educational journey, from a first-year assignment scaffolded through low-stakes exercises to their capstone project [see Figure 4]. Designing change means integrating new learning modes and goals alongside a student's guided pathway to degree completion, then assessing those changes to show cumulative learning.

Since supporting faculty professional development is an important behavior of learning colleges, during periods of dynamic change an institution must be flexible about generating change at scale, including across majors and co-curricular events.
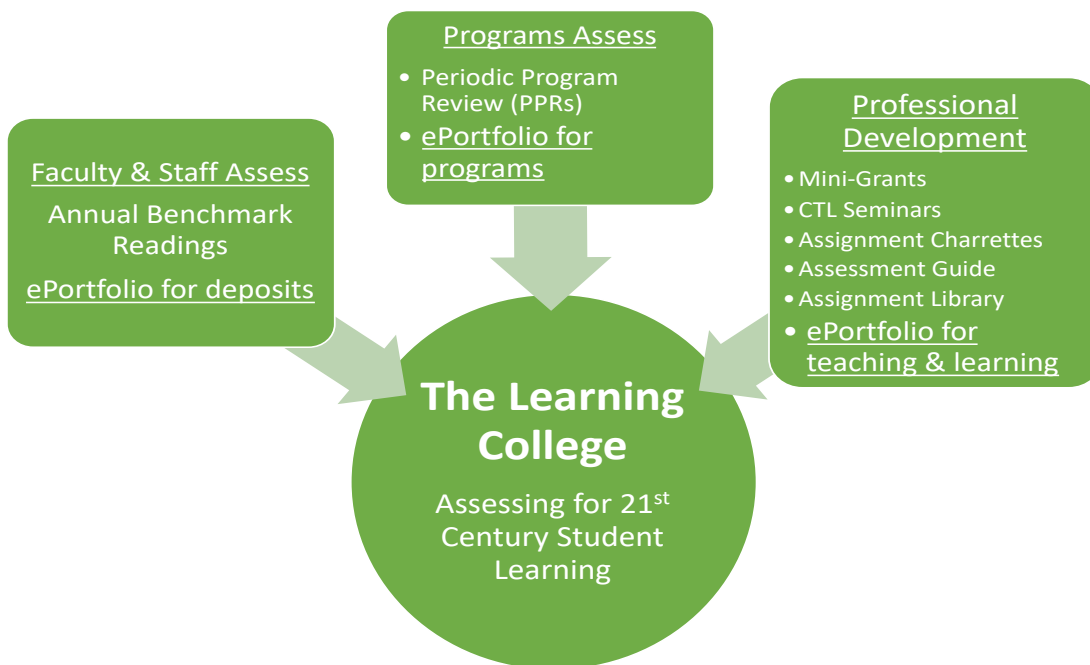

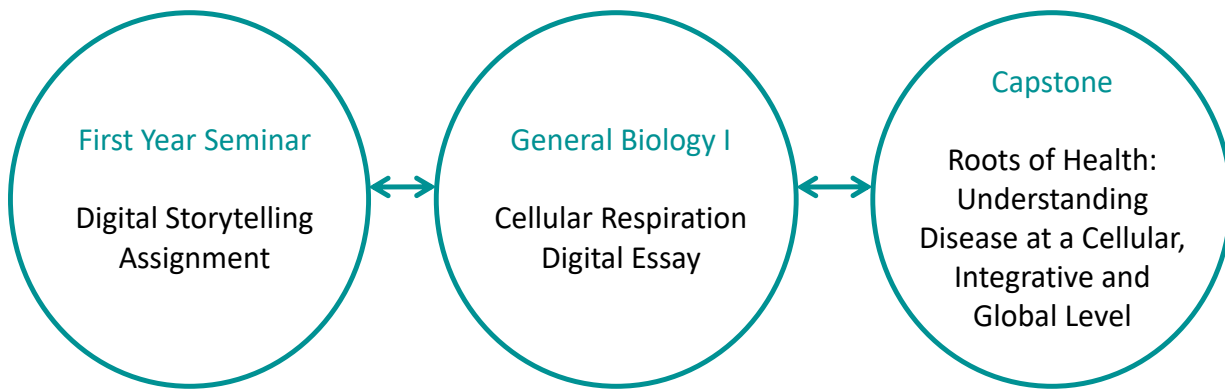Figure 3. The Learning College and Related Elements.

Figure 4. Sample Scaffolded 'Signature Assignment Series'.

Eynon and Gambino (2017) describe how the integrative learning that emerges from assessment cycles—and the use of ePortfolio practice and pedagogy—can often be part of "a continual process of institutional improvement" (p. 106). At LaGuardia, much of this adaptation and assessment has materialized through our CTL. Refining our general education through new competencies and abilities meant revising existing professional development programs to support assignment development and revision. We also wanted our ePortfolio practice to promote our pivot to our new Core Competencies and Communication Abilities. As a result, in 2016-17 LaGuardia developed new initiatives to help faculty integrate the Core Competencies and Communication Abilities through Learning Matters Mini-Grants, which funded faculty to undertake program-specific curriculum redesign; roughly half of them put ePortfolio practice at their center. Through additional subsequent support from a Teagle Foundation grant, these funds supported program-based faculty teams who met regularly to implement degree mapping, examine student assignments, and discuss pedagogy. In particular, we incorporated Pat Hutchings idea of "assignment design charrettes" to empower faculty attention on their assignments (Hutchings et al., 2018; Hutchings & Green, 2018). In 2018, the CTL hosted charrette-based seminars for teams of faculty teams leading Learning Matters grants. In 2019, the CTL guided teams to examine artifacts of student learning and assessment data to make further revisions to assignments and curriculum.

We thus synced the mini-grants into our on-going cultures of assessment and ePortfolio. Fortunately, LaGuardia began to redesign change with sophisticated practices of assessment and ePortfolio practice already in place. We knew we needed to deepen and integrate those cultures across our general education curriculum and into program majors. The mini-grants were key to achieving that integration, and our annual Benchmark Reading process grounded all of the professional development offered through our Center for Teaching and Learning, including the mini-grants. Yet even the Benchmark Reading, when groups of compensated faculty and staff gathered annually to score artifacts of student work using rubrics associated with our competencies and abilities, would need to also evolve. The backend data management of our Digication platform already collected and stored "Assessment of learning" data, but we now needed more robust practice of Assessment

for Learning (Penny Light, Chen, & Ittelson, 2012 p. 97). In part, this meant giving faculty and program directors more data from their programs and curriculum, and also creating new professional development opportunities to create new meanings from that data; we called these progressively larger Benchmark Readings "2.0" and "3.0" [see Figures 5 and 6].
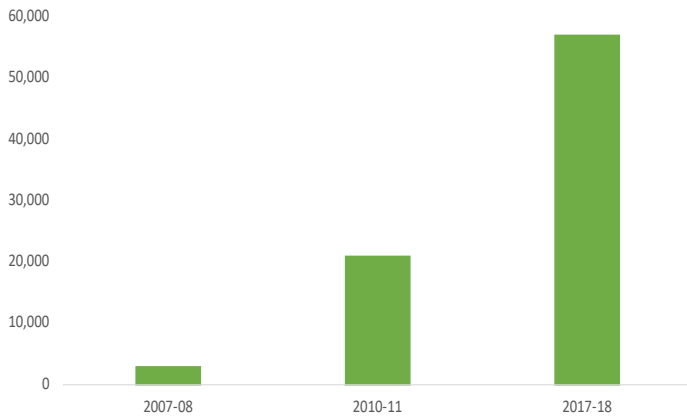

Figure 5. Artifact Deposits in ePortfolios: 2007 through 2018.

In collaboration with our Digication partners, LaGuardia's Academic Affairs leadership increased the number of artifacts of student learning we collected and scored. Led by Assistant Dean Eric Hofmann, we expanded the scoring process so that programs undergoing periodic program review, as well as faculty teams working on annual Learning Matters Mini-Grants targeting specific courses, received more data from their programs and students. This expansion increased our recruitment of faculty and staff who participated: at its peak, over 180 colleagues participated in annual process, who together scored over 12,000 artifacts.

	BR 2.0 (2017-18)	BR 3.0 (2018-19)
Total Number of individual artifacts scored:	1,670	3,150
Total Number of Competency/Ability Pairs:	3,319	6,360
Total Number of Scores:	6,700	13,000
Valid Scores (as % of Pairs):	2,647 (79.8%)	
Invalid Scores (88s, 99s, etc.):	672 (20.2%)	

Figure 6. Learning from our changes: Going to Greater Scale with Benchmark Readings 2.0 & 3.0.

After scoring student work, faculty and staff reassembled to reflect on their experiences, and often suggested new initiatives for professional development. For example, we

created our Core Competency and Communication Ability "Tip Sheets," our Learning Matters "Assessment Guide," and our Learning Matters Assignment Library upon such suggestions. The additional data gave faculty in program review and Learning Matters Mini-Grants course-specific details about how assignments aligned with the new competencies were working in their curriculum. In turn, faculty were able to make informed decisions about where assignment and curricular revision should occur.

Through our Benchmark Readings, we have learned more about the efficacy of our general education competencies and abilities. Based on the most recent data, we've learned that students improve in each competency and ability as they accumulate credits for graduation, although they are strongest in the competencies that most closely resemble our previous student learning outcomes (Written Communication, Oral Communication, and Inquiry and Problem Solving) [see Figures 7 and 8]. In addition, we see a three-year trend that shows that the number of student artifacts failing to address the intended rubric continues to decline, dropping in that span from approximately 33% to 20% [See Figure 9]. The data also suggest that we must continue prioritizing our newest competencies and ability: Integrative Learning, Global Learning, and Digital Communication.
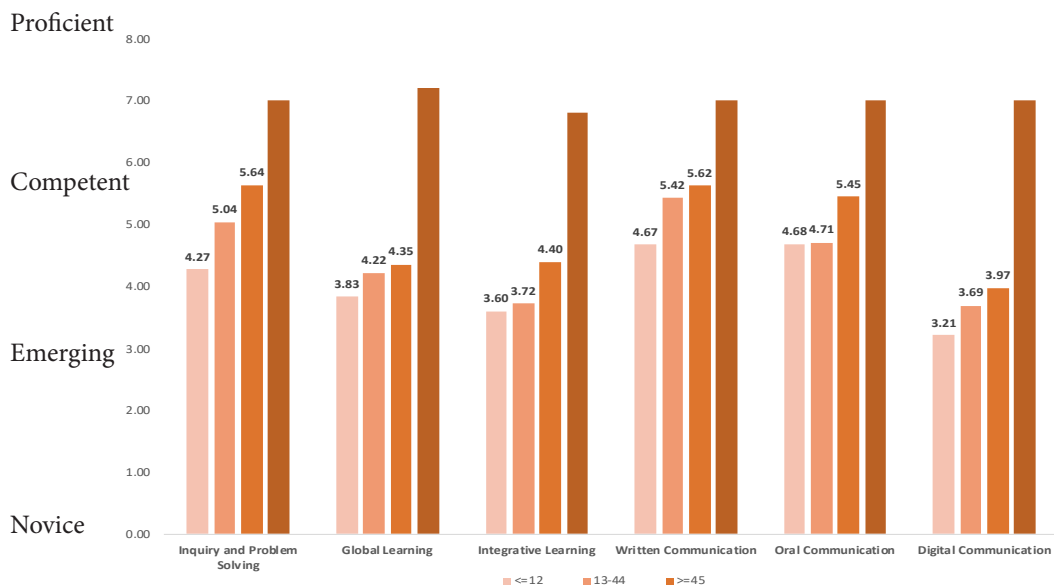

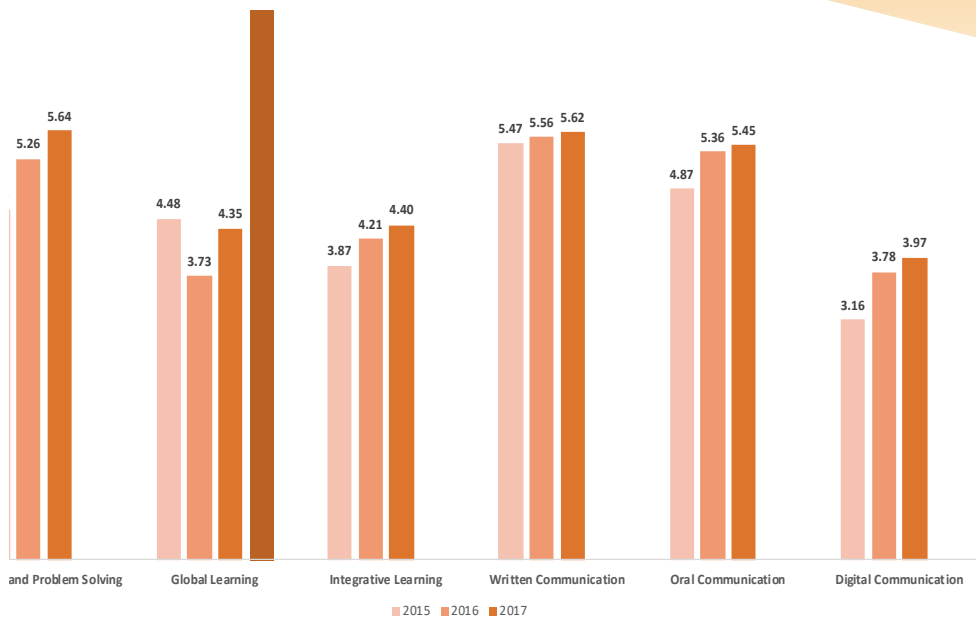Figure 7. 2018 Benchmark Readings.
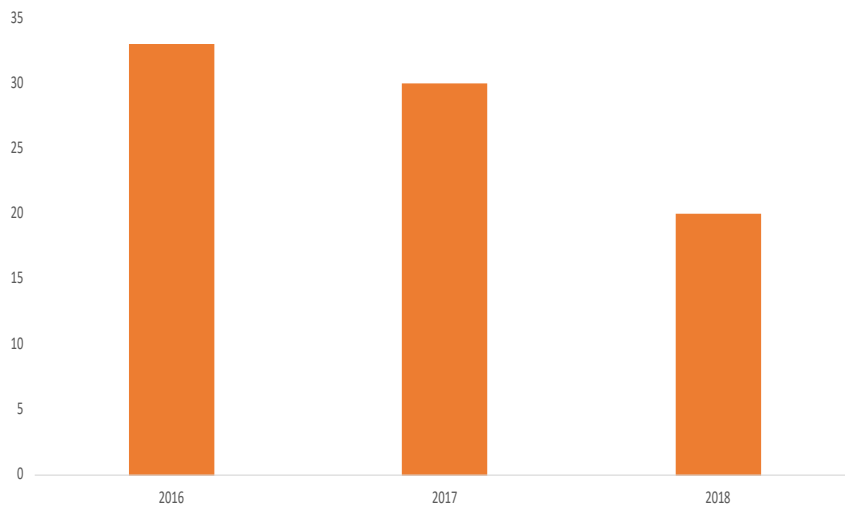
Figure 8. Three-year Trends for 45+ Credit.

Figure 9. Three-year Trend Focusing on Assignments; Percentage of artifacts that fail to address competency.

ePortfolio as Digital Communication

Scholars of ePortfolio practice have always stressed that faculty and students create ePortfolios for different purposes, such as assignment portfolios, course portfolios, program portfolios, and what LaGuardia calls the core ePortfolio, which students develop in their first year and revise through capstone and graduation (Penny Light, Chen, & Ittelson, 2012). No matter the forum or purpose, one of the primary strengths of ePortfolio practice comes from its power as a reflective tool. In this respect, making Integrative Learning a general education competency helped LaGuardia catalyze the deep learning that takes place when ePortfolio practice becomes part of a coherent curriculum. In the case of LaGuardia's Integrative Learning rubric, for example, two of the four dimensions are "Connections Between and Among Academic Disciplines" and "Connections to Personal Experience" (Integrative Learning, 2018). Assignments that ask students to integrate their courses together with their co-curricular and personal experiences create new potential for deep learning, in part by encouraging them to apply knowledge from their education to their lives and careers. While faculty at LaGuardia are not required to use any particular ePortfolio platform for Integrative Learning assignments, designing the Integrative Learning for ePortfolio practice reinforces student learning within and across majors, and helps to solidify assessment for learning.

At the same time, ePortfolio practice has always pushed beyond the reflective practices embedded in Integrative Learning. When LaGuardia developed new competencies and abilities, it empowered a committee to look carefully at developing a rubric for Digital Communication. At the time, there was no precedent among the VALUE rubrics, nor anywhere else we searched, for defining the dimensions of "Digital" communication skills for a general education curriculum. We sought practical categories that might translate across a variety of web platforms, including our Digication ePortolio. After some reflection, we decided to invent our own rubric.

For our rubric, we agreed that Digital Communication should be closely related to other forms of spoken and written communication. As one of three inter-related Communication Abilities with Written and Oral Communication, our new digital ability shared some common dimensions, including communicating academic content and purpose to an appropriate audience (keeping in mind effective syntax and mechanics). As with our other competencies and abilities, the rubric aims for students becoming "Competent," which reflects a 3 on the rubric (on a 4-point scale). There are many roads to becoming Competent, and faculty have a degree of freedom in choosing the right platform for their assignment and course. As our colleagues have explained in a report on wiki assignments for NILOA's Assessment in Practice, the two key terms that first emerged for our definition of "Digital Communication" were "multimedia" and "interactive" (Riccio, Slocum, & Sokolski, 2018, p. 2). Through a multi-year process of assignment design and reflection, however, faculty and staff participating in our annual Benchmark Readings suggested a final modification for the rubric: the revised rubric now defines and emphasizes the key concepts of multimedia and holistic design. These complementary but distinct concepts reflect the power of the digital ability as a mode for amplifying student voices using contemporary digital platforms. We believe the digital ability contributes students visions and voices to a rapidly changing society, which is part of LaGuardia's mission.

While the term "digital" could refer to many modes of literacy or composition, our emphasis on digital communication speaks to the common capacities of digital media tools for engaging audiences, viewers, and readers with different forms of multimodal content, and values how students articulate their work through a coherent voice, tone, and design. By multimedia, we mean student work that effectively employs different forms of media on a variety of digital platforms. We seek student work that juxtaposes different forms of traditional media in combination with one another, such as text, audio, images, videos, and/or various kinds of data visualizations (graphs, charts, etc.). We believe this form of multimodal communication defines the premise and promise of existing digital communication; a major article in the New York Times, for example, will often contain images and video alongside the text. Similarly, Tweets and other viral memes on social media often combine images or sounds with textual captions. Helpfully, most blogging platforms contain these basic applications. The presentation of visual information, from tables to paintings, often appears alongside explanatory text. Even better, such juxtaposed media can be developed and adapted by faculty in every major and program. These elements speak to what Nancy K. Baym (2015) calls "digital language as a mixed modality" (p. 71). She describes how digital expression has grown from a "complex hybrid between writing and speech" into "conversations and writing with stylistic and formal elements of film, television, music videos, and photography, and other genres and practice" (p. 73-74). Moreover, both the original and next generation ePortfolio platform created by Digication supports a student's ability to create multimedia content no matter their major or discipline.

The power of multimedia digital communication comes from the effects it can have on different audiences. Text and video are compelling alone, but they are arguably more effective in combination. As a result, empowering students to harness the power of multimedia can be both exciting and democratizing. Affecting one's audience through different mediums can generate new dispositions and emotions over time, and turn readers into viewers and vice versa. In addition, learning to manipulate different kinds of media and tools can make student ideas potentially more accessible to different kinds of learners. Engaging diverse forms of digital media can open the emotional and social benefits that comes from engaging with different kinds of learning styles in both students and their audience.

Understanding the potential of ePortfolio practice as Digital Communication also means thinking carefully about how students design multimedia elements into their work. This is the idea behind what our rubric calls "holistic design," which asks students to think about how the digital platforms or tools they are using can advance the content in their work, and how the multimedia digital content they create can sustain a unified and coherent message for audiences, readers, and viewers. The fundamental skill for students is one of consistent narration; that is, students should make sure that the meaning of the media elements they use consistently support both the overall purpose of their communication, as well as the specific assignment goal they're addressing. The thematic consistency that comes from goal-oriented choices defines what we call holistic design.

As the data from our Benchmark Readings shows, faculty have become more successful at incorporating Digital Communication into their program curriculums over time. Part of the challenge of developing the digital ability for our general education curriculum has been providing faculty with sustained professional development opportunities to

> Empowering students to harness the power of multimedia can be both and exciting and democratizing.

understand the rubric and its meaning. LaGuardia emphasizes our Digication platform alongside Digital Communication in many, but not all, of our professional development programs. Yet no matter what platform faculty incorporate into assignments, the pedagogy of ePortfolio practice drives how LaGuardia articulates Digital Communication during professional development.

Assessing for Learning with ePortfolio

Many of the successes in LaGuardia's OTA program are possible because the program combined an ePortfolio practice with an assessment for learning philosophy. These successes reflect larger lessons we learned Evolving the Loop at LaGuardia. As a data management tool, our ePortfolio platform acts as a crucial tool for data collection. Collecting and scoring authentic artifacts of student work are essential for providing faculty and program directors with up-to-date information about the effectiveness of general education assignments. Communicating data to faculty, and encouraging faculty and program directors to use data to develop assignment revision, helps to deepen the culture of assessment through evidence of student learning. Further, data about program learning can inform faculty where to direct resources for professional development. Data also inform professional development, and timely data can strengthen student learning through iterative engagement with core competencies and abilities. Improved pedagogies lead to greater curriculum coherence, and over time, these improvements sustain the guided pathways framework for student learning, retention, and graduation.

While scaling up the digital abilities of students and faculty requires data-driven feedback, it also requires patience. Emphasizing notions of "frugal innovation" (Thies, 2017) can also be helpful. Frugal innovation stresses efficient, simple, and inclusive ways to bring "accessible digital innovation to the classroom" (Davis, 2017). Making sure faculty assignments define fair use and copyright, for example, and provide citation strategies for multimedia sources, can become manageable through 'tip sheets' and other common resources.

Further, showing students and faculty successful models are essential. In response to faculty requests, LaGuardia created the Learning Matters Assignment Library (LMAL), a resource housed within a larger collection of Open Educational Resources (OERs) through the LaGuardia library via CUNY Academic Works, the university's institutional repository. Co-led by our Metadata Librarian Elizabeth Jardine and Dr. Ece Aykol of the English Department, LMAL contains assignments from at least 25 different programs and departments, and houses assignments created for each of the three competencies and three communication abilities. Faculty developed many of these assignments in CTL seminars and from Learning Matters Mini-Grants. To add an assignment, faculty submitted an application with their assignment to the curator, Dr. Aykol, who coordinated internal peer review with members of the college's Assessment Leadership Team. Submissions were encouraged for recognition from Academic Affairs, which credited faculty assignments as a modest contribution for tenure and promotion – part of "rewards systems" of professional development (Bass & Eynon, 2016, p.43). LMAL has drawn a wide audience. The assignments were downloaded a total 2,544 times between April 1, 2020, and June 30, 2020, and over 15,000 times since we began; in 2019, 37% of all downloads came from outside the United States. Many of the assignments in the library were developed for ePortfolio practice.

Final Thoughts

Deepening ePortfolio practice and assessment for learning speaks to the demands for competency-focused general education, and to the need for evidence-based evaluation of authentic student work. A core ePortfolio practice promotes growth in the student's whole or complete self, and as a high-impact practice it helps exhibit "desired outcomes at required levels of competence" (Kuh et al, 2016, p. 65). In combination with ePortfolio practice, a transparent assessment culture promotes an "intentional, integrated, and inquiry-centered undergraduate experience" (Kuh et al, 2016, p. 66). Indeed, linking ePortfolio practice to competency-based general education informs why Gambino and Eynon claim that ePortfolio is a "meta-high impact practice" that enriches the other ten identified by scholars of learning (Eynon & Gambino, 2017). In sum, combining ePortfolio practice with assessing for learning strengthens our common mission: graduating students who have learned how they learn, and know how to keep learning once they've graduated.
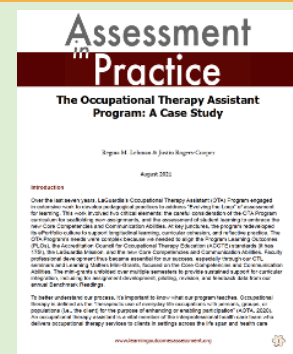
See the August 2021 Assessment in Practice to read more about LaGuardia's Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.

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About NILOA

- The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) was established in December 2008.
- NILOA is co-located at the University of Illinois and Indiana University.
- The NILOA website contains free assessment resources and can be found at http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org.
- The NILOA research team has scanned institutional websites, surveyed chief academic officers, and commissioned a series of occasional papers.
- NILOA's Founding Director, George Kuh, founded the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE).
- The other co-principal investigator for NILOA, Stanley Ikenberry, was president of the University of Illinois from 1979 to 1995 and of the American Council of Education from 1996 to 2001.

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