

Guiding Philosophy

Through VALUE, AAC&U seeks to contribute to the national dialogue on assessment of college student learning. It builds on a philosophy of learning assessment that privileges multiple expert judgments of the quality of student work over reliance on standardized tests administered to samples of students outside of their required courses. The assessment approaches that VALUE advances are based on the shared understanding of faculty and academic professionals on campuses from across the country.

VALUE assumes that:

- to achieve a high-quality education for all students, valid assessment data are needed to guide planning, teaching, and improvement;
- colleges and universities seek to foster and assess numerous essential learning outcomes beyond those addressed by currently available standardized tests;
- learning develops over time and should become more complex and sophisticated as students move through their curricular and cocurricular educational pathways toward a degree;
- good practice in assessment requires multiple assessments, over time;
- well-planned electronic portfolios provide opportunities to collect data from multiple assessments across a broad range of learning outcomes while guiding student learning and building self-assessment capabilities;
- e-portfolios and assessment of work in them can inform programs and institutions on progress in achieving expected goals.

For more information about the VALUE project visit www.aacu.org/value

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AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,150 accredited public and private colleges and universities of every type and size. Its mission is to reinforce the collective commitment to liberal education at both the national and local levels and to help individual institutions keep the quality of student learning at the core of their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges.

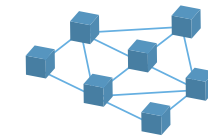
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Electronic portfolios



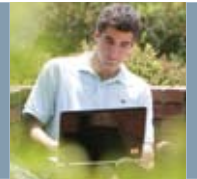
Assessment for learning



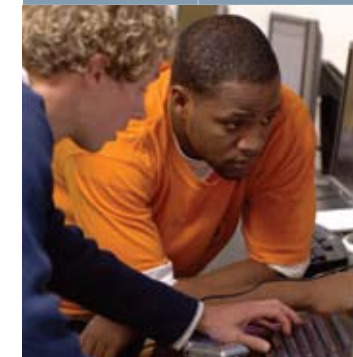
VALUE

Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education

Integrative learning



High expectations



Learning outcomes



Association of American Colleges and Universities



About VALUE

VALUE is a campus-based project sponsored by AAC&U as part of its Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative. Through LEAP, AAC&U seeks to engage the public with core questions about what really matters in college; give students a compass to guide their learning; and make a set of essential learning outcomes the preferred framework for educational excellence, assessment of learning, and new alignments between school and college.

VALUE works to develop approaches to assessment based upon examples of student work completed in their courses and saved over time in an e-portfolio. The project collects and synthesizes best practices in assessing student work using rubrics developed by faculty members. It is identifying commonalities of outcomes and expectations of achievement across a variety of institutions.

VALUE also identifies and shares models and templates through which institutions can demonstrate, share, and assess student accomplishment of progressively more advanced and integrative learning for the broad set of essential learning outcomes needed for success in the twenty-first century. These results can be used for course, program, and institutional assessment purposes.



Photos courtesy of: Albion College, photographer Justin Maconochie; Birmingham Southern College; Buffalo State College; Miami Dade College; Oregon State University; Rollins College; University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, photographer Rick Mickelson; Whittier College; and Yeshiva University

Initiative Goals

Assess student learning over time

Achieving the outcomes of an engaged and practical liberal education requires multiple opportunities to learn and apply skills and knowledge in different settings over an extended period of time with periodic feedback from faculty members. Challenging, course-embedded assignments within both general education and the major can be used for assessment purposes and provide information to guide improvements for students and programs alike.

VALUE provides resources and guidance for campuses to plan assessments at multiple points in a curriculum and cocurriculum, and generate useful data. By collecting data at appropriate points in a student's educational career, institutions can build a progressive profile of student learning throughout a program and provide opportunities for all students to reflect upon their progress and plan their future study wisely.

Share expectations and rubrics that describe achievement levels

Educators at all levels have created "rubrics" — scoring guides with statements of expected levels of achievement using criteria vital to quality work in a chosen area. These criteria are determined in discussions among experts in the appropriate fields.

The VALUE project collected and analyzed rubrics for a wide set of essential learning outcomes and discovered that the criteria for judging quality are widely shared across higher education. Based on these commonalities, VALUE developed a set of rubrics that represents the ways in which experts from many programs and institutions judge the quality of work for particular outcomes. The VALUE project is piloting the use of these new rubrics by having faculty score actual student work collected in e-portfolios on twelve leadership campuses and additional partner campuses (see right). The project assesses achievement of the following outcomes*:

Inquiry and analysis	Teamwork
Critical thinking	Problem solving
Creative thinking	Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
Written communication	Intercultural knowledge and competence
Oral communication	Ethical reasoning
Quantitative literacy	Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
Information literacy	Integrative learning

*Adapted from *College Learning for the New Global Century*, AAC&U 2007 (www.aacu.org/leap).

Develop e-portfolios as tools for learning and assessment

Evidence of learning collected in an e-portfolio creates a rich portrait of achievement for an individual and, with sampling and analysis from a collection of portfolios, can create a similar portrait of a program or an entire institution. Drawing directly from curriculum-embedded and cocurricular work, e-portfolios can represent multiple learning styles, modes of accomplishment, and the quality of work accomplished by students.

VALUE promotes wider use of e-portfolios for assessment and is helping campuses share, adopt, and invent effective e-portfolio practices. E-portfolios can foster and provide evidence of high levels of student learning across all program and institution-wide outcomes.

- Portfolios are structured around clear expectations and articulated goals
- Progressive formative assessments foster improvement while learning is still in process
- Self and peer assessments, guided by rubrics, teach students to judge their own work as an expert would
- E-portfolios allow students to carry their record of learning as they move among institutions
- Periodic reflections on learning guide personal goal setting and future planning
- Sampling and aggregation of data from individual student portfolios facilitate program and institutional review

VALUE E-portfolio Leadership Institutions*

Alverno College

Bowling Green State University

*City University of New York—
LaGuardia Community College*

College of San Mateo

George Mason University

Kapi'olani Community College

Portland State University

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

San Francisco State University

Spelman College

St. Olaf College

University of Michigan



*primary rubric testing campuses

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