

What do we want to know about our learners?

As we have learned, we want to know more about our learners' progress than just their ability to articulate knowledge. We need to ascertain their critical and creative thinking skills, their ability to apply this knowledge to analyze problems and propose appropriate, justifiable, and creative solutions.

We need to gain insights into their command of transferable core competencies such as communication, digital fluency, and information literacy. We want to evaluate not only discipline-specific knowledge, but also skills essential to future employability, career success, citizenship, and life, such as teamwork, intercultural competence, and ethical reasoning. These core learning outcomes are recognized in the Essential Employability Skills defined by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU, 2009a), the Ontario Degree Level Standard (MCU, 2009b), and the work of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU, n.d.). Furthermore, we want to know how learners improve in these areas over time.

In keeping with Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and honouring relationships, we want to treat our learners as whole beings. We want to listen to what they know, who they are, and how they feel. We want to create space for them to use their gifts and to contribute to collective learning. We recognize that our learners are diverse and that they bring lived experiences, personal identities, and cultural practices to their understanding.

Equally important, our learners should be self-aware of their own learning achievements and limitations. Online learning requires a high degree of self-regulation. Online assessment design that incorporates meaningful, timely feedback can guide participants through the learning process so that they are cognizant of what they know, what they can do, and what they have yet to learn.

Moreover, online learners need to be able to communicate their identities, knowledge, and abilities. We want graduates to be capable of articulating acquired skills to prospective employers using concrete examples of their own work and experiences.

References

AACU. (n.d.). *Essential Learning Outcomes*. <https://www.aacu.org/essential-learning-outcomes>

MCU. (2009a). *Essential Employability Skills*. <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/audiences/colleges/progstan/essential.html>

MCU. (2009b). *Ontario Qualifications Framework - Section 11 Baccalaureate/Bachelor's Degree: Honours*. <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/programs/oqf/certificate11.html>