

Promoting At-Promise Student Success

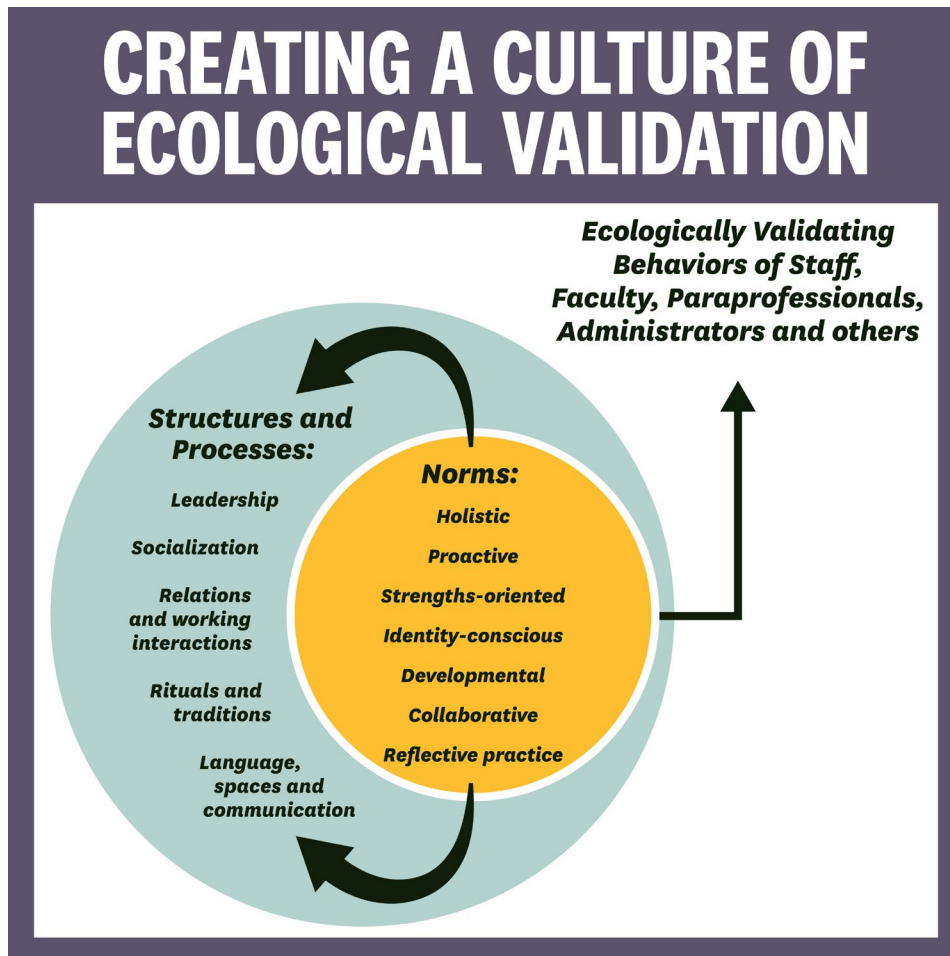
Ecological Validation Reflection Tool for Educators

[For use at the unit or programatic level]

Instructions: Cross-functional groups have the potential to affect institutional change. Start reflecting on your individual approach to enacting the norms of ecological validation. Now engage in learning with your colleagues within your professional unit. Use the below reflection tool to initiate and track progress made towards incorporating an ecological validation approach into your unit's work. Work with colleagues in your unit to fill out this reflection tool.

Your professional unit plays an integral role in supporting the success of at-promise students on your campus. Consider the various structures and processes that inform the culture of your unit – as well as those that inform the culture of your institution. Explore how your unit fosters a culture of ecological validation conducive to supporting at-promise student success.

1. As a first step, review the video on [ecological validation](#) and the below graphic while paying particular attention to the norms of ecological validation as well as structures and processes that inform your campus' cultural context.



2. Next, use the guiding questions to facilitate group reflection on how ecological validation might interface with your unit's current approach to supporting students.
 - How does the concept of ecological validation align with or diverge from our existing approach to supporting at-promise students?
 - In what ways do we embody the norms of ecological validation? Do we support students—directly or indirectly—in ways that are strengths-oriented, holistic, proactive, identity-conscious, and honor their developmental stage? Provide concrete examples.
 - Where are our areas of strength in enacting the norms of ecological validation? And where are our areas of potential growth?
 - In what ways do we engage in reflective practice about our approach to supporting at-promise student success?
 - How have we been able to collaborate effectively with colleagues? Provide examples of instances or spaces that have facilitated effective collaboration.
 - When has collaboration involved cross-functional interactions (i.e., with people who hold different types of roles on campus)?
 - What type of support—relational and material—do we need to improve our ability to enact ecological validation?
3. Working as a group, rate how well your unit reflects the norms of ecological validation and offer evidence for your rankings. Then identify actionable steps you can take—perhaps aligned with structures and processes that inform culture change—to strengthen your unit's approach to ecological validation.
4. Revisit this reflection tool periodically to track progress.

Date of reflection:

Names of participants completing activity:

Norms of ecological validation (EV)	Rate how well your unit reflects the EV norms 1. Initial (we are just getting started) 2. Emerging (we are working on this) 3. Developed (we are doing this well)	Sources of evidence Provide an example to support your rating (e.g., observation, policy, practice, institutional data point)	Actionable steps Write 1-2 ideas for how the norms of EV could be developed, sustained or enhanced in your unit. Consider how changes to the structures and processes that facilitate cultural change might enhance EV in your unit (see definitions below)
Holistic			
Proactive			
Strengths-oriented			
Identity-conscious			
Developmental			
Reflective			
Collaborative and cross-functional			

Defintions

Holistic: Considers all aspects of a student’s background, identities, personality, and goals, as well as academic and interpersonal experiences in college when connecting them with resources and opportunities.

Proactive: Places the onus on institutional agents to regularly reach out to students to build relationships, address challenges, and identify opportunities.

Strengths-oriented: Focuses on the cultural assets, talents and skills, previous successes, and personality traits that students bring with them to campus rather than employing a deficit approach, which focuses primarily on the assumed challenges that at-promise college students may face.

Identity-conscious: Intentionally considers students’ identities—with acute attention to the identities of those students from underserved (e.g., at-promise) backgrounds.

Developmental: Involves supporting students throughout their educational journeys in a cohesive way from admission through graduation.

Collaborative: Explores ways to build connections across various campus services and programs to create integrated and reinforcing validating experiences across a student’s ecology of experience, which requires cross functional work across departments, programs, support services and other aspects of academic and student affairs programming.

Reflective Practice: Involves continually considering how students, staff, and leadership experience initiatives to make shifts necessary to improve student success. This process uses both formal and informal data to inform decision-making.

For more information about the PASS project, please visit our [website](#). Please note that resources for practitioners are located [here](#) and materials related to Professional Learning Community can be found [here](#).

Citation:

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