

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Gogebic Community College

Project Details			
Title	Embedded Assessment for Freshmen Composition	Status	COMPLETED
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	Updated	10-22-2013
Timeline		Reviewed	03-30-2014
	Planned Project Kickoff 02-22-2010	Created	03-29-2010
	Actual Completion 05-01-2014	Version	4

1: Project Goal

A: This action project will assess student learning in Freshmen Composition (ENG 101) courses. This project is intended to provide GCC quantifiable data related to student learning in freshmen composition courses. This project will also be used as a placement tool, as well as a method to evaluate grading effectiveness. Additionally, this data will be compared to data collected at other institutions.

2: Reasons For Project

A: GCC is interested in collecting and providing quantifiable evidence of teaching and learning effectiveness.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: While the English department will be most directly involved in the assessment process, every instructional division has a stake in the development of effective assessment techniques. This pilot project will be expanded to other instructional areas after the program is evaluated.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Assessment of student learning in regards to the objectives for Freshman Composition will be greatly improved and enhanced through this project. Additionally, GCC will obtain comparative data through this process. The project will assist the institution in correct student placement within core courses. Overall, GCC will enhance its process of data collection in support of student learning.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: We have decided to extend this project because it is providing what we believe to be valuable data and insight into our students' learning needs. We feel that the continuation of this project will be beneficial to all involved.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: We will know this Action Project is successful when we have quantifiable and comparative data that can be used to assess student learning. Data has been and will continue to be collected each semester and assessed through a detailed rubric developed by the faculty.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: The project will be deemed a success if:

- * Substantial data has been collected.
- * The data is being used to measure student learning.
- * The data is being used to plan and improve teaching effectiveness.
- * The data is compared to similar data from other institutions to help determine institutional effectiveness.
- * The data is readily accessible by all faculty.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

- A: 1. Instructors from the English Department at Gogebic Community College spent time this past year analyzing the data and discussing the embedded assessment results and assessment project as a whole. Through a number of meetings centering on the student assessments, English instructors were able to focus on key areas where students need improvement in the ENG 101 classroom. Though this project essentially has ended, English instructors continue to informally discuss the project's results as they plan another embedded assessment project for ENG 101.

2: Institution Involvement

- A: 1. Faculty and staff at GCC were very supportive of the project, assisting English instructors in a number of ways. English instructors, both full-time and adjunct, developed the assessment, scored the writing samples and tabulated data. The Dean of Instruction advised the data collection portion of the project. The AQIP team as a whole advised the data collection process, as well as the development of the writing prompt. Also, GCC's assistant registrar/institutional researcher advised a number of aspects of the project.

3: Next Steps

- A: This action project will be closed by the end of the current semester. With the data analyzed, instructors from the department are developing another ENG 101 embedded assessment, one that will give more comprehensive feedback to the department. The new assessment project, which will begin during the Fall 2014 semester, will utilize the course objectives as a scoring rubric. The rubric will be used to analyze individual student learning at the end of the semester. Currently, English instructors are developing this assessment project.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

- A: 1. After evaluating the assessments and resulting scores, instructors from the English Department determined that students in ENG 101 need more focus on paragraphing and developing a "unifying theme." Using that information, the Department revised the course objectives to include a focus on paragraph development. Also, the English Department discussed additional ways to improve student writing in the ENG 101 classroom, such as methods used to help students write thesis statements and other aspects of their essays. Overall, from the benefits of the norming session to working closely with other instructors on the project, the assessment has opened a more effective dialogue among instructors about their methods and assignments that enforce the course objectives for ENG 101.

5: Project Challenges

- A: 1. Though the ENG 101 embedded assessment will soon be closed, instructors in the English Department would like a clearer picture of exactly where students need improvement in their writing. Thus, an additional embedded assessment, as mentioned above, is being developed to better gauge student learning in the ENG 101 classroom. Results from the current assessment project were not as conclusive as instructors originally hoped they would be. A future assessment should give instructors a more comprehensive examination of where students need improvement in ENG 101.

Update Review

1: CURRENT PROJECT STATUS SUMMARY

- A: Gogebic Community College appears to have established some good baseline data for their project and appears to continue to utilize this data to help determine levels of student learning. As indicated earlier in this project, the assessment was also to provide for placement in English and it appears as though the English instructors are using the data collected as a diagnostic tool. GCC appears to

be making adequate progress in this project and it appears to be becoming a systemic activity.

2: INSTITUTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

A: It looks as though GCC has adequate institutional involvement and buy-in. Having both adjunct and full-time faculty take part in this process indicates GCC rigor in this process as well as the need to have key stakeholders in the English program play important roles in the development and implementation of this project.

3: PLANNED NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE

A: GCC indicates a well thought out plan to continue to move forward with this project. It would be interesting to know if the instructors are sharing the rubric with the students prior to assessment to establish if the students are aware of the assessment process. It may also be beneficial to know if the assessments are twofold and being used to help provide grades for the course.

4: BEST PRACTICES

A: Analyzing the results of the scores and utilizing those scores to help the English department revise the course to utilize what has been learned from the data indicates extreme value added from this project. Including additional areas of (thesis statements) consideration for ENG101 students better prepares them for the next level of their education and is commendable for this project. Conversations among the English faculty in course refinement and advanced pedagogy appears to move this project into success and that of best practices.

5: ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES TO PROJECT SUCCESS

A: Continuing to utilize and fine tune this project is highly recommended and may be considered to share across the curriculum.

6: ORIGINAL PROJECT GOALS AND DELIVERABLES

A: GCC appears to continue to reach for additional benchmarks with this project.

7: ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER THE PAST YEAR

A: Having additional data to support the success and refinement of this project supports the success of this project.

8: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, OR CONCERNS

A: This reviewer sees the success of teams, both adjunct and full-time, and would recommend disseminating the results for further value added to the institutions assessment program.

Project Outcome

1: REASON FOR COMPLETION

A: 1. All of the objectives from the Embedded Assessment for Freshman Composition were met. Data from this assessment have been analyzed, discussed with depth, used to improve student learning in the composition classroom, and reported within GCC's recent Systems Portfolio. Currently, instructors from the English department are working on another ENG 101 embedded assessment, one that will give more comprehensive feedback to the department.

2: SUCCESS FACTORS

A: 1. After evaluating the assessments and resulting scores, instructors from the English Department were able to determine that

students in ENG 101 need more focus on paragraphing and developing a “unifying theme.” Using that information, the Department revised the course objectives to include a focus on paragraph development. Also, the English Department discussed additional ways to improve student writing in the ENG 101 classroom, such as methods used to help students write thesis statements and other aspects of their essays. From the benefits of the norming session to working closely with other instructors on the project, the assessment has opened a more effective dialogue among instructors about their methods and assignments that enforce the course objectives for ENG 101. Thus, the project has helped improve student learning while opening communication among English instructors.

3: UNSUCCESSFUL FACTORS

A: Results from the current assessment project were not as conclusive as instructors originally hoped they would be. The English Department would like a clearer picture of exactly where students need improvement in their writing. As mentioned, an additional embedded assessment is being developed to better gauge student learning in the ENG 101 classroom.