
Action Project

Design and Implement Systems to Measure Student Learning

Institution: Glen Oaks Community College
Submitted: 2002-05-20 **Contact:** Lucy Zimmerman
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Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: --

Target completion date: --

Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Design and implement systems to measure student learning

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

Glen Oaks Community College will use the principles of continuous quality improvement both to determine academic assessment goals and methods and to create division assessment plans. When components of division plans have been implemented, 1. Students will increase their achievement levels. 2. Curriculum changes will improve student learning. 3. Faculty will use assessment results to improve learning. 4. Students will have an accurate understanding of the standards of college-level courses and programs.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

Glen Oaks Community College is a teaching/learning institution. An emphasis on student learning flows logically from its Vision, its Mission Statement, and the institutional self-assessment that was completed as part of the AQIP participation requirement. Furthermore, students and stakeholders value achievement. Improving student learning is one measure of achievement, one that is the very core of what is done at the institution. Therefore, it is most appropriate that the goal of designing and implementing systems to measure student learning address this essential criterion--Helping Students Learn.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

Student Service Instruction Institutional Research

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

Teaching Assessment and Placement Curriculum Development Recruiting

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

The College President and the Dean of the College will maintain attention to this goal through monthly reports to the Board of Trustees and to Team GO, the institutional organization responsible for not only completion of but also personnel involvement in and support of AQIP activities. The Chair of Team Go will electronically pass this information on to all college personnel. Furthermore, the Dean of the College will devote a portion of all Faculty Forums to assessment of learning and to keeping faculty energy focused on this goal. Likewise, Area Chairs will devote a portion of division meetings to those activities. Once assessment is actually underway and results are documented, the College President will publicize information via Town Hall Meetings (institution-wide, informational meetings called approximately monthly by the President), and Area Chairs will publicize information via "What's Happening," (in-house electronic weekly publication). At every opportunity, all personnel, but especially faculty, will celebrate achievement of goals and improvement in student learning

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

By surveying Area Chairs, Dean of the College will monitor the divisions' development and implementation of assessment plans. Area Chairs will submit a copy of the plan to the Dean of the College

and will survey faculty regarding implementation. Student Services will count the number of students assessed and accurately placed based on that assessment.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

Number of faculty who attend professional development activities related to measuring learning

Distribution of students in courses that correspond appropriately to students' abilities Course completion rates Graduation rates Success rate in developmental writing exit exam Success rate in certification tests

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

5 of 7 divisions will determine what learning/skills to assess . 5 of 7 divisions will explore measurement instruments; Implement and begin tracking the occupational programs admissions process Remaining 2 divisions will do the work of year 1; Above 5 will select measurement instrument(s). Business Div. will pilot their assessment plan; Continue tracking the occupational programs admissions process. 5 of 7 divisions will fully implement assessment and provide feedback; 2 of 7 will select instruments and begin assessment. Business Div. will evaluate their assessment and start curriculum review and development; Business Div. will mentor other divisions as they begin the assessment process; Continue tracking the occupational programs admissions process

K. Project Leader and contact person:

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Annual Update: 2006-08-28

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

Course Development Model (CDM) work initiated in 2004 – 2005 continued during 2005 – 2006 as faculty have now completed models for 80% of our courses. This percentage encompasses 100% of the courses for our recently revised programs in technical/occupational areas of Nursing, Allied Health, Electrical/Electronics, Machine Tool, Office Administration, and Business Entrepreneurship. Our CDM work has not only identified measurable course objectives and, thereby, driven instructional consistency across the curriculum but also linked individual course development to larger curriculum and program processes, such as Program Review. One program that continues to give evidence of the value of assessment of student learning, especially as it prompts course and program change, is our Nursing Program. On this year's NCLEX exam, for example, Nursing Program graduates achieved 100% pass rate at the LPN/Level I and a 95% pass rate at the RN/Level II. In part, this may be attributable to the nursing faculty's having instituted mandatory AIT testing to assess student learning within the program, having implemented required remediation and re-testing for students scoring below 75% on that mandatory test, and having provided that remediation in multiple ways, including modifications in course content and delivery as merited by assessment results. The use in the Nursing Program of these assessment activities to increase student success prompted faculty to explore nationally-normed tools for the assessment of General Education and of institutional learning outcomes. Faculty examined ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) and ETS's Measures of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP). A review of these tools revealed that significant foundation work needed to be done before active, productive assessment of the College's Educational Values would yield improvement in student learning. The institution's Educational Values (attributes/goals) needed review; indicators of progress in achieving the goals and data sources of those indicators needed identification; an assessment plan needed development. That plan needed to include, among other things, a timeline, a process for the review and analysis of data, the projected use(s) of the results of the outcomes assessment, the addressing of issues that arise from the analysis of the data, and the incorporation of all this into broader institutional planning. The examination of the nationally-normed tools and the complexity of addressing the assessment of the College's Educational Values led to the funding for four faculty and the Dean of the College to attend "Making a Difference in Student Learning: Assessment as a Core Strategy," a July team-based workshop sponsored by the Higher Learning Commission. The mentored teamwork of that event yielded a draft of both an assessment plan and strategies for implementation, effective Day One of the 2006 – 2007 academic year. Thus, the 25 August 2006 In- Service Day included a segment by the workshop team and prepared annual contract and full-time faculty for a full day assessment workshop in

October and an active year of assessing the first of nine institutional Educational Values: Write and speak effectively.

Review (10-20-06):

This is an important action project in that it connects not only with AQIP Category (1) Helping Students Learn, but also with Category (9) Building Collaborative Relationships. The institution is achieving an exceptional accomplishment through this project, and its work represents outstanding practice that ought to be shared with other higher education institutions. An examination of nationally-normed assessment tools in relation to the institution's Educational Values led to administrator/faculty team participation in an HLC assessment workshop that yielded an assessment and implementation plan and resulted in active engagement of contract and full-time faculty in assessment training.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

As in the initial year of CDM work, all full-time and annual contract faculty participated in the drafting of CDMs while course-specific part-time faculty assisted in the drafting and review processes. Where applicable, Counseling and Advising staff reviewed CDMs, maintaining a link to Student Services, and the College's Director of Grants/Institutional Research continued to provide comparator data on national test results. Full-time faculty's involvement expanded into the exploration of the nationally-normed tools, CAAP and MAPP, and, along with the Dean of the College, into the participation in the HLC assessment workshop. Greater numbers of personnel from all employee divisions of the College were involved in this Action Project as the College Council established Strategy Teams to propose institutional goals related to each of the Board-approved Strategic Plan Core Strategies. Of the twenty (20) submitted goals, the College Council selected four (4) as Areas of First Focus, recommended them for immediate adoption, publicized them internally at a College-wide meeting in April 2006, and sent them to the Board of Trustees for adoption in June 2006. One of those areas, Learner Success, centers on the development of a plan that enhances the success of current and future students from initial inquiry through completion of student goals. (See two related Action Projects: (1) Design/Launch a College Council Strategic Planning Model and (2) Design, Form, and Train Core Strategy Teams.) The work of this Action Project clearly falls within the scope of Learner Success, and, because of that scope, the involvement of people has expanded beyond faculty to include a sampling of College personnel from all divisions and the Board of Trustees.

Review (10-20-06):

Pulling various groups together is a difficult, often time consuming task. By seeking involvement of personnel from all employee divisions in a quality improvement initiative, the gains for increased student success and improving college processes are considerable. Your work in this area exemplifies a best practice of AQIP Category (9) Building Collaborative Partnerships).

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

During 2006 – 2007, faculty will complete the CDM work and begin to link that activity with a Curriculum Instruction Model (CIM) which will create opportunity to assess student learning at the program level, much as the Nursing Program presently functions. The faculty that attended the HLC assessment workshop will become a Project Team under the Learner Success Area of First Focus and, beginning October 2006, will implement their drafted plan for the assessment of institution's Educational Values. Some of the activities in that plan include the following: review the historical background for the development of the values (goals/attributes); review and possibly restate the values in light of their ability to be measured; seek consensus on the drafted indicators of and rubric for the attribute selected for the pilot assessment; in workshop settings practice applying the rubric; across the curriculum, for one semester, assess the attribute of communicating (writing and speaking) effectively; collect and analyze data from the assessment; determine if analysis merits change in instruction; proceed in a CQI cycle with the one attribute while preparing to add a second to the assessment process. Throughout the development of the process, as additional attributes, for example, analyze information critically, engage in problem solving, and work collaboratively, are slotted to be assessed, faculty and personnel other than those who attended the 2006 HLC event will receive training and will assume leadership roles in the individual assessments. The 2006 – 2007 next steps will serve as a model for the process not only of assessing educational values but also of applying CQI principles.

Review (10-20-06):

It is noteworthy that this early in your action project you have identified a strategy for implementing a continuous quality improvement cycle for the college's Educational Values while at the same time faculty and personnel other than those who attended the HLC assessment workshop will receive training to assume leadership roles in individual assessments.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

We have no effective practices to share at this time, but the members of the workshop team will testify to the value of institutional support for participating in an "official" assessment workshop early in the assessment process so that clarity of direction and intent may be achieved and productive activity be begun on a scale commensurate with the individual institution, its values, and its human and fiscal resources. Such clarity for us led to enthusiastic faculty leadership which generated further faculty support and participation.

Review (10-20-06):

The "effective practice" of a team attending professional assessment training early in the assessment process saved the institution from losing focus and interest in the assessment process and generated essential faculty support and participation (AQIP Category (5) Leading and Communicating).

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

The never-ending aspect of the assessment of student learning presents a challenge of endurance for those involved in the design of the plan, its pilot, and its continuous application. More important, perhaps, is the challenge of transforming attitudes of "this is a faculty-only process of testing what students have learned in a course" into pervasive institutional attitudes of a continuous quality improvement culture that focuses on collecting and analyzing relevant data and applying that analysis for achieving institutional goals.

Review (10-20-06):

It is evident that you understand the difficulties inherent in managing change over the long haul and the importance of implementing effective attitude transformation strategies. It is also evident that you are committed to the successful implementation of this project. Be sure to celebrate the achievements of 2005-06, and communicate your continuous improvement progress throughout the institution

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

We seek no assistance at this time. However, we will in a timely manner contact AQIP staff or our HLC assessment workshop mentor should our 2006 – 2007 assessment of student learning activities generate problems or concerns.

Review (10-20-06):