

## Project Details

Title	Enhancing General Education Assessment Using Specific Course Data Collection	Status	REVIEWED
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	Updated	08-27-2010
Timeline		Reviewed	09-11-2010
Planned Project Kickoff		Created	08-12-2010
08-23-2010		Last Modified	09-11-2010
Target Completion			
05-31-2013			

- **1: Project Accomplishments and Status**
- Answer/Update:

This is a new Action Project that was enacted in August 2010.

The original goals of the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning team have been accomplished. These goals were accomplished through the Academy team's original Action Plan that doubled as an AQIP Action Project. The need still exists for these goals to be monitored, sustained, and expanded. Therefore this new Action Project was developed. This new Action Project will assist in sustaining the previous accomplishments while adding additional assessment of specific General Education Program courses.

- Review:

Congratulations on the success of your initial project! Your new project, intended to build on the success of the first effort, truly exemplifies the spirit of continuous improvement – even the good can get better! This new project will expand your earlier successful efforts by expanding the assessment effort to include student work from classes that were not included in the original project.

In addition to the value it will provide by improving students' achievement of general education learning goals, this project can also provide a wonderful illustration of "how assessment works" in a continuous improvement cycle. Faculty and staff want to know that the efforts they expend on assessment mean something; it may help you increase the level of engagement in this new project if you continue to describe the results achieved by the first project and clearly articulate how this project uses those results to further advance improvement.

To leverage the success of the first project to advance this one, it may be useful to include in this project description a statement of the specific learning outcomes assessed in the first project, a brief description of how that assessment was conducted, and a discussion about how the assessments to be conducted in this project will be similar to, or different from, those in the original project. To emphasize that both projects are focused on

improving student learning, clearly state the student learning goals of the general education program in the materials describing this project. It may seem that you are stating the obvious, but clear communication can be especially helpful as you seek to expand the number of faculty engaged in the project. Having clear, full descriptions of the project in hand when groups gather to discuss next steps can help make it easier for those less familiar with the project to participate, and lets them know that you value their time and effort.

- **2: Institution Involvement**
- Answer/Update:

The organization area most involved in this Action Project encompasses our entire General Education Program. Eleven of the fourteen institutional academic departments offer courses in the General Education Program. These include: Communication Arts, Language & Literature, Art & Design, Music, Physical Science & Mathematics, Life Sciences, Health, Human Performance & Sport, Family and Consumer Sciences, Sociology, Psychology & Criminal Justice, History, Politics & Geography, Technology & Applied Sciences, and Business & Economics.

The Academy for Assessment of Learning Team will work collaboratively with the General Education Committee to monitor the process of assessing specific General Education Program courses. Additional input and analysis will be provided from the Wayne State College Assessment Oversight Committee and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Previously established General Education Program assessment will be sustained, continuously evaluated, and altered when necessary. The General Education Program course faculty and students will provide assessment data for analysis in the improvement of student learning through the electronic data collection process using the “Assessment Database.”

The WSC Network and Technology Services (NATS) department will continue to support and enhance the development and activation of the “Assessment Database” electronic reporting system to collect and report specific General Education Program course assessment data.

- Review:

The list of project participants indicates the project team’s recognition of the wide range of stakeholders in a project of this magnitude – there is, appropriately, a widespread sense of ‘ownership’ of the general education program. The team recognizes that it will be even more challenging to communicate effectively with stakeholders as the scope of the general education project expands, and to continue the high level of faculty engagement demonstrated in the first project – through retreats, workshops and other means of receiving input to shape the project and providing updates on the progress of the project.

Sensitivity to results of assessment may increase as more classes (and, therefore, more faculty) are directly engaged in the project; communication about the methods and

purpose of the assessment will become even more important. Other campuses have reported that it is helpful to frequently remind faculty and staff that the purpose of assessment is improvement of student learning, not evaluation of an individual faculty or staff member's performance. A clear and well communicated plan for analyzing and acting on results of assessment may help alleviate these concerns.

- **3: Next Steps**
- Answer/Update:

Specific General Education Program course assessment will be piloted during the 2010-2011 academic year. NATS will continue to refine the general education electronic "Assessment Database" reporting process involving the campus software developers. WebFOCUS© software will continue to be used for ease in the electronic reporting of assessment data. Additional quantification and reporting will be designed based upon input provided by faculty and student users. Faculty with experience using the system will meet and provide mentoring and collaboration for others new to this assessment process. Additional assessment for specific General Education Program courses will be expanded over the next three years until most General Education Program courses will be providing assessment data into the electronic assessment system.

The Academy for Assessment of Student Learning team will lead this initiative with continued collaboration with the General Education Program Committee. It is proposed that CNA 100 Principles of Human Communication, ENG 102 Composition Skills, PED 103 Lifestyle Assessment and FSC 207 Nutrition be selected for specific course assessment during the 2010-2011 academic year.

- Review:

This project team clearly understands the importance of technology for this project, and is taking proactive steps to involve end-users in the preparation of technological capabilities and reporting, which are so important to this project. Take every opportunity to let campus constituents know about the successes of the first project in this regard – it seems likely that this success will encourage others to engage in the project. For a reader who is unfamiliar with the initial project, printed materials and discussions about the technology and related processes should include descriptions of the assessment data that will be collected, stored and manipulated by the technology. Increasing understanding of how the process works may help build support and encourage engagement.

It's a great idea to have faculty who are familiar with the system provide teaching and mentoring for their colleagues. Again, this demonstrates the continuous improvement idea of identifying what works and advancing it even further!

- **4: Resulting Effective Practices**
- Answer/Update:

The currently established direct measure of assessment of the four general education goals using the Educated Perspective Seminar courses is successful and this assessment process will be followed for this Action Project as additional specific General Education Program courses are added into the assessment database collection system process. In addition, the Chemistry Department has started using the “Assessment Database” to input and summarize their direct measures of assessment.

- Review:

The credibility and value of the assessment data will be increased by providing both direct and indirect measures, as described. Assessment methodology is an area that is susceptible to criticism – the project will be strengthened by providing clear, detailed descriptions of both the direct and indirect methods used for assessing student achievement of the general education learning goals. Since this is a continuation of an earlier project, the project team may assume the reader is familiar with the learning goals and assessment methods. To build support and reduce opportunities for misunderstanding, it may be useful to have clear statements of the learning goals (what is being assessed), descriptions of what will be assessed (for example, will the assessment include the work of all students or a sample of students; what kind of student work will be examined); and how the work will be assessed (who assigns a score, and on what basis).

- **5: Project Challenges**

- Answer/Update:

Communication and collaboration are key challenges when working with the General Education Program course faculty. Many General Education Program courses employ adjunct faculty which will add additional complications to these challenges. Another challenge will be gaining faculty commitment and understanding for the request of additional assessment for this process

- Review:

It's evident that the project team understands that one of the primary challenges for the project will be faculty participation and support. However, the team's strategy is one that many have recommended as one of the best ways of strengthening a culture of assessment – build on successful efforts, grow a critical mass of assessment ‘believers.’ Make sure the success of the initial project is widely known and celebrated. Many campuses are struggling with implementation of assessment of general education. It is no small thing that your campus has been successful in making significant progress – celebrate!

Clearly the team and campus is committed to general education. Adding 1-3 new courses into the assessment process each term will require a lot of time and attention, and may bring many unanticipated issues. Such significant change takes significant time and sustained effort, so hang in there!