

Out Comes Learning

McHenry County College's Assessment Team Newsletter

A newsletter dedicated to the promotion and recognition of Academic Assessment at MCC

McHenry County College's Assessment Team, 2006-2007



Team Members: (back row, left to right) Elaine Whalen-Pederson - Faculty Development Chair, Kathy Chamberlain - Assessment Chair, Jeffrey Bright - Dean of Adult Education & Workforce Services, Dr. Julie Giuliani - Distance Education Director, Dr. Jim Gray - V.P. for Learning and Student Support Services, Jennie Hoffmann - Secretary Adult Education, (front row, left to right) Dr. Gabriel Decio - Humanities, Julie Frelove- Business & Technology, Annette Waddelow - Research & Assessment Associate, Jim Van Bosch - Director of Perkins Grant & Workforce Support, Dr. Bev Dow - Math & Science, Dr. Christine Grela - Human and Public Service

CAT of the Month

3-2-1 Reflection

This is a take-off on the Muddiest Point or the One-Minute Paper. It requires a bit more critical thinking on the part of the students.

After a lecture or lab activity, ask your students to complete this assessment by:

- Writing 3 things that they have learned
- Writing 2 things that they would like to know or better understand
- Asking 1 question about the material covered

This is a great way to quickly check your students' learning and perhaps use the generated questions to build on students' natural curiosities and inquiries.



Our Mission: The mission of the McHenry County College assessment team is to provide support to divisional faculty for learning outcomes assessment. This support will be provided by division liaisons who will communicate information about the assessment and transformation process; coordinate the flow of information; investigate and recommend plans to record, organize, analyze, and report data; and be an advocate for the integration of assessment into the College community for the purpose of improving student learning.

Farewell Address from Paul Hamill

During the last two years, I've had the privilege of working on the assessment team. As I leave my post as assessment liaison for the Math and Science Division, I'm humbled by the accomplishments our team has achieved. We've worked hard to reach our goal of establishing a culture of assessment on campus, and our continued efforts on assessment will only strengthen the college. I am grateful for the insights and camaraderie I have shared with the other team members and the college community. I look forward to working with our new Math and Science assessment liaison, Beverly Dow. Bev brings a tremendous amount of educational experience to the assessment table, and her passion for learning and teaching is second to none. Although I may be leaving the team, I look forward to promoting the ongoing efforts of assessment as I continue my teaching efforts on campus.

Faculty Assessment Survey Results

Seventy full-time and adjunct faculty members responded to the spring end-of-semester survey from the assessment team. Ninety percent of the respondents said they administered CATs at least once during the semester with over half administering CATs multiple times. Over 80% share assessment information with students and discuss assessment data with their departments/colleagues. Adjunct faculty did not discuss assessment data with their department/colleagues as often as full-time faculty and 25% said they never have. Suggestions to improve adjunct faculty knowledge and involvement included providing information on assessment (handouts, website information, information in the MCC library), mentoring adjuncts, and having meetings/workshops at convenient times for adjuncts.

Survey respondents tended to find assessment discussions with colleagues and one-on-one discussions with division liaisons more useful than larger group settings like workshops and presentations. Full-time faculty rated opportunities to discuss assessment with colleagues as most useful while adjunct faculty rated consultation with division liaisons the most useful. Other useful items supporting assessment included knowing what other MCC departments and other institutions are doing and support to faculty to attend assessment conferences.

The survey concluded with comment questions and example responses follow:

How have students benefited from assessment at MCC?

- I think on-going assessment lets students know that as an organization MCC is committed to revision and modifications as needed (as we should be)
- Students benefit from good transformations
- We spend more time thinking about what they are learning and how we might help them learn better
- In my area, I think we respond more quickly to patterns of learning (or non-learning) that crop up in student work. I can document examples of improved student performance following transformations. I also think that discussing assessment in front of students lets them know we care about whether they are learning and are keeping track.

Describe concerns you have about assessment at MCC.

- Not enough time spent on the discussion of assessment results and subsequent transformations
- At times it seems like too much tracking and data collection
- Since NCA left haven't seen the same emphasis on assessment.
- I hope it doesn't get to the point where assessment is the "key" to everything and teachers feel like they must teach to the assessments

Recommendations for enhancing assessment at MCC.

- Keep emphasizing that assessment is not necessarily anything new, just better documentation of what one has been doing. But also stress there are some new things and they can help students.
- It is important for faculty to know that assessment data will actually be used for transformations. Sometimes it seems like we are asked to collect assessment data that are never used.
- Simplify/streamline the entire assessment process
- Give everyone (instructors) formal training on established best practices for assessment. Give students an overview class or two on the subject when they start at MCC so they understand why the college performs assessments.
- Departments need more frequent feedback of results to streamline procedure & to improve course offerings & content based on assessment findings.