

Out Comes Learning

McHenry County College's Assessment Team Newsletter

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

Curriculum Mapping: A “Root Canal” in Assessment

Maybe not that bad, but at least a good tooth cleaning

By Ronald S. Geary, Criminal Justice Department Chair

I put the date on my Outlook calendar and also on my desk calendar. What kind of date could manufacture such fear of forgetting? After all, very few things are scheduled so far in advance to slip your memory. A dentist appointment takes months to secure. We dread it, but it is necessary. Even after we get there (willingly), we regret it. We get lectured on how to floss, how to brush, blah, blah, blah. But this particular date was not a dentist appointment. It was a Curriculum Mapping workshop. Why did it start to feel like a dentist appointment as the date stared back at me from my calendar? I was dreading it. And, to add insult to injury, it was to be followed the next day by an Assessment Fair. Would there be cotton candy? At least some popcorn? Maybe all these “bad for your teeth” items were translating into dental instruments scratching my teeth. Would it all lead to the dreaded root canal?

Carole Barrowman was the Curriculum Mapping facilitator at the workshop. Over the last three years, I have suffered from TracDat and assessment overload. To be straight-forward, I wasn't terribly excited about this workshop. I have often heard the cliché “getting more out of it than I thought I would.” To say the least, I got more than I ever thought I'd get. Curriculum Mapping is equivalent to a good tooth cleaning. As we transform our programs, it is inevitable that mapping occur at a college-wide level. This starts with course level curriculum and continues to institutional General Education Goals. Curriculum Mapping is a necessity, just like our yearly dental exam and, just as a good check-up and cleaning, it sets us up for the future.

As we move forward through our institutional transformation, it was refreshing to get an outside perspective on our institutional goals. Carole Barrowman brings a perspective of Ability-Based Learning Outcomes that spans all areas of education. As Carole indicates in her facilitation, “One of the greatest challenges to faculty in shaping an ability-based program is the tendency to think of the development of abilities in contrast to a mastery of subject matter or content.” Abilities can span many disciplines. Ability-Based Learning allows students to gain experience and allows them to draw upon various abilities they have learned and combine them in more complex ways. If implemented properly, students will have a sense of how to apply their knowledge and abilities in many different contexts.

As we move forward in our efforts to transform and rewrite goals, I would urge you to become informed on Ability-Based Learning Outcomes. I think all educators truly teach with the best of intent for student outcomes. Curriculum Mapping will simply point us all in the right direction. So as we hear and talk about Curriculum Mapping in the months to come, don't think of it as a painful root canal. Just think of it as an annual cleaning and check-up that keeps our institution healthy and productive for our students.

Out Comes Learning Assessment Newsletter May 2007

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.

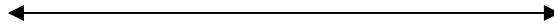
Congratulations to ECE

Debbie Ryan's Early Childhood Practicum class took three WorkKeys Assessments in March as a part of the End of Program Assessment. There were eight students testing and all qualified for the National Career Readiness Certificates from ACT/WorkKeys. There were six students that received a silver, and one each that received a gold and a bronze.

Each certificate is portable nationwide and demonstrates proficiencies in work readiness and trainability skills. A student earning the bronze level has the necessary skills for 35 percent of the jobs in the WorkKeys database; the silver has skills for 65 percent of those jobs and the gold has the skills for 90 percent of all jobs in the database.

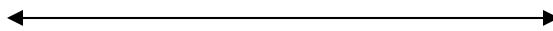
This certification provides a Certification Registry for individuals and employers. Certificate holders can then access the Talent Bank to post their credentials which can be searched by employers. There is also a Job Bank for employers to post opportunities. All are available online at www.MyWorkKeys.com.

Kudos to the Early Childhood Education Program and its graduates!



The Year in Review- A Celebration of MCC's Assessment Efforts

1. Continued General Education assessment
2. Offered professional development sessions about assessment
3. Developed a process flow chart for General Education Assessment
4. Coordinated a state-wide conference on Assessment
5. Sponsored two workshops on curriculum mapping of general education goals with a facilitator from Alverno College.
6. Attended with some CAPC members the Alverno Day in fall, 2006 to further our knowledge about assessment of student learning
7. Continued representation on the Alverno Innovation And Inquiry For Student Learning a Lumina Foundation project
8. Presented at regional and national conferences
9. Redesigned the intranet and external websites on assessment
10. Administered a faculty survey in Spring regarding the assessment efforts and will share the results with faculty in the fall semester.
11. Hosted meetings to discuss and share results of the E-Portfolio Project and its continuation as a program/course level assessment
12. Celebrated the use of C.A.T.S. in the classrooms during February



Thank you!

for your efforts to assess, reflect and
make transformations for the improvement of student learning!