Outcomes Assessment Update

Fall 2010

Course Assessment News

Action Plans for Success

One of the goals of Outcomes Assessment Is to identify areas in courses that need improvement and to ask the faculty to develop an action plan for success…

Take a look at what some of your colleagues are doing!

AR101 Faculty begin ambitious project

Led by Professors Tendai Johnson, Mary Staley, and Joseph Kabriel, AR101 (Drawing I) has begun an ambitious multiple semester project.

Highlights:
- The instructor for each section of AR101 will collect several drawings from 5 students in their section randomly selected by the OA staff
- One of the collected drawings will be a drawing done on the first day of class so that AR101 can assess how each student grows through the AR101 course.
- Each drawing will be assessed by 3 different faculty in areas such as whether the picture is a whole event rather the sum of parts and the use of positive and negative space.

The Outcomes Assessment team is excited about this creative project that will allow faculty to address some critical questions about their course and improve the experience for their students!

We've engaged ourselves in a rather robust Outcomes Assessment of student learning that utilizes a baseline to ensure that we are primarily evaluating student learning. We are pleased that we came up with a plan that does not influence or interrupt each instructor's approach to this course, nor are we streamlining the assessment by utilizing a uniform testing of students' knowledge. Through this process, we hope to understand how our drawing course, with such diverse students and instructors across campuses, does impact student learning. – Prof. Tendai Johnson

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1. **Ask a meaningful question**
Ensure that your assessment project focuses on something your discipline wants to know about and that the results will be meaningful to the faculty.

2. **Align the assessment with the student learning outcomes**
Ensure that the assessment instrument you select measures the student learning outcomes and aligns with the appropriate level of challenge.

3. **Communicate**
Be sure to involve all full and part-time discipline faculty in the selection of the outcomes to assess and development of the assessment instrument. Get them involved in determining what is important to measure in the course and how the student performance data might be useful.

4. **Go outside the box**
Go outside the College to see what the trends and issues are nationally in the discipline. Look for assessment ideas and tools from national organizations. Look at how the course relates to other disciplines or degrees.

5. **Take a chance**
Try something out. Outcomes assessment is a self-reflective practice, not an evaluation of individual faculty. The goal of OA is to improve opportunities for student learning, not just reporting successful numbers.

Course Assessment News (cont.)

PS101 Faculty address common misperceptions

What does it mean for an elected official to be impeached?

When PS101 faculty asked this question on their Fall 2009 assessment only 2/3 of students were able to answer correctly. When reviewed the results from their entire Fall 2009 assessment they found that students struggle most on material that is basic, but often strikingly misused and misrepresented in the media.

To address this concern, faculty are working together to warn students about common misperceptions and provide them with contrast from scholarly sources and their own expertise.

Academics need to emphasize accuracy rather than sensationalism. – Dr. Nathan Zook

Education Faculty Review Writing Standards

When the faculty in the School of Education did their assessment of ED101 in the Fall of 2008, they uncovered concerns about the quality of writing in the ED101 course and creating an appropriate assessment of college level writing. In their recommendations, the Education faculty committed to a collegewide meeting to review the rubric standards for college level writing.

During the Spring 2010 professional week, Professor Rita Kranidis led full- and part-time faculty in the discipline in a workshop to develop strategies for improving writing in Education courses and discussed the creation of rubrics that are truly representative of department and individual faculty priorities. One faculty member who attended the meeting said, "It was a really great opportunity for all of us to think about our expectations and actions regarding student writing."

Upcoming Projects – Program Outcomes

All programs at Montgomery College (degrees, certificates, and letters of recognition) now have program outcomes listed in the college catalog. During the Spring of 2011 faculty will be asked to identify how the courses in the program guide students to the completion of those outcomes. This project is an important piece of building cohesive programs and establishing accountability for meeting the program outcomes. Look for more information coming soon.

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General Education Assessment

A number of Gen Ed courses are participating in a pilot project to develop an assessment process for Gen Ed courses which are not currently part of the current 5 year assessment cycle. Instructors in these courses will have the opportunity to participate in the development of Collegewide rubrics for Effective Communication and Critical Analysis and Reasoning as well as working with the Collegewide Assessment Team on the approach to assessing student performance on these core competencies. These courses will also pilot the General Education Review process once they have completed their assessment. These pilots will not only enhance the opportunities for students to master the core General Education competencies and improve student learning opportunities, but they will also help us achieve excellence as a college as we move in to our 5 year self-review for accreditation.

The workgroups involved in this pilot are currently participating in conversations focused on ensuring that students have repeated opportunities to practice and master the General Education competencies. Additionally, they are refining the rubrics which will become Collegewide Rubrics for assessing these important competencies. A broader group of faculty will have the opportunity to review and give feedback on these rubrics throughout the Spring 2011 semester in faculty focus groups and workshops.

Montgomery College General Education Competencies that must be assessed

1. **Written and oral communication** includes the ability to communicate effectively in verbal and written language, the ability to use a variety of modern information resources and supporting technologies, the ability to differentiate content from style of presentation, and the ability to suit content and style to the purpose of the communication.
2. **Scientific and quantitative reasoning** includes the ability to locate, identify, collect, organize, analyze, and interpret data and the ability to use mathematics and the scientific method of inquiry to make decisions, when appropriate.
3. **Critical analysis and reasoning** include the application of higher order analytic and creative cognitive processes to arrive at reasoned and supportable conclusions, to synthesize and apply knowledge within and across courses and disciplines, and to develop creative solutions.
4. **Technological competency** includes the ability to use computer technology and appropriate software applications to produce documentation, quantitative data presentations, and functional graphical presentations appropriate to various academic and professional settings.
5. **Information literacy** includes the ability to identify, locate, and effectively use information from various print and electronic sources.

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