

Assessment: General Education

Responsible Unit: Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee
Academics, Vice President's Office

Date Approved: September 2009

Date Revised: June 2012

ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM GENERAL EDUCATION READING ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

Background

The across-the-curriculum assessment effort coincides with the college's work on the QEP accreditation focus on reading. *Assessment Update*, the well-known journal on national higher education assessment initiatives, reports the findings of a reading study that measured problem-solving and critical thinking-skills in undergraduates vis-à-vis faculty and employer expectations. The recommendations in the report include this language: "The problem-solving and reading skills of undergraduates can be enhanced when faculty explicitly and clearly articulate their educational outcomes and then plan classroom activities and assignments that are directly linked to the development of those learning goals. Systematic, ongoing assessments of student learning should also be linked with faculty expectations" (Nov.-Dec. 1997: 10).

Principles that guided the development of this assessment model are the following:

1. General Education is the responsibility of the faculty as a whole, not individuals or individual departments.
2. Assessing General Education should be minimally intrusive for both faculty and students.
3. It should use existing examples of student work whenever possible.
4. It should show aggregate improvement over time and over levels.

Benefits of this model include the following:

1. Course-embedded assessment measures what students are learning in curriculum that is specific to their experience at BCTC, as opposed to testing knowledge on a standardized exam.
2. Faculty can use those tools they currently use to measure student learning, e.g., reading quizzes, book reports, reading journals, and source evaluation forms for college-level assessment.

Reading Assessment FROM "Read for Life" QEP Proposal: College-Level Courses' Area-Developed Tools and Rubrics

In college-level courses assessment of reading will synchronize with each area's normal cycle of assessment, which, according to BCTC's general education coordinator, entails planning, doing, checking, and improving.

Areas that identify read and listen with comprehension as a general education course outcome will determine which class is most appropriate for the first assessment cycle. Over the five-year period in which the General Education Committee dovetails its efforts with those of the QEP, areas will assess reading in classes of different levels. Faculty will utilize course-embedded measures for their assessment of student reading and will work with a rubric suitable to their discipline. Each area will adopt a common assessment tool and a

common rubric. Area coordinators will report the assessment process and progress, as part of BCTC’s five –step cycle.

Goal

The intended goal of this initiative is to measure improvement in student reading over disciplines, over levels, and over time. Reading proficiency is measured by individual disciplines according to their assessment tool and assessment results.

Getting started

Initially, this across-the-curriculum effort was intended to include multiple sections of large-enrollment classes, including online, offered at several campuses, and those taught by adjuncts as well as full-time faculty. Over time, as the process was refined, other classes were to be included in the reading assessment work.

During the 2009-2010 academic year, the General Education Assessment Coordinator met with discipline coordinators to educate them on this assessment effort. The year’s goals were (1) to select those courses listing “read and listen with comprehension” as a general education course outcome in which reading-across-the-curriculum assessment would occur beginning the 2010-2011 academic year and (2) to plan appropriate assessment activities in these courses using the following planning template.

Plan-Do-Check-Reflect-Improve PLANNING Process

Academic Area:

Semester/Year:

Learning Objective	Assessment Techniques	Assessment Distribution Process	Assessment Tool Assessment Process
What will the student know or be able to do on completion of this course?	How will the student demonstrate that he/she has achieved the goal? What measures will be used document student learning?	How and when will the assessment tool be distributed to and collected from all area faculty, including sections taught online and by adjuncts?	How and when does the area faculty plan to review and report on the assessment data?

During the 2010-2012 and 2011-2012 academic years, the General Education Assessment Coordinator met with discipline coordinators (1) to plan appropriate assessment activities in those identified courses for which assessment activities were not planned the previous year, (2) to monitor the status of course assessment activities, (3) to use assessment results as they come available to improve discipline-specific student reading, and (4) to share these results with the larger college community to improve student reading across the curriculum.