

## Action Project

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**Institution:** Moraine Park Technical College  
**Submitted:** 2004-09-01                      **Contact:** Nadine Allen  
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### Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: --

Target completion date: --

Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Implementation of TABE Testing

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

The project will involve the replacement of the current entrance assessment instrument, Accuplacer, with the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). TABE provides a more focused analysis of learner readiness and will be used to provide a roadmap for "forced focused remediation" for learners that are identified with deficiencies in specific skill areas. The goal is for TABE tested learners to match the completion rate of 86% for all college courses.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities: \_

This Project is one of the top priority Focus Strategies that resulted from the College's Strategic Planning Process. Within Moraine Park, a recent focus on retention has led to the development of baseline data against which the performance of learners will be measured. Statistics show that in 2003-2004, learners successfully completed 86% of their coursework. In the areas of mathematics and communication skills (written, oral, and speech) that number dropped to 76%. The intended outcome of this project is to individually identify the specific areas of remediation needed by each learner and to provide skill building activities designed to improve learner readiness in math and communication skills. This will increase the number of students successfully completing related coursework and ultimately meeting their goal of successfully completing a specified program of study and subsequently being gainfully employed in related areas.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project: \_

\* Primary Learning System and Adult Basic Education Unit \* Library and Instructional Technology (Includes college-entrance assessment process) \* Student Admissions \* Counseling \* Academic Advising \* Institutional Advancement/Research

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve: \_

\* Adult Basic Education Processes Instructional modules will be developed to specifically address identified skill areas in which learners may need skill building. Learners will be required to successfully complete these modules before they can enroll in math or communication skills courses related to their program of study. For example: If the assessment indicates that a learner needs skill building in decimals, fractions, and manipulating equations, they will be assigned to three modules related to decimals, fractions, and manipulating equations. Only upon successful completion of these modules, as indicated by TABE retesting, will the learner be allowed to enroll in math courses

associated with their program. \* Admissions Processes Two process improvement strategies will impact admissions services as a result of the implementation of TABE testing. The first is to reinforce the required remediation for learners before course/program enrollment. And, second, to work with learners who are blocked from course enrollment due to non-completion of remedial work. \* Student Retention Processes In the past, based on a low score in math, the learner would have offered the opportunity for general remediation in “math” This lack of focus meant that learners who chose to participate in remedial activities would spend time reviewing areas in which they were not deficient. This led to frustration and learners often enrolled in the math courses in the program without completing the skill building that would help them successfully complete the work required in the class. As a result students were unsuccessful in required math courses and subsequently unsuccessful in their program of study. This Action Project addresses: \* AQIP Criteria 1P5. How do you help students select programs of study that match their needs, interests and abilities? In providing this help, how are discrepancies between the necessary and actual preparation of students and their learning styles detected and addressed? \* AQIP Criterion 3P5. How do you determine if new student and stakeholder groups should be addressed within your educational offerings and services? \* AQIP Criterion 8P3. How does this Action Plan support institutional strategies?

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):

Bi-annual status updates to AAGST and CGST. Specifically this refers to the communication of performance data related to the goals and feedback on processes affected by the project.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:

\* Gather periodic learner and instructor feedback on TABE implementation process. \* Monitor and track math and communication course completion rate. \* Track number of students in remediation. \* Monitor the development and implementation of skill building modules. \* Assess usability of information derived from TABE reports. \* Monitor the accuracy of the auto-enrollment process in skill-building modules.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:

\* Number of learners who complete both pre- and post- TABE testing. \* Number of learners who complete TABE testing and successfully complete math and communication courses. \* Number of learners who complete TABE testing and who graduate from programs. \* Number of learners who complete TABE testing and who graduate from programs that require math and/or communication courses.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):

2004-05 Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Targets: \* Aug 2004: Communicate implementation of TABE assessment instrument to college staff. \* Oct 15, 2004: Field-test TABE testing for all incoming students. \* Sept 1-March 1: Develop process to block enrollment in math and communication courses if skill building is required. \* Aug 2004– June 2005: Develop skill building modules in math and communication skills that tie directly to the TABE Skills Report. \* May 1, 2005: Block enrollment and provide “focused forced remediation” for all incoming learners identified as needing skill building. \* Report year-end progress to AAGST, CGST, and AQIP. 2005-06 Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Targets: \* Aug 1, 2005 - May 31, 2006: Implement required remediation for all incoming students as needed based on TABE results. Increase, by 10%, the number of learners who successfully complete math and communication courses (2005-06 as measured against 2004-2005) \* June 1, 2006: Collect data on the number of individuals who received remediation and have successfully completed math and communication courses related to the program \* June 1, 2006: Collect feedback on systems and processes related to TABE testing, referral, and remediation. \* Report year-end progress to AAGST, CGST, and AQIP. \* June 1, 2006: Revise skill-building modules as needed. 2006-07 Quantitative and Qualitative Performance Targets: \* Refine remediation processes related to the TABE testing. \* Monitor data to determine goal achievement. \* Study three year trend in graduation rates of students who participated in skill-building activities. \* Revise

assessment and remediation processes as needed. \* Provide summative report to AAGST, CGST and AQIP.

**K. Project Leader and contact person:**

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**Annual Update: 2006-08-31**

**A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.**

Full implementation of this project continues to wait for notification from the Department of Education that TABE Versions 9 and 10 have been approved for “ability to benefit” purposes. Pending that authorization, Moraine Park continues to use ACCUPLACER as its entrance assessment. However, significant progress toward that full implementation took place during Academic Year 2005-2006. Consistent and widespread use of TABE within the College’s Basic Education Program has resulted in recognition by staff and students alike of the value of the information provided by TABE, and use of that information to plan students’ learning processes. Basic Education instructors have learned to rely on that data to move new students quickly and accurately into indicated remediation. Feedback from Basic Education students reports their appreciation of the specific assessment of their skills. Strong impetus toward this progress came from the Health Care programs, which imposed mandatory remediation, effective Summer 2005, for students who missed the ACCUPLACER cut-off scores for those programs. Those cut-off scores were set by committees of program staff from across Wisconsin. Students must complete the remediation before they are accepted into the program. The fact that it is required has dramatically increased the number of students who enroll in remediation, and follow through to completion. Though we are at an interim step to full implementation of TABE, full implementation will be smoother and more acceptable to students and staff, based on the success that is being achieved by the Health Care students.

**Review (10-07-06):**

The project, a clear outgrowth of the institution's Strategic plan, progressed significantly despite the awaiting Department of Education approval of TABE. Utilization by staff and students already is yielding benefits with increased enrollment in and completion of remediation. The move towards targeted remediation reflects an appreciation of students' individual strengths and needs. The institution is using data to drive decisions and clearly measure outcomes.

**B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.**

Moraine Park staff perform the work of the College through team participation. In team meetings, issues are introduced, action plans developed, assignments made, and follow-up discussions held, continuing the action cycle. Staff involvement in TABE implementation took place at Basic Education Team meetings, Special Populations Advisory Committee meetings, Health Occupations Team meetings, Health Program Advisory Committee meetings, and Admissions Team meetings. Agendas for those meetings are planned to assure cross-functional sharing and planning; staff are asked to take part in those sessions to provide participation of all internal stakeholders. Students participate on advisory committees, complete surveys, and confer directly with instructors, deans, counselors and advisors regarding their needs. Internal non-stakeholder staff are continually informed, and their input elicited, at semi-annual meetings and via print and electronic communication.

**Review (10-07-06):**

Participation of all internal stakeholders, particularly students, demonstrates widespread College involvement.

Would it be appropriate to include stakeholders from the Beaver Dam business community who are served by the College's graduates?

**C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.**

Moraine Park is part of a statewide system initiative to serve “underprepared learners” who seek admission to programs. There is overlap between these two processes. Both depend on identification of specific cut-off scores for program entrance, enforcement of those cut-off scores, and a “ladder” of instructional services provided for potential students who do not achieve the required cut-off. The Vice-president of Enrollment Management represents Moraine Park on that statewide task force, and is chairing the effort within Moraine Park to set cut-off scores for program entrance. When those scores have been set, Admissions staff will apply them in their work with incoming students, referring them for the level and source of remediation indicated by their entrance assessment scores. Basic Education staff are adapting the work of last year’s statewide curriculum task force for use at Moraine Park; pre-program remediation needs will be factored into that work.

**Review (10-07-06):**

Good integration of institutional and the WTCS system's approach to addressing this issue.

**D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.**

It is gratifying to see the high level of “buy-in” of staff from separate units of the College, who see the value and effectiveness of the TABE process and results as it is used within Basic Education. Staff who previously were skeptical of the wisdom of this project now routinely guide students through the process at whatever step their job responsibilities lie. An important aspect of this success is the opportunity instructors have to adapt students’ learning plans to their unique needs and strengths, by working with them individually. It is not a “canned” approach, but one which keeps the students involved in and responsible for their learning. The loop of information among the students, instructors and Admissions staff also contribute to the students’ persistence and success. Students are motivated when they realize that they will be able to continue to access academic support when they get into their postsecondary courses. They thrive when they see themselves succeeding, and begin to let go of negative concepts they had developed regarding their learning ability.

**Review (10-07-06):**

The response nicely describes Action Project's outcomes more than describing any "effective practices". Clearly the "loop of information" between students, instructors and admissions staff would be an "effective practice" from which other institutions would benefit. Did the effective implementation of the TABE Testing Project yield other "effective practices" that could be used in other Action Projects and by other institutions.

**E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?**

Waiting for TABE to be accepted for “ability-to-benefit” purposes. Waiting for cut-off scores to be set for program entrance. Convincing students to access free remediation instruction soon enough to meet their academic goals. Creating information pieces to communicate and implement new processes, and aligning them with existing processes and services. Converting existing data system to People Soft.

**Review (10-07-06):**

Despite the challenges listed here, the Project already led to measurable benefits and improved processes. Two years into the Project, do you feel like you are on track to complete it on time?

**F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?**

The challenges listed above are inherent to the process. Staff participation and guidance will precipitate success for this project. We do not see need for outside assistance.

**Review (10-07-06):**

Congratulations on a well designed Project, that is aligned with the College's strategic plan, addresses 3 AQIP Criteria and meets the community's needs.