

Action Project: Using Assessment Portfolios for Program Evaluation and Planning for Improvement.

Institution: Moraine Park Technical College

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Annual Update: 2004-09-01

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Description

The goal of this Action Project is to integrate Moraine Parks student outcome assessment practices into the Elements of Quality Programs (EQP) process for the improvement of teaching and learning.

Related AQIP Criteria

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Primary | 1-Helping Students Learn |
| Related | 7-Measuring Effectiveness |
| Related | 8-Planning Continuous Improvement |
| Related | None |
| Related | None |

Related AQIP Principles

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Principle | A - A mission and vision that focus on serving students and other stakeholders |
| Principle | D - A learning-centered environment |
| Principle | H - Planning for innovation and improvement |
| Principle | I - Fact-based information-gathering and thinking to support analysis and decision-making |

Rationale for Action

1) The EQP process utilizes several indicators to determine program quality status, for example, enrollments, growth in full-time equivalencies (FTEs), format of curricula, and use of performance-based modules. Currently, the results of the evaluation of assessment portfolios are not incorporated into the EQP process. Incorporating the quantitative and qualitative assessment findings into the EQP review will foster a process of curriculum inquiry in which faculty can view their programs in a holistic way -- at a level beyond individual courses. 2) The College Assessment Plan identifies that the primary purpose of portfolios is to assess teaching and learning for program analysis and results-oriented planning. This Assessment Plan identifies ways to systematically use assessment data to evaluate learning in programs, to improve student achievement, and to promote student ownership of learning

through curriculum and/or program revisions. 3) The activities in this Action Project provide for close monitoring of the implementation and outcomes of assessment in programs in order to improve programs as they are being conducted to ensure their ongoing quality, to justify them for continued allocation of resources, and to practice the principles of a learning college as indicated in the vision and mission of Moraine Park Technical College.

Areas Affected

1) Academic Affairs Guidance and Support Team; 2) Instructional Programs (Primary Learning System); 3) Outcome Assessment Office; 4) Outcome Assessment Major Process Team; 5) Instructional Technology (IT)

Processes Affected

1) The Elements of Quality Programs review process will be most affected by integrating assessment data as criteria for program evaluation. 2) The Assessment process will also be impacted because critical stakeholders will use the results of assessment evaluations: learners, administrators, Board members, faculty and staff.

Process Measures

1) Develop a timeline for integrating assessment as a criterion in the EQP process including support from faculty and staff, development of measurement instruments, and establishment of benchmarks to measure this projects progress. 2) Measurement of internal stakeholders acceptance and understanding of the assessment process in part via the Assessment Process Evaluation Survey based on The Higher Learning Commission/NCAs Assessment of Student Academic Achievement Levels of Implementation (March 2000) and the Student Success Dashboard metrics currently under development. 3) Monitoring trends in the number of students completing and turning in a portfolio. 4) Monitoring trends in the number of students meeting exit level criteria based on findings from Assessment Portfolio/DML Evaluation and Advisory Committee Portfolio Review instruments.

Outcome Measures

1) Assessment information is synthesized into indicators usable by the EQP process. 2) Positive cultural shift as evidenced by faculty and staff acceptance of assessment as an EQP measure and college-wide perception of achievement of third level of implementation. 3) Assessment metric is fully integrated into the EQP process thus moving the College to the Third Level of Implementation, Maturing Stages of Continuous Improvement (NCA, March 2000).

Performance Targets

| Year | Quantitative and Qualitative Stretch Targets |
|------|--|
| One | 1) Develop 3-year project GANTT/PERT chart detailing process measures, milestones, and outcome dates. 2) Develop the following measurement instruments: Assessment Process Evaluation Survey, Assessment Portfolio/DML Evaluation, and Advisory Committee Portfolio Review. 3) Pilot the measurement instruments. 4) Involve faculty and staff in development of the assessment criterion to be integrated in the EQP process. |

| | |
|-------|---|
| Two | 1) Define the assessment indicator(s) to be used as a criterion in the EQP process utilizing the data derived from the pilot implementation of the measurement instruments. 2) Integrate the first phase of the Student Success Dashboard (survey) metric into the assessment process. 3) Refine the assessment measurement instruments in conjunction with the EQP process and re-administer the instruments. 4) Establish baseline assessment metrics to be used as indicators in the EQP process. These will serve as future points of comparison to gauge continuous quality improvement. |
| Three | 1) Fully integrate assessment measures as a criterion in the EQP process. 2) Verify stakeholder perception that assessment is implemented at the maturing stages of continuous improvement using measurement instruments. 3) Validate that the integration of assessment into the EQP process has contributed to the advancement of teaching and learning through curriculum and program improvement. |

Keeping Focus

1) All work at MPTC is accomplished through use of the existing team structure. The Outcome Assessment Major Project Team will be charged with the responsibility of assuring that the energy of the College remains focused on this project and its goals, and achieves the desired outcomes. 2) Progress reports will be posted on the College Intranet as well as in the College newsletter.

Annual Update: 2004-09-01

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

The Assessment in EQP Subteam continued to provide leadership for this project. The Subteam met eight times between September and May. Communication of the Project's activities and progress was reported at monthly Major Process Team meetings. The Subteam's year-end report outlines major accomplishments: **ACCEPTED** the Elements of Quality Programs Subteam report on using evaluation results from assessment processes as an indicator for program improvement **IDENTIFIED** strategies to promote and secure instructor involvement in the portfolio process including integrating **ORGANIZED** an Open Forum, on each of three campuses, for Instructors regarding assessment issues, facilitated by Institutional Advancement/Research staff **REVISED** Assessment Survey instrument administered to Instructional Excellence Teams (IETs) **REVISED** Portfolio Evaluation metric **REVIEWED** AQIP's Annual Update review statement for this AQIP Action Project; and **REVISED** Performance Targets for years two and three **SUMMARIZED** Subteam activities to be communicated monthly to IETs **MET** Year-Two 2004 Revised Performance Targets 1. Define the assessment indicator(s) to be used as a criterion in the EQP process utilizing the data derived from the year-two pilot implementation of the measurement instruments. 2. Refine the assessment culture measurement instrument for faculty in conjunction with the EQP process and re-administer the instruments. 3. Refine the portfolio evaluation instrument and re-administer for portfolio review. 4. Integrate assessment measures into the Student Success Dashboard Survey (AQIP Project – Obtain feedback from learners to determine the extent to which needs and goals are/are not being met.)

Review (09-29-04):

There's quite a bit of information in this update, but I'm having difficulty translating it into AQIP criteria as benefits to stakeholders. That's not necessarily a criticism of the update, but it could conceal a divergence of purpose, if the team isn't careful. I would recommend that future updates on this project concentrate on expressing, in lay terms, how the project is serving a learning environment. In the spirit of AQIP, we should concentrate on process, not product, and the update has a checklist tone of expediency. Again, that's not necessarily a criticism of the quality of the review except that it may indicate a focus on the finished product rather than the ongoing process of continuous quality improvement along the way. Overall, the college appears to be making reasonable progress on this action project.

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

This Action Project continues under Subteam leadership, which is a working group of the Outcome Assessment Major Process Team. Subteam membership is comprised of two managers, three instructors and one support professional. The Subteam chair worked with the Institutional Advancement/Research Partner in the revision of two measurement instruments, the Assessment Culture Survey, an assessment plan implementation survey administered to faculty in the 2004 spring semester and the Portfolio Evaluation of Program Outcomes and Reflections on Learning instrument. Program faculty and advisory committee members utilized this instrument for portfolio review sessions in May-June 2004. Both instruments provide baseline data that the college can use to drive continuous improvement efforts. A total of 65 diploma and associate degree program Instructional Excellence Teams piloted the assessment indicator to formulate improvement plans in the College program evaluation process, Elements of Quality Programs, EQP.

Review (09-29-04):

Should the people involved correspond to those areas listed in the Areas Affected section of this review? The membership is described by categories of managers, instructors, etc., so the specific individuals may reflect the Areas Affected details, but it's hard to tell. For instance, is there IT representation in this phase? Also, as I mentioned in Section A, the tone of this update has the feel of components and subcomponents in a way that hints at result-orientation, not process-orientation. Ongoing quality improvement encourages process thinking.

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

In the 2004-05 academic year, the Assessment in EQP Subteam will continue in its leadership role to: OVERSEE the implementation of Year-Three Performance Targets - 1. Clarify the assessment indicator to be used as a criterion in the EQP process utilizing the data derived from the year-two pilot implementation of the measurement instruments. This will establish baseline assessment metrics that will serve as future points of comparison to gauge continuous quality improvement. 2. Utilize the refined faculty Assessment Culture Survey and the refined Portfolio Evaluation Instrument. 3. Refine and re-administer the Assessment Culture Survey for support professionals, adjunct faculty and managers. 4. Integrate the first phase of the Student Success Dashboard (survey) metric into the assessment process. 5. Incorporate assessment processes into curriculum to promote and secure instructor involvement. Additional recommendations for 2004-05: PROMOTE portfolio organization options, either by outcome or by course (Decision by IETs) ORGANIZE an additional Open Forum during Professional Development days in August, 2004 DISCUSS and use the results of the Assessment Survey administered to IETs in 2004 ADMINISTER Assessment Survey to call-staff instructors, support professionals, and instructional and non-instructional managers in fall 2004 COACH IETs to identify acceptable threshold levels for their program portfolios and identify scoring rubrics for artifacts and self-assessment/reflection statements WORK with EQP Subteam to define the EQP Assessment Indicator as a metric.

Review (09-29-04):

Like the previous updates, this one seems well written except that I'm having a hard time translating it into benefits to user-groups. In fact, I'm having a hard time translating it at all. The reason this is pertinent is that the group working on this project may be so intricately familiar with its own details that it thinks and communicates in enthymemes and syllogisms. Having a lot of experience working at a technical school, I can say with authority that this is particularly symptomatic of technically oriented schools because technology inspires its own jargon. While this may be an efficient form of communication, it alienates user groups outside of its own discourse community and, more importantly, can lead the team into self-involved roles. The good thing is that, in order for a group to evolve into the enthymeme stage, it has to work hard enough to be intricately familiar with a project. With that in mind, I want to complement the team for its thoroughness and attention to detail. The disadvantage, however, is that groups can start to concentrate so much on details that they ignore the very purposes for which they were established in the first place. My advice to the team is to examine its service roles to see if it needs to reorganize into either a broader spectrum by including additional members or if it should replace some of the existing members with new people. Specifically, I would recommend a more active use of the critical stakeholders listed in the Processes Affected section: learners, administrators, Board members,

faculty and staff. I also recommend writing future updates in a way that can be used to update outside stakeholders regarding the obvious benefits of this action project, even after the project has been retired.

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

In 2003-04, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) piloted Moraine Park's EQP process for use in the statewide Quality Program Review (QPR) program. When this action project is completed, assessment practices will be included as one of the indicators for quality technical college programs in Wisconsin. When assessment is integrated into the program evaluation process, assessment will become an institutional priority with learners, faculty, and staff accepting assessment activities as a part of the organization's culture.

Review (09-29-04):

This sounds like a good accomplishment. Are there any internal Effective Practices developed that were not in the original plan? The partnership with WTCS also seems like it would tie in nicely with sections A,B,and C of this update. For the next update, write about how the statewide partnerships developed, particularly if they evolved in unexpected ways. The reason I think this is pertinent is that I detect such rigid planning and controls on this action project that is isn't maturing outside of the prearranged plan. One of the nice things about effective practices is that they sometimes surprise us by developing unexpected benefits.

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

Anticipated challenges in 2004-05 include: 1. Providing IETs with meaningful data analyses derived from the Assessment Culture Survey, the student portfolio review and the Student Success Dashboard survey so that results can be used in planning program improvement. 2. Designing course curriculum revisions to include instructors not only scoring performance tasks but also scoring self-assessment/reflection statements that are used in Student Portfolios. 3. Converting the portfolio evaluation instrument from a paper to an electronic format.

Review (09-29-04):

By this point in the action project, the team should also begin thinking about perception and integration challenges. Specifically, how are your stakeholders learning about and comprehending the benefits of Assessment Portfolios, and how are your cross curricular user groups going to implement the process into an improvement of their effectiveness? Develop a timeline for answering these questions, and work on this part of the Action Project in the stages that you outline in the Process Measures section: acceptance, understanding, implementation, and monitoring.

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?

No assistance needed.

Review (09-29-04):

I believe that it's necessary for outside user groups to receive the delivery of this action project in a way that allows them to understand it and see its value. With that in mind, I recommend that future summaries be expressed in ways that put their value in understandable terms, and that the teams associated with this project at MPTC try and broaden their approach to include people who don't work with it regularly enough to be intimately familiar with its details. Overall, the college is demonstrating reasonable progress toward completion of this project.

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