

ASSESSMENT ACADEMY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

John A. Logan College has a rich ten year history of assessment, and we must think of mining the gold nuggets from the data we have collected in order to move forward to measuring and reporting credible evidence of student learning. We cannot think of “closing the loop;” rather we must return to conceptualizing assessing student learning outcomes, as demonstrated by a helix. This analogy best captures the nature of assessing student learning outcomes; for it is not a loop, but a depiction of assessment as evolving and devolving. We believe that the two proposed action plans, presented through our membership in the HLC Assessment Academy, can and must be combined to better develop measurable student learning outcomes appropriate to our programs, educational goals, mission goals, mission statement, and strategic plan. Several steps must be taken to combine the two action plans, moving forward to the next generation of assessment and culture of engagement. Our suggestions follow:

First, mining our rich history means re-thinking how to use the data we have collected already on course level assessment and move forward to an institutional level of assessment. The current data emphasizes linking, or mapping, core course objectives to a group of skill sets that were identified by the nominal groups as representing the eight educational goals: Communication, Mathematical Reasoning, Workforce Readiness, Aesthetic Response, Critical Thinking, Ethical Awareness, Community Responsibility and Wellness.

We have assessed the performance of the student within the classroom and adjusted either course objectives or pedagogy. For example, the English department is using the works cited page as their expected outcome stating that at the completion of English 101, students will be able to construct a works cited page with 100% accuracy. The problem with this approach is that the outcome is only measuring student performance on a specific assignment. In addition, the works cited page changes

rapidly as does our technology, making it nearly impossible for students to master. Furthermore, whether a student masters a works cited page with 100% accuracy is not a measurement of a skill set he or she will use after graduation. This is considered a micro-level approach.

Second, the micro-level approach is problematic in that the educational goals may not be measurable as institutional student-learning outcomes. *Institutional* student learning outcomes are those outcomes that are associated with transfer and career degree granting programs. These student learning outcomes represent what a John A. Logan College student takes into his or her career and life experiences immediately after graduation and into the future. To date, we have been implementing core course mapping of objectives to student classroom performance.

Now, our charge is to move to the development of generic rubrics for assessment of institutional student learning outcomes as they compare to our current educational goals. For example, with the new approach we will be able to assess oral and written communication through a general set of life skills. A student will know how to develop a focused and well supported point of view in both civic and work environments. In addition, this approach includes measuring these skills in disciplines other than English. This is considered a macro-level approach.

Beginning with the educational goals of communication and mathematical reasoning, we will demonstrate how a new and combined action plan can achieve program improvement and create a culture of engagement for assessing institutional student learning outcomes. This can be accomplished by the following:

1. Identify the courses in the academic degree and certificate programs that use mathematical reasoning and/or communication skills using the existing document inventory. (March 6, 2008)
2. Using the existing skill sets listed in the left hand column of the implementation documents for mathematical reasoning and communication, instructors will develop two to five student learning outcomes that can be used and measured across the curriculum. (April 22, 2008)

3. Develop a flexible student learning outcomes rubric with the assistance of willing and appropriate faculty and Academy Team members. (by May 31, 2008)
4. Pilot this rubric in identified courses using communication and mathematical reasoning skills. Such courses may include cosmetology, logic, nonverbal language, and psychology for communication. Mathematical reasoning skills may be represented in courses such as economics, chemistry, nursing, early childcare development, and construction management. (Fall, 2008)
5. Analyze and revise the institutional communication and mathematical reasoning rubrics.
6. Retest the rubrics, analyze and report the results to appropriate stakeholders. Revise pedagogy as needed.
7. Repeat the process with the remaining educational goals.