



John Wood Community College
REPORT FOR _____
THE FOCUSED VISIT
ON ASSESSMENT

February 2007

Submitted to
The Higher Learning Commission
of the North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface..... ii

Forward/acknowledgments

 Chapter 1 Introduction 1

 Chapter 2 Philosophy of General Education 11

 Chapter 3 General Education Assessment – Portfolio Project 15

 Chapter 4 General Education Assessment – Hatfield Method..... 21

 Chapter 5 Career and Technical Education Assessment 29

 Chapter 6 Developmental Education Assessment 33

Preface and Acknowledgements

In the report that follows, the reader will find a thorough description of the processes used at John Wood Community College to assess student learning outcomes. The report is written in the past tense because it represents a “snapshot,” if you will, of the state of assessment at a given point in time. The processes described are either still in place at the current time or have undergone some evolution by college faculty to improve the process. The assessment process is in a continual state of development. With each measurement or use of a tool, the process has been evaluated for effectiveness and efficiency. The reader will discover that some of the processes have already been through changes. Notwithstanding that the faculty recognizes that the assessment processes and measures can be improved, the faculty has taken the data heretofore collected and seriously considered the findings about student learning at JWCC and applied those findings. Thus, the concept of continual improvement applies not only to assuring that student learning of stated outcomes is occurring at JWCC but also applies to the process itself.

The intent of this report is, of course, to reflect the state of assessment at John Wood Community College. To that end, the committee submits it to the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. The report was produced by the Focused Visit Committee:

Co-chairs

David Rigsbee	Professor of Mathematics
David Shinn, Ph. D.	Director of Institutional Research

Subcommittee Chairs

Renee Scheiter-Higgins	Director of Education
David Harbin	Assistant Professor, Social/Behavioral Sciences
Marty Otto	Professor, Computer Science & OFT
Joyce Miller	Professor, Developmental Education
Joan Larner	Administrative Assistant, Instruction

At-large Members

Randy Greenwell	Dean of Transfer Education
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Carolyn Warren	Professor, Early Childhood Ed & Chair of the SCAA

Ex-officio members

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Larry Fischer	Vice President for Instruction
Jeremy Aeilts	Student representative

Administrative Support

Barb Woodyard	Administrative Assistant, Institutional Research & Foundation
Liz Akers	Instruction Program Secretary

During the writing, drafts of the report were distributed to members of the faculty assessment committee (Senate Committee on Academic Assessment), to all full-time faculty, to representatives of the part-time faculty (Associate faculty) who serve on the Faculty Senate, posted on the web for anyone to read, made available at all outreach centers of JWCC, distributed to directors in non-instructional areas, and distributed to senior level administrators. All parties or constituencies were invited to provide feedback. The committee thanks all those who provided their feedback. The feedback was most valuable.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Need for the Focused Visit

In 2003, the Higher Learning Commission conducted an accreditation visit to JWCC. This was a comprehensive review to ascertain the continuance of the college's accreditation. In that review, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) cited JWCC as not satisfactorily meeting the commission's standards for the assessment of student learning. The report stated

John Wood Community College lacks an established program of assessment of student learning providing information for instructional improvement across all curricular areas on a systematic and consistent basis. Some assessment activities are evident, but the overall effort falls short of Commission Expectation. (Advancement Section, p 8)

As a result of the evaluation in 2003, the HLC required a Focused Visit in 2007 to review the college's progress in meeting the expectation to have an assessment plan in action. This report is in response to this requirement of the HLC and is limited to the college's efforts in establishing an assessment of student learning.

Following is the college's response to the eight Commission recommendations cited in the Advancement Section of the 2003 visit report. In this summary, a synopsis of progress in meeting the recommendations of the Commission is provided. In subsequent chapters of the report detailed explanations and data are provided regarding general education, career and technical education, and developmental education.

Response to the HLC Recommendations

HLC Recommendation 1: *All members of the faculty are involved in the process.*

This recommendation has been met. Faculty involvement was formalized through the existence of the Faculty Senate. All full-time faculty members and representatives of associate faculty were members of the Senate. The Senate Committee on Academic Assessment (SCAA) has given a monthly report of their assessment activities and discussion followed at Faculty Senate meetings.

Faculty has led the development and implementation of all assessment efforts.

Beginning with the fall of 2003, all students have been required to submit a General Education Portfolio prior to graduation from JWCC with an AA or AS degree. Faculty members led the process of designing the Portfolio requirement through the SCAA. Later, faculty participated in introducing the requirement to their students. All faculty members were required to include the General Education Outcomes in their course syllabi. In the spring of 2005, a number of faculty members served on a team that scored the first group of portfolios. In the fall of 2005, all faculty members received the complete *Assessment Manual* (a copy of which accompanies this report) and the entire faculty reviewed the results of the first Portfolio reading. The entire faculty responded to those results by making suggestions of how those results could be used to improve education at JWCC in general, and more particularly in the area of writing mechanics. Similar collections of student artifacts and faculty review of those artifacts have now been repeated for the fall of 2005 and spring of 2006. In addition, responses from faculty have been analyzed by the Faculty Senate and a number of those suggestions have already been implemented to improve student learning.

Each faculty member has an Assessment Manual detailing the plan.

In addition to our General Education faculty, all faculty members of our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs were involved in the process. Each CTE program, with the guidance of SCAA, has developed and articulated measurable outcomes.

All Developmental Education (Dev Ed) faculty has been involved in the assessment process. Although assessment was planned by the Developmental Education Oversight Committee (which included the chair and the other full-time Dev Ed instructor), associate faculty within Dev Ed were kept abreast of the plans and results and given the opportunity to provide feedback to the chair.

HLC Recommendation 2: Students are involved in the process as appropriate.

This recommendation has been met. Students have participated in the scoring process by reading alongside faculty members in the fall 2005 reading of artifacts. Student representatives from the Student Government Association (SGA) have participated as members on the Focused Visit Committee and a student has been a member of the SCAA since fall 2005. As the Portfolio project was developing, voluntary student workshops were held to educate students about the portfolio requirement and obtain their feedback. Faculty reported the findings from the fall 2005 general education artifact assessment to the SGA. Also, as a web-based presentation and brochure about the portfolio requirement was being developed, the

Students have provided feedback for improving the process and material to inform students of portfolio requirement.

SCAA obtained feedback from SGA to improve the presentation and brochure.

HLC Recommendation 3: *The institutional plan provides a structure and at least some elements that will be common across programs.*

This recommendation has been met. All instructional branches at JWCC have common elements in their assessment governance, assessment language, assessment reporting, and assessment feedback. The institutional plan embodied in our *Assessment Manual* describes the composition of the different instructional areas within the college and how they relate.

Governance

The assessment of student learning has clearly been a responsibility of the faculty. At JWCC this responsibility was codified with the creation of the Faculty Senate, a body composed of all full-time faculty members and representatives of associate faculty. Within the Senate, the SCAA was given broad powers to collect and analyze assessment data, then report findings to the proper audiences. Faculty Senate has been the forum where assessment results were discussed and changes suggested. Although the structure of and the by-laws of the Senate precluded CTE Directors from voting, their participation and input has been invited. The Senate Committee on Curriculum has been given power to review curricular changes and recommend modifications for approval by the full Senate. The functions of the SCAA and the Committee on Curriculum complemented each other as the SCAA provided the impetus for curricular changes and assessment of those changes. Charts describing JWCC's governance structure and the Faculty Senate committee structure can be found in the Appendix.

The SCAA has been the body of faculty that has guided assessment efforts.

If faculty was considered as the driver of assessment at JWCC, the administration was considered as the engine. The administrative structure (Vice-President of Instruction, Dean of Transfer Education, Dean of Career and Technical Education, department chairs and directors, teaching faculty) provided a framework for assuring that assessment activities were conducted. Monies have been provided for attendance at conferences, consultants, release time, and stipends. JWCC's Board of Trustees has demonstrated its support of assessment with their vote to require that all students in the transfer programs (AA & AS) submit a portfolio of General Education artifacts to be used for assessment. The goals to create, implement, and sustain an assessment plan have been a part of the

The Board of Trustees and administration have supported assessment with funding and action.

college's strategic plan since 2003. The Vice-President of Instruction has characterized the system as "an institution-wide effort that is led by faculty."

Common Language

All degree or certificate areas have agreed upon a common language of assessment. Broad *Goals* were identified for general education, CTE programs, and Dev Ed. These goals were broken down into measurable *Outcomes*. Outcomes were broken down again into *Components*. These components were evaluated through written *Characteristics*, and converted to numeric data by *Rubrics*. These data were then analyzed and disseminated to the proper audiences by means of an *Assessment Report*. Faculty members then responded to this report by means of a *Response Form*.

The assessment plan included the standardization of language and documentation.

Within the assessment of GE goals, the cycle has been an annual cycle with a specific type of assessment occurring each fall and spring semester.

Within CTE and Dev Ed, the basics of the assessment process were designed to account for the wide variety of programs. Each program has been able to reflect its distinctiveness within the assessment framework. A program's annual cycle was outlined or chronicled by a *Cycle Sheet*, because the cycle can end at any time throughout the year as each program deems appropriate. CTE programs and Dev Ed summarized their yearly cycles of data on a summary form, the *Assessment Implementation Form*, commonly called the Four Column Form. All CTE degrees and certificates and Dev Ed had an *Assessment Binder* that contains their assessment documentation. All CTE and Dev Ed binders have resided on a portable shelving unit available for inspection or additions at any time. A full discussion of JWCC's CTE assessment processes is presented in Chapter 5. Assessment processes of Dev Ed are discussed in Chapter 6.

Reporting and Feedback

Reviewing of assessment reports, maintaining the assessment documentation, monitoring the timeliness of the reporting and compiling summaries of activities from all instructional branches were all functions of SCAA. The SCAA subcommittee structure breaks down these tasks into manageable units. The SCAA has provided the opportunities for faculty to learn about and respond to general education assessment results through faculty senate meetings and convocation activities. Furthermore, the SCAA has maintained the records and monitored the activities of CTE program assessment and Dev Ed assessment. A chart describing the

SCAA subcommittee structure can be found in the Appendix.

HLC Recommendation 4: *Clear goals are established for each academic or vocational-technical program and measurable outcomes are identified.*

This recommendation has been met. Goals and measurable outcomes have been established for all academic and CTE programs. The General Education (GE) goals have been rewritten and specific learning outcomes identified for each goal. Within CTE, each program has clear articulated goals and outcomes that served as the basis for assessment of the programs.

Specific outcomes have been written for General Education and for all CTE programs.

HLC Recommendation 5: *The efficacy of developmental courses in preparing students for success in college is assessed.*

This recommendation has been met. At the time of the HLC visit in 2003, the Department of Developmental Education was newly formed. Since that time, its Chair and a Developmental Education Oversight Committee have met regularly and much progress has been made. Since the fall of 2005, all students in Developmental Education (Dev Ed) classes have been post-tested by COMPASS, the computer-based placement test. Results of this testing have been shared with Dev Ed faculty members who provided feedback. One cycle has been completed and one very notable change that occurred because of the assessment process was the creation of an additional level of coursework in reading, writing and mathematics for our most under-prepared students. Chapter 6 describes the program and its assessment activities.

The Dev Ed Oversight Committee has guided the formation of a Dev Ed department and its assessment efforts.

HLC Recommendation 6: *Institution-wide general education outcomes are established and student attainment of these outcomes is assessed.*

This recommendation has been met. JWCC has a firm commitment to general education as evidenced by this statement:

JWCC believes general education is a vital and basic part of a student's education. General education is defined as education which promotes a common base of knowledge intended to provide students with the skills necessary to participate in a wide range of activities which enhance the overall quality of life in the community. (JWCC Catalog, p. 77)

The JWCC GE curricula have been defined by the General Education Goals and Outcomes that served as focal points for

assessment. Chapter 2 articulates the philosophy of General Education at JWCC and lists the GE Goals and Outcomes.

The assessment of these General Education Outcomes has been manifested in two different, although related, mechanisms. The first was the General Education Portfolio and the second was the fall collection of assessment artifacts. From this point forward the fall collection of artifacts was referred to as the “Hatfield Method” (a working title referring to the consultant, Dr. Susan Hatfield from Winona State University, who suggested that JWCC should consider adopting the mechanism).

Since the summer of 2003, students seeking an AA or AS degree from JWCC have been required to submit a General Education Portfolio before graduating. This portfolio was designed as a collection of artifacts to represent students’ work for each of the General Education Goals. Each artifact was to be accompanied by a reflection paragraph. In May 2005, a small group of faculty and staff read and assessed the first set of portfolios and subsequently reported the results to the faculty in August 2005.

After examining the results of students’ writing skills, the faculty decided that the Hatfield Method would be used to collect further data about students’ writing skills. By December 2005, writing artifacts had been collected and a revised rubric for the assessment of student writing had been developed. Improved training of readers resulted in more consistent results with improved inter-rater reliability.

The assessment results of students’ writing skills obtained in December using the Hatfield Method were consistent with those obtained in May. On average, the rating of students’ mechanics of writing was lower than the ratings of students’ organization and content components. These ratings formed the baseline data about students’ written communication skills. These results were reported to all faculty and the following were their top six suggested courses of action.

1. Have a writing assignment as part of placement.

Some faculty thought that the students’ poor performance with writing mechanics was due to students’ entry level skills. The college has collected data from COMPASS testing about incoming students’ entry level writing skills and these data were used to place students in English courses. The COMPASS data, however, was not based on a writing sample but rather on an editing exercise. Faculty suggested that a writing sample would be a better placement tool. With the cooperation of the Language and Literature faculty, the Developmental Education Oversight Committee investigated the

Two complementary strategies have been used to assess general education.

AA and AS degree students have been required to submit a general education portfolio for graduation.

The Hatfield Method was the collection of specific artifacts for specific general education outcomes.

Results of assessing written communications have led to instructional changes.

use of a writing sample alternative provided by COMPASS. The conclusion by the faculty was that the COMPASS scoring rubric was not adequate to be used for placement. Other methods of collecting and scoring writing samples for placement purposes have not yet been explored.

Placement tools have been evaluated.

2. In each class, tell the students up front what the expectations of writing are.

Instructors discussed this in Faculty Senate and decided that this was a necessary step in improving student writing. If instructors do not clearly communicate the expectations, the students will likely not improve.

3. Refer students who are having writing problems to the writing specialists.

For a number of years, JWCC has had a number of walk-in tutors or specialists available to help students with their writing. Students often have not taken advantage of the assistance that the college provided. Instructors thought they may need to be more active in referring students with poor mechanics skills to these specialists and following their progress more closely.

4. Spend some time teaching mechanics in English 101.

This suggestion evoked discussion from the Language and Literature faculty. They expressed concern that basic mechanics and grammar were not stressed enough college-wide and they thought that the insertion of a teaching unit in mechanics would shorten time to teach important content and, in effect, lower the writing standards. The faculty discussed an idea to increase English 101 from three to four credit hours to provide the additional time that would be necessary. This idea met resistance because such an action would add credit hours to a number of degree and certificate programs.

From the discussion about improving mechanics, the faculty and chair of the Language and Literature department made three additional suggestions:

1. The Language and Literature Department agreed to host a general mechanics workshop for all faculty who require writing assignments. This could be at faculty convocation or some other venue.
2. The handbook called Understanding Plagiarism: A Student Guide to Writing Your Own Work by Rosemarie Menager-Beeley should be used by all instructors who require a research paper.
3. The Language and Literature Department encouraged faculty who assigns a research paper to use Turnitin.com.

Language & Literature faculty have guided other faculty on how to assist their students to improve writing.

5. *Give the writing rubric to the students so they know how they will be graded on writing in each class.*

By clearly identifying the writing standards that would be used in each class, the students are more likely to perform in the manner expected. Using the rubric in a class other than a Language class would stress the significance placed on writing across the College in general. From the beginning of the class, the students would know that the subject matter content would be important, as well as mechanics of writing. The rubric would show that poor performance in either content or mechanics would result in a lower grade.

Writing rubrics have been made available to students.

6. *Do not accept poorly-written work.*

Once clear expectations have been communicated to students, and the rubric has been explained, students might still submit writing that is unacceptable. Should that happen, faculty has committed to meeting with the student or referring the student to a writing specialist before the paper would be accepted for credit.

HLC Recommendation 7: Data on assessment results is regularly collected, disseminated, and used for instructional improvement.

This recommendation has been met. In General Education the cycle was firmly established. The first cycle started with the portfolio reading in May 2005 with faculty receiving feedback in August 2005. A second cycle was completed with the use of the Hatfield Method in December 2005 with faculty receiving feedback in spring 2006. A third cycle was completed with the portfolio reading in May 2006 with faculty receiving feedback in fall 2006. A fourth cycle was completed December 2006 using the Hatfield Method.

The annual assessment cycle for general education has been implemented.

The first cycle starting in May 2005 and ending in December 2006 that focused on students' writing skills yielded six suggestions for changes. Faculty has incorporated changes into their courses to emphasize good writing skills. In September 2006, the SCAA surveyed the faculty to identify the changes that had been made. The survey centered on the top six suggestions for improving students' writing skills. (See recommendation number 6 above.) Thirty-one of 52 full-time faculty indicated changes they had made in their courses. Each of six suggestions has been incorporated by the faculty into their instruction. A more detailed description can be found in Chapter 4.

In the area of CTE, each degree or certificate-granting program has articulated an annual cycle of data collection. Some programs were

further along than other programs with regard to the systematic documentation of their assessment plans, results, and use of results guided by the SCAA.

In the area of Developmental Education, an assessment loop has been completed each semester beginning with fall 2005. Students in structured developmental education classes have completed the COMPASS as a post-test. This post-test has served to measure student learning in those Dev Ed classes. Mid-semester meetings were held with all Dev-Ed faculty to review the assessment results. Feedback was obtained, and this information was used to plan changes in instruction.

CTE and Dev Ed assessment cycles have been developed.

HLC Recommendation 8: The reporting mechanism should provide for a feedback loop documenting that faculty members have reviewed the assessment data and have decided what measures, if any, ought to be taken in response to the data.

This recommendation has been met. As described briefly above, full cycles and documented feedback loops have been completed for assessment of General Education programs, for a proportion of the CTE programs, and for Developmental Education. The primary document for assessment of student learning was the *Assessment Manual* produced by the SCAA.

In the area of General Education, after the first set of student portfolios was assessed in May 2005, the results were reported to the faculty at Fall convocation in August. At that time, individual faculty members responded to the results. During the fall 2005 semester, the SCAA responded by focusing with further assessment of students' writing skill using the Hatfield Method. Those results were consistent with May results. The faculty has since reviewed both sets of results and provided suggestions for changes to improve students' writing skills. The infrastructure was established to sustain the routine of conducting May Portfolio/December Hatfield assessments with related reporting from the SCAA to the Faculty Senate and coordination of determining appropriate actions.

The SCAA has served as the focal point for establishing the assessment of student learning.

In CTE, all programs have articulated goals and measurable outcomes, and an annual cycle for planning and reporting assessment. Several programs have completed their cycles and others were in the process of closing the loop for the first time in the fall of 2006. Members of the faculty worked with the SCAA to assist the CTE programs to develop their goals, outcomes and planning cycles. They discovered that many of the CTE programs had been, in fact, collecting and using data to improve their programs. Programs have, for example, utilized program

guarantees, graduate evaluation surveys, and advisory councils. The SCAA has provided an infrastructure to focus on assessment of student learning and provide documentation and evidence.

In Developmental Education, the first cycle of the assessment of student learning began with the use of COMPASS as a post-test in fall 2005. The post-testing has continued. The results of the post-test have been reviewed by the Dev Ed faculty and the Developmental Education Oversight Committee. The results have indicated a particular concern about the students in MAT 012, Introductory Algebra. Changes have been made not only in the post-testing of these classes but also in the curriculum of MAT 012 to better assess and prepare the students for success in subsequent courses in the math sequence. The focus on assessment of student learning within Developmental Education has been established.

Summary and Conclusion

JWCC has in place an established plan for the assessment of student learning. Since the HLC 2003 visit, the governance system of the college has adapted to support a faculty-led effort to create a systematic and a sustainable assessment plan. The faculty, through the functions of the SCAA, has the recognized power to coordinate and manage the assessment of student learning and was active in collecting data, analyzing that data and reporting those results to the proper audiences. Reporting and feedback mechanisms were established to proactively work for change. The subsequent chapters in this document provide detailed descriptions of the progress made in the assessment of General Education, CTE, and Dev Ed.

Through the SCAA, the faculty has developed practical assessment plans and principles.

While much has been accomplished, the college has recognized that much remains to be done. In General Education, four cycles of assessment data collection and analysis have been completed but not all GE goals have been assessed. Nonetheless, steps have been taken to improve writing mechanics for our students. Not every CTE program has completed a full cycle of assessment but the infrastructure has been created to guide and support their assessments. Within Dev Ed, progress has been made in forming a structured department with a set of goals and outcomes. Although the first set of assessments focused on placement and academic support, the Dev Ed department has shifted its focus to the assessment of student learning.

The college, led by the faculty, has demonstrated its commitment to continual improvement of student learning. A “systematic and sustainable” process was clearly evident.

CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHY OF GENERAL EDUCATION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the philosophy of General Education at John Wood Community College (JWCC), and to explain the General Education curriculum and its assessment structure. Assessment flowed logically from the mission statement of the college:

John Wood Community College will provide the highest quality educational opportunities and services fully accessible at affordable levels in an attractive, caring, and safe environment to meet the needs of a diverse community. (JWCC 2006-2007 Catalog)

To fulfill its mission, JWCC was guided by a number of goals which address General Education in a direct manner:

To prepare students who intend to transfer, who intend to acquire job skills, who require academic enhancement, or who require functional life skills instruction for a rapidly changing, global community.

To create and maintain an environment which emphasizes learning; encourages free discussion of ideas, and stimulates intellectual growth, scholarship, and critical thinking.

To ensure student understanding of program and course content in relation to educational goals.

To provide a "common core of learning" which encourages coherent and substantive learning in essential areas of knowledge. (Board Policy 201)

These goals have driven the development of the JWCC degree structure and the entire curriculum of the college from its founding in 1974. The Board's concept of the "common core of learning" (otherwise known as General Education) was a major part of each degree and of many of the certificates offered at the college.

Additionally, the faculty has developed specific goals and outcomes to further define this General Education to guide its teaching. The following quote and table were from the JWCC College Catalog 2006-2007 pages 76-77.

JWCC believes general education is a vital and basic part of a student's education. General education is defined as education which promotes a common base of knowledge intended to provide students with the skills necessary to participate in a wide range of activities which enhance the overall quality of life in the community. Specific goals have been devised which reflect essential areas of general education competence. In addition to learning the skills and mastering the knowledge of their specific program(s), students will be able to:

General Education Goals	Minimum Student Learning Outcomes (Student will be able to:)
1. Demonstrate an awareness of human values and diverse cultures.	1.1 describe attributes of a culture different from one's own.
2. Explain economics and politics from local, national and world perspectives.	2.1 explain the function of an economic system. 2.2 explain the function of a political system.
3. Demonstrate interpersonal skills and behaviors to promote the achievement of personal and group goals in the workplace and society.	3.1 work in groups effectively.
4. Use critical thinking.	4.1 make rational decisions and solve problems.
5. Communicate effectively utilizing verbal, nonverbal, listening and written skills.	5.1 write clearly. 5.2 deliver an oral presentation.
6. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and apply information technology.	6.1 utilize current computer software. 6.2 demonstrate information seeking skills.
7. Explain the importance of facilitating and adapting to change.	7.1 explain the importance of adapting to change.
8. Demonstrate an awareness of humanities and fine arts.*	8.1 demonstrate an awareness of the humanities 8.2 demonstrate an awareness of the fine arts.

***Goal applies only to the associate in arts and associate in science degrees.**

Relationship of General Education to Degree and Certificate Structure

JWCC currently offers two transfer degrees: the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science. Additionally, the college offers 45 Associate of Applied Science degrees and certificate programs for students seeking direct entry into employment. As Figure 1 displays, the General Education core has been part of both the Transfer degree programs and the Career and Technical Education degree as well as some certificate programs. The relationship between General Education and other subject-specific learning is summarized in Figure 1.

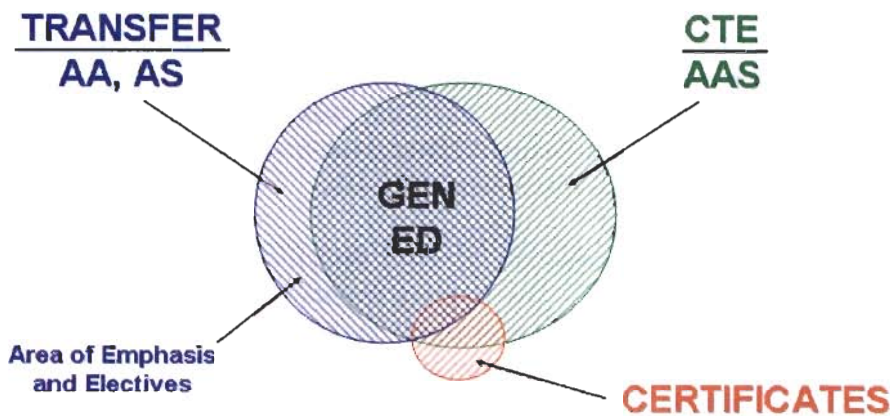


Figure 1: Instructional Programming at JWCC

Overview of General Education Assessment at JWCC

As a result of the 2003 NCA site visit and self-study, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) stated that John Wood Community College had not made sufficient progress in the development and implementation of an assessment plan for General Education. The faculty immediately began to develop a plan that would make assessment the focus of the entire institution.

Dr. William Simpson addressed our student population in the student assessment handbook. The following is an excerpt from his message:

John Wood Community College is committed to continuous improvement and this includes the teaching and learning processes. We need your support and participation in assessing your learning for the College to achieve the goal of offering excellent learning experiences for students. You can assist in the assessment of learning through actively collecting materials for a portfolio as outlined in this booklet. Additionally, your teachers will guide you in assembling materials for your portfolio within each of your classes.

Successful learning is a participative process between student and teacher. Both must be willing to work to achieve each other's goals, and a cooperative system seems to be the best. Thank you for helping JWCC to improve; your participation is vital and valued.
(Excerpt from *Portfolio Assessment Plan*)

Shortly after the HLC visit in 2003, the Portfolio Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Academic Assessment submitted a plan to assess General Education by means of a General Education Portfolio.

In the climate of assessment, it has become important to attempt to measure, in some quantitative way, those abstract benefits which accompany the awarding of an AA or AS degree. The portfolio assessment subcommittee was assigned the task of developing a plan for assessing the general education goals. In the fall 2002 a limited pilot program was completed to allow for assessment in a quantitative way the rather intangible benefits that students receive from their instruction. A Student Portfolio was one means of measuring how well John Wood Community College students were meeting the standards articulated by the General Educational Goals.

A student's portfolio would be a collection of work the student has done during the student's tenure at JWCC. The learning events included in the portfolio would be chosen by the student and would include a statement by the student reflecting on how the portfolio learning event represents one or more of the General Education Goals. Armed with a copy of the student's portfolio, the college can assess how well it is meeting its goal of providing students with a "common core of knowledge" from the mission statement of the college and Board Policy 201. (Portfolio Assessment Plan, Assessment Manual page 1-2)

Portfolios were received and scored in the spring of 2005 and again in spring 2006. In addition to the General Education Portfolio, the faculty has developed a second, but related mechanism to assess General Education. This mechanism was described as the fall collection of General Education artifacts, but because this second mechanism was suggested to JWCC faculty by assessment consultant Dr. Susan Hatfield of Winona State University, the mechanism was commonly called "the Hatfield Method" throughout the college.

Chapters 3 and 4 explain in greater detail how these two mechanisms worked together to provide the faculty with the information needed to monitor the effectiveness of JWCC's General Education curriculum and to modify the curriculum accordingly to facilitate continuous improvement and to assure that JWCC continues to fulfill its mission and goals.

CHAPTER 3
GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT –
PORTFOLIO PROJECT

CHAPTER 3 GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT – PORTFOLIO PROJECT

Purpose

As a result of the 2003 NCA site visit and self-study, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) stated that John Wood Community College (JWCC) had not made sufficient progress in the development and implementation of an assessment plan. At that time, the college had already chosen student portfolios as a means of measuring, in a quantitative way, the General Education core curriculum that accompany the awarding of an AA, AS, or AAS degree. The core curriculum contributes to all the degree programs as well as some certificate programs (and represented in Figure 1 as “GEN ED”).

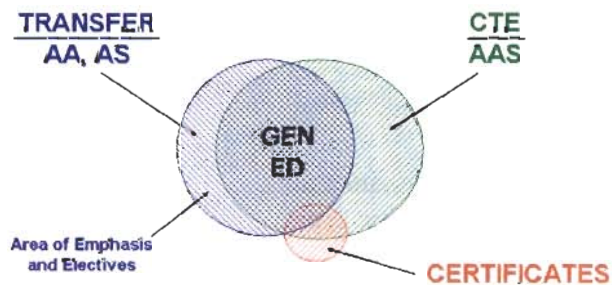


Figure 1: General Education Core in Degrees and Certificates at JWCC

The Senate Committee on Academic Assessment (SCAA) created the Portfolio subcommittee to design a plan for assessing the General Education (GE) goals. In the fall of 2002, a limited pilot program was completed to examine the use of portfolios as a means to assess the GE goals. Shortly after the HLC visit in spring of 2003, the Portfolio subcommittee of the SCAA submitted a portfolio assessment plan.

In, 2002, the Faculty chose portfolios as one of the methods to assess student learning of the Gen Ed outcomes.

Timeline

The following were key events and dates in the evolution of the process to use portfolios as an assessment tool at JWCC.

- Spring 2002 – Portfolio Subcommittee of SCAA was

formed and charged with developing a proposal for assessment.

- Fall 2002 – A limited pilot project of the portfolio assessment was conducted within limited instructional areas of JWCC.
- Spring 2003 – Proposal of portfolio assessment was presented, proposed and successfully passed by the faculty senate.
- Spring 2003 – Developed the student assessment handbook.
- Spring 2003 – Board of Trustees approved that AA and AS graduates must submit a portfolio.
- Summer 2003 – Presented the plan and procedural information to faculty and staff.
- Summer 2003 – Implemented the portfolio assessment requirement to the first class of incoming and transfer students.
- Fall 2003 – Neal McKenna from Kishwaukee CC visited JWCC and discussed the Kishwaukee portfolio assessment process.
- Fall 2003 – On-going student workshops were first presented.
- Fall 2003 – Continued evaluation of rubrics.
- Spring 2004 – Portfolio subcommittee finalized the scoring rubrics for the portfolios.
- Fall 2004 – Midpoint survey was conducted on students and faculty regarding assessment process to determine any assistance or additional training needed.
- Fall 2004 – Dr. Susan Hatfield made her first consulting visit to JWCC.
- Spring 2005 – First graduating class with portfolio assessment requirement submitted portfolios.
- Spring 2005 – Student portfolios were analyzed and scored by faculty and staff readers. The portfolio assessment process was reviewed and modified.
- Fall 2005 – Assessment Manual distributed to faculty.
- Fall 2005 – SCAA reported results to the faculty. Faculty examined the results and suggested actions to the SCAA.
- Fall 2005 – Dr. Susan Hatfield guided faculty during convocation in a discussion of the May 2005 portfolio results.
- Fall 2005 – Student handbook on portfolios was modified and a web-based PowerPoint presentation was made available to students.
- Spring 2006 – Second graduating class with portfolio assessment requirement submitted portfolios.

Spring 2003: Board of Trustees approved the portfolio as a graduation requirement for AA and AS programs.

Spring 2005: First reading of portfolios.

- Spring 2006 – Student portfolios were analyzed and scored by faculty and staff readers. The portfolio assessment process was reviewed and modified.
- Fall 2006 – SCAA reported results to the faculty. Faculty examined the results and suggested actions to the SCAA.
- Fall 2006 – SCAA disseminated the results campus-wide.
- Fall 2006 – Changes related to writing mechanics were incorporated into curriculum and instruction.
- Fall 2006 – SCAA Procedures Manual draft completed.
- Fall 2006 – Assessment Manual revised.

Instructional changes have been made by individual faculty as a result of general education assessment.

Description of the Assessment Mechanism

Figure 2 is a schematic that describes the cycle of portfolio assessment process at JWCC.

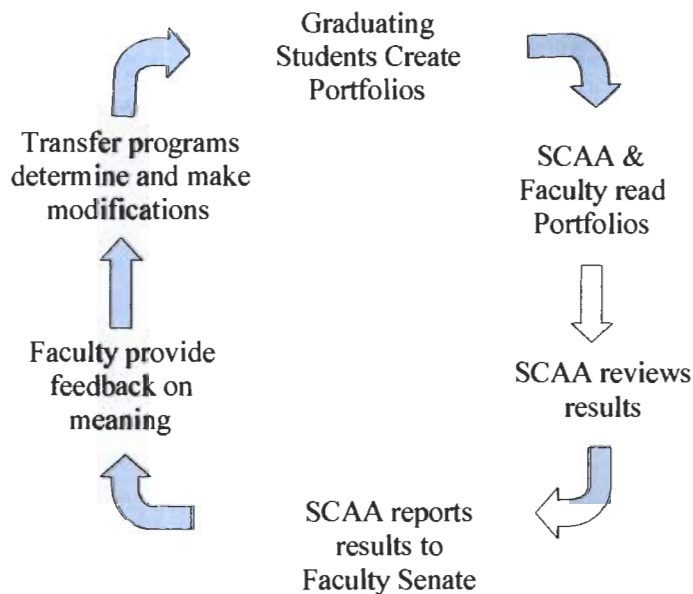


Figure 2 Cycle of portfolio assessment process

Faculty Involvement

Faculty development was a critical factor of the growth process of the portfolio assessment mechanism. This assessment process has been a faculty-driven initiative with the support of the entire college. The faculty has led all aspects of the portfolio process from selecting the method to determining courses of action based upon the results.

Faculty has created a matrix that relates each general education course to one or more general education goal.

Furthermore, the faculty created a matrix that identified those general education courses that addressed each of the GE goals. Once the correspondence between courses and goals was identified,

faculty altered their syllabi to include a list of GE goals for students to use as a guide in selecting artifacts for their portfolios. For additional guidance, instructors were also asked to identify assignments that could serve as portfolio artifacts.

AA and AS students were informed about portfolios in the classes, through workshops, and the internet.

Student Involvement

Over three hundred students have attended general education portfolio workshops that focused on the following:

- what was required to complete the portfolio,
- how do students obtain a portfolio,
- date of submission,
- location of submission,
- purpose of the portfolio,
- instructors' role, and
- how to write a reflection statement.

Marketing pieces have been made available to notify students about the portfolio requirement for graduation, the completion date, the on-line PowerPoint presentation, contact information, and the times and dates of portfolio workshops.

Students have been consulted for the development of portfolio awareness material.

Students have been involved in the portfolio process in the following ways:

- Students completed a survey about portfolio awareness in the fall of 2004.
- A student has been a member of SCAA since 2005.
- SGA provided input for the development of portfolio training materials in the spring of 2006.

Structure

Figure 3 displays the relationships of parties involved in and affected by the GE assessment using portfolios. The SCAA has been responsible for coordinating the assessment and dissemination of the results. The SCAA reports to the Faculty Senate. The Transfer Education departments' faculty, the Dean of Transfer Education, and the Vice President for Instruction have supported the recommendations that the SCAA has made to implement the portfolio process. The office of Institutional Research has provided research-related support to the SCAA.

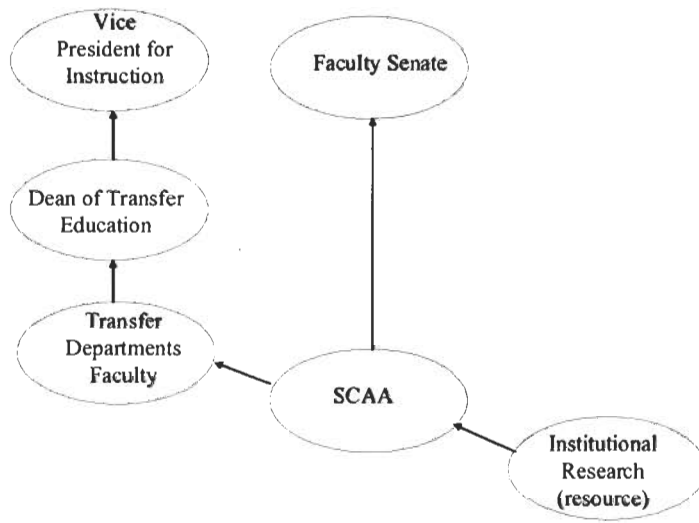


Figure 3 Responsible parties for portfolio assessment

Clarity of the goal

Designing the assessment process has forced JWCC to set clear and obtainable student learning outcomes to reflect the general education goals and measure student learning. The general education goals have evolved into specific goal statements and outcomes.

Completion of the feedback loop

The first reading of the General Education portfolios occurred in May 2005. The portfolio reading team consisted of 20 persons from full-time faculty, associate faculty, administrators, and counselors. The two-day session began with a brief history of the portfolio assessment and was followed by a training session on the scoring process.

At the beginning of the first day, the readers formed pairs to read and score. Each pair was responsible for reading the artifacts from approximately twelve student portfolios. Using a rubric created by the SCAA, the scoring consisted of a two-step process: 1) reading the reflection statement and scoring how well the student related the artifact to a general education goal, and 2) readers considered how well the artifact matched the stated general education goal. The second day consisted of scoring artifacts of writing for their mechanics, organization, and content. Overall the two-day process marked a successful beginning for the first assessment of student

learning. From this evaluation, we obtained feedback which was analyzed and compared to the goals and anticipated results. These results were disseminated to the faculty at convocation (August 2005) and staff through an internal college-wide newsletter.

***Results of the
portfolio readings
have led to change.***

In the fall of 2005, the SCAA decided to use the second assessment tool, the Hatfield Method. This second assessment tool involved courses that addressed GE goal 5 that focuses on communication. This project involved four steps:

1. Survey of Department Chairs – Departments were asked to look at their 2nd year courses that addressed GE goal 5 with writing and/or speaking assignments.
2. SCAA selected one section per course from which to collect artifacts for the December 2005 reading.
3. From all the artifacts that were collected five were randomly selected from each class.
4. Readers spent one day, December 20, to analyze and score artifacts in a manner similar to the reading of portfolios in May 2005.

A more complete description of the Hatfield Method and its use follows in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

The process has increased faculty communication about course goals and led to better coordination of the curriculum. Faculty has discussed potential course revisions and alternative teaching strategies. Student involvement has included SGA representation on the SCAA as well as feedback from the SGA to the SCAA.

CHAPTER 4
GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT –
HATFIELD METHOD

CHAPTER 4 GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT HATFIELD METHOD

Purpose

The Hatfield Method of Assessment (i.e., the fall collection of General Education assessment artifacts) provided a second mechanism to measure student learning of General Education (GE) goals. This mechanism produced data that complemented the data obtained by the GE Portfolio assessment and provided faculty with clear and accurate information about what students learned with respect to the GE goals.

The Hatfield Method complements the annual assessment of general education portfolios.

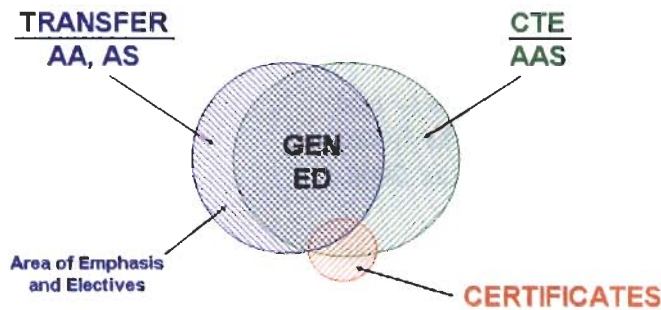


Figure 1: Instructional Programming at JWCC

Timeline

After the first reading of GE Portfolios was completed in May 2005, the Senate Committee on Academic Assessment (SCAA) analyzed the results and reported them to faculty at Fall convocation on August 18, 2005. The results suggested that the mechanics of students' written artifacts were not adequate to meet the GE goal. Faculty members discussed these results and made written responses by department to SCAA. A summary report can be found in the Appendix. The faculty's responses to the report were:

- A number of the GE Objectives as stated in the 2004-2005 catalog were written in a vague manner.
- Since each student chose the artifacts that were submitted in the Portfolio, the lower scores in writing mechanics might have been due to students submitting writing samples from a class they completed in their first semester at John Wood Community College (JWCC). Thus, the writing skills they exhibited were due more to their entry-level writing abilities

than to the instruction they received at JWCC.

The SCAA met to review the faculty recommendations and concluded:

- Additional writing samples need to be collected and assessed using the Hatfield Method before any meaningful curricular decisions can be made.
- This collection of artifacts needs to concentrate on classes with high percentages of third-semester students.
- The language of GE assessment should be clarified and aligned with a college-wide common assessment language.
- Rubrics need to be developed at the same time as outcomes are written so that the outcomes are measurable.
- Video tapes of oral presentations along with student-prepared outlines need to be collected to make a baseline measurement of oral communication skills.

First use of Hatfield Method in Fall 2005 examined the artifacts of written and oral communication.

The committee then took the following actions:

- The GE Objectives were re-written as GE Goals and Outcomes. This new language was approved by the Board of Trustees in November 2005 for inclusion in the 2006-2007 catalog.
- A detailed questionnaire was prepared for all departments. Each department reported what courses in their areas addressed the communication outcomes of speaking and writing and if an artifact would be produced.
- Care was taken to select classes that included students working toward an Associate of Applied Sciences (AAS) degree as well as students in the transfer programs.
- Care was taken to ask if classes contained a high percentage of students who had already completed two or more semesters of college coursework at JWCC.

Description of the Assessment Mechanism

A brief outline of the Hatfield Method:

- Instructors of selected classes submitted clear and unmarked copies of written artifacts or video-taped oral presentation artifacts from their students in the fall semester.
- Each student completed an anonymous demographic questionnaire that was submitted with the writing or speaking artifact. (A copy of the demographic form can be found in the Appendix.)
- Instructors submitted their artifacts to the SCAA by the week of final exams in December 2005.
- A scoring team composed of faculty members, students,

advisors and administrators was convened to read and score the artifacts.

- The results of this scoring were reported to faculty during the spring 2006 semester.

The assessment of GE goals using the Hatfield method has been designed to occur each December. The design included a two-step approach. The first step was to pilot test the rubric and collect baseline data using artifacts in the portfolio assessment in the spring of each year. The second step was to use the same rubric in December for artifacts collected for the specific GE goal. This two-step approach allowed faculty to refine the rubric and avoid making curricular decisions based on a single measurement. The fall data provided a second set of data to confirm the validity of the spring data and the efficacy of the rubric. This cycle was built into the plan that the SCAA developed to assess each GE goal in a reasonable time frame. Even though every goal and outcome would not be examined by faculty every semester, every outcome will eventually be measured. (The time frame can be found in the Appendix.)

The Hatfield Method was designed to be used each fall and focus on one or two GE outcomes.

While the first use of the Hatfield Method produced usable data, the second use has proved more challenging. In May 2006 the rubrics that were pilot tested for Goal 2 – Political and Economic systems-were found to have been unsuitable to score the artifacts produced by students. This has caused the faculty to reexamine the rubrics and types of assignments that they required of students. The SCAA needed to make decisions taking these results into consideration before planning for artifact collection in December 2006. Working with the SCAA, the departments responsible for teaching classes in politics and economics have re-evaluated and modified the rubrics.

Faculty Involvement

In light of the demand that faculty drive assessment, it was appropriate that the SCAA planned and conducted the annual assessments of the artifacts. The SCAA was the force that identified the need for the Hatfield method as well as the force that has planned and implemented its application.

As in all assessment, the SCAA coordinated the process.

Faculty participated by identifying in each class an assignment to be used as an artifact. Instructors provided artifacts from all students in their classes and not artifacts from selected students. Those faculty forwarded the copies to the SCAA.

A panel that included faculty members scored the artifacts. The results were reported to the faculty by the SCAA through Faculty Senate. Faculty discussed the results and suggested changes.

Student Involvement

A student representative from the Student Government Association (SGA) has been a member of the SCAA since 2005. The SGA representative regularly gave reports to the full SGA on proceedings of the SCAA meetings.

Students served as readers during the December 2005 assessment of the GE goal 5 artifacts. The students participated in the training. They were paired with a faculty or staff person to form a reading team just as all other readers were paired.

A student representative from SGA has been a member of the SCAA since the Fall of 2005.

Structure

Figure 2 diagrams the relationships of the parties responsible for the use and implementation of the Hatfield Method. The SCAA has been the body that oversees the assessment. The Office of Institutional Research has supported the SCAA with methodological advice as well as data compilation and analysis. The SCAA has worked with the faculty of the Transfer Education programs to plan and conduct assessment activities. All faculty were affected by the modifications resulting from the assessment. The Deans and Vice President have been the administrative arms to facilitate assessment. The SCAA, of course, as a committee of the Faculty Senate, has reported all plans, activities, and results to the faculty through the Senate.

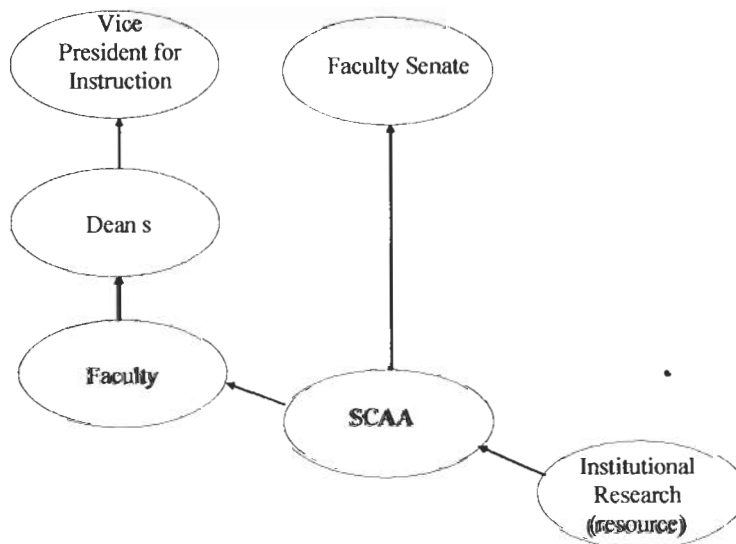


Figure 2 Responsible parties for the Hatfield Method

Figure 3 shows the cycle of the activities that were necessary to complete the Hatfield Method and ensure that the feedback loop was completed.

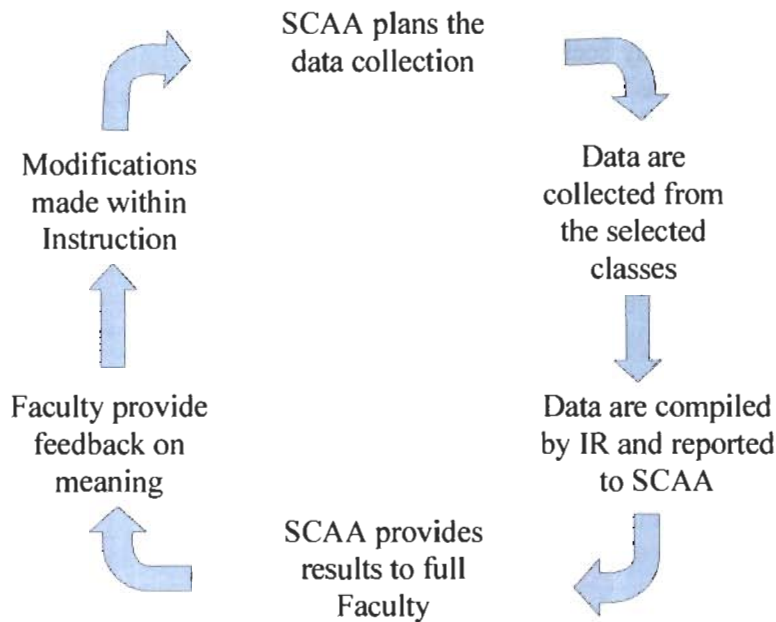


Figure 3: Cycle of the Hatfield Method

The SCAA has been the primary body to ensure that the cycle was completed. Different subcommittees within the SCAA were given responsibility for the collection of artifacts, the development of the rubrics, and the planning of the training sessions for the readings and use of the rubrics. Each subcommittee reported to the SCAA and worked with each other (e.g., the training subcommittee worked with the rubric development subcommittee to develop the training sessions).

Institutional Research has supported the SCAA assessment with data compilation and analysis.

The Office of Institutional Research assisted with the design of the forms to record the assessment data and later compiled the data into a report (The report of December 2005 can be found in the Appendix.).

The SCAA members discussed the results but, more important, the SCAA reported the results to the Faculty Senate. At that time, the faculty had the opportunity to provide an interpretation and evaluation of the results. They also provided suggestions on actions to implement the responses to the results. Similarly, individual departments addressed the concerns with their respective faculty.

Clarity of the Goal

Specific GE goals and outcomes have now been included in the course syllabi for every discipline. Although many instructors have listed all eight GE goals in their syllabi, it has not been expected that a single course can efficiently and effectively seek to measure them all. The faculty within each department has identified the GE goals and outcomes addressed by each of the GE courses for which their departments have been responsible. (The matrix can be found in Chapter 3 of the Appendix.)

The GE goals have undergone an evolution to improve their articulation of student learning outcomes.

As a result of the evolving assessment process, the GE goals have been revised three times since 2003. Each revision has addressed a particular concern and each revision has further clarified the goals. The latest revision included the addition of student learning outcomes that further defined and clarified each goal. As the assessment process within JWCC continues to develop and refine itself, the GE outcomes may undergo further revision. All of these changes have been accomplished to provide students and faculty with clear and measurable expectations for what will be taught in the classroom and learned by the students.

Completion of the Feedback Loop

As described above, the SCAA reported the results to the Faculty Senate and provided opportunities for the faculty to interpret and respond to the findings. The faculty response was not only discussed at Faculty Senate but was also provided to specific departments that were affected by the results. The departments' actions based upon the conclusions of the faculty closed the feedback loop and laid the foundation for the GE goal to be assessed again within the schedule developed by the SCAA.

By taking the results to the Faculty Senate, the SCAA ensured that the feedback loop was closed.

With the entire faculty providing a number of suggestions for improving students' writing, 31 of 52 faculty responded to a survey asking them to indicate how they had changed their courses to emphasize good writing skills. The changes included:

- In each class, tell the students up front what the expectations are for writing.

Twenty-six faculty responded that they had used this suggestion. The change has been made across the curriculum, in 42 courses. The suggestion has been incorporated into the transfer courses of science, English, humanities, math, economics, history, and social science. In career and technical courses, the suggestion has been incorporated into agriculture, accounting, office technology, and

early childhood education.

One comment from a science instructor:

“Students are now provided with a handout that clearly details the expectations of the writing assignments. I have had fewer questions from students since this change and the quality of the papers has increased in all classes.”

- Refer students who are having writing problems to the writing specialists.

Nineteen faculty responded that they had used this suggestion. The change has been made across the curriculum, in 21 courses. The suggestion has been incorporated mostly into the transfer courses of science, English, economics, history, and social science.

A couple of comments from instructors:

“There is no evidence that the students follow through.”

“Online students have more difficulty using the writing specialist.”

- Give the writing rubric to the students, so they will be aware of the writing expectations.

Nineteen faculty responded that they had used this suggestion. The change has been made across the curriculum, in 31 courses. The suggestion has been incorporated into the transfer courses of science, English, humanities, math, history, and social science. In career and technical courses, the suggestion has been incorporated into office technology and early childhood education. One instructor shared the rubric that was used in a nursing class. Instructors for all Developmental Education courses used some type of rubric already but they were working on developing more consistent rubrics.

- Do not accept poorly written work.

Eighteen faculty responded that they had used this suggestion. The change has been made across the curriculum, in 20 courses. The suggestion has been incorporated into the transfer courses of science, English, and social science. In career and technical courses, the suggestion has been incorporated into agriculture, accounting, office technology, computer science and early childhood education.

A few comments from instructors:

“All work from some students is poor but that is why we have Developmental Education. We take the poorly written work (as

something) and begin to see improvements.”

“Students must have papers proofed and corrected in writing lab.”

“Papers are returned ungraded and students are expected to re-submit the papers when directions have been followed.”

“Students who do not meet minimum requirements for a C must revise and resubmit the assignment for a grade. Depending on the problem, students may have to meet with me first.”

CHAPTER 5

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

CHAPTER 5 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Introduction

Four major credentials have been available to John Wood Community College (JWCC) students: the Associate in Arts (AA), the Associate in Science (AS), the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) and the Certificate. The AA and AS degrees were designed for those students who plan to transfer to a four-year college to continue their education. In contrast, the AAS degrees and associated certificates have been available to students who desired specialized career training which focuses on preparing students for immediate full-time employment. The AAS degrees and certificate programs are represented in the Figure 1 as green and gold, respectively.

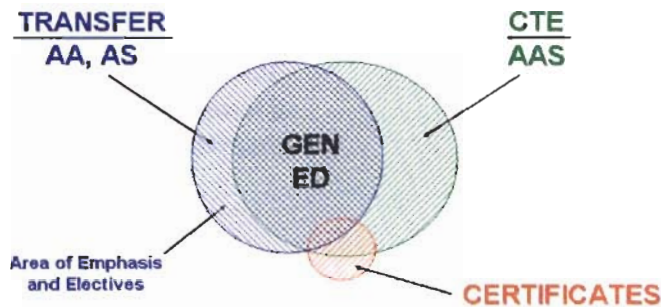


Figure 1 Instructional Programming at JWCC

JWCC has defined a program as “a series of courses that lead to a degree or certificate.” JWCC offered 45 degrees and certificates grouped into seven Career and Technical Education (CTE) departments to meet the needs of students and the requirements of the district’s businesses. The programs were Business and Industry, Business, Health Sciences, Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Computer Science and Office Technology, Transportation and Public Safety, and the Division of Education.

CTE comprised 45 separate degrees & certificates grouped in 7 departments.

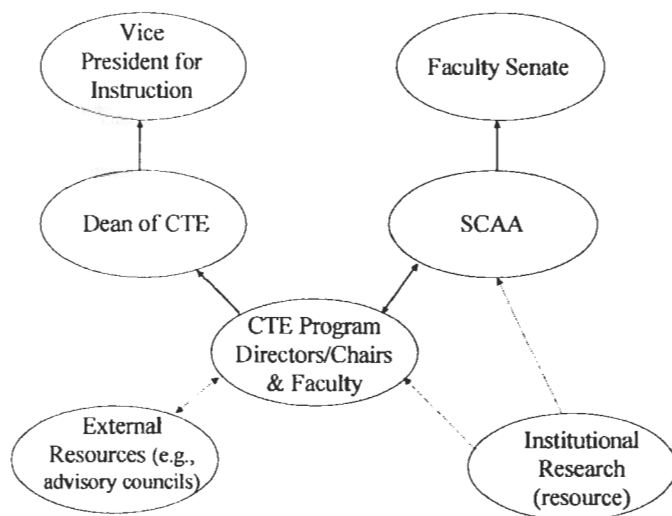
The purpose of assessment within the CTE areas was to ensure that the learning outcomes of each program were being achieved. Each department’s faculty has been responsible for the assessment planning and activities within their respective programs. Procedures and mechanisms have been developed and changed over time in

order to document the assessment of student learning and provide data for continual improvement.

The Infrastructure

The SCAA formally assumed responsibility of guiding the assessment of student learning at its March 22, 2002 meeting and began immediately focusing in the assessment of general education. After the successful implementation of the portfolio assessment of general education in 2005, the SCAA broadened its focus to include the assessment of CTE student learning outcomes.

Figure 2 provides a graphic of the current relationship among the parties involved in the assessment of CTE program outcomes. The CTE program chairs and directors administratively report to the Dean of CTE. The SCAA, however, coordinates the documentation of CTE assessment. Some CTE programs use external resources (e.g., advisory councils) to gain assessment-related information and feedback. The Office of Institutional Research provides assessment-related expertise to CTE programs as well as to the SCAA.



SCAA coordinated the documentation of assessment within CTE.

Figure 2 - Relationship of Parties Involved for CTE Assessment.

Prior to formalizing the process for the assessment of student learning and becoming integrated into the regime of a formal institutional process, CTE programs relied primarily on external resources to provide feedback about their programs' effectiveness and to suggest curricular changes. These resources have included internship supervisors, employers of graduates, advisory councils and their curriculum committees. As the focus shifted to the

assessment of student learning, these resources were included in the feedback structure, by receiving copies of the assessment reports and returning written responses to the department for further action.

The SCAA provided the coordination necessary to put each CTE program's assessment within the same framework for systematic planning, implementation and use of assessment with its corresponding documentation. One of the primary standard documents was the Assessment Implementation Form; which was the four-column summary form used to plan and report assessment activities. The four columns were: Goal and/or Intended Outcomes or Objectives, Assessment Activity, Assessment Result, and Use of Results. Departments have used this form as a summary of their annual activities.

The Assessment Implementation Form summarized a program's annual assessment activities.

Under the SCAA's guidance, full-time and associate faculty has collaborated with their respective department chairs or directors to determine goals and student learning outcomes for each program. Each program has developed a loose leaf binder for collecting the assessment-related documents. Each binder contained:

Each program has developed clear goals and outcomes.

- Assessment Implementation Forms,
- goals and outcomes,
- rubrics,
- Cycle Sheet – a summary form describing who (department level) was responsible for overseeing the assessment activities, when those activities would be conducted, who would analyze the data,
- reports of past assessment activities,
- responses to the reports,
- actions taken, and
- additional sections -- as desired by each program to include advisory committee meeting minutes, departmental meeting minutes, etc.

Program binders have contained annual assessment cycle, assessment plans, reports, uses of data.

Figure 3 provides a graphic representation of the cycle and the roles of the CTE program and SCAA in the cycle. The SCAA collected the plans and reviewed them for completeness, sending them back to the program faculty for improvement or clarification, if necessary. Each program conducted its assessment according to the plan and reported to the SCAA the results as well as the implications the data had on program changes or curricula. The faculty was involved at all stages of the assessment process: from the planning, conducting, reviewing, evaluating, and application.



Figure 3 – Annual Cycle of CTE Assessment

Involvement of associate faculty and half-time faculty has also increased since 2003. Departmental meetings to discuss assessment included associate and half-time faculty. Fall convocation schedules have been developed keeping in mind the need to include associate faculty in all discussions including departmental assessment-related discussions (e.g., see the schedule for fall 2005). Currently, associate and half-time faculty have been involved at the department level; others have been members of the SCAA (e.g., see the list of 2005-2006 SCAA members).

Associate Faculty has been included in assessment activities.

Student Involvement

Student involvement has been encouraged by an SGA representative sitting on the SCAA. Most CTE advisory councils have a student representative sitting as an active member of the council.

CHAPTER 6

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

CHAPTER 6
ASSESSMENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

Description

The purpose of Developmental Education at John Wood Community College (JWCC) has been to provide remedial instruction to underprepared students to help them acquire the basic academic skills (reading, writing, and math) needed to be successful in college. The Developmental Education (Dev Ed) department seeks to fulfill its purpose by concerning itself with three activities: 1) accurate assessment and placement of students into developmental and on-level courses, 2) effective and efficient instruction in the developmental courses, and 3) assessment activities that measure and provide continual improvement of the first two activities.

The Dev Ed department was created in 2003 with the Department Chairperson as its only member. It has since added a full-time faculty member (January, 2005). The Chair of the Dev Ed department works with the chairs of the Mathematics department and the Language, Literature, & Humanities department to determine curricula and to provide sections taught by full-time faculty from both departments. While the full-time Dev Ed faculty taught Dev Ed courses, the chair also hired associate faculty to teach additional sections for Math and English instruction.

The Dev Ed department was formed in January 2003.

In January 2003, the Developmental Education Oversight Committee was formed. The purpose of the Oversight Committee was to provide guidance to the then newly created Developmental Education department. Previous efforts within the college had been more or less *ad hoc* with no formal structure. One of the Oversight Committee's first actions was to adopt, as general guidelines, the six goals of developmental education as expressed by the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE).

The Dev Ed department adopted NADE's goals for Dev Ed at JWCC.

1. To preserve and make possible educational opportunity for each postsecondary learner.
2. To develop in each learner the skills and attitudes necessary for the attainment of academic, career, and life goals.
3. To ensure proper placement by assessing each learner's level of preparedness for college coursework.
4. To maintain academic standards by enabling learners to acquire competencies needed for success in mainstream college courses.
5. To enhance the retention of students.
6. To promote the continued development and application of

cognitive and affective learning theory.

With the Oversight Committee's guidance the Dev Ed department has grown and taken its place within the College's formal instructional structure. As a result, prior concerns about advisement and placement have been alleviated.

Student Involvement

Student involvement in the assessment process has been limited to their participation in the placement testing and enrolling in Dev Ed courses.

Structure

The Dev Ed department was part of the Division of Education within Instruction. The chair of the department reports to the Director of Education who reports to the Dean of Transfer Education. Figure 1 shows the organizational relationships of the department within Instruction.

As mentioned above, the Developmental Education Oversight committee guided the chair in fulfilling the goals of developmental education at JWCC. Since its inception, the committee's members have included:

- the Chair of the Dev Ed department,
- one faculty member of Math Department who has taught one or more math developmental education courses,
- one faculty member from the Language, Literature, and Humanities department who has taught one or more English developmental education courses,
- a representative from Adult Education,
- the Dean of Transfer Education,
- the Dean of Career & Technical Education
- a counselor from Career and Advising Services,
- the Director of Institutional Research,
- the new full-time Dev Ed Faculty member (2005), and
- the Director of Education (2005).

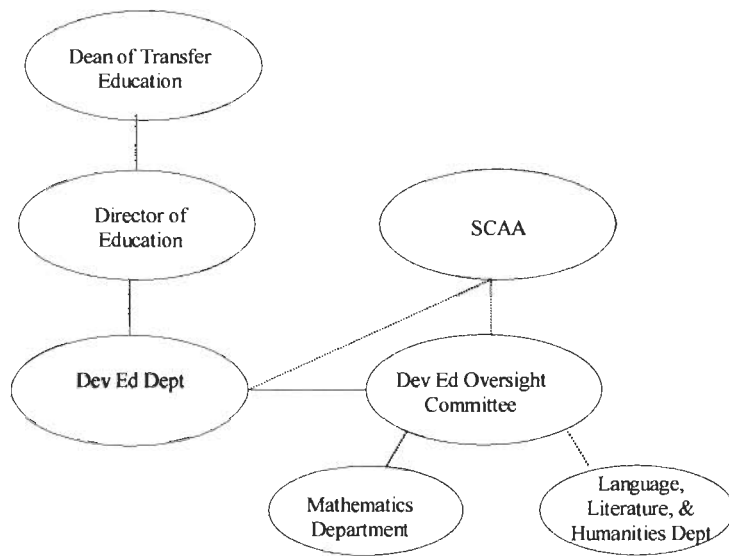


Figure 1 – Relationships of parties responsible for assessment in developmental education

The original chair of the Oversight Committee was the Director of Institutional Research who was selected because the director had past education and experiences as a developmental educator. Also, because the Director was a direct report to the President and an objective participant, the Director’s membership allowed the committee to transcend both Instruction and Student Services. As the committee coalesced, the leadership for the committee has been tacitly assumed by the Chair of the Dev Ed department. The Director of Institutional Research has continued to be a member of the committee.

The Oversight Committee has advised the Dev Ed Department and was an advocate for Dev Ed concerns throughout the college.

In practical terms, the Oversight Committee has reviewed and monitored all activities within the college that relate to developmental education. These activities have included: assessment of students’ academic preparation, placement based upon that assessment, advising, tutoring, re-organization, and re-distribution of funds to or from developmental education-related programming. Although the Oversight Committee has, in one sense, been an advocate of developmental education within the college, it has also been the primary source of planning for and conducting of the assessment of student learning in developmental education. Also, The Oversight Committee has made recommendations to other departments or programs within the college. These recommendations have led to changes that benefited developmental education students.

Since January 2003, the committee has met two to four times per month during each academic year to clarify goals and objectives,

determine appropriate actions, determine and complete assessment activities, make developmental education–related recommendations to other departments within the college, and modify departmental procedures and curriculum. The Dev Ed department has been meeting a minimum of four times a year with its full-time faculty and associate faculty.

Clarity of Goals and Outcomes

The goals developed by the Oversight Committee have been consistent with the goals established by NADE. A considerable amount of work within each goal has been accomplished. There was, however, still considerable work to do.

Goal 1 Insure the proper placement of under-prepared students.

- **Outcome 1 - Improve communication between service areas.**
- **Outcome 2 - Develop alternative assessments of student knowledge and skills.**
- **Outcome 3 - Improve articulation of prerequisite skills.**

Placement activities have been conducted by Student Services. The Admissions office has been responsible for administering the placement test (ACT's COMPASS test). Career and Advising Services has incorporated the placement results into its counseling services with individual students. The Oversight Committee has evaluated the outcomes of the placement assessment process and made recommendations based on the findings. The Director of Admissions, the Dean of Enrollment Services, and the Director of Career and Advising Services were consulted and brought into discussions that led to a recommendation by the Oversight Committee. Recommendations have included:

- asking the Dean of Transfer Education to establish entry skill levels for college courses in reading, English, and math,
- creating a confirmation placement test for students in MAT 011 (Pre-algebra),
- changing the cut-off scores for math and reading, and
- creating level 005 courses for reading, English, and math for students at the lowest skill levels.

The recommendations have led to change. For example, the Math department adopted the recommendation to create a confirmation placement test for students enrolled in MAT 011 in fall 2005. The use of the confirmation placement test has led to a) moving some students into higher or lower Math classes (e.g., better placement) and b) adjustments in the placement criteria for MAT 011.

Research improved the placement of students into the Dev Ed Math component.

Goal 2. To maintain academic standards by enabling under-prepared learners to acquire competencies needed for success in on-level courses.

- **Outcome 1 - Create new learning environments or modify existing ones.**
- **Outcome 2 - Create new course structures or modify existing ones.**
- **Outcome 3 - Create consistent attendance policies.**
- **Outcome 4 - Orient students to instructional and support culture and extracurricular activities.**
- **Outcome 5 - Students will achieve the learning outcomes for each developmental education course.**

The committee recommended a learning center/lab for developmental math and English. A “contained” lab has not yet been instituted. The Dev Ed department has been using a math software program (ALEKS) for the lowest level math students (MAT 005). This web-based software has improved student learning as evidenced by COMPASS assessment results at semester’s end. Students have used ALEKS to remediate their individual weaknesses. The Dev Ed department has been reviewing web-based materials for reading and English.

In 2003, following a recommendation the committee made, low-end developmental education classes (MAT 005, ENG 005, and CMN 005) were created. The 005 classes were designed not only to allow for better instruction for the lowest skilled students but also to aid in better placement and retention in the pre-existing higher level developmental education courses. This has reduced the range of students’ preparedness in all courses. Thus, instructors had more time to teach the goals of the course rather than address remediation needs.

The committee tracked students who took an 005 course to determine how well they did in the next course of the sequence. Based on the results, the committee has recommended to Student Services that double- and triple-threat students (those students who have placed into two or more developmental education courses) should be enrolled in a study skills class - PSY 108. A designated section of PSY 108 has been reserved for developmental education students.

The Dev Ed department has a uniform attendance policy. All students can be dropped without notice after missing 1.5 times the number of class meetings per week during the first 12 weeks of the class. Attendance has not counted in the determination of grades.

The Dev Ed department created courses (“005”) for the lowest-skilled students.

All students enrolled in structured Dev Ed courses have been required to complete the COMPASS as a post-test. The post-test has served as a measure of the student learning outcomes. The specific student learning outcomes for developmental education can be found in the Appendix.

COMPASS placement test was used as a post-test outcome measure of student learning.

Goal 3 To enhance the retention of under-prepared learners

- **Outcome 1 - Improve communication among students, faculty and support staff.**
- **Outcome 2 - Improve Dev. Ed counseling practices.**
- **Outcome 3 - Communicate alternatives to learners who don't succeed where placed.**

Members of the Oversight Committee have met with the Career and Advising Services staff to discuss the difficulties developmental education students have in college. The purpose of the meetings was to re-emphasize that students who placed into two or three developmental education course were at high risk of not succeeding in college if they were also placed into college-level classes prior to completing their developmental education sequence.

Dev Ed Oversight Committee met with other groups and committees to improve retention-related services for students.

Also, the Oversight Committee met with the Support Services staff and director to better understand the tutorial services and the tutorial referral system (Early Alert System) available to instructors. The result of the meetings was that the forms were changed and the process was refined to better serve the students and faculty.

Goal 4. To impact the development of staff and instructors by promoting the continued development and application of cognitive, affective and behavioral learning theory

- **Outcome 1 - Encourage involvement in national and statewide organizations.**
- **Outcome 2 - Encourage involvement in JWCC governance system.**
- **Outcome 3 - Encourage involvement in local in-service programs.**

To encourage faculty development with regard developmental education, the Dev Ed department has budgeted for the last three years to provide membership for 10 individuals including Oversight Committee members and Instruction administration to NADE. One of the membership benefits includes the professional journal published by NADE.

Since 2002, JWCC has been represented by the Dev Ed Chair at

national and state developmental education conferences. In addition, eight additional members have attended at least one conference. A report of the highlights of each conference was shared with the Oversight Committee.

One or more members of the Dev Ed Oversight Committee have had roles in the college's governance structure. Members have sat on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, SCAA, Curriculum Committee, Professional Development Committee, Tenure Review Committee, and Technology Committee. Since 2002, the Dev Ed department has increased its visibility tremendously on the JWCC campus.

In August 2006, the first Dev Ed convocation was held. The morning session consisted of Ruby Payne's workshop entitled "Understanding the Framework of Poverty" presented by Maria Dunstan. During the afternoon session the participants practiced scoring techniques using rubrics for math (pre-algebra) and writing.

Feedback Loop

Figure 2 below displays the feedback loop for assessment within the Dev Ed department. The Oversight Committee has been responsible for the assessment process by not only planning the assessment activities but also by guiding the Dev Ed department in conducting the assessment. Since the chair of the Dev Ed department has been on the Oversight Committee it has been easy for the chair to enact the planned assessments within the Dev Ed department. Similarly, the chair has been able to share with the full-time and associate faculty the Oversight Committee's analysis of the results and obtain feedback.

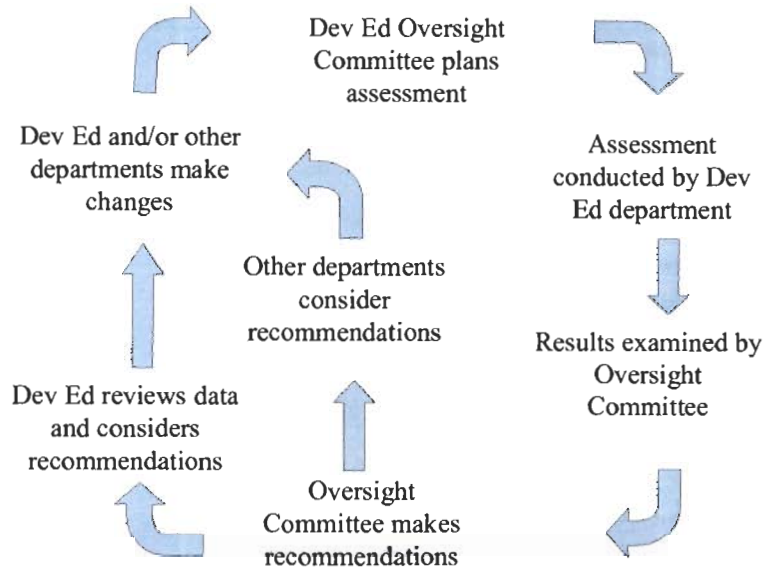


Figure 2 Dev Ed Assessment Loop

The Dev Ed assessment has occurred each semester since fall of 2005. The committee has met regularly during the year and has reviewed the assessment data. From the data and their review, the Dev Ed department with the guidance of the Oversight Committee has planned changes, planned further assessment, and made recommendations for the next semester. Beginning in the fall of 2006, the Dev Ed department reported and provided documentation to the SCAA.

The following presents an example of how assessment has led to change as a result of post-test COMPASS analysis in math Dev Ed classes:

When COMPASS data was received for students in Introductory Algebra (MAT 012) classes for fall 2005, it was found that only 18 of 162 (11%) students tested placed forward into the next level by virtue of their COMPASS score. Instructors thought that this might have been an anomalous finding, perhaps caused by a disparity in what the COMPASS test covered compared to what was being taught in classes as outlined in the course syllabus. In spring 2006 a second measurement showed that only 11 of 107 (10%) students placed forward. These two sets of data and a review of the questions asked by COMPASS led to a conclusion that there was incongruence between COMPASS and the course curriculum. At the August 2006 Dev Ed convocation the Dev Ed full-time and associate faculty decided to use a locally developed post-test for MAT 012 that would be a more accurate measure of the students' learning.

Conclusion

The Dev Ed department has advanced significantly since 2002. Some of the original goals have been met. Changes have been made. The focus has moved to the assessment of learning outcomes whereas earlier the focus was on improving placement and creating some consistency and a better environment for instructors and students. The college has recognized developmental education as an integral and important function. With regard to assessment specifically, the sharpened focus on student learning outcomes needs to continue and lead to improvement in instructional methodologies and/or structures. To become an integral part of the college-wide assessment structure, the Dev Ed department began reporting all assessment of student learning activities and results to the SCAA in fall of 2006.

Having established Dev Ed as a department, the Oversight Committee has focused on the assessment of student learning.