

The Higher Learning Commission Action Project Directory

Des Moines Area Community College

Project Details	
Title Developing An Extended English Comp. I Pilot	Status REVIEWED
Category 1-Helping Students Learn	Updated 09-13-2010
Timeline	Reviewed 10-03-2010
Planned Project Kickoff 11-01-2007	Created 11-24-2009
Target Completion 12-01-2009	Version 3 of 3

1: Project Goal

A: Improve student success in core English course work. Create a comprehensive writing program at DMACC that supports students at multiple levels of competencies, improves appropriate course level instruction and improves student retention. Provide more appropriate placement for students of all levels of writing competency. Facilitate enhanced instruction that supports those students who are not quite ready for college-level writing, those students who are at college-level writing, as well as honors level students.

2: Reasons For Project

A: DMACC is trying to resolve the issue of high failure rate in English Comp I courses and inappropriate placement of students. Students are failing English Comp I courses at a rate higher than other courses. Developmental writing courses exist but there are multiple barriers to the efficacy of this instructional model, one major factor being the reticence of students to enroll in developmental coursework. DMACC would like to develop a process/program that would provide an alternative way for students to learn effective college level writing. This project was identified from NCCBP Aggregate Report 2007.

3: Organizational Areas Affected

A: District-wide English Composition courses, English Faculty, Assessment, Advising/Counseling, and Scheduling. Areas and personnel to be affected are faculty load, room scheduling, tabloid preparation and printing, the curriculum commission, COMPASS placement testing, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness' predictive analytics.

4: Key Organizational Process(es)

A: Targeted processes are directed towards developing current college writing courses into a comprehensive program that would enhance the learning experience for a broader range of students. DMACC provides writing instruction in several levels of developmental writing as well as the core courses of English Composition. Developmental writing is under-utilized (due to non-transferability of credits) with limited numbers participating & transitioning into Comp I. Current Comp 1 courses are filled with three distinctly different levels of competency resulting in instruction provided to the middle or lower end. The comprehensive writing program will enhance student assessment, placement and improve appropriate course level instruction.

5: Project Time Frame Rationale

A: Initially DMACC needs to research other best practices, set up a work group of English faculty who will develop a pilot that can be tested and modified prior to college-wide roll out. The projected timeline allows for the development, training and implementation of the iMoat assessment technology and processes, course development, the gaining of faculty support and participation, and the implementation of a pilot. The projected timeline for the pilot implementation is Fall 08 with full implementation in Fall 09.

6: Project Success Monitoring

A: In the developmental stages of the project, multiple meetings will be conducted by the implementation team. In addition the AQIP Leadership Team will meet with the implementation team leaders to monitor activities and provide support as needed. Goals/timelines have been established for each of the individual components of the project to ensure that the project continues to progress.

7: Project Outcome Measures

A: Multiple data in regards to satisfactory completion (C or better), retention and progression among others will be captured for students participating in the extended Comp I pilot relative to current institutional data. The data will be an integral component in measuring and studying the outcomes and overall success of the comprehensive English Composition Program Pilot.

Project Update

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: The ENG 104 initiated in the fall of 2008 with a single class on a single campus. In the spring of 2009 the course offerings expanded to six sections across the district. Seven classes were scheduled for fall 2009. At the end of the project, when enrollment data were collected, there were 44 completers. Six of the seven course sections were active and all six campuses participated.

2: Institution Involvement

A: This faculty led project has been supported by all levels of administration. While enrollments are low in many of the sections senior administration from the CAO through the academic deans and provosts support the continuation of the courses. Faculty are working with methods of instruction through traditional and web blended course offerings.

3: Next Steps

A: This action project as established is complete. A new action project has been established to study the factors surrounding the course. Multiple data in regards to satisfactory completion (C or better), retention and progression among others have been captured for students participating in the extended Comp I pilot. The data are an integral component in measuring and studying the outcomes and overall success of the comprehensive English Composition Program Pilot.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Faculty leadership has been critical in this project. This action project has demonstrated the strength in collaboration between faculty and administration in developing the course, getting it on the schedule and getting the course offered across the district. The continuation of district-wide support for this pilot course has been a strong testament in the collaborative efforts of the college.

5: Project Challenges

A: There are no challenges to the action project as written. Challenges going forward will be identified in the new action project: ENG 104 Factors Surrounding Utilization.

Update Review

1: Project Accomplishments and Status

A: The expansion of ENG 104 over the past two years is a success worth celebrating. The fact that the course is being offered on all six campuses shows interest in helping students learn (AQIP Category (1) Helping Students Learn) as well as the ability to work collaboratively (AQIP Category (9) Building Collaborative Relationships). The collection of success and retention data will be helpful in determining the overall effectiveness of the action project (AQIP Category (7) Measuring Effectiveness). The College will benefit from the continuation of data collection to obtain trend data for determination if improvements need to be made (AQIP Category (8) Planning Continuous Improvement). The focus and energy given to the project over the past two years is commendable. It certainly exhibits leadership and commitment as well as a genuine desire to better serve students. Kudos!

2: Institution Involvement

A: Support from administration at all levels is extremely important especially in these challenging financial times. It sounds as though clear communication occurred as the action project was developed and implemented (AQIP Category (5) Leading and Communicating) because without this the project may not have been as successful as it was. Continual senior administration commitment is important as the College offers the new courses into the future (AQIP Category (1) Helping Students Learn and Category (9) Building Collaborative Relationships). The fact that faculty are working on the development of alternate delivery methods shows commitment and dedication to the new classes as well which is imperative to the project. Consideration may be given to involving an instructional designer and/or faculty mentors to assist those new to teaching web blended courses. This has the potential to allow faculty to focus on the content while the designer focuses on technology and how to use it effectively to teach as well as the design of the online portion of the course. A faculty mentor may help alleviate trepidation about the online environment. The College may also benefit from having an institutional researcher and assessment personnel more involved in the project to obtain data and analysis (AQIP Category (7) Measuring Effectiveness) to understand successes and areas for improvement (AQIP Category (8) Planning Continuous Improvement).

3: Next Steps

A: The College understands the importance of collecting and analyzing data (AQIP Category (7) Measuring Effectiveness) which is great! The commitment to continuing the project with a focus on multiple data analysis is commendable and will certainly have a positive impact on student learning and faculty teaching (AQIP Category (1) Helping Students Learn). The desire to continually improve English course offerings and develop a comprehensive writing program exhibits a culture of continuous quality improvement which is certainly in the spirit of AQIP and high performance organizations (AQIP Category (8) Planning Continuous Improvement). Best of luck as you move to the next steps of this important initiative.

4: Resulting Effective Practices

A: Congratulations on the collaboration that has occurred as a result of implementing this action project! This type of work not only has an impact on how initiatives are implemented and decisions made but also have a positive impact on students' learning (AQIP Category (1) Helping Student Learn) and success while at DMACC. It will be important to maintain the collaborative relationships between administration and faculty as well as appropriate personnel at the six other locations as the College moves into "next steps" (AQIP Category (8) Planning Continuous Improvement and Category (9) Building Collaborative Relationships).

5: Project Challenges

A: Congratulations on a successful project with no lingering challenges! Best of luck as the College moves forward with the new action project. DMACC's commitment and dedication to helping students become successful writers is important to celebrate.