

Action Project

Title: National Association for Developmental Education certification of the Heartland Community College Developmental Writing and Math Programs

Version: 2

Institution: Heartland Community College **Status:** Completed

Submitted: 2010-12-13 **Category:** 1-Helping Students Learn

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2009-12-10
Target completion date: 2011-07-01
Actual completion date: 2011-11-30

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

The main goal is to complete the NADE certification process which includes conducting the self-study, analyzing that data and then applying for the certification.

The main AQIP goal of the College is Helping Students Learn. This self-study will focus on our developmental programs that offer our students a foundation for their remaining college work. A large part of our mission is Access to Higher Education. In order to offer such access HCC must offer a strong developmental education program. The NADE certification process will help us maintain our current strengths and improve on our weaknesses. The goal to increase student success and retention aligns directly with the mission of the College.

Reasons For Project

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

This project is designed to help identify specific problems within the Developmental Writing and Math Programs in a way that will help HCC fix those problems and strengthen the program.

This project is important because more than 25% of HCC students take at least one developmental education course and the success and retention rates of those students are lower than is desired. In addition, more than 60% of HCC students take at least one

developmental math course and the success and retention rates of those students are lower than is desired.

The result of the certification project will be a strategic plan for improving the success and retention rates of students taking developmental English and math courses at HCC.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

The main areas impacted by this project will be the students, faculty and staff involved with the Writing and Math Programs along with other student support areas that work with those students including testing and tutoring and advising.

Internal: Developmental students, developmental faculty, advisors, tutors, non-developmental faculty and all academic programs within the college.

External: Prospective developmental students and the larger community

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

The primary organizational process to be impacted is developmental instruction.

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

The self-study should take approximately one year depending on available release time. Interpretation of the self-study and completion of the NADE certification will take approximately one year depending on available release time.

As of January, 2011:

English

- All but one section of the self-study has been completed – the last section will be completed this semester
- Two sections of GENS 100 being piloted this semester by English faculty as investigation into integrating student success strategies into developmental writing courses
- We have proposed piloting four sections of a four credit developmental writing course in the fall (probably two sections of 094 and two sections of 095) which integrates the student success strategies used in the GENS courses since targeted student success instruction is one of the main interventions identified in the self study

Math

- We will be piloting seven sections of the redesigned developmental math sequence (one of the main interventions identified)
- We hope to finish running the review sessions for their remaining self-study questions.

Full self-studies should be completed in Summer 2011.

Project Success Monitoring

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

Success of the project is defined by the completion of the certification process. The Developmental English Self-Study only has one section to complete, while the Math Self-Study will complete its multiple sections this spring.

Project Outcome Measures

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

The anticipated outcomes were to identify places where improvements can be made to the developmental writing and math programs and create goals tied to those improvements.

In spring 21011 two pilots are taking place. Two English faculty will pilot "On Course" in an Academic Success class to research if that program may benefit developmental education students in English. In mathematics seven sections will pilot a modularized math curriculum.

The progress of the pilots projects be monitored by DECT at and the appropriate Dean.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status

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

Math Team: Weekly math meetings were held to discuss low retention and pass rates in the developmental math courses for the past year. The math department is in the process of applying for NADE certification for developmental education courses. We have completed almost all of the self-evaluation and are currently working on an action project. Benchmark data comparing our retention and pass rates was used to determine that we fall below average among similar institutions. Last summer we applied for an NCAT grant and received it. This has allowed us to completely redesign how all the developmental math courses are offered. We offer all dev ed math in a computer lab with multiple instructors offering assistance on an "as needed" basis. Students must master material in modules before they can move on. Technology has been integrated into the course to give students timely help when they need it. This is the first semester we have full implementation and will gather data on pass rates and retention utilizing the teaching software. A brand new computer lab with 140 computers and a testing center with 50 computers was built for this project. Extensive instructor training meetings as well as input meetings were employed. We will compare success rates using the Emporium model to success rates using a traditional lecture mode (two years of outcomes for each).

English Team: The College has supported this AQIP project in accomplishing the following:

- travel for and training of two English instructors at a NADE certification training institute in Chicago;

- funding three English faculty members to attend an On Course Workshop in Marriottsville, Maryland;
- time for Institutional Effectiveness staff to provide baseline data required by NADE;
- completion of an intensive self-study of the developmental English program;
- offering three sections of developmental English courses (one ENGL 094 and two ENGL 095) as four-credit-hour trials of infusion of the regular English curriculum plus student success curriculum; and
- beginning of the application narrative for NADE certification.

NOTE: We did not complete the NADE certification process in one year, which was listed as a goal in the original AQIP Action Project Charter. The NADE certification process actually takes three to five years because it includes the self-study, analysis of baseline data, creation and two-year implementation of action projects that address the program's strengths and weaknesses, analysis of post-action –project data, and completion of the narrative. We misunderstood the NADE process when the charter was completed. However, we have made significant progress as detailed above.

Institution Involvement

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

Math Team: Weekly meetings with constituents across campus occurred for over a year. This involved IT, admissions, registration, testing, institutional effectiveness, math faculty members, and math administration. We also attended advisor in-services to give updates on the new program and met with area high school administrators. A team of faculty, staff, and admin was formed over the summer to update the curriculum and create the modules, assessments, syllabi, and focus groups. The Developmental Education Coordinating Team was a foundation for institutional support. This project was placed with high priority on the IT project list and a lab was built and furnished in record time.

English Team: Two English instructors were selected to begin/complete the Self-Evaluation (the first step; an extensive program evaluation). The college provided release time from teaching and summer pay for these instructors to provide the initial investigation and scoring and then hold college-wide meetings to review the scoring and receive broader input (to ensure greater accuracy). Awareness of the project was maintained in several ways: frequent reporting on the progress of the Self-Evaluation to various college constituencies (such as the bi-annual Best Practices days); reports to key college committees (such as Curriculum and Academic Standards); and yearly written reports to various constituencies at the college. Those working directly on the Self-Evaluation were kept active by the ongoing financial support (mainly in the form of course-release time, providing the time for the faculty to move the project forward).

Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

Math Team: Surveys of instructors and students have already informed the Spring syllabus. Proposals for changes based on survey information and feedback meetings are being presented to the full time faculty to tweak the new program to improve. We are also

working on the NADE self-study and the NADE narrative. Two developmental math faculty members are being paid as program managers to head the initiative and to complete the NADE certification process.

English Team: The self-study revealed a lack of student success related to non-academic issues (e.g. child care, financial concerns, transportation, readiness for college). Interpreting this as an unmet need for instruction and integration of student success strategies in our developmental English courses, three English faculty members developed three, four-credit-hour pilot sections of developmental English with a combination of the regular English curriculum plus student success curriculum. The pilot sections are also using MyWritingLab, a course management system, to address language convention issues (grammar, spelling, punctuation, usage, and mechanics). The pilot faculty have been communicating regularly about strengths and weaknesses of this approach which will be reported to the whole English faculty at an upcoming Writing Program Institute Day. Assessments of students' understanding/application of student success strategies, English learning outcomes, and satisfaction with the courses are on-going. Because the pilot is on-going, a thorough critical analysis of it is not yet possible but it is definitely anticipated. Three pilot sections will be offered again in Spring 2012 using knowledge gained from implementation of the Fall 2011 pilot.

Resulting Effective Practices

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

Math Team: Long term, this model should provide significant cost-saving by increasing the number of students served per section and utilizing less costly personnel for instruction. Our expectation is that the increase in success and retention of developmental education students and the subsequent increase in graduates would be a reason for other institutions to use this method of instruction.

English Team: The self-evaluation revealed both strengths and weaknesses of the Developmental English program. A key weakness which has been identified is the lack of data-informed decision-making in the program. Without data to verify which students are succeeding (or, not succeeding), the program is at a loss to direct particular energy or resources toward any particular population. Additionally, lack of a systematic "data loop" impairs the program's ability to adequately assess course outcomes, pedagogies, and content. As a result of the certification process, the Developmental English program is in the process of re-designing the curriculum. Several sections are using revised curricula and data will be collected on student success rates. The pilot sections began in Fall 2011, so data are not yet available for the initial redesign efforts. The revised curriculum is based both on current research in the field of Developmental Education as well as the data we receive from the pilot sections and general institutional data. We do expect that the curriculum will be one that can be replicated elsewhere.

Project Challenges

What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share both the challenge and your strategy for meeting it. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help beyond the review process, explain your need(s) and tell us whom to contact and when.

Math Team: Because this is a new process for IT, students, faculty, advising, financial aid, the book store, etc. there has been resistance to change. We are collecting information and updating the course, providing training, in order to improve the course.

English Team: Several challenges include:

- Unlike the developmental math program which found a system to adopt at HCC, we have not found a system that fits our program. We continue to research for such a program at other institutions and in the literature, and this research will need to continue via faculty participation at conferences and membership in professional organizations.
- In order to continue to assess the success of the pilots with an eye toward full implantation to all English courses, we require the continued support of Institutional Effectiveness to regularly provide data about the developmental English program. A systematic data review process will enable the program to continually monitor the relationship between student success and implementation of the curriculum.
- Eventually, this AQIP Action Project will require additional future release time for faculty. This semester, no faculty members are receiving release time because we are teaching the pilots, but in the future we will need release time to implement the pilot across the program.

Annual Update

Reason for completion

What is the primary reason for closing this project?

The original goal of the Action Project was to apply for and attain NADE certification within one year; however, the NADE certification process actually takes three to five years since it includes the self-study; analysis of baseline data; creation and two-year implementation of action projects that address the program's strengths and weaknesses; analysis of post-action project data; and completion of the narrative. We misunderstood the NADE process when the Action Project charter was approved. However, we have made significant progress in each discipline area, and the work toward certification is to continue.

Success Factors

What aspects of this project would you categorize as successful?

Under this Action Project, the HCC math department, currently in the process of applying for NADE certification for developmental education courses, has completed almost all of its self-evaluation. Benchmark data comparing our retention and pass rates pointed to comparatively poorer performance than similar institutions. In response to these performance metrics, we applied for and received an NCAT grant to allow us to completely redesign the delivery strategies for our developmental math courses. We now offer all dev ed math in a computer lab with multiple instructors offering assistance on an "as needed" basis. Students must master material in modules before they can move on. Technology has been integrated into the course to give students timely help when they need it. Full implementation went into effect Fall 2011 and we will gather data on pass rates and retention utilizing the teaching software. Extensive instructor training meetings as well as

input meetings were employed. We will compare success rates using the Emporium model to success rates using a traditional lecture mode (two years of outcomes data for each).

In the long term, this model should provide significant cost-saving by increasing the number of students served per section and utilizing less costly personnel for instruction. Our expectation is that the increase in success and retention of developmental education students and the subsequent increase in graduates would be a reason for other institutions to use this method of instruction.

Participation in this Action Project prompted the College to support the NADE English team in the following ways:

- travel for and training of two English instructors at a NADE certification training institute in Chicago;
- funding three English faculty members to attend an On Course Workshop in Marriottsville, Maryland;
- time for Institutional Effectiveness staff to provide baseline data required by NADE;
- completion of an intensive self-study of the developmental English program;
- offering three sections of developmental English courses (one ENGL 094 and two ENGL 095) as four-credit-hour trials of
- infusion of the regular English curriculum plus student success curriculum; and
- beginning of the application narrative for NADE certification.

The revised curriculum is based both on current research in the field of Developmental Education as well as the data we have received from the pilot sections and general institutional data. We do expect that the curriculum will be one that can be replicated elsewhere.

Unsuccessful Factors

What aspects of this project would you categorize as less than successful?

Because the Math team's implemented approach involves new resources and process for IT, students, faculty, advising, financial aid, the book store, etc. there has been some resistance to change. We are collecting information and updating the course, providing training, in order to improve the course.

The English team's self-evaluation revealed both strengths and weaknesses of the Developmental English program, notably the lack of data-informed decision-making in the program. Without first identifying and operationalizing appropriate measures of effectiveness, and designing the mechanisms by which to regularly report on those measures, the program is at a loss to direct particular energy or resources toward any particular population. Additionally, lack of a systematic "data loop" impairs the program's ability to adequately assess course outcomes, pedagogies, and content. As a result of the certification process, the Developmental English program is in the process of re-designing the curriculum. Several sections are using revised curricula and data will be collected on student success rates. Eventually, this AQIP Action Project will require additional future release time for faculty. This semester, no faculty members are receiving release time because we are teaching the pilots, but in the future we will need release time to implement the pilot across the program.