

Action Project

Title: Develop a System for Tracking Developmental Student Success

Version: 2

Institution: Heartland Community College

Status: Completed

Submitted: 2009-11-24

Category: 1-Helping Students Learn

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2006-05-19

Target completion date: 2007-12-19

Actual completion date:

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

This project is the initial step in a comprehensive plan to track and improve developmental student success. This project will explore the feasibility of applying an existing model developed for Developmental Reading to Developmental Math and Writing. The end result will be a systematic, integrated tracking system for developmental education.

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

Results of the AQIP Examiner survey and our Campus Conversation Day yielded a general concern about student retention. Since a significant number of our students enroll at the developmental level, this seems like a good place to start addressing these concerns. Preliminary methods developed in the Reading model show promise for tracking students' progress through developmental courses and into college-level courses more effectively.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

Faculty in developmental reading, writing and math, student services, placement testing and advising, and institutional research will all be impacted by this action project.

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

Program assessment, curriculum development, and data collection and analysis can all be impacted by this action project.

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

Since there is an existing model that can be used for guidance, it should be relatively quick to determine whether the model can be extended and to develop an integrated data tracking system.

Project Success Monitoring

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

The team will submit monthly reports of progress to the AQIP Coordinating Committee.

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

A comprehensive process map of the developmental education process will be completed. An integrated data tracking system will be developed. A first round of data will be extracted from the system that shows: persistence and success of students in each developmental course, enrollment, persistence and success of students in their next level developmental and/or college level courses, and success of students by level of developmental placement and number of subject areas.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status

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

The developmental education tracking team after identifying several variables associated with student persistence through developmental education courses in Math, Reading, and English, obtained and customized a statistical software package that can produce an easy to interpret visual rendering or "star" of these several variables simultaneously. Examples of such variables are: Did the student fail, pass, or withdraw from one or more developmental education courses?; How many times has the student taken the same developmental education course?; or What are the demographic characteristics of the students who are or are not successful in various developmental education courses? The team worked to pull sample retention data for developmental education students out of the college's current data bases and run the software and interpret it.

Institution Involvement

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

The VP of Instruction provided a modest budget for food and allowed course release time for the team chair. Also, since developmental education cuts across three areas: Math, Reading, and English, there were several faculty who were interested in the project since it

was directly related to their courses. Finally, administrators and staff involved in the Academic Support area were also directly impacted by this project.

Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

The team will hand the software program along with modifications made to the program and the variable lists to the Institutional Research (IR) department so that IR can begin to present the data it has for developmental education students using the “stars” software. Members of the team who are involved in developmental education programs will review the data presentations and make recommendations to refine the software program either as needed or desired. Since the team has completed the software modification and has identified the data it would like to see from IR, the project will be retired during the Fall 2008 semester.

Resulting Effective Practices

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

The “stars” software program is an efficient and clear way to organize a number of variables related to the persistence of developmental education students with a single visual or “star”.

Project Challenges

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

The biggest challenge for this project is that while the “stars” software is very interesting and is a way to summarize a lot of data with a single visual, not many people currently working in the institution know how to use the “stars” software. Consequently, the IR department and/or others in the developmental education program will have to learn this program for it to be useful. Learning a new software program or even how to interpret the results of a new software program can take time and other resources which the college might not choose to commit. Another challenge is for IR to seamlessly extract the data from PeopleSoft in a way that makes it usable for the “stars” software. Finally, not all of the data that could be used in the “stars” software is currently collected by the college.

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