

UPDATE ACTION PROJECT

Assessment of General Education Outcomes

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

Academic Year 2009-2010 was the fourth year that Concordia used the ETS assessment resource, the Measures of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) Abbreviated Online Form to measure the effectiveness of our General Education curriculum. Registration for our freshman and senior students was conducted online through the First Year Experience course, Freedom and Responsibility, and through the senior capstone course, Values & Virtues. There were multiple time slots over two and one half weeks in fall semester and one and one half weeks in spring semester. The sessions were scheduled beginning at midday and continuing until 10:00pm: 35 during the fall semester, with 5 extra sessions during finals week; and 11 during spring, with 1 extra session during finals week. A total of 523 (95.6%) students took the test: 352 from Freedom and Responsibility, 171 from Values & Virtues. During the four years of this action project we have seen an improvement in the percentage of students who have taken the test. We are very pleased with the numbers from this past year.

After completion of testing in Spring 2010, we now have collected data from our AY2009-2010 senior students for both their freshman and senior years. We have been able to compare those scores in order to assess the "value added" to those students through our General Education curriculum. The following table shows those comparisons.

Scores for All Seniors Who Took the Test in AY200910 Compared with the Scores of the Freshmen Who Took the Test in AY200607 (the Seniors' Freshman Year)

	<u>Mean</u>		<u>Change</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>		<u>National Norms</u>
	SR Yr.	FR Yr.	FR-SR Yr.	SR Yr.	FR Yr.	2009-10
Total Score	447.69	439.32	8.37	22.9	18.42	442.9(19.4)
Critical Thinking	112.63	110.86	1.77	6.94	5.58	111.1 (6.3)
Reading	118.88	116.39	2.49	6.61	7.21	117.9 (7.0)
Writing	114.46	113.49	.97	5.34	4.50	114.2 (5.0)
Mathematics	114.51	111.95	2.56	7.02	6.25	113.0 (6.1)
Humanities	115.74	113.57	2.17	6.05	6.28	114.4 (6.5)
Social Sciences	115.12	113.30	1.82	7.24	5.85	113.2 (6.3)
Natural Sciences	114.99	113.57	1.42	5.75	5.79	114.9 (5.9)

There has been an increase in the scores of our senior students between their freshman and senior academic years. The most notable increases appear in the norm-referenced skill scores for mathematics and college-level reading. These are two areas where departments have been making curriculum/course adjustments to address weaknesses and

to improve the learning experiences of our students while sustaining the rigor of our programs. This is extremely encouraging to our faculty and administration.

Based on this past year's MAPP testing results, the department chairs, together with their individual faculty, have continued to discuss how they might make additional revisions to General Education courses within their department to address areas that could be further improved. These changes will be implemented during the current academic year. The Academic Council (which includes the Sr. and Asst. VPs for Academics and the Deans of each College) has established a practice of continually reviewing the General Education results. This review is then taken to the respective colleges for further review. The individual departments look carefully at the MAPP scores and see where changes and adjustments might be initiated in their course offerings that could improve the "value added" for our students in their academic experience.

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

This past year it was again a requirement that the General Education Outcomes test (MAPP) be completed in order to receive a passing grade by the freshmen registered in Freedom and Responsibility (the required First Year Experience course) and the seniors registered in Values and Virtues (the required capstone course). The Assistant Senior VP for Academics was instrumental in rallying the faculty teaching these courses to get their students to register and complete the Gen Ed test. Since we had a record enrollment of new freshmen, this involved a great many enthusiastic instructors.

Our students are now required to take two writing courses (English Composition and Writing about Literature), housed in the English Department. The faculty in this department carefully monitored student progress in writing skill development. The Math Department also continued to follow the effectiveness of changes that were made in their department to enhance student success. Incoming students take the math placement test during our summer Jump Start sessions and the initial math course for each of these students is determined by the department members, based on their placement test score. There is a course geared to remedial work which carries no credit. There are two other courses in the General Education Curriculum. Students are placed in the course most appropriate for them. The College of Arts and Sciences faculty met throughout the year to review the General Education Curriculum in light of the results from the Gen Ed testing program.

3. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

We now have four years of data for our senior students. We have been able to compare the senior students' scores to their scores as incoming freshmen and have been able to assess the "value added" by our General Education curriculum for these students during their time on our campus. We will continue this analysis of the pre- and post- scores each year.

The Sr. VP for Academics will meet annually with the College Deans to discuss the current results of our Gen Ed testing. The Deans of each college will be meeting with the Department chairs to present them with the testing results. Each department will meet as a whole to discuss in depth the next steps for appropriate revisions to General Education courses in their area of the curriculum with special emphasis in addressing areas that can be improved, as evidenced in the MAPP Proficiency Ratings. The revisions made as a result of these meetings will be reported back to the College Deans and the Sr. VP for Academics to complete the cycle.

The University has also established a Strategic Enrollment Planning initiative and a Committee for Student Success. These groups are collecting and analyzing data to improve our enrollment, retention, and matriculation practices and numbers. The data collected from our General Education testing program is being used by both of these planning groups to see how we as a university can better serve our students. These groups are both composed of faculty, staff, administration, and student representatives.

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

Our administration, faculty and staff have begun to look for the results of our annual Gen Ed testing. This is a major change on our campus and a good one. It has become a picture against which each department can seek ways to improve the General Education courses in their specific area. It is a joint, campus-wide effort to help our students learn even more through our General Education Curriculum. We are learning to make effective, data-driven decisions to better serve our students.

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

One challenge still remains: receiving feedback from department and program chairs about actions taken on revisions/adaptations/adjustments to curriculum, courses, and/or programs based on the results of this testing program. We know these actions are occurring, but we need to have a better reporting system in place so that we can document the changes and evaluate the effectiveness of them. Reminders will be sent frequently and the hope is that these reminders will be rewarded.