

Project Details

Title	Implementation of the new General Education Program - Assessment of Learning Outcomes	Status	ACTIVE
Category	1-Helping Students Learn	Updated	
Timeline		Reviewed	
Planned Project Kickoff	08-01-2010	Created	03-30-2010
Target Completion	06-30-2014	Last Modified	03-30-2010

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

A: Previous action projects, general education reform and centralization of outcome assessment, have now brought us to implementation of our revised General Education program and concurrently systematically assessing student achievement of learning outcomes. Now that our assessment infrastructure has been established, we will focus on assessment to both inform our efforts at promoting student success and as a mechanism for evaluation of the new curriculum. This effort will involve close coordination between the faculty General Education Committee, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the majors inside and outside the College.

2: 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:

A: General Education reform has taken about 4 years of concerted effort on campus. At the same time, we have been working hard to imbed centralized assessment of student learning outcomes into the culture and infrastructure of the campus. Our new General Education program will be implemented beginning in the fall 2010 for 2014 graduates. At the same time, the campus is focusing heavily on student retention as part of its enrollment initiative and in response to the state of Indiana's "Reaching Higher" initiative. Therefore, it is imperative that now, as we begin full-scale implementation of our new general education program that we make assessment of learning outcomes an integral part of that implementation. It is critical that we treat assessment of learning outcomes as a part of implementation of the new general education program at this opportune time so that assessment doesn't become an "add on." Also, there are bound to be unexpected difficulties or consequences of the new program and it is imperative that we collect, analyze and use data to fine tune the curriculum on an ongoing basis. Finally, a coherent program of assessment will require significant coordination between the College of Arts and Sciences and the majors both inside and outside the college. Developing this work as an action project has proven a successful way for IU Northwest to focus its efforts and maintain active discussion of the work.

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

A: All academic units, the Faculty Organization General Education and Assessment Committee, and the office of Academic Affairs will be affected.

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

A: Assessment of student learning outcomes—we will be focusing on assessment as providing measures of both student success and program evaluation.

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

A: Implementation of the general education program will take a full 4 years. By the end of this project, we will have refined our assessment infrastructure, gone through one complete admission cohort (for traditional students), and will have collected data that will inform evaluation. The faculty from all academic majors have identified for each major where assessment of general education learning outcomes will occur. Now it is time for the exact mechanisms to be described and implemented.

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

A: Success of this AP will be monitored by the Office of Academic Affairs (including the newly established Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research). Success will require 1). A standard process of evaluation of learning outcomes of foundational courses (Elementary Composition, Public Speaking, Mathematics, and a natural science with a laboratory) and using the results to suggest necessary improvements. This will be the responsibility of the General Education and Assessment Committee; 2). A method of monitoring and communicating assessment of learning outcomes in the Principle 2 Breadth of Learning courses and centralized reporting of the results. This will primarily be the responsibility of the College of Arts and Science; and 3). A method of monitoring and communicating assessment of learning outcomes in the advanced foundation courses and learning outcomes associated with Principle 3 through 5. This will primarily be the responsibility of the academic unit offering the major. The monitoring of these efforts will be centralized in Academic Affairs and reported at least annually by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research.

7: 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: Development, implementation, and communication of: 1) an established process by which the General Education and Assessment Committee conducts its assessment work related to learning outcomes in foundations courses and uses that data for improvement; 2) an established process by which the College of Arts and Sciences manages assessment of Breadth of Learning courses, uses the data for improvement and communicates the data to the larger campus faculty; and 1) an established process by which the academic majors (units) conduct assessment work related to learning outcomes in advanced courses and in Principles 3-5, communicates the results, and uses the results for improvement.