

**INTERIM REPORT ON IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING**  
**CYCLE: 2003-2004**  
(Draft 8/11/04)

**Synopsis of Activities during 2003-2004 Cycle**

Having completed one full cycle of departmental reviews and submission of reports on student learning, the results of the cycle 2002-2003 were distributed during the August 2003 Assembly Day session on best practices in student learning. At the workshop, the Illinois Goal Five standards were also distributed and discussed. Three program faculty members presented their student learning practices:

- ESL described its use of student portfolios and feedback loops to enhance program outcomes and practices;
- Auto Technology described the use of pre-test and post-tests to measure student learning growth in the program; and
- EMS described how the program was using feedback gotten from end-of-term student evaluation responses to modify instructional approaches to enhance student learning.

By the end of September 2003, the final Cycle 2002-2003 report was completed and incorporated comments from all instructional departments. The Student Learning Committee and the College administration reviewed the report. The document was then included in the Student Learning Committee's midyear report to the Faculty Senates.

In October 2003, Black Hawk College received official feedback from the Higher Learning Commission that the College had secured its ten-year accreditation status. However, as a follow-up to the review of BHC's student learning practices, a progress report on that topic, would have to be filed in June 2006. The Commission requested that the College be able to respond and provide evidence on the following three major questions:

- What data has the College collected in the assessment of general education outcomes and degree programs through direct and indirect measures?
- What changes in curriculum, methods of instruction, and/or academic activities have occurred based on the results of departmental assessments?
- What has been the impact of assessment on departmental planning and budgeting processes?

The Higher Learning Commission feedback was distributed to all employees over email and was carefully examined by the College faculty, administration, and staff. The Student Learning Committee incorporated the expected outcomes into its draft copies of the Faculty Guide to Student Learning: Cycles 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. Additionally, to meet new requirements relating to the Illinois Commitment: Goal Five, the incorporation of state expectations regarding student learning were included in the

standardized departmental student learning reporting form. This document, which was given to Department Chairs near the end of the spring 2004 semester, contained these additional questions:

- Briefly describe the processes your department uses to ensure that students demonstrate mastery of stated program learning objectives prior to program completion.
- Briefly describe overall how students within departmental programs have performed. Please provide applicable data.
- If program level assessment is not sufficiently established to provide the requested information in the prior two questions, briefly describe the process or processes being developed and the anticipated implementation schedule to address program level assessment.

Several other updates and initiatives occurred during Cycle 2003-2004 that supported and advanced the expansion of student learning throughout the College community. They are the following:

- Faculty Guide for Assessing Student Learning Cycle: 2004-2005 was approved by the Faculty Senates in May 2004 and will be distributed at the fall 2004 Assembly Day.
- As recommended by the Student Learning Committee and supported by the Faculty Senates and administration, "Student Learning" will be placed as a standing agenda item on departmental and administrative meetings (e.g., Instructional Services Council, Deans' Council) to promote discussion and sharing of ideas and initiatives throughout the year.
- The Teaching/Learning Center provided individual, group, and online workshops and assistance to faculty regarding student learning.
- Faculty were supported in attending workshops and conferences on assessment.
- New instructional areas and connecting instructional support units were incorporated into the results reporting cycle (e.g., BCEC, Student Success Center).
- The artifact collection process and English exit exam process are formally submitting their outcomes and results.
- Departments are linking student learning and continuous improvement processes feedback into the instructional equipment and institutional unit planning processes.
- A flowchart of the Black Hawk College student learning planning process was developed and approved by the Senates and administration. This chart is now included in the faculty guide.

### **Summary of English-Exit Exam Process**

Black Hawk College has followed an exit exam process for students in English 091 and 101 classes for over seven years. Listed below is a summary of outcomes and findings from the 2003-2004 academic year cycle as noted by the Dorothy Beck, Chair of the Humanities, Languages, and Journalism Department.

#### Fall 2003

- Of the 831 students enrolled at mid-date in composition classes, 562 attempted the exit exam at the first opportunity; 498 passed. An additional 70 students passed on the second topic, either through re-takes or make-ups.
- Error analysis of the failing essays showed the following: mechanics (139), focus—unclear thesis or vague response (71), development (70), style—word choice, tone, sentence complexity (70), and organization (32).
- Observations of the English faculty grading team regarding areas to monitor for students were the following: many students seemed to lack understanding of the topic and high error rate in mechanics coupled with stylistic errors indicate the need for more attention to the conventions of edited American English in Composition I.
- Prior to the spring scoring session, approximately 40 members of the faculty and staff from across the institution were able to attend a workshop on holistic grading principles facilitated by Professor William Condon from Washington State University. The session was helpful in laying groundwork for valid scoring of exit essays and strengthening of reader reliability on essays.

#### Spring 2004

- Of the 276 students registered for Composition I at mid-date, 192 attempted the essay. Of those, 161 passed. Another 26 passed with the retake or make-up topic.
- Error analysis of the failing essays showed the following: development (54), style (30), focus (26), correctness (26), and organization (15).

#### Summer 2004

- Information from the summer 2004 exit exam scoring is not available at the time of this interim report. Those findings will be included in the final report that will be filed in September 2004.

### **Description and Summary of Artifact Collection Process Outcomes**

#### Description and History of Artifact Collection

Black Hawk College established its outcomes for general education through a DACUM (Designing a Curriculum) process that was included for general use in coordination with

the Plan for Assessing Student Learning in May 1995. A process of artifact collection began in spring 1999 in order to begin to measure general education outcomes.

Instructional faculty was asked to voluntarily submit examples of student work that could benchmark objectives under the general education headings. The first designated category was C. Apply Communication Skills, followed in 2002 and 2003 by category B. Apply Quantitative Skills. A group of faculty volunteers, often from the Outcomes Assessment or the current Student Learning Committee, would meet at the end of the academic year to score the submitted artifacts. To maintain student confidentiality and to gather information following protocols that protect the rights of human subjects, artifact responses are coded and blind scoring is used.

Though the scoring was always done, no evaluation, application, or communication of the results was ever documented. Additionally, the original vision of the process was to expand in the future to collecting artifacts from all general education categories. However, those steps did not occur, and the artifact collection process did not expand to examine all portions of the general education grid. Participation of faculty, though not extensive, has continued over the years. This year's report will be the first attempt to look at the results of two cycles of grading and to share, apply, and document the outcomes of the artifact collection process. The ability of Black Hawk College to expand and refine this process for the betterment of our student learners is a goal that faculty and administration will work on collaboratively over the next several years. Use of an electronic student portfolio for AA and AS completers or nationally developed general education measurement tests are just some options that Black Hawk College may choose over time.

#### Summary of Artifact Collection Outcomes for Cycles: 2002-2003 and 2003-2004

The following information was excerpted from a report of findings analyzed by Professors Miley and Beck. The artifacts were submitted by BHC faculty during these two reporting cycles and were scored by faculty teams. A more detailed analysis is available.

#### Fall 2002 and Spring 2003

Artifacts collected were targeted to measure C: Apply communication skills (specifically C4: Use standard English and C5: Convey ideas and information through writing).

- In fall 2002, 152 writing artifacts from 9 sections of 6 different courses were scored. Data from 3 courses were included in the artifact analysis.
- In spring 2003, 145 writing artifacts from 11 sections of 7 different courses were scored.
- Data from 4 courses were included in the artifact analysis. Artifacts from developmental courses, artifacts based on group projects, artifacts from a course in a certificate program, and artifacts for which there was insufficient identifying information at the time of the analysis were excluded.

- A total of 185 artifacts were analyzed.
- The scoring teams evaluated the essays on a nine-part rubric. The team used the following scale to score the essays: organization (1-3 points); content (1-3 points); and mechanics (1-3 points).

### Analysis

- The process for collecting and scoring artifacts is deeply flawed.
- The analysis of artifacts yields no statistically significant conclusion regarding the impact—positive or negative—of general education courses on the ability to communicate effectively in writing.
- The analysis of artifacts suggests that students who enter with deficiencies that require developmental courses in reading and/or writing remain at risk and earn writing scores that are significantly lower than students who enter without such deficiencies—even after completion of nearly all general education requirements and after completion of developmental courses.
- The range of artifact scores for students transferring to the College is narrower, with greater concentration at the lower score end, than the range of artifact scores for “native” students.
- Analysis of samples from specific courses sometimes yields statistically significant results.

### Fall 2003 and Spring 2004

#### Analysis

The artifacts have been collected and scored. However, analysis is not yet complete. A summary and findings will be a part of the final student learning report document.

### **1) Data Collected at Department Level to Measure Program and General Education Outcomes through Direct and Indirect Measures**

The following comments are a summary of responses by question submitted by instructional units. The diligent work and ideas of all faculty and their department chairs helping to write this report are gratefully acknowledged. Full detail and information are found in the submitted department student learning reports. As of this writing, not all departmental reports are finished. The complete information will be included in the final report in September 2004.

- CS faculty has gathered pre- and post-test data related to outcomes in the CS100 course.
- Another faculty member is studying trends related to testing methodology. Students are allowed the option of taking either objective or problem/solving essay tests. The results of this spring 2004 activity are still under review.

- Mandatory pre- and post-testing of all students in developmental reading courses began in 2002-2003, utilizing an informal, locally constructed cloze test. The process was cumbersome, and results were inconclusive. The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) test, a standardized instrument, was adopted for use in spring 2003 and has been used in subsequent semesters. The data collected from pre-test and post-test results indicates statistically significant improvement in reading ability for this 2003-2004 cycle in both developmental reading courses.
- PLATO, a student-tutorial, web-based product, became available for use with students in August 2003. A PLATO learner summary by class reports is available for activity happening from August 18, 2003 and May 7, 2004.
- Nineteen students requested PLATO as a supplemental learning resource for their college-credit courses. Disciplines requested were math, science, English, communication, and reading.
- In spring 2004 a student request for service form was used to identify and track students using PLATO who were not enrolled in credit or adult education classes. Thirty-six individuals completed a request form.
- Seventeen individuals requested PLATO to brush up on academic skills. Some outcomes of PLATO usage showed five of the 17 completed ASSET, 1 registered for fall 2004 classes, 1 earned course grades of 2.0 or above and withdrew from 1 course in the term.
- One department collected information about the success of the BHC students transferring to a four-year college and tracked the success of science students as they progressed in the nursing program.
- The library used classroom assessment techniques in selected library instruction sessions to collect information on what students found most valuable, learned that was new, and still had questions. The input will be used to improve presentations.
- One department is using portfolio reviews to evaluate student learning within specific programs.
- Collection of data on student performance on the English exit exam for English 091 and 101 occurs.
- A Business Education instructor has students take exams for certification using software, as well as compile a portfolio of work.
- The Business and Community Education Center (BCEC) collects student evaluations at the end of every class. The information is summarized in a graph format and shared with coordinators, dean, and director. As appropriate, summarized feedback may be shared with industries. The evaluations are also applied to improve delivery and meet student and stakeholder expectations. Depending on company request, a needs assessment may be given to determine training requirements. Pre- and post-tests are sometimes given to document student progress (e.g., Blue Print Reading and Shop Math). Professional certification exams are sometimes administered and the pass-rate data used to ensure a program is meeting industry requirements (e.g., SHRM).
- A BCEC indirect measure is industry research or benchmarking.
- Adult Education collects data as required by local, state, and federal agencies. Some examples are the number of students completing the GED testing and the

number of students who have completed individual tests of the GED battery. Pre- and post-testing is often done.

- Math faculty teaching in Math 108: Statistics for General Education, created a common final exam. It was designed so that each question on the exam directly reflected one of the seven major student-learning outcomes as stated on the course syllabus. From this, the faculty was able to determine what percentage of the students did not meet the stated student-learning outcome. The results showed that stated as a percentage and will be analyzed by the department in August 2004 so note the impact and needed changes because of the data. This will help the department create benchmarks. A similar study also occurred in two summer 2004 sections.
- One department is using advisory feedback to assist with identifying and improving needed skills for student graduates. Additionally, review of pass rates on final exams in some occupational programs will be monitored and matched with outcomes of industry qualifying exams (e.g., Fire Science students showed 100% pass rate on state-approved finals).
- Psychology and sociology faculty have been reviewing pass rates in Psychology 101 and Principles of Sociology in relation to students' ASSET scores in reading. College-level reading scores correlated with passing grades in these general education core curriculum classes.
- Associate Degree Nursing reviews graduation and attrition rates within the program. This data is used in discussion on determining interventions or changes needed to assist student success rate in completing the program.
- The Equine Program applies student comments from classroom assessment techniques to improve learning approaches.
- In all Applied Science programs students need to have a work experience opportunity. The department uses feedback from students, employers, and program faculty to improve its training programs.
- In agriculture students must show competency by taking various program exams (e.g., crop rotation and chemical exam, livestock waste management exam).
- The Automotive Technology Program makes use of pre-tests and post-test and uses the ASC testing exams to benchmark student progress against industry standards.
- The Automotive Technology and Agricultural Mechanics areas also use exit interviews concerning work internship and supervision.

## **2) Changes in Curriculum , Methods of Instruction, and/or Academic Activities Based on the Results of Departmental Assessments**

The following comments are a summary of responses by question submitted by instructional units. The diligent work and ideas of all faculty and their department chairs helping to write this report are gratefully acknowledged. Full detail and information are found in the submitted department student learning reports. As of this writing, not all

departmental reports are finished. The complete information will be included in the final report in September 2004.

- In response to high attrition in courses where students seem to have some strong general occupation skills is being studied. Alternative methods of instruction and assessment will see if changes promote persistence. Students in several sections were allowed to take pre-tests on unit objectives and complete a project rather than do typical assignments or tests.
- PLATO has focused on learning the software system, resolving technological barriers, aligning modules to developmental courses, and marketing services to students.
- Faculty members have increased participation in the tutoring program. The instructors act as models for student tutors. An orientation course/training is being developed for academic year 2004-2005.
- One department is developing online courses in response to assessment feedback.
- Developing an effective search strategy that transforms student thesis statements into concepts more easily manipulated by electronic article databases, is a target for change. The modification to address the result of this cycle's study will be to focus on fewer "tools" and more on "pre" research preparation.
- One department shows that results of assessment practices support maintenance of programs. Future cycles may indicate need for changes in curriculum, methods of instruction, and /or academic activities.
- One department feels positive about learning more about assessment processes and techniques.
- BCEC coordinators assist companies to realign training objectives with actual industry needs.
- BCEC has varied its training times (e.g., having training span a longer period of weeks vs. a single training session) to increase class rapport and skill development and to offer topics useful to a company (e.g., mail-merge skills).
- Based on comments from students and stakeholders, Adult Education has expanded its offerings of ESL (e.g., BHC Technology Center) and changed the location of its Spanish GED to the Illinois Employment and Training Center.
- More computer technology skills have been integrated into the ESL program through more lab access and use of web-based learning tools. PLATO has been integrated into classroom assignments. Student feedback on use of these supplemental learning activities is positive.
- To provide more community access and support for childcare needs, GED classes are also being provided at the Martin Luther King Center.
- The instructors of Math 080, Basic Mathematical Skills, evaluated the performance of every student with respect the stated student learning outcomes at the end of the Fall 2003 semester. They developed a scoring rubric for each question and then met to evaluate the performance of the 218 students. Based upon the results, they were able to determine the outcome with the weakest performance. They discussed, as a group, how they could improve their instruction of that topic (and others) throughout the course. They came up with a list of seven instructional strategies to try. They agreed to modify one of the



assessment questions and to expand the tool by including an additional question. They will administer the assessment tool again in the spring 2004 semester to collect similar data for Math 080 students who take the course during the spring.

- Three instructors have, as of spring semester, integrated "MyMathLab" in Course Compass into their instruction for certain courses. This software is used to assess how well students are able to do the homework problems assigned to them. Students can repeatedly do their homework online until they receive an acceptable score. They receive immediate feedback. The instructor can obtain results for the whole class at the problem level or the student level. In one survey of 42 students who had instruction in this manner, 26 felt it was positive and only one felt it was negative. The instructors felt that this added dimension of their instruction played a huge role in how their students did in the course. Now, for fall 2004, two additional instructors are planning to implement "MyMathLab" into their courses. This has led to a change in textbook (publisher) for the course Math 090, Intermediate Algebra, for fall 2004. In the past we have always used the same text in Math 091 and 090.
- To address the concerns voiced about the level of graduates' abilities to communicate with parents, additional opportunities have been added for students to observe child care professionals interact with parents as well as increased emphasis on communicating with parents in child development classes.
- By reducing the practicum experience by 1 credit hour, an additional general education option was added to the curriculum. The committee is also exploring the possibility of requiring first aid certification rather than a course in first aid, thereby opening up the possibility of an additional option for a general education course.
- To increase flexibility, a limited number of seats in state-approved FSO online courses originating from John Wood Community College have been scheduled during FY 03/04.
- The general education options in the FSO AAS curriculum have been modified to provide students with additional options. For example, rather than indicating a specific course, the curriculum now reads "speech elective," "science elective," and "mathematics elective."
- The outstanding pass rates on the state-approved finals for the courses taught in the FY 03/04 cycle, confirms that the course content is appropriately aligned with the outcomes designated by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.
- A new course, Social and Behavioral Studies 100, has been developed, articulated, and approved by the college's curriculum committee and the ICCB. This course is intended to introduce students to the social and behavioral sciences and assist in preparing them for successfully completing Psychology 101 or Sociology 100. Two sections of this course are scheduled for the spring semester in FY05. Faculty will be developing a carefully designed follow-up study to track outcomes.
- The ADN Program faculty members have contacted the Student Success Center to collaborate on developing a series of courses to help students experience difficulties in classes.

- The ADN/LPN Programs are undergoing major curriculum revisions to integrate curriculum and help LPN's with a career-ladder approach.
- In auto and agriculture mechanics, ten exit interviews were conducted. Changes made from that feedback were new text books will be used in two classes to strengthen diagnosis and problem-solving issues. Courses in the program areas that contain those two objectives will be revised to add more time onto those topics.

### **3) Impact of Assessment on Departmental Planning and Budgeting Processes during this Planning Cycle**

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- One department reports minimal impact of assessment on departmental planning and budgeting processes at this time.
- The Humanities, Languages, and Journalism Department's 2004-2005 plan incorporates assessment measures for developmental English and reading courses and for continued assessment in composition. The plan calls for increased Internet access, in part to assist learning and retention in composition, reading, and ESL courses. The results of these planned assessments may support departmental goal to seek additional training in assessing student writing and measure the impact of technology updates on departmental disciplines.
- Access to PLATO is being increased and will hopefully continue to grow over time. The service request form has been improved to facilitate access and tracking functions.
- One department is using the current planning cycle as an opportunity to benchmark activities for further analysis.
- As a result of student feedback about search skills, the Library has identified an online tutorial that students will complete on their own prior to attending the 50-minute orientation.
- Feedback from advisory groups and overall assessment of the health of departmental processes, support maintenance of current budgetary levels.
- One department has created its initial unit plan and uses it to make instructional equipment purchase decisions.
- Survey-type assessments assist BCEC in projecting needed amounts to support training requested by employers.
- Institutional dollars provided support for the purchase of PLATO software system and will continue to support the ongoing renewal fee.
- More computer lab and Internet access was available to more Outreach sites, thus providing more ability of students to use tutorial and supplementary material.

- The BEST Plus assessment tool for ESL students will be piloted next year to expand assessment of some instructional program levels.
- In regards to planning, the mathematics faculty would like to assess how well students perform in their 100-level mathematics course once they leave their last developmental mathematics class. This discussion has led to a request of MIS for some data as it relates to students who complete a program in developmental mathematics. To date, those results are not available from MIS but it is on their schedule.
- In regards to the budgeting process for math, the biggest influence of the assessment of student learning is that it has led to requests for instructional equipment. One example was the request for tables and chairs in classroom 3-314, which was funded. The large number of student activities and small group work that is done in the courses normally taught in that room lead to this request and originated with the input from student assessment of instruction opportunities.
- A second example was the request for another mid-tech classroom. The increasing use of the software provided to the instructors by the publishers in mathematics is now exceeding the supply of classrooms capable of this delivery style. Although not funded this year, the request will be made again as the need continues to grow.
- Conversations about the SBS 100 project have involved all of the faculty members in the department, rather than being limited to faculty teaching psychology and sociology. These discussions have led to questioning whether other discipline areas in the department might also need to "scaffold" course work to accommodate those students who are under-prepared for college-level course work, and, thus, at risk of failing or dropping out. By trading a section of Psychology 101 and one of Sociology 100, we are facilitating the transition without needing to request additional funding.
- At this point in time, all of the FSO courses are up-to-date with respect to state approval. We will be incorporating the projected revision cycle into our multi-year SBES Unit Plan.

#### **4) Demonstrate Mastery of Stated Program Learning Objectives Prior to Program Completion**

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- Office Careers requires that all students develop a portfolio during their final semester. The portfolio contains sample work and is used as the seminar/internship instructor and student evaluate the student's strengths and weaknesses.

- Adult Education faculty were assigned to review and monitor student progress in PLATO units.
- Faculty feedback on students' ability to do research-related assignments was requested.
- One department uses advisory board, individual faculty comments, and portfolio review to ensure positive outcomes for courses and graduates.
- Some classes have varied testing styles (e.g., paper/pencil vs. demonstration scenarios) to increase student learning. Other assessments include journaling; pre-tests and post-tests; and review of faculty comments/observations of practicum activities and skill attainment lists.
- Every Adult Education student completes an Individual Education and Employment Plan (IEEP). Students work with instructors to review primary and secondary goals.
- All Adult Education disciplines (e.g., GED, ESL, Vocational Skills, and Optional Education) use pre-and post-testing using various instruments (e.g., Test of Adult Basic Education, Celsa, Best/Best Plus). Student progress reports are filed and address gains in learning, employment, personal, and/or social goals.
- Various types of assessments are used in one department: writing samples, oral presentations, competency or mastery-level scores on unit or chapter tests, or field-trip activities (e.g., ESL classes go to a fast-food restaurant and faculty observes ability of student to order food and give appropriate money or change).
- There are as yet no formal, structured processes to directly assess program mastery by the students in either mathematics or manufacturing technology. Instead, faculty members are in a position to assess the quality and depth of program mastery on an individual student level. In manufacturing, the classes are small enough that the instructors are able to work one on one with the students in several courses over several semesters. Through all of the assignments but particularly the required projects, the program mastery of a student in welding, drafting, electronics, and machining is well known to the faculty members. Currently, there is no organized manner of tracking the success of each individual student.
- With respect to both the FSO and CD curricula, we have relied heavily on advisory committee feedback.
- Pass rates on the state-approved finals in FSO courses provide a direct measure of students' achievement of course outcomes.
- The ADN Program is based on a prior learning theory. Each of the four levels or semesters is progressively more complex and incorporates all skills from the previous levels. Each semester students have to master clinical and theory knowledge. The classroom has a theory final, and the clinical skills are measured through use of clinical tools which the faculty developed to progress from simple in Level 1 to the more complex in Level 4.

**5) Briefly Describe Overall How Students within Departmental Programs Have Performed. Please Provide Applicable Data.**

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- Several departments made no comments regarding this question.
- Faculty feedback on impact of library training is positive. It is unclear, however, if students can apply the library research skills presented in English 101 or Speech 101 to other courses. There is no consistent or integrated research-based writing outcome that would provide a measurement for this question.
- One department tracks and sees success in the number of program graduates, transfer success, scholarship attainment, and/or career placement.
- BCEC students have overall performed well. Feedback on programs is positive.
- Two of the three HRCI Certification Exam pass rates are at the 100% level.
- In all but one of sixteen core outcome measure sub-goals, Adult Education programs met or exceeded federal targeted percentages.
- At the end of the fall 2004 semester, five of our second semester welding students agreed to perform a MIG welding test for the RIA. Four of the five had welds that met or exceeded the expectations for a welding trainee at the Arsenal.
- The ADN Program tracks its graduation and attrition levels. The NCLEX Exam (the national exam to become a registered nurse) pass rate for 2003 (the latest number available at this time) is 87%.
- Students in Auto and Agricultural Mechanics showed gain of knowledge from the original pre-test data. However, not all students were able to pass the ASE qualifying tests (40% pass rate). The goal for next year is to have a student pass rate of 50%.
- In order for BHC students to stay competitive and meet industry standards and to strengthen the program, the College should examine becoming NATEF certified.

#### **6) Plans to Develop and Implement Program-Level Assessments**

The following comments are a summary of responses by question submitted by instructional units. The diligent work and ideas of all faculty and their department chairs, who wrote this report, are gratefully acknowledged. Full detail and information are found in the submitted department student learning reports. As of this writing, not all departmental reports are finished. The complete information will be included in the final report in September 2004.

- Program level assessment will be discussed in the academic department this fall. Disciplines want to develop program-level assessment processes by spring 2005 for academic year 2005-2006 implementation.

- Except for the technical writing program, which is being phased out, the Humanities, Languages, and Journalism Department are primarily AA/AS programs.
- During the 2004-2005 cycle, students who utilize PLATO as a supplement will be engaged in an evaluative questionnaire regarding their learning mastery and their perceptions of PLATO for effectiveness and accessibility. The results of these comments will be applied to future planning cycles.
- Full development of program-level assessment will resume as faculty departmental team assembles for new academic year.
- A recommendation from the Library regarding incorporating a research-based writing question, as part of the general education/core curriculum assessment review was forwarded to the Student Learning Committee for consideration.
- One department plans to have program leaders use direct question feedback from students to collect data.
- The Art discipline group hopes to use an outside reciprocal evaluator process and to share results of this practice with the College community.
- One department recognizes that its major program is the AA/AS. This group will use 2004-2005 to develop its plan for measurement of general education outcomes.
- BCEC is working with a company to provide a 360 assessment.
- The BCEC team (Dean, Director, Coordinators, Support Staff, and Instructors) work to provide continuous quality improvement to all programs and services. Discussions on the improvement cycles happen at every monthly meeting.
- The mathematics faculty plans to assess the success of students who have completed the developmental mathematics program at BHC. Specific data has already been requested from MIS in order to begin this study.
- Completion rates and grade distribution data for all mathematics courses has been now been collected for FY04. This data will be used once similar data is collected in the same manner during FY05. Comparisons and trends can then be made. The current thought is to make this an annual assessment. Follow-up studies for Math 080 and 108 are planned for FY05. A similar assessment tool may be created for Math 110, Mathematics for General Education.
- The SBES review stated program-level outcomes for Child Development, Teacher Assistant, Fire Service Officer, Law Enforcement Technology, Law Enforcement Certificate, and Private Security and revise to ensure the measurability of these outcomes. The departmental team will work together to develop a plan for collecting outcome data; to collect program-level data; to review data and, based on this feedback; to revise courses and curricula. A proposed timeline is to develop a plan that will "roll out" in layers so that some program-level assessment data in each departmental area will be available for review at the end of the 2004-2005 academic year.

#### **Other Departmental Highlights and Trends for Cycle 2003-2004**

Assessment activities of the faculty in the Department of Social, Behavioral, and Educational Studies have focused in three areas: expanding the departmental base of knowledge about assessment, applying assessment strategies, and planning and implementing changes in courses and curricula based on assessment data. As is evidenced by the examples, the assessment activities at the course level are multidimensional and integrated into the everyday realities of teaching and learning. Department members now have a broad base of experiences on which to develop strategies to assess course level general education outcomes and to refine and broaden other program-level assessment related to degree and certificate programs for which department faculty are responsible. The comments provided in the overall departmental report all focus on program-level assessment. Department members have been diligent in pursuing course-level assessment as evidenced by assessment reports and changes made in syllabi and instructional designs. Selected examples follow:

- Students in the face-to-face sections of History 222 provide daily feedback with respect to points they believe they understand, concepts that are still unclear, and learning processes that are helpful to them. This direct feedback from students, as well as pre- and post-test results on course objectives, has led to a change in which the content of the course is structured. Given feedback from students, the video material that at one time was included within classroom instruction, is now available for students to view in the ILC should they want to access this additional course resource.
- Students in one instructor's sections of Psychology 200 provide end-of-semester feedback and evaluation of instruction on a learner-centered form. This format provides information about students' evaluation of the instructor, but, perhaps, more importantly, vital information about their perceptions about how they learn. Reviewing data from several semesters confirms that students find applying development concepts by analyzing relevant examples a significant element in their learning about human development. Reviewing this feedback has resulted in incorporating a series of assignments based on Video Workshops, a series of short video clips available to students on a CD ROM.
- A political science instructor noted that students' answers to the final essay question in a political science class did not always demonstrate the depth and breadth of the course objectives. He revised the final essay this summer to directly incorporate points from each of the course outcomes. Although direct feedback from the final examination is not yet available, the instructor is pleased with the questions students are asking as they prepare their essays, as their questions suggest that this revision to the final will provide a more direct measure of course outcomes than previous examination questions.
- Faculty members who share instruction for teaching Principles of Sociology in an online format have noted that the online students have had difficulty in comparing, contrasting and applying the sociological perspectives. This feedback, based on an assessment of students' essays for each unit in the course, led to altering the assignment in Unit 1 to provide more specific guidance in understanding and applying the perspectives. Since the course revisions were

made for the summer school version of the online class, no feedback as to the impact of this change is available.

- A history instructor noted that while students appeared to be interested in course material, they came to class without having read the assignment materials. The cramming method of study for essay examinations led to poorly prepared essays and a lack of evidence of critical thinking. He reconfigured his course to incorporate a series of debates. Students are required to prepare an essay prior to the class debate from either a pro or con position. The instructor indicates that several outcomes are evident. Students are highly invested in learning about the debate issues. Their in-class conversations are lively and demonstrate their abilities to analyze historical issues. More specifically, end-of-unit assessments demonstrate higher scores in those areas on the examinations that deal with the debate issues.
- A team of faculty teaching an online Global Issues class noticed that interchanges among students on the discussion board expanded exponentially when one student began to post links to web resources related to the conversation. Soon one student's innovation became the norm and the discussion board became the site of exciting discourse instructors had intended. Revisions are underway to incorporate this strategy into the next online version of the course.
- A sociology faculty member has noted that students are often initially "blindsided" by examination questions. Feedback from students indicates that they anticipate "fact-based" questions and are stunned by questions that require applications and critical analysis. This faculty member is going to field test a system that provides opportunities for the instructor to assist students in taking conceptual multiple-choice examinations. In preparation for next semester, software has been installed in 1-412 to support this technology-based innovation. Departmental members hope to expand the use of the feedback device in future semesters.
- A psychology professor routinely seeks students' feedback about course material by engaging students in mid-term "guided" discussions about the text selected for the course. This year's conversation in one class surfaced students' concerns with difficult diagnostic terminology in the text used in the abnormal psychology course. On the other hand, students indicated that the text was, for them, a good learning tool. They saw no need for the next group to have a different one. They particularly enjoyed having the material in the text subdivided in an understandable way. Hence, the professor has decided not to make any changes in text selection when Abnormal Psychology is next taught.
- A child development faculty member reports on how she uses a portfolio assignment in the child development practicum course (which serves as a capstone for the child development degree program). Students design a portfolio of their work, including a resume, cover letter, philosophy, lesson plans, units, Illinois Early Learning Standard statements, certificates of attendance/training, letters of commendation, and other materials documenting their success and knowledge when working with young children. Parts of the portfolio are due periodically throughout the semester and the final artifact is due in April. The instructor reports, "the first time I gave this assignment, students didn't know



what to collect. Now I give them lists of required and recommended items. Students were not familiar with the Illinois Early Learning Standards and I added standard statements into the portfolio process. Students turned in statements of how they follow the Illinois Early Learning Standards in their classrooms, which also helps them follow guidelines for many centers using these standards. I have heard from graduated students that this portfolio has helped them get positions with higher pay than other candidates! I have also heard back from graduates that they know what people are talking about when they describe or refer to Illinois Early Learning Standards. Focusing on standards helps students be purposeful teachers, and allows them to explain how children are learning through play. This assignment has also helped them think about assessment and developmentally appropriate ways to document children's learning."

- One faculty member using a distance learning delivery method was concerned about the DL delivery process. Three weeks into the course, she administered an anonymous survey designed to assess the learner's reaction to the class and distance learning delivery system and presented the results in summary form at the next class meeting. Because of students' responses on the survey, the instructor added a WebCT component to the class to enhance communication and to try to resolve some of the disconnect that was occurring at the distant sites. The WebCT component did not alleviate the sense of disconnection that occurred at the distant sites. However, it did provide alternatives for communication and the presentation of material.
- An instructor for Orientation 100 has been using an expert-designed pre- and post-test measuring such indices as students' sense of self-responsibility, self-motivation, self-management, self-awareness, life-long learning, and belief in self. The mean scores on all of these indicators increased in on the post-test scores. The mean scores on one indicator, life-long learning, nearly doubled (an increase from 31 to 60), and many were a third higher at the time of the posttest (for example, self-motivation increased from 46 to 63, self-awareness increase from 47 to 62, and belief in self increased from 43 to 59). The sample size (10) is too small for a detailed statistical analysis; however, the results are certainly encouraging and suggest that the changes made to the course are supportive of the identified outcomes.
- A psychology professor routinely uses a "muddiest point" technique to gather information about concepts that are confusing to students. By administering the CAT prior to unit examinations, the professor is able to review concepts about which students are confused. Because this instructor has been gathering muddy point feedback for several years, she indicates that by being able to anticipate points of confusion, she has changed the way she presents certain concepts. Feedback from the muddy point cards assists her in assessing whether the changes she has made have been helpful.
- Several faculty members in the SBES department asked students to respond to posttest evaluation surveys. These surveys often combined a focus on students' perception of interest, value of readings, etc. with a focus on students' study habits. Feedback from these surveys has led to revisions of units and modifications of courses. Engaging students in a reflection of the relationship

between their study habits and their achievement on examinations has stimulated some to make significant changes in how they approach college-level course work.

- A political science professor assessed the course outcome to compare and contrast various political ideologies by reviewing students' papers about their self-identity with a particular contemporary political ideology. From reading student papers each semester, the instructor continually revises class presentations on contemporary political ideologies, making every effort to present opposing ideologies in a fair and balanced manner.
- A sociology professor routinely begins class with the question, "Any questions, comments, or concerns?" Questions asked lead to fruitful discussions and clarifications about concepts that students haven't understood. Course documents, including class projects and paper requirements, are modified from semester to semester to make these documents clearer to "clean up" questions and concerns that students have raised. The instructor makes notations in the relevant text and reading material so as to highlight future instructional and pedagogical challenges. This ongoing and continuous assessment process provides direct and immediate feedback regarding classroom instruction. Over the course of the semester, students become more comfortable in asking questions and making comments that may challenge the previous instructional endeavors. This discourse has been a direct pathway to involving students in learning and critical analysis.