

MAY 1, 2023

ISSUE 01

The AssessNews

Assessments in Action at Danville Area
Community College



WHAT'S NEW IN ASSESSMENT?

Program Spotlights: Student success is what we are all about and assessments are essential for measuring student success. Once faculty know where students are struggling to meet the student learning outcomes, they can make the pedagogical changes needed to help students succeed. Faculty have been successfully using assessments to make positive changes in their programs to improve student success. A select group will be highlighted in the **Program Spotlight** section to demonstrate some of the changes faculty are making.

Assessment Day: Mark your calendars for May 11, our end-of-the-semester assessment day. We will use this time to evaluate our Technology Assessment Data and fill out program reports. Your Assessment Champions will be available in-person (LH 205) and over Zoom from 9 am- 12 pm to help out with your assessments. Brunch will be served in Lincoln Hall.

Program Assessment Reports (PAR) in Sharepoint: Your Assessment Champions are working hard to make the assessment process as user-friendly as possible. They have been working with Jung'Ae to streamline assessment forms into a single work-flow document that will be filled out in Sharepoint. We think you're gonna like what you see!

Newsletter Highlights

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Get to Know Your
Champions





PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Initial Assessment: Through their assessments, the automotive faculty found that students were more likely to memorize skills and steps specific to each automotive brand. However, the goal is for students to think critically when presented with a repair rather than memorizing the steps for each repair. The faculty plan to introduce more activities that require students to problem-solve various repairs and solutions. Ideally, this will help improve their critical thinking skills and ability to address problems with an inquiry mindset as they are presented.

Changes Made:

- Continue assessments to collect more data to make better comparisons and analysis and identify long term trends
- Assess students for prior knowledge upon entering course to ensure appropriate levels of knowledge
- Provide students with more repetition and practice; use new digital tool (CodeZinger) to implement this
- Require students to complete assignments before moving on to new assignments; use Blackboard option to make assignments available only after the previous ones have been submitted
- Alter course content to focus more on general skills and solution instead of brand specific details – focus turned to problem solving rather than memorization
- Monitor community needs within the industry to incorporate into critical thinking lessons
- Move assessments to different time within semester for more investigation of results
- Investigate including a comprehensive exam which will tie together individual learning modules and require a higher level of critical thinking
- Concentrate on first semester intro courses – including more activities /projects to boost critical thinking skills early in the program

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: SOCIAL SCIENCE

Initial Assessment: Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross’s classic work Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers provides the blueprint for this activity. Students did a “Pro and Con” grid in the first week of class and then repeat the exercise in week 8. Angelo and Cross report that the exercise is “A quick and easy way to assess whether and how well students can imagine more than one side to an issue. For some college students this is a difficult but valuable step in their intellectual development.” They also state that “This assessment forces students to go beyond their first reactions, to search for at least two sides to the issue in question, and to weigh the value of competing claims.” With the competing interpretations, students will show they understand the issue, provide evidence and support for each, and take a final supported position. They will do this with Angelo and Cross pro and con exercise and a written conclusion.

Changes Made:

- Providing more intense feedback to students
- Devote more class time to explaining what is expected and provide more examples
- Spend more time with students explaining the reason behind citations along with how to properly cite their work.
- Work more with students on using evidence and strengthening their argument or stance throughout their work.

Results after Changes: After examining the data tables from fall and spring, one can readily see the move from “Needs Improvement” to at least “Competent” in every modality. Faculty engaged students who may have never been exposed to the critical thinking approach to research and writing. The more hands on approach with feedback seems to drive the needle.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

MATH

Initial Assessment: The Math program decided to assess critical thinking skills of their students by examining their students' ability to correctly solve problems on quizzes, tests and/or homework. The program set the benchmark that 70% or more of their students will rank "Competent" or above in each assessment category. Of the eleven different courses they assessed, six of them did not meet the determined benchmark which suggested a need for changes in pedagogy.

Changes Made:

- Instead of two large, proctored midterms, the faculty decided to break the exams up into four smaller, proctored midterms (to help give feedback and allow the students to make necessary changes as soon as possible)
- Completing a better explanation of "Use of Evidence" before completing student assessments
- Creating a focused class session within the first 4 weeks of class, specific to generating a clear step-by-step process for problem-solving, providing evidence and a means of error checking their work
- Incorporating a focused video lecture discussing the thought process used to sort through techniques needed for analysis, and the logic step-by-step needed to use the chosen technique to develop answers. Also, emphasize reading comprehension

Results after Changes: Looking at the data after making changes in pedagogy, the Math faculty noticed more students were able to meet the benchmark of "Competent" or better, and all but two courses showed improvement in the number of students meeting the benchmark. They also noted that as the complexity of the course increased, so did the number of students receiving a score of competent. This suggests that as students advance through the Math sequences, into the upper-level classes, they are becoming more skilled in critical thinking.



Important Dates

May 10:

- Round 2 Rubrics Due

May 11:

- Assessment Day!

August 18:

- Technology PLAR and CTL Due
- Planning Document for Fall Assessments Due

CHAMPION TIP

You've completed assessments your entire teaching career....you just need to document them! You feel like something isn't working and you change it, but instead of "going with your gut" take a moment to collect the evidence so you know your change was beneficial. Keep it simple and relevant to what you want to know about student learning within your program.

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHAMPIONS:

FUN FACTS....

Ryan:

- Is a certified KCBS BBQ judge, a high school basketball official, and baseball umpire

Wendy:

- They call her the "OG" of assessment since she is one of the original champs (but that doesn't make her old)

Jen:

- Is a hand-standing vegan that can land a plane - in an emergency, with help

Stephanie:

- Loves to spend warm, sunny days backpacking and those nights sleeping in a hammock under the stars



A Message from the Assessment Director, Dr. Penny McConnell

Our Assessment Champions may not look like they take assessment, or anything else for that matter, seriously. Nothing could be further from the truth. These four faculty members work countless hours each and every week to make assessment of student learning at DACC both meaningful and impactful. While no one would describe assessment as fun, Jen, Ryan, Stephanie and Wendy are doing everything possible to make it less stressful and, hopefully, a little more enjoyable for you. Thank you for everything you do to make assessment of student learning a priority at DACC. And remember. Every day is a good day to say "Thanks for all you do" to an Assessment Champion.