

Adult Basic Education- 2010/2011 Annual Report for Assessment and Outcomes

1. Results from 2009-2010 Project:

Take from our 2010 Program Review:

“There have been many changes to improve attainment of the College Core Outcomes since our last Program Review: refinement of the Capstone Project, the implementation of ABE College Success Cohorts, CG 100 courses, the growth and refinement of GED Online, piloting 12 internationalization of some ABE curriculum and use of My Skills Tutor and Reading Plus software programs.”

What we implemented based on our work from 2009-2010:

- To encourage greater participation and to better support instructors, particularly part-time instructors, we created additional materials to guide instructors through the project and posted them on our ABE instructor website. We also introduced the project during our fall in-service meeting and had numerous trainings/meetings throughout fall and winter terms to facilitate the assessment projects.
- Some campuses chose to continue assessing instructors' individual capstone projects, while others chose to create a common assignment.
- We created a math specific rubric for the communication outcome in addition to rubrics that could be used in our reading/writing ABE classes.
- Instructors could choose to participate in the fall or winter terms and take part in either working group to double score and collaborate on project reflections.
- Student self-assessment surveys were added to capture direct student feedback on teaching and learning.
- Capstone projects will be posted on our ABE website to share ideas and provide support for new instructors.
- We encouraged instructors to identify students with a range of abilities when choosing samples and continued to emphasize that the project aim is instructor improvement.
- Provided a self-reflection template to ensure specific areas of instruction were addressed by all participants in order to improve our ability to analyze and reflect on individual projects, as well as our project as a whole.
- We decided to continue the double scoring process, even though some areas, like speaking and listening, would be tricky. We felt the conversations generated in the process would be beneficial and interesting.

2. Outcomes and Methods

Core Outcomes Assessed:

Communication and Community and Environmental Responsibility

a. Project Overview:

The ABE SAC chose to assess the Capstone Projects which we implement each term. The four capstone themes are: citizen, family, worker and life-long learner. The general

parameters of the project are: The project should consist of 10% or more of class time over the course of the term for each ABE class and address reading, math, writing, communication and technology. As a SAC we determined, that each instructor would be given the creativity to approach the capstone in their own way. For more specific information:

<https://intranet-pcc-edu.view.pcc.edu/departments/abe/instruction-assessment/capstone.html>

To encourage and facilitate more part-time involvement, we created a step by step participation guide and various rubrics which we posted on our department webpage:

<https://intranet-pcc-edu.view.pcc.edu/departments/abe/instruction-assessment/>

We introduced the project during our Fall SAC Inservice and then had follow up informational sessions with instructors at some campus site meetings to further assist instructors with the project.

We had 11 instructors participate, 7 of which were a part time. Instructors could choose to assess both of the outcomes or just one. Each participant provided an outline of their individual Capstone Project and selected the appropriate rubric to use. The rubrics could be used as written, or modified to better fit their project. Participants also collected Student Surveys- our indirect assessment piece- which provided an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning and our teaching.

Participating instructors met together and exchanged student samples and double scored with the rubrics. Instructors were able to reflect on the progress of their students, as well as exchange ideas with colleagues. We shared ideas on a wide array of projects such as: creating animated job interview videos, researching and debating current legislative issues, using MAP to create career planning portfolios and research careers, applying math concepts to design dream homes, etc... During that time we made suggestions to further improve the overall project next school year and discussed ways we might encourage participation from all ABE instructors as we assess Self-Reflection and Cultural Awareness.

b. Impact on Teaching and Learning:

- Whether instructors officially participated or not, because of our frequent emphasis on the Core Outcomes, we felt like our SAC in general was much better educated on what the outcomes are, why they are important and how we can continue to effectively incorporate them into our curriculum.
- Participating instructors enjoyed the time to meet with colleagues and share their projects. The additional time set aside to discuss our individual practice was valuable. This discussion led to clearer understanding of the Core Outcomes in general, but also led to creative ways to further improve our individual projects. It was a fruitful way to gain future lesson/project ideas. The following reflect some of the instructor responses listed on our Project/Unit Reflections:

- “Using the Core Outcome as a planning tool really helped me focus on different types of communication. I really felt like it raised the level of instruction in the classroom because I was more aware of all the different components and built this into the curriculum. Having the rubric to follow was very helpful.
 - Giving the oral presentations helped students to gain confidence in speaking.
 - The students did well with the bi-weekly group discussions.
 - Students really liked discussing controversial issues and learning more background information about them. They did well transferring their ideas from discussion to paragraph writing.
 - Next time, I would extend the skill areas to add a presentation component along with power points to aid presentations.
 - Students enjoyed the presentations, but next time I would spend more time modeling and provide instruction on effective presenting. I would create a specific presentation rubric so students could have more meaningful guidance and feedback.
 - I realized I was unsure how to address the idea of “scientific method” in the *Community and Environmental Responsibility* outcome. I need help with this.
 - The conversations I had with colleagues were really interesting. We don’t get enough chances to do this!
 - I would add a presentation component. The students were really effective at sharing information in groups, but need the experience of an individual presentation.
 - Being able to give an effective oral presentation was also part of the focus. I would like to work on giving the students more experience with this and also skills to enhance their presentations.
 - I would make their projects more reflective rather than just fact gathering.
 - Using creative problem solving was one of the areas that was emerging and also collaborating in a group setting. I definitely need to incorporate more real world experience into the class because I saw how this really energized them.
- Teachers had various degrees of experience using and creating rubrics. Participants all chose to use the rubric templates as they were and didn’t alter them. It was useful to have a common rubric to double assess student samples. As it wasn’t possible to double score all of the components, such as speaking and listening, we appreciated the chance to discuss to what extent we are embedding this into our curriculum and the value of adding frequent formal and informal opportunities for students to speak to and listen to one another.
 - Because we work with a wide range of students (from pre-literacy to college ready) our rubric scoring was quite varied. Our samples were from students with widely varying abilities, so it was interesting to talk about how students were able to perform at different levels and how our projects might be adapted for students at varying levels.
 - We offered a model of *Indirect Assessment for Students* that could be adapted for individual projects. All participants used the survey without altering it, so it was interesting to look at the results. The following are some of the students’ specific comments about the projects:
 - This project gave me an idea about what I want to do in the future. It also gave me the information on questions I needed to answer.

- I liked how in depth it was.
 - The project gave me a chance to apply the essay skills I've learned in class.
 - The 10 minutes of pleasure reading was great. I liked having all the different books in the room.
 - I liked that we worked as a team, then by ourselves.
 - I really liked the speaking stuff.
 - I liked participating and going up in front and speaking about the project and working with a partner.
 - I learned about careers and opportunities at PCC.
 - Got a chance to learn about PCC college.
 - I liked moving around. It made it a physical project.
 - I really liked working as a group.
 - Looking up information and sharing it out loud.
 - I really liked researching careers.
 - I liked taking the MAP quizzes to find out about me.
 - Dealing with other people and being involved with the group was good.
 - I got to open up with some of my classmates and enjoy working with others.
 - Provided opportunities for creativity.
 - I learned a lot about square footage.
 - I loved planning my dream home!
 - I got to think about myself and relate the issues to my own life.
 - I had the opportunity to write and answer interview questions in detail. I feel like it helped me with my writing skills that I so much need.
 - The project was great when you think about moving on after you get the ged. It helps build my confidence with group and individual work.
 - I learned about how to make an animated video. I never knew anything about this before.
 - I thought it was pretty cool how we got to research different careers and making the cartoon was pretty cool.
 - I found good solid information on MAP I didn't know before to help me make a path for my future.
 - It was fun working with a video creator.
 - I really like the chance to practice job interviews. I can be a pro at them now.
- The student surveys didn't provide a lot of specific information about how to improve the projects. Most of the students "agreed" or "somewhat agreed" to the questions listed. In the future, individual instructors might provide some examples or more structure on how students can give constructive feedback to improve their own learning and help shape future projects from a student perspective.

3. Recommendations for Project Improvement:

- Instructors who did use the same project to assess both outcomes felt like it would be more useful to focus on what outcome at a time. Next year, we will all focus on *Self-Reflection* in fall and *Cultural Awareness* in winter.

- Some campuses may choose a common project, while others will encourage instructors to assess their own individual projects.
- We think it is really important to have all instructors participate in the assessment project. We hope to greatly increase participation next year- hopefully by sharing how the process has benefitted those of us who've participated so far.
- A part-time math instructor created the math rubric we used for *Communication*. We want to encourage more math instructors to use and create rubrics like this to assess the Core Outcomes. In our last program review, we identified this as an area of improvement for our SAC.
- Continue to encourage instructors to choose a wide range of student abilities when they select samples.
- Continue to emphasize that this is an opportunity for instructors to reflect and improve our practice.
- Emphasize the benefit of collaborating with colleagues- especially at our own campus.
- Encourage instructors to incorporate formal presentations into their projects.
- Create a presentation rubric as a model and post to our website
- Continue to offer creative ways for our students to collaborate with each other.

Project Contacts:

Amy Boehnke amy.boehnke@pcc.edu

Juliet Pursell jpursell@pcc.edu