Nov 1st, 10:00 AM - 10:45 AM

Implementing a College-Wide Requirement for Teaching Scholarship

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Recommended Citation
Crosby, Lynne and Morris, Deborah, "Implementing a College-Wide Requirement for Teaching Scholarship" (2007). SoTL Commons Conference. 18.
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Implementing a College-Wide Requirement for Teaching Scholarship

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SOTL Commons Conference – Nov 2007
“This presentation will be ABOUT SoTL and not an example of SoTL, but it is very appropriate for this conference. The idea of a college requiring faculty to collect and submit data on how well their classes met the articulated learning objectives is an exciting and frightening logical extension of SoTL that is bound to attract high attendance and evoke lively discussion.”

– Reviewer comment
Florida Community College

- One of the ten largest community colleges in the US
- Five campuses and five major centers
- 450 full-time faculty
What would you do?

“Learning Outcomes Enhancement Plan” (LOEP)

- New requirement in full-time faculty contract
- New element of faculty evaluation
  - Required of full-time teaching faculty, counselors and librarians
- “Guidelines” provided by administration and small taskforce of faculty
- No budget!
LOEP Purpose

- The Learning Outcomes Enhancement Plan is an opportunity for faculty to investigate, assess, and reflect on ways to improve teaching practice.
- Assessment and documentation of learning outcomes is an increasingly important aspect of institutional accreditation.
LOEP Components

• Identification of learning outcome(s) to be enhanced
• Methods by which the learning outcomes will be assessed
• Actions to be taken that will (hypothetically) lead to the desired learning outcomes
• When applicable, results of previous plans
• Resources needed to fully implement plan
What would you do?

Review the LOEP “guidelines” and discuss how you would proceed at your institution.
What We Did

• Chose a theoretical/practical model: Classroom Assessment → SoTL

• Clarified the required elements of an LOEP and the criteria for evaluation – still ongoing!

• Developed professional development materials and activities for both faculty and administrators on how to create, implement, and evaluate an LOEP

• Creating opportunities for faculty to collaborate and share their strategies and results
Faculty Workshops

“Phase I” – Planning for Classroom Assessment
- TGI
- Learning outcomes
- Overview of methods
- Analyze sample plans
- Complete “Planning Sheet”

“Phase II” – Gathering and Making Sense of Assessment Data
- Review methods
- Share current approaches
- Discuss case studies
- Data analysis tips
- CAT (One-Minute Paper)

Context: SOTL
Administrator sessions

Focus groups
- Discuss observations regarding initial LOEPs
- Gather consensus view on approaches to evaluation

Workshops
- Review patterns/benefits/challenges of LOEP process
- Practice applying evaluation guidelines to sample LOEPs

Developed evaluation guidelines
Sample Faculty Activity

Case study on Math classroom assessment project

Sample Administrator Activity

Practice using the guidelines to evaluate an LOEP
Sharing and Collaboration

- Faculty symposia
  - International Conference on Teaching & Learning
  - College Convocation

- Online “LOEP Wizard”
  - Develop and submit LOEPs for review
  - Searchable database of past LOEPs
Is it working?

- Content analysis of LOEPs annually
- Feedback from workshops
- Anecdotal comments
- Faculty survey – not yet politically possible!

Other ideas?
Content analysis – Year 2

Learning Outcomes Statements
• 56% were not really learning outcomes
• 30% could have been re-worded easily to become learning outcomes
• 10% were learning outcomes
• 4% did not include a learning outcome

Instructional Strategies
• Most common instructional strategies were tests/quizzes, lecture, topic review, PowerPoints, discussions and instructor demonstrations
• LOEPs that exceeded the guidelines included classroom interaction and written work as instructional strategies
Content analysis

Assessment Methods

- Student surveys
- Observation/evaluation of performance
- Tests/quizzes
- Grade analysis
- Written work
Anecdotal Comments:

Faculty are...

• designing new learning activities
• attempting new instructional strategies
• interested in working in groups, making a broader or more significant impact on problems students encounter
• requesting more professional development, including specific workshops such as rubrics, effective grading, etc.
• requesting mentoring
• finding the activity useful
Anecdotal Comments:

Faculty are sometimes…

- finding it difficult to come up with “new” ideas
- avoiding projects that require them to examine their practice
- hesitant to connect LOEP to other assessment ventures (e.g. program assessment)
- focused on meeting the requirement rather than learning something from the process
Next Steps

- Systematically assess what faculty believe they are getting out of the process – and, if possible, its impact on their teaching
- Create more opportunities for faculty to share methods and results
- Further clarify evaluation criteria (e.g. a rubric)
- Continue/expand professional development opportunities for faculty and administrators
- Connect LOEP process to program assessment (e.g. general education assessment)
Lessons Learned

• “High ambiguity environment” created by not developing clear guidelines prior to implementation
• Faculty need assurance that “negative results” will not negatively impact evaluation
• Professional development and communication of contract requirements need to be separate
• “Model” LOEPs needed, but challenging to collect and disseminate
• Administrators needed as much support and preparation as faculty
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FCCJ Classroom Assessment Webpage
http://fccj.edu/campuses/mccs/instruction/programdev/assessment/classassess.html
Our CAT: One-Minute Paper

Please write brief responses to the following:

• What was the most useful idea you gained from today’s workshop?

• What questions or concerns do you still have? What additional resources or information would help you be successful?