

General Education Assessment Process Summer 2009

Assessing student learning is a powerful strategy that energizes the learning environment and inspires faculty and students. Positively focused assessment initiatives have a major impact on the quality of the education at Edison. They stimulate a transformative process that engages everyone involved in a systematic reflection of the curriculum and strategies employed. If assessment is approached with an eye on continuous improvement—from the classroom to the Board Room—then its true purpose can be actualized.

The assessment process is guided by three fundamental questions:

- ❖ What do students need to know to successfully achieve their educational goals?
- ❖ How do we know that students have learned what they need to know?
- ❖ What continuous improvement strategies should we consider to improve student learning outcomes?

Assessing student achievement in general education occurs at many levels: the course level; the program level; and the interdisciplinary level. To conduct course assessment, instructors design learning activities that integrate both the specific content of the course with general education core competencies. Individual learning activities are created to establish and reinforce these skills in a formative manner. To conduct its general education course assessments, Edison uses a dynamic "Institutional Portfolio" approach. The model consists of a collection of students' work (identifiable information for students and faculty are removed prior to scoring) which is reviewed by faculty teams using defined rubrics. Aggregate results are reported by Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness to the Student Learning Outcomes Committee which, in turn, reports to the Vice President of Student and Academic Services. Following this review, faculty act upon the assessment results. Specific details about Edison's assessment process are available at <http://www.edison.edu/facultystaff/learningoutcomes.php>.

During a pilot program in Summer 2009, thirty-seven courses were randomly selected for assessing general education outcomes—twenty chosen for Communication and seventeen for Critical Thinking. Coded assignments for review were randomly selected from students who had completed a minimum of forty credit hours.

Communication Assessment

The results for the Summer pilot Communication Assessment indicated that:

- In the summer pilot, 71.4% of the students chosen performed above the cutoff score.
- A higher GPA improved a student's performance.
- Additional hours completed also improved performance.

Critical Thinking Assessment

As a result of the Summer pilot, the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric has been revised to more narrowly define the specific criteria required to meet the cutoff score. The revised rubric will be applied to the Fall 2009 assessment.

If you would like additional information about Edison's General Education Assessment projects, please contact Marty Ambrose, Assessment Chair or this department.