

# Out Comes Learning

McHenry County College's Assessment Team Newsletter

*A newsletter dedicated to the promotion and recognition of Academic Assessment at MCC*

**Our Mission:** The mission of the McHenry County College assessment team is to provide support to divisional faculty for learning outcomes assessment. This support will be provided by division liaisons who will communicate information about the assessment and transformation process; coordinate the flow of information; investigate and recommend plans to record, organize, analyze, and report data; and be an advocate for the integration of assessment into the College community for the purpose of improving student learning.



*Brought to you by your learning Liaisons: Dr. Jim Gray; Kathy Chamberlain - Assessment Chair; Howard Nelson - Business; Dr. Julie Giuliani - Distance Education; Susan Richmond - Human and Public Service; Annie Brady - Institutional Research; Paul Hamill - Math / Science; Dr. Gabriel Decio - Humanities*

## **Fall 04 Workshop Report Embedding General Education Goals in the Curriculum**

A portion of this year's Fall Workshop involved faculty attending one of six groups in the afternoon. Participants of each of these groups shared strategies of how they help students to achieve one of the following general education goals: to develop an awareness of and a commitment to ethical behavior; to be creative and innovative; to think critically, act rationally, and be open to examining new ideas; to clearly communicate; to appreciate the diversity of the human experience; and to develop the skills and values for lifelong learning. A copy of the detailed strategies from each of the groups will be shared at the September division meetings. It will also be available online as link on the Assessment home page.

It is our hope that you will initially take a few moments to peruse the various strategies for each general education goal so that you can confirm that you are already incorporating many of these strategies into your curriculum. It is also hoped that with some reflection you will find a few new strategies that you might be able to use including, but certainly not limited to, classroom activities, syllabi, evaluation tools, and even classroom assessment techniques!

So many wonderful strategies were shared by everyone that space does not allow us to detail them here. We are appreciative that our faculty is so committed to student learning.

-----

## Bloom's Taxonomy and Learning Objectives

Using Bloom's Taxonomy, three "domains" of educational activities are identified. The first of these, named the Cognitive Domain, involves knowledge and the development of intellectual attitudes and skills. The other domains are the Affective Domain and the Psychomotor Domain. Eventually, Bloom and his co-workers established a hierarchy of educational objectives, which generally referred to as Bloom's Taxonomy, and which divides cognitive objectives ranging from the simplest behavior to the most complex.

1. Knowledge – facts, vocabulary, definitions
2. Comprehension – relationships, and similarities / differences.
3. Application – solving problems
4. Analysis- critical thinking
5. Synthesis – original or creative thinking
6. Evaluation – judging one way over another

Objectives should begin with "At the completion of this lesson / course the student will be able to....."

- Define a term
- Compare items
- Solve a problem
- Analyze information
- Create a new process
- Compare the "new and the old"

The verb in the objective is "active" and must be measurable. Ask yourself, is the performance observable and was it done in an acceptable manner? Next time we will discuss the psychomotor domain.

## The C.A.T. of the Month

Your assessment liaisons are sponsoring a friendly competition among the divisions to promote Classroom Assessment Techniques (C.A.T.S.). These are based on the book of the same name by Thomas Angelo and Patricia Cross. It is the team's goal to get more instructors doing classroom assessment to improve student learning. The C.A.T. for September is a reflective paper. Just ask your students in your class to reflect on their learning for the particular subject matter / content that was discussed during a class period. Make it only one page, typed, and have them address the following:



1. What did you learn?
2. How does it connect to other information that you already have?

After you have tried it, weigh in with your division liaison about how it went. It is our hope that you will gain insight about how your students are learning. The liaison will keep track of what percentage of the faculty from that division took the challenge. There will be a surprise at the next division meeting for the winning group!

**"Assessment** is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance". (Thomas A. Angelo, *AAHE Bulletin*, November 1995, p.7)

## Online Assessment

Online assessment strategies emphasize the importance of student learning outcomes and continual program improvement. To this end, the MCC online course assessment process involves a set of criteria for benchmarking student learning, best practices, and program standards. Learning outcomes are assessed in multiple ways using a variety of Blackboard tools such as online quizzes and exams, discussion boards, reflection papers and the use of the grade book. Students anonymously and electronically evaluate both course content and quality of technical support at the end of each semester. Before a newly developed online course is offered it is reviewed using a standards matrix by department Dean, Chair, Director of DE and invested faculty member. Lastly, online courses, as well as telecourses recently received North Central Accreditation's recommendation to offer distance education degrees in Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and the Associate in General Education. Certainly, this was clear indication that our Distance Education assessment program is aligned to state and national academic standards.

-----