

Out Comes Learning

McHenry County College's Assessment Team Newsletter

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

The 11th Annual Assessment Fair Conference, March 2, 2007



They came! (Despite the weather)

They ate! (Imagine a continental breakfast and pasta buffet lunch)

They learned!



Keynote speaker Carole Barrowman



Breakout session

They left! (And the weather was still awful.)

Congratulations to those who participated in our February assessment of student learning celebration! Chocolate was awarded to anyone who reported using a Classroom Assessment Technique or participated in an assessment workshop. Keep up the good work!

The Chocolate List

Meri Albright	Julie Freelove	Cheryl Richards
Mark Arctander	Doug Goosetree	Sarah Ruthvan
Frank Ardito	Therese Hart	Joe Rybacek
Jim Blaz	Carol Holbein	Jill Stonecliffe
Judi Cameron	Lynn Lourie	Bridget E. Vogrinc
Kathy Chamberlain	Barbara Meinke	Elaine Whalen-Pedersen
Marie Day	Amy Ortiz	Janice Young

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.

Rubrics and Respite: League of Innovations Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, March 3rd through 6th, 2007

By: Mark Arctander

On a snowy Saturday morning, a team from MCC headed to New Orleans for the League of Innovations Conference. Upon arriving to sunshine and warm weather, the six attendees from MCC - Kathy Chamberlain, Diane Nyhammer, Mike Reagan, Jennie Hoffmann, Robert McCord, and I took a walk to the French Quarter for Mufaletta's and Po'Boys at Maspero's.

This was my first "Innovations" conference, so after registering, I looked through the program for sessions that would benefit me as the Chair of Curriculum Development and Review and also as the Chair of the Department of Fine Art. One of the best sessions I attended was titled: *Strategies for Improving Writing in the Humanities*. Faculty members from Front Range Community College in Colorado discussed a "learning community" that pairs their highest level Developmental Reading and/or English courses with general education courses. At MCC, courses like Art Appreciation, Art History, Non-Western Art Forms, and Ethnic Folk Art are all possible pairings with Developmental Reading or English courses. I recall the papers I received from first-semester-first-year Art Appreciation students and realized that this kind of concurrent enrollment would benefit our students considerably. I have already discussed the idea with Sarah Ruthven, the Art Department's Assessment Liaison, English faculty, and Diane Nyhammer.

Respite

I had been to New Orleans before and was chosen to lead a tour of Bourbon Street and the French Quarter. We were able to find Jazz, Blues, food, and ultimately ended up at Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop - a 1760's building that was (allegedly) once the front for Jean and Pierre Lafitte's privateering (pirating) operation, which is now a café and pub that leans decidedly to the southeast and daylight (or moonlight) is visible through the roof/ceiling.

Rubrics

Mike Reagan (Chair of the CAPC subcommittee revising MCC's general education goals) and I attended another notable session, *Embedding and Assessing General Education Outcomes* presented by faculty from Sinclair Community College (Ohio). We were both impressed by Sinclair's six *very short* goals, and the measurable outcomes relative to these goals. A rubric that is used college-wide makes the whole assessment process fairly easy. Sinclair assesses 1 to 2 general education goals per year at entry and exit points in curricula (much like some of our "pre and post" tests). The Sinclair group stressed that General Education Goals should be concise and succinct. Mike and I talked about reducing MCC's general education goals to five broader statements, and we could assess one a year, making sure of transformation during the spring semester after initial assessment during the fall semester - and then move on to the next goal, thereby creating a five-year cycle of Assessment and Transformation.

Respite

An early morning walk along the Mississippi "River Walk" to Café DuMond for Beignets and Café au Lait was refreshing as the air had cooled markedly. The walk back was decidedly slower, with each of us anchored by bits of powdered-sugar coated fried dough, but we were now energized for the next session.

Rubrics

All totaled I attended 10 sessions, including one with our own Kathy Plinske joining Mark Milliron in an informative session that dealt with the integration of technology and pedagogy—an inevitability as witnessed by both Milliron's and Kathy's recent similar presentations at MCC.

Robert McCord and I attended *Painting as Pre-Writing*. Presenters from Hawaii handed out macadamia nuts and played Hawaiian music as an accompaniment to their rather engaging idea of using painting as a pre-writing tool. I was intrigued by the notion and thought that maybe I could approach this from the opposite direction - "writing as pre-painting" in my painting classes. We were instructed to write (list, diagram, and free-flow) as much as we could about either a significant event that our family celebrates or an object of our interest or affection. We were then directed to paint what this writing of words meant in watercolor. We were then finally asked to write more - now considering the visual image of the initial idea. The possibility of using writing as a pre-painting tool is something I will explore, and Robert thinks he could use this as a way to create new content for writing assignments. This session was a nice break from the hard and true assessment sessions attended with refreshing results.

Final Respite

The group had a great dinner together on the final evening. Early sessions and then a drive to the airport rounded out the experience. Good-bye to the swaying palms, Hurricanes (cold red ones), beads, and Creole and Cajun food, and hello snow and cold. But Spring is just around the corner, and the information gleaned from this informative conference will now begin to make a difference at our little college in the corn and (at times) cold.