



HLC Accreditation Evidence

Title: History of Assessment at Barton Community College

Office of Origin: Vice President of Instruction - Assessment of Student Learning

History of Assessment at Barton Community College

Classroom Level Assessment Techniques (CATS)

Beginning in 2004 with a required monitoring report to address HLC's concerns regarding assessment and continuing until the present time, Barton has made increasing progress towards the development of a multi-layered, assessment program. Initially, classroom level assessment techniques (CATS) were the primary assessment approach adopted by the College. The Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC) selected CATS because of its adaptability to a broad range of classes and subjects, abbreviated training requirement, and ability for immediate implementation by faculty and staff. The textbook, *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*, by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross, was used extensively as a model and served as a training manual for faculty and staff. To this day it is referenced in the *Barton Assessment Process Handbook* and made available at the Barton campus locations for review by faculty and staff.

Course Assessments Project (CAP)

Following CATS, Barton addresses Course Assessments Project (CAP). Barton initially piloted with college algebra. The instructors were tasked to identify competencies they felt were crucial to the course and determine ways to assess them. Twenty competencies were selected, and a twenty question multiple choice test was developed and given across the board at all venues and offerings of the course. Instructors made improvements at the course level to address concerns identified in the data. The Coordinator and OAC representatives met with the respective math faculty to assess progress made to improve student learning. This model was later adopted as the standard and applied to more and more courses as other groups saw the value and volunteer to join the project.

AQIP Influence on Institutional Assessment – Embedded Assessment Project

When Barton became a member of AQIP, it was time to advance CAPS beyond Math. The College had not attempted institutional assessment, but it was now time. Barton's faculty and staff approved a set of five fundamental outcomes (FO), previously referred to as General Education Outcomes, that direct the entire curriculum.

The Vice President then presented the outcomes to the Trustees for approval. Upon review, the Board of Trustees not only approved the FO but also determined that the resulting assessment data would measure the accomplishment of Board END 1 relating to the essential skills of Barton graduates. To determine a way to assess the FO, Barton created a new AQIP Action Project, Embedded Assessment. With guidance from HLC Action Project reviewers, the project team determined that the most efficient strategy would be to build on CAPS, which were still growing in number, and embed the assessment of the FOs.

Just as one can think of a course as the sum of its competencies, so can a degree be thought of as the sum of its courses. As with CAPS where instructors align specific questions with course competencies, faculty tied the specific competencies to the

Fundamental Outcomes. In this manner, Barton assesses the FOs directly in the courses in which they are taught and developed.

Impact of Title III Project – CAT Follow-Up Project

In 2008, Barton received a five-year Title III grant which included assessment objectives for several of its goals. Specifically, at least 90% of courses would develop course assessments, at least 90% of classes would document the use of classroom assessment techniques, and at least 90% of those classroom assessments would result in improvements in student learning. This grant was both beneficial and detrimental to our progress with regards to assessment.

Barton had funds to assist with the development of assessment instruments but required a significant effort to meet the goals; resulting in a considerable strain on the faculty and staff and hindering their buy-in. Assessment risked becoming a means to an end -- striving to satisfy the Title III goals but not to improving student learning.

Fortunately, the Outcomes Assessment Committee developed another AQIP Action Project to mitigate the potentially adverse outcomes. The CAT Follow-up Action Project was a means to keep the lines of communication open with faculty. Its goals dealt with keeping them on task while educating them on the benefits of assessment in the classroom. Faculty received more training. Members of the OAC demonstrated the benefits of assessment resulting in an increase in the number of course assessments. The result was an overwhelming shift from 7% of to 33% of identified courses participating! Largely successful, the goals relating to classroom assessment were attainable and mostly met.

Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC)

Throughout all of this, the Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC), a faculty committee consisting of Deans as well as the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services, led the charge of assessment at Barton. Two faculty members chaired the group; the Co-Assessment Coordinators. Their roles included presenting assessment workshops at the various campuses, answering questions, and serving as a resource to the faculty, staff, and administration relating to assessment. Additionally, they collected, compiled, and disseminated the assessment data and analysis documentation. As the number of assessments increased so did their workload; as such, in 2015 a new position, the Coordinator of Assessment of Student Learning was developed with a goal to develop a means to reduce the workload, make it more manageable, and automate as much of the data processes as possible.

Assessment Academy

The OAC Coordinator recommended that Barton join the Assessment Academy as the Quality Initiative for HLC. Under the direction of the Barton President, the College provided significant resources to fund attendance at the HLC Assessment Academy, technology to support data collection and analysis, and release time for faculty and staff participation in training activities.

The Coordinator and a team of faculty and staff began working with the Academy mentors, showing them the current processes, identifying gaps, and implementing strategies to address them. With the assistance of the mentors and support from a dedicated institutional researcher and the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, a vast amount of automation has now been put into place reducing approximately 500 hours of manual data entry per year.