

LEVELS OF ASSESSMENT BARTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Classroom-Level Assessment

The mission statement of the college suggests a commitment to putting learners and learning first in all matters concerning the operation of the college. The learning process begins in the environment in which course material is presented. Whether the course is delivered electronically or in more traditional classrooms, we call this the classroom level. If the guiding question of assessment at Barton County Community College is "As a result of their educational experiences here, to what degree have students learned what we expect them to learn?" then the assessment process should begin at the classroom level and focus on classroom assessment and its results as the foundation of the process.

Classroom assessment is an assessment activity conducted by the individual instructor in his/her classroom. The assessment activity is the choice of the instructor, selected to assess the particular outcome or objective identified by the instructor. The instructor may assess a classroom lecture, a reading assignment, a skill demonstration, or even an entire unit. The assessment device may be of the instructor's own creation or one selected from the many already in use by others.

Since the fall of 2001, Barton faculty have been encouraged to incorporate Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) into their instructional delivery. Relying on the work of Thomas Angelo and Patricia Cross, the Outcomes Assessment Committee has offered numerous training opportunities for learning about CATs.

Aside from the benefits to the individual instructor, the process of classroom assessment engenders changes within the culture of the college. When conducted regularly, CATs provide individual instructors with a wealth of meaningful information about their students' learning. Furthermore, information gleaned from CATs may be used to effect real-time adjustments designed to improve student learning. For many faculty, CATs provide an introduction to the nature of assessment, laying the foundation for understanding assessment in the broader perspective. For example, faculty whose courses are involved in the Course Assessment Project often use CATs to determine whether changes to course curriculum and instruction are yielding improvements in student learning. As Barton's assessment efforts evolve, become more sophisticated and engrained, the faculty's work with classroom assessment will under gird future initiatives at the course, program, and degree levels.

Since the establishment of the Class Level Assessment initiative, training, both formal and informal, has been ongoing. New faculty receive training in orientation activities, and other training resources are available 24/7 online. Classroom Assessment Techniques are considered formative assessment measures. As such, information derived from classroom assessment shall be used only by the instructor to improve learning as she/he sees fit. The CAT report provides documentation that assessment was done, not whether it meets a standard. Faculty are encouraged to share assessment results with colleagues, both informally and during structured

meetings. Beginning in the summer of 2010 and every term thereafter, each faculty member (associate and full-time) is asked to conduct and document at least one classroom assessment activity in each class they teach. This does not replace the expectation that faculty members will also participate in the course and program assessment activities of their department or program.

Expected Actions

- Faculty members will conduct classroom assessment early enough in the semester to be able to informally share the results with students.
- Faculty members are urged to discuss with other members in the program/department/discipline in a collegial and academic manner the results of their classroom assessments as a means to collective improvement of the learning of their students.
- The Outcomes Assessment Committee will compile CAT data and forward it to the respective deans.
- The Outcomes Assessment Committee will improve the retrieval and communication of CAT results.

Course Assessment

Course assessment is the assessment of student learning as it occurs through the duration of a course. While this assessment naturally takes place within individual departments, programs or disciplines, the distance between Barton's multiple teaching sites and various modes of instructional delivery sometimes hinders communication between faculty teaching sections of the same course, making course assessment challenging. Thus, to assess learning at the course level, the Outcomes Assessment Committee established a project that not only would allow faculty to discover whether (and to what degree) their students were mastering the course content, but also would provide a means by which faculty from Barton's many teaching venues could communicate, sharing experiences, expertise, and philosophies, thereby becoming, in essence, one-district. Since the pilot group of ten Barton courses in the fall of 2003, the Course Assessment Project (CAP) now includes over twenty Barton courses. A goal of 100% of courses offered online will be included in the CAP by the fiscal year 2014.

In the first phase of the project, course faculty review the course syllabus, coming to consensus on the course description, outcomes, and core competencies. Course Coordinators, full-time instructors who teach the course, facilitate these conversations, keeping all course faculty apprised of progress and changes as they occur. Only after the course faculty have reached this consensus can they begin the work of creating a common assessment instrument, the second phase of the project. In designing their assessment instrument, course faculty are free to create whatever instrument they believe will provide them with meaningful information about their students' attainment of the course competencies. In addition to developing the instrument in this phase, faculty determine administration guidelines, which may include timing, testing conditions, exchanging instruments and results, and benchmarking. Once faculty have implemented their assessment instrument, the results are collected, analyzed, and shared according to the pre-determined guidelines. It is in this third phase that faculty discuss their

students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as the project's assessment processes. In the fourth phase of the project, course faculty determine their next steps. Individual faculty may want to focus on a particular weakness; as a group, the faculty may develop a plan to remediate a pattern of weakness perceived from analyzing their results. Similarly, course faculty may decide to address a pattern of weakness by revising the course curriculum (which may involve revisiting the syllabus) or their instructional methods. Finally, course faculty may review their administration guidelines and procedures as well as the instrument itself to ensure that their assessment plan is accomplishing what they want it to accomplish.

Barton's Course Assessment Project mirrors efforts at the State level to effect consistent delivery of general education courses offered at the State's post-secondary institutions. Initiated in 1999, the Kansas Council of Instructional Administrators, a group comprised of the chief academic officers of the state's community college and vocational-technical schools/colleges, developed the Kansas Core Outcomes Project. Every September, faculty from the state's community colleges and universities gather to discuss the commonalities of their courses. The project now involves thirty courses in thirteen disciplines. Barton faculty involved in the State's Core Outcomes Project are working to integrate the agreed-upon outcomes and competencies into their syllabi.

In May 2005, the Kansas Board of Regents drafted new regulations for courses considered to be Concurrent Education Partnership (CEP) classes. CEP courses are college classes taught by high school teachers in the high school building during the high school day to high school students. Among its new regulations, the KBOR now requires that CEP instructors administer "the same final examination given in a representative section of the course taught at the institution awarding the course credit." (K.S.A. 2000 Supp. 72-11a01 through 72-11a05) Barton's Course Assessment Project has allowed associate faculty who teach CEP courses to participate in conversations and decisions regarding the development, content, and administration of a common instrument prior to the implementation of KBOR's regulations during the 2006-07 academic year.

Expected Outcomes

- During the 2010-2014 academic years, faculty who teach active courses will discuss and review course syllabi, assessment instruments, student results, and action plans, and develop action plans to address any areas of concern.
- Course faculty involved in the Course Assessment Project will participate in course-level assessment activities, including attending course faculty meetings, administering assessments according to guidelines (pre-determined by course faculty), submitting appropriate documentation to the course coordinator, participating in the analysis of assessment results, and documenting changes in curriculum and/or instruction for the purposes of improving student learning.
- Course Coordinators will report assessment results and subsequent plans for modifying curriculum and/or instruction to the Outcomes Assessment Committee vis-à-vis the Assessment Coordinators by the designated deadline.

- Course faculty will continue to collaboratively evaluate the validity and reliability of assessment instruments.

Degree-Level Assessment

Degree level assessment is completed using a mix of direct and indirect measures of student learning. The direct measure of student learning at the degree level involves embedded assessments/questions from courses involved with the Course Assessment Project. Building on the existing Class- and Course-Level assessment projects, faculty will be engaged in degree level assessment that is directly correlated to the general education outcomes set forth by the college.

The indirect measure of student learning at the degree level is collected from the Graduation and Noel-Lovetz survey.

Piloted in spring 2006 on the Great Bend campus, the graduate survey questioned students about their academic preparation at Barton, focusing on general education coursework completed as part of an associates' degree. Graduates were asked to rate how well they felt their Barton coursework had prepared them for the future using a five-point interval scale with scores ranging from "Very Well Prepared" (5) to "Poorly Prepared" (1); with a value of 3 representing a feeling of being "Moderately Prepared." An option of "Does Not Apply" was also given. The respondents were asked to rate their preparedness in ten general academic disciplines, as well as three additional general skills categories: *Reading Skills*, *Computer Proficiency*, and *Critical Thinking*. In addition to the questions regarding their general education coursework, the survey gathers demographic information about students' enrollment in developmental education, online, and hybrid coursework. Current survey questions appear below:

On a scale of 1 to 5, with **5** being **very well prepared** and **1** being **very poorly prepared**, please indicate how well your classroom experiences at Barton prepared you in the following areas. Use an **X** to denote any areas which **do not apply to your Barton coursework**.

Written Communication: courses in which you were required to express yourself in writing

Language Arts: courses in which you gave presentations, speeches, used foreign languages, or discussed literature

Math: courses in which you studied or applied math-related concepts

Social & Behavioral Sciences: courses in which you learned about human and societal behavior

Natural Science: courses in which you learned about properties of the natural world

Fine Arts: courses in which you were exposed to art, music, theater, or dance

Philosophy/History/Religion: courses in which you learned about or discussed philosophical, historical, or religious topics

Economics/Political Science: courses in which you learned about or discussed economics or politics

Developmental: courses in which you studied or applied developmental math, reading, or English concepts

___ Physical Education, Health & Performance: courses in which you learned about or applied fitness-related concepts or participated in performance-based activities

Using the same scale as above, please indicate how well your classroom experiences at Barton prepared you in the following general skill areas:

___ Reading Skills (Comprehension, Ability to critically analyze written materials)

___ Computer Proficiency (Utilizing computer technology to process information.)

___ Critical Thinking (Gathering facts, Generating insights, Analyzing data, Evaluating information)

Results from the alumni survey will be compared with those from the graduate survey for the purpose of identifying strengths and weaknesses in Barton's general education program. Although the graduate survey has yielded interesting and positive results, faculty have not been able to use the results to effect changes in their courses and programs that will improve student learning at the degree level.

Expected Outcomes

- Course coordinators will fill out Degree Level Embedded Assessment Project (DLEAP) form for the common assessment used identifying which general education outcomes are being assessed.
- Course coordinators will compile their results and submit to OAC.
- Results of the compilation of data will be presented to the Board of Trustees, Deans, and faculty members.
- Faculty members will discuss strategies to improve results.
- Faculty will review graduate and alumni survey results to determine what actions, if any, need to be taken to improve Barton's general education program.
- Working with the Alumni Office, Barton will administer the alumni survey.

Program-Level Assessment

With the 2006 reauthorization of the federally funded Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Kansas vocational-technical programs underwent significant changes in the way they were funded, approved, and monitored. With the specific expectation that vocational program completers will be prepared for employment in their chosen field, these changes also affected the way programs assessed their students. To satisfy the expectations of the Kansas Board of Regents (the authorized agency for Perkins oversight in the State of Kansas), Barton vocational-technical faculty have developed the following goals:

- Over the next five years, vocational faculty will develop plans and processes for incorporating industry-recognized testing of all vocational students completing approved programs.
- Vocational faculty will annually report student satisfaction results from program completers.
- Vocational faculty will annually report employer satisfaction results.
- Vocational faculty will continue to refine capstone courses for their programs.

- Using institutional data on placement and success rates of vocational students in developmental courses, vocational faculty will determine whether placement and developmental instruction are meeting the needs of vocational students.
- Over the next five years, incorporate a “work habit/ethics” component into each vocational program.