
Action Project

Institution:	Baker College	Contact:	Chris Davis
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Timeline:

Planned project kickoff date: 03-01-2007

Target completion date: 12-30-2009

Actual completion date: --

A. Give this Action Project a short title in 10 words or fewer:

Improving Learning of Under-prepared Students

B. Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer:

This project will establish minimum-competency levels in reading, writing, and math, which will take the form of various types of exit tools, before students can advance from developmental courses to college-level programs and general education courses. Two new courses, one in math and one in English, will be developed to allow an additional ten weeks of instruction for those students who do not meet the competency requirements, but have some measure of success in the first course. Students will be required to complete developmental education courses first in their programs to ensure that they have the basic skills necessary to succeed. The ultimate goal is to improve success rates not only in the developmental courses but also in the college-level courses, as well as to improve overall retention and success toward graduation for this significant portion of our population.

C. Identify the single AQIP Category which the Action Project will most affect or impact:

Primary Category: Helping Students Learn

D. Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now -- why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities:

Over 80% of all entering first-time students test into one of more developmental education courses, and 11% of these students test into all three developmental education areas. DEQIP (Developmental Education Quality Improvement Program) has been building toward this project since Jan. 2004. A Developmental Education Initiative has been approved by the entire Baker College System, from the President's Council to the campus level. The Conversation Days provocative propositions and the Constellation Survey both identified a system wide need to improve the learning of under-prepared students.

E. List the organizational areas - -institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project:

Academics (deans, faculty, programs), Counseling and Advising, Admissions, and the institution as a whole

F. Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve:

--Student placement and advising, which is near the beginning of the student's experience with our college and its course offerings --Academics, which includes developmental and general education, and all programs, allowing students to be more fully prepared for the challenges and rigors of their studies --Employers, who will benefit from better prepared graduates who demonstrate competency

not only in their program content areas, but in soft skill areas as well

G. Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion):



While some of the foundation has been laid for these changes prior to the start of this project, the exit tools for the developmental courses will not all be in place until Fall 2007. In addition, in order to measure whether we are truly successful in better preparing these students, we will need to track them through their subsequent college level courses. The results will be much more apparent in two years, with graduated measurements occurring along the way.

H. Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing:



The action team will meet quarterly to review progress, with subcommittees meeting at various times within the quarters. Data will be collected on a quarterly basis for the results of the competency-based exit tools. Students will also be tracked into their subsequent college-level course to determine if they are more successful as a result of these minimum competencies. The leaders of the four action teams will also meet periodically to review progress of the four projects.

I. Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals:



The true measure of success will be an increase both in the successful completion rates of the developmental courses and in the successful completion rates of the subsequent college-level courses in English and math. Improved retention rates of these students to graduation will also be an indicator of success.

J. Other information (e.g., publicity, sponsor or champion, etc.):



Deans of Developmental Education have been in place on each campus since Jan. 2004. DEQIP (Developmental Education Quality Improvement Program) action team: --10 campus deans --2 faculty representatives (one-English, one- math) --System Curriculum and Assessment directors --System Teacher Preparation Director --System Director of Institutional Research --Counseling and Learning Support Center representatives --Instructional Designer --System Director of Effective Teaching and Learning --System Vice-President of Academics --System Director of General Education and Developmental Education Establishment of a developmental education faculty group that will meet quarterly System wide training of over 300 administration, faculty, and staff in CQI, including 20 developmental education faculty Full support of the President of Baker College system

K. Project Leader and contact person:



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Annual Update: 2007-09-13

A. Describe the past year's accomplishments and the current status of this Action Project.

The AQIP Action Project on improving student learning for the under prepared student had its beginnings in a proposal from System Academics in Oct. 2003. This original proposal was approved by the Presidents Executive Council creating a department of developmental education and ten campus dean administrators in January 2004. Prior to this, the developmental education courses were part of general education. In a sense, this AQIP project's foundations were developed from the last three years' work of the DEQIP (Developmental Education Quality Improvement Program) group, made up of the ten deans, two faculty, some system directors, the system vice-president of academics, and the director of general education and developmental education.

The DEQIP group meets four times a year, the second week of each quarter. In addition, various subcommittees meet multiple times per year to complete the work and implement the changes required by the project. In October 2006, a meeting was held with all campus presidents, CAOs, and system leaders to share the AQIP project, which is also known as the DEQIP Initiative. Baker College has analyzed data that indicate that 11% of our students who are new to college and new to Baker place, through COMPASS testing, into 3-4 developmental education courses. Of these same students, 48% test into the lowest developmental education math course, 12% test into the second level developmental education math course, and 60% test into one or the other. 20% of these students test into the developmental reading course and 19% test into the developmental writing course. In addition, the data indicate that only about 50% of these students are successful in their first attempt at the lowest level math course. Beginning Fall 2007, all students who place into developmental education courses will be required to take those courses first, either in conjunction with other college level courses or alone, depending on the number of developmental education credits required. Since Fall 2006, a portfolio review process has been implemented as the exit for English Review, the developmental education writing course. The results so far indicate that for those students who submit a portfolio, about 79% are successful in moving on to the college level course. The Essential Math Concepts course, the lowest level math course, uses a series of six module tests as the exit, and in fall 2005, various policies for consistency across campuses were implemented in this course. In addition, in Fall 2006, MyMathLab was implemented as a delivery method. For Fall 2007, the majority of sections for Essential Math Concepts will be delivered through MML. Starting fall 2007, there will be required exit exams for College Reading, a score of 60 on a COMPASS posttest, and for Prealgebra, a score of 37/54 on a validated exit exam. Beginning winter 2008, extended courses for English Review and Essential Math Concepts will be offered. These courses, already developed, will provide students who meet the criteria (passing the coursework but failing the portfolio review in English and passing three of the six modules in math) an additional ten weeks in which to successfully complete the course work. In order to better support students and faculty, the entire developmental education curriculum has been reviewed and revised. In addition to the above accomplishments, in Spring 2007 system meetings of developmental education faculty began and will continue to be held two to three times a year for the purpose of providing a forum for faculty concerns as well as communicating changes and providing professional development geared specifically to this group of faculty. On a campus level, developmental education faculty participate in four additional hours of professional development each quarter. This is in addition to the eight hours provided for new and returning faculty. Faculty evaluation forms and processes have also been reviewed and revised. A new evaluation was piloted with developmental education faculty and is expected to be adopted by all faculty in the next academic year after a period of time is allowed for feedback. This new evaluation tool better addresses student learning and faculty contributions to the learning. DEQIP has also been gathering data on retention of developmental education faculty and on faculty performance in the developmental education courses. Campuses will be accountable for successful completion rates in developmental education courses for the 07-08 academic year. Baseline data prior to the formation of DEQIP and the AQIP Project show that students who place into developmental education courses are not as successful in the college level courses in math and English as those students who place directly into the college level courses. Our ultimate goal with improving curriculum, teaching strategies, and mastery demonstrated through standardized exit tool is to improve the success of these students in the college level courses. Preliminary results with English Review indicates that the higher the portfolio rubric score, the better the grade in Composition I. Data will continue to be collected on all of the students and their success in the college level classes throughout the implementation of these exit procedures during the 07-08 academic year and beyond.

Review (10-06-07):

It's clear that Baker College understands the challenges of under-prepared students. There is college-wide recognition of the issues. Establishing a separate department and DEQIP group

provided focus to improving the performance of students. The college has used data effectively to define the issues and to track outcomes of actions taken. The college not only focused on the student issues but also gave attention to the needs of the faculty teaching developmental courses. The project incorporated the AQIP principles of Learning, Collaboration, Information and People.

B. Describe how the institution involved people in work on this Action Project.

This AQIP project has been a top priority with the System President, Vice President of Academics, and Director of General Education and Developmental Education. The project has had the full support of the president who, along with the director, visited every campus admissions office during the month of March to present the project, the data that supports the project, and the goals of the project. The president along with the vice-president of academics, the director of developmental education, four developmental education deans, and two developmental education math faculty visited DeVry University in Chicago to see the MyMathLab software in action with students. Agenda time has been devoted to the DEQIP Initiatives/AQIP Project at the Presidents and Executive Council Meetings and at the CAO/VPO meetings. The developmental education deans on every campus have been providing information at the deans' meetings, at the Campus Operation meetings, and at department meetings. In addition, the deans of development education have held information sessions for all of the academic and admission departments at their campuses. Advisors have been informed of all of the changes and how these changes will affect students and their programs, including providing a list of courses for advising within programs. The AQIP projects link includes this project on improving learning for the under prepared student, and. DEQIP has its own Blackboard site. The motivation remains high for this high stakes project. As campus report cards will now include the pass rates for developmental education courses, there is even more at stake for all involved. Presidents, CAOs, and deans were provided with a five year sketch of data for successful completion rates in the lowest level developmental math course. This will provide evidence for mentoring as well as staffing changes. Faculty meetings are being held on both the campus and system levels to share all of the data, the changes, and the requirements of the new processes. Faculty have also been actively involved in developing the curriculum and the exit tools. Data and evidence sharing has become a priority at all levels with all departments and all groups. There is constant communication through various channels and updates whenever required. Program system meetings have included this project on their agendas, and the programs have written rotations that include the lowest level math course. Another part of this project involves incorporating basic competencies in reading, writing, and math into the certificate programs. The programs have developed various methods to include these competencies. DEQIP information is included in the handbook for faculty, and DEQIP has pages in the catalog that outline its mission, goals, and objectives. The DEQIP group is highly motivated and is working on keeping the various campuses and faculty highly motivated.

Review (10-06-07):

This project was well-supported and promoted by the top administration of the college. Having a team of people visit another institution for learning about a new approach to addressing the issue is a best practice. The college has done a good job of connecting the pieces of the system surrounding student success through involvement and communication with advisors, deans and campus operations which supports several AQIP Categories including (5) Leading and Communicating, (6) Supporting Institutional Operations and (9) Building Collaborative Relationships. Accountability for the project outcomes will be increased and have greater visibility with inclusion of performance measurements on the campus report cards. The principles of Leadership, Involvement and Collaboration are evident

C. Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project.

The planned next steps for this action project include various items. Some of our planned next steps are Review of module tests for Essential Math Concepts either for validation or for creation of an alternate comprehensive exit test Implementation of exit exam processes by faculty for each course on each campus Implementation, collection, and analysis of Class Assessment Records for Essential Math Concepts and Prealgebra (CAR and CARP) Creation of a Class Assessment Record for English Review (CARE) in order to address the issue of the approximately 30% of English Review students who do not present a portfolio for review, thus eliminating themselves from successful completion of the course and the ability to move into the college level writing courses Creation of professional development sessions with faculty input and feedback Follow-up with enrollment in developmental education classes during the first quarter and review of the exceptions that were made to this policy. Collection and analysis of these exceptions to enrolling in developmental education courses initially. Continued review of faculty performance, faculty profiles for success, and sharing of best practices Collection and analysis of data about successful completion rates with exit tools and processes Collection and analysis of data about students' success as they move from English Review to Composition I and from Essential Math Concepts to Prealgebra to Introductory Algebra or Mathematics for Business Collection and analysis of data on effectiveness and implementation of Extended courses Collection and analysis of data for students who complete Essential Math Concepts and Prealgebra within one quarter

Review (10-06-07):

The college has developed a good plan for continuing and expanding the activities of this project. Again, the college has focused not only on the success of students but also if its faculty. Planning for additional professional development, faculty profiles for success and sharing of best practices align well with AQIP Category (4) Valuing People. The collection and analysis of data is evident. There has been great progress made on this action project since the kick-off date was March of 2007. In reading the update, you can feel energy for this project. The principles of Learning, People, and Information are all considered in their planned next steps.

D. Describe any "effective practice(s)" that resulted from your work on this Action Project.

Eventually, we will be able to share several practices with other institutions. These will include Our practices for proposals and data-driven decision making Our exit tools and exit processes Our standardized curriculum, faculty guides, student learning outcomes, and collaborative processes for developing all of these Our faculty development processes and professional development modules Our creation of developmental education as a separate program within our institution Potential for additional sharing of practices as we move forward

Review (10-06-07):

The issue of under-prepared students is a concern for many institutions. This is an ambitious project but one with great potential to make a difference for students. The college should document their processes and practices to help other colleges improve. We look forward to your sharing what worked well in addressing this issue. Keep up the good work.

E. What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project?

We have identified several risks and challenges as we have been implementing this project across our multi-campus system Risk: Taking developmental education courses prior to program courses may be a disappointment to students anxious to get into their programs. Proper advising and sharing of the data with students is one response to this risk. Risk: Turn-over of deans and faculty. As with any institution, we face the challenges that turn-over in administrative and faculty positions present. As an institution that relies very heavily on adjunct faculty, we face an even greater challenge. Challenge: Communication and consistency of message. In spite of all of our communication

efforts, with a multi-campus institution of about 35,000 students, there are communication challenges that we need to address. Challenge: Since we have a large Online college, the Online Developmental Education dean has been facing various challenges in regard to the initiatives, delivery, and exit processes as they translate from on-ground to online. Challenge: Offering, staffing, and scheduling of additional sections of developmental education. Since the courses must now be completed up front and since the MyMathLab sections require computer lab availability, this presents a challenge for some campuses. Challenge: Programming and data collection challenges have surfaced since many are currently manual processes. Our IS department has a long list of requests and needs more time and staffing to complete the requests in a timely fashion. Challenge: There is so much noise in measuring student success – life events, other classes, etc., but we should still see some difference in improved student learning in developmental education courses.

Review (10-06-07):

The college has been very thoughtful in identifying the challenges and risks of this action project. All are very valid. It might be helpful for the college to identify strategies to minimize the challenges and risk and to build those into this project. Some additional activities designed around AQIP Category (3) Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs might be beneficial. Even with several challenges, the college is keeping its focus on the improvement of student learning, which is very commendable.

F. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help to stimulate progress on this action project, explain your need(s) here and tell us who to contact and when?

At this time, we think we are making sufficient progress with the project and will not need a link to a colleague or another institution. We may need this assistance at a later date.

Review (10-06-07):

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