
Action Project

Title: Aligning Course Objectives

Version: 3

Institution: Midstate College

Status: Active

Submitted: 2012-10-10

Category: 1-Helping Students Learn

Timeline

Planned project kickoff date: 2010-12-01

Target completion date: 2012-12-03

Actual completion date:

Project Detail

Project Goal

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

This action project will ensure that all course objectives are measurable and appropriate to the course level based on Midstate's adoption of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Reasons For Project

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

The College has been working to align course objectives with program objectives, and as a result, there is a need to ensure that course objectives are measurable and appropriate to the course level based on Midstate's adoption of Bloom's Taxonomy. Properly written objectives are necessary to create an environment that facilitates student learning.

Organizational Areas Affected

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

The following department, programs, and positions will be affected by this action project: academic department and programs, faculty, and the Director of Assessment.

Key Organizational Process(es)

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

The following organizational processes will be improved: curriculum development and assessment.

Project Time Frame Rationale

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

The action project will be designed to focus on 100 and 200 level courses during the 2010 academic year and the 300 and 400 level courses during the 2011 academic year. This timeframe will be adjusted as needed.

Project Success Monitoring

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

1. A schedule will be developed to facilitate the review of courses.
2. Faculty will be provided professional development opportunities concerning objectives during which they will be given a template that demonstrates an effective format for

writing objectives. This template will be used to evaluate whether objectives are written properly. In addition, faculty will be given a verb wheel, which is a tool that provides guidance concerning Bloom's Taxonomy.

Project Outcome Measures

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 action project outcomes are listed below:

1. All course objectives will be measureable. (program directors and faculty)
2. All course objectives will be appropriate to the course level based on Midstate's adoption of Bloom's Taxonomy. (program directors and faculty)
3. Assessment matrices will be updated as appropriate and submitted with course/program approval forms. (program directors and faculty)
4. Course approval forms will be processed and approved for any required changes. Course syllabi will be updated to reflect approved changes. (program directors and faculty)
5. Approved changes will be communicated to faculty so that changes are incorporated into teaching. (Chief Academic Dean, program directors)

The measurements for this project's outcomes are listed below:

1. We have a master list of all courses that will be used as a means for documenting what courses have been reviewed and changes approved.
2. The course/program approval process will be followed. Changes will be disseminated to appropriate entities in a timely fashion.

Annual Update

Project Accomplishments and Status

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

Program Directors and faculty, both full-time and adjunct, have successfully used the Course Objective Rubric to complete evaluations of individual course objectives. This rubric has proven successful because it contains detailed performance criteria outlined as follows:

- Each objective contains a process or a skill (a verb) that students will learn.
- Each objective contains some targeted content (a noun) for students to learn.
- Each objective is distinct from the others; there is no repetition or redundancy.
- Each objective is measurable.
- The objectives can be mapped to the various levels on Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.
- Each objective is stated in terms of what students are to learn; not in terms of the teacher's activities.
- The objectives present a clear picture of the purpose of the course and learning outcomes.
- The objectives are at the appropriate level of Bloom's Taxonomy.

An "Assessment Day" is schedule each term. Program Directors discuss assessment efforts with full-time and adjunct faculty. Focused activity enforces the role and importance of the

courses to the curriculum. It also offers the opportunity to verify that the curriculum is appropriately structured and balanced to attain the program goals. Additional topics range from Bloom's Taxonomy to reviewing results of the individual instructor's self-assessments of courses taught the previous term.

The College completed course objective evaluations for 16 of 17 current degree programs (bachelor, associate, and diploma) for all 100-, 200-, 300-, and 400-level courses. The Realtime Reporting Bachelor degree program personnel are in the process of completing course objective evaluations and have identified activities and time-lines with a completion date of November 2012. The "plan" includes weekly reports to the Dean of Academics with specific target information and progress updates.

Through this action project we discovered a need to revise our program and course approval process. This process is the formal means by which course and program changes are facilitated. The data flow for this process was getting congested because there was only one designated person processing the flow of informational requests. An additional academic support person has been added to the program and course approval process helping to streamline the process and improve the turnaround time.

Institution Involvement

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

The action project team met on a monthly basis and helped drive progress. Program Director meetings, faculty meetings, and AQIP in-services all have helped keep this action project on track. This action project was highlighted through a detailed presentation to the entire college in the winter 2011 AQIP In-service and the fall 2012 AQIP In-service. Full-time faculty meeting and Program Directors meetings also served as check points for progress updates from the Program Directors and faculty. Assessment day was used by Program Directors for additional discussions with full-time and part-time faculty regarding the use of Bloom's Taxonomy in course objectives evaluation and revisions.

Next Steps

Describe your planned next steps for this Action Project

Personalized meetings with individual program directors and faculty have helped to ensure accurate documentation and facilitate on-going progress. As mentioned earlier, one bachelor degree program still has outstanding course objective evaluations which need to be completed. A plan has been created to achieve 100% completion of all course evaluations by November 2012. This action project is scheduled to be completed at the beginning of December 2012.

Resulting Effective Practices

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

No additional effective practices have been defined at this time since the last update report in 2011.

What challenges, if any, are you still facing in regards to this Action Project? This is an opportunity to get constructive, actionable feedback and advice from our review process. Use this question to specify where your blocks, gaps, sticking points, or problems are. If you have already fashioned strategies to deal with any challenge you face, share both the challenge and your strategy for meeting it. If you would like to discuss the possibility of AQIP providing you help beyond the review process, explain your need(s) and tell us whom to contact and when.

Although we still have one degree program which is still working through the process of course objective evaluation, we are confident they will complete their evaluations by November 2012.
