ED 299
Program Assessment Seminar
Final Report
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I. Introduction

This report details three assessment projects: The Social Science Assessment Working Group, the Hybrid Guidelines Project and the Quality Matters Online Course Training and Certification Project. The Social Science group began as a response to last accreditation report and initiative of the office of instruction to begin doing program-level assessment, discussed at Fall inservice. The Hybrid Guidelines project was a response to meet student desire to for flexible schedules, more online choices, but also regular classroom contact with an instructor, and the need to have some quality control on this new mode of course delivery, which is a combination of online and traditional classroom instruction. Hybrid courses on average make up 11% of all courses offered while fully online courses only comprise 5%. Presently, although Lane has many courses with online learning components, it has no hybrid courses, which are defined by seat time being officially allocated to online instruction. The Quality Matters Online Course Training Certification project began when Joe Escobar, Meredith Keene-Wilson and myself, Lane's current three faculty webmasters, went to a training event last Fall in Chemeketa College. Cynde Leathers then wrote and received a grant for $13,500 for Quality Matters training at Lane.

II. Method

The Social Science Division group met on a weekly basis with the mission of tying discipline level assessment to the core competencies in the AAOT, such as critical thinking, communication and integrating course materials into individual experiences and perspectives. Faculty from Psychology, Geography, History, Philosophy and Religion set out to design course-level outcomes, assessment rubrics and/or student surveys to begin evaluating assessment in their courses.

For the hybrid project, a task force was formed to explore the implications for scheduling, technical support, faculty training, etc., and the need for guidelines for faculty direction and managerial oversight was noted. It was also noted that there were no formal guidelines for developing online courses at Lane and assessing how effective they were. The webmasters then applied for and received an assessment grant for 120 hours of curriculum development from the office of instruction, and set to work developing hybrid guidelines for faculty and made a presentation at the Division Managers' Meeting in April.

The Quality Matters Online Course Certification Project is just getting started. We plan on doing half-day or full day trainings some time during the Fall inservice period with funding for 50 attendees, primarily faculty, but managers as well. After this training, attendees will be certified to evaluate their own courses as a member of a three-person review panel which must consist of two other Quality Matters certified reviewers, one of which must be from another institution, to assure objectivity.

III. Challenges And Process

One of the major challenges was that the social sciences are so disparate and use such different methodologies. They run the gamut from disciplines which have a lot in common with the hard sciences and make use of statistics and mathematical models, such as Psychology or Economics, and disciplines which have more in common with the Humanities such as History or Philosophy. A faculty survey was designed and, after making some suggestions for minor revisions, I made it into an online survey. The link was then sent out to faculty.

The Hybrid Project adopted the Quality Matters rubric for online courses for Hybrid Instruction. Some challenges we encountered were the definition of a Hybrid course, what sort of scheduling possibilities were to be allowed, and whether the faculty member was obligated to use a Learning Management System. It was decided that the guidelines developed would only apply to the online portion of the course, as it was assumed that faculty already have guidance on and managers ways of evaluating in-class instruction.

Current challenges for the Quality Matters project include scheduling and drawing enough voluntary faculty participants through some sort of incentive program within the constraints of the budget of the grant.

IV. Results

A Social Science Assessment Plan was developed, along with several rubrics and assessment strategies for the disciplines mentioned above. These documents will be kept in a resource binder in the department and I will be putting them up on a departmental assessment website as well.

After numerous revisions and rewrites, the guidelines, *Hybrid Courses: Guidelines and Best Practices* were printed and made available online to faculty and managers, with a simplified scoring system and explanations as to how to use the guidelines. In particular, it was made clear that although managers could use the guidelines in their oversight role in determining which courses should be taught in their divisions, they were not to be used as a means of faculty evaluation or discipline. It was decided that faculty could use any combination of online and traditional classroom scheduling, but the only caveat being that the schedule had to remain the same throughout the term and that whole credit hours needed to be used (i.e. a faculty member could not do 1.5 hrs online and 2.5 hrs classroom instruction). An HYB designation was agreed upon for catalog purposes, as well as a requirement that each credit will require approximately 33 hours of student involvement during the quarter, including class time, homework, research projects, studying for exams, online work in hybrid courses, or other out-of-class activities. It was decided to highly recommend, but not require, that the online portion of a hybrid course use an approved learning management system, such as Moodle. The expectation was also given in the guidelines that standards will not be compromised in converting a face-to-face class to a hybrid and regular interaction with the instructor will occur (i.e. that it is acceptable for an instructor to simply put a static lesson plan on the web and suggest that students email her if they have any questions). At Spring Inservice, the webmasters held a well-attended afternoon session *Hybrid Courses: The Best of Both Worlds*, and made a podcast and the PowerPoint presentation available on the teach.lanecc.edu homepage.

The Quality Matters project is still in process. The grant proposal by Cynde Leathers sets out a lot of the planning for the project, but we still require clarification of some of the requirements from Maryland Online and to work out a training schedule for Fall. Then during the Winter term, there are funds allocated to train 5 faculty from Lane to become external Quality Matters reviewers for sister institutions such as Chemeketa or Portland Community College. Finally, in the Winter and Spring terms, the plan to Quality Matters certify at least five online courses at Lane.

V. Conclusion

The Social Science Division is far ahead of many divisions in already collecting faculty data and having a working assessment plan. Hybrid courses have already been scheduled for next year, and positive feedback has come from faculty and managers to the guidelines developed by the webmasters. Finally, the Quality Matters project promises to increase the effectiveness of online learning at Lane and provide tools for faculty to do quality assessment of student learning.