

NMU AQIP Action Project

Title: Library Instruction: Assessment of Student Learning, Persistence and Retention

Systems Portfolio Category 1: Helping Students Learn

Planned Project Launch Date: September 30, 2015

Target Completion Date: September 30, 2016

Sponsors: Mary P. (Mollie) Freier

1. Briefly describe the project in less than 100 words. Be sure to identify the key organizational areas (departments, programs, divisions, units, etc.) and key organizational processes that this action project will affect, change, and/or improve.

Current library science research has shown a strong positive correlation between student library use and persistence and retention. Building upon these studies, the project committee (library staff, registrar, faculty and AQIP liaison) will gather data on persistence and retention for College Composition I (EN 111) students who have received library instruction from a librarian and compare the results to those who have not received librarian support. In addition, data regarding the quality of sources EN 111 students use will be analyzed. Student focus groups will be conducted in order to learn how NMU might improve and reinforce library instruction methods.

2. Describe your institution's reasons for initiating this Action Project now and for how long it should take to complete it. Why are this project and its goals high among your current priorities? Also, explain how this project relates to any strategic initiatives or challenges described in the institution's recent or soon-to-be submitted portfolio.

The Olson Library has not provided formal library instruction for EN 111 classes since 2010; we have instead "trained the trainers" by showing teaching assistants and adjunct faculty how to conduct library instruction. However, we have not been able to assess the results of this program because we have not been able to gather data consistently. This lack was underscored by comments on our 2014 Systems Portfolio, which suggested that the library relied too heavily on survey data for its assessment and not enough on direct assessment of student learning. This project will provide us with assessment data which can be considered not only in terms of the success of our instruction in first-year composition courses (EN 111), but for library instruction across the curriculum and to different levels of students. Specific components of this project have already been accepted into Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success (AiA), a competitive program developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/AiA>). Therefore, timing is appropriate to build upon this endeavor and apply recommendations regarding library instruction campus-wide.

NMU, like many colleges and universities, is also concerned about enrollment and retention. The results of this project will also indicate whether or not having a member of the library faculty conduct instruction results in students using the library, an action that research from other institutions indicates

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will positively impact student success and retention (see the ACRL Value of Academic Libraries Project: http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/?page_id=21).

The one-year time frame was selected in order to collect and analyze data from two semesters (Fall 2015 and Winter 2016)

3. List the project goals, milestones, and deliverables along with corresponding metrics, due dates, and other measures for assessing the progress for each goal. Be sure to include formal evaluations when the project progress will be reviewed.

October 2015 – January 2016:

- Identify all relevant EN 111 student data currently available and create a quantitative analyses framework.
- Address focus group procedures and identify a qualitative analysis framework.
- Develop a procedure to review student work submitted in EN 111 and develop a rubric for analysis.
- Meet with stakeholders to review metrics.

February 2016 – May 2016

- Conduct analyses of data gathered during the previous four months.
- Meet with stakeholders to review results.

June 2016 – September 2016

- Implement recommendations from stakeholders.
- Provide recommendations based upon results.

4. Describe how various members of the learning community will participate in this action project. Show the breadth of involvement by individuals and groups over the project's duration.

The sponsor of this project is an NMU Olson Library professor. The sponsor will be participating in the national program and adhering to the schedule for that program as Assessment in Action (AiA) team leader. At NMU, the AiA team also includes an Associate Professor and Instruction Librarian, Registrar, and Director of Institutional Accreditation and Assessment. An additional professor who is also the Director of Composition has been consulted and has already contributed valuable feedback. Each individual identified will serve as the lead for the following subgroup committees.

- Faculty: Investigate current research in library instruction and provide recommendations regarding the academic needs of students in EN 111.
- Registrar and Director of Institutional Accreditation and Assessment: Provide data necessary to assess instructional techniques and create rubrics.
- Others as deemed necessary by Action Project committee and by stakeholders who wish to participate in this Action Project.

This Action Project focuses on first-year composition students; the data collected will help in showing the value of library use and ways that library instruction could benefit students across the curriculum. Recommendations will be of value not only to instruction librarians, but to teaching faculty in all areas.

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5. Describe how the institution will monitor project progress/success during, and at the completion of this project. Be sure to specifically state the measures that will be evaluated and when.

The project will begin on September 30, 2015. Library tours and instruction for EN 111 are currently being scheduled. All EN 111 instruction for Fall 2015 will be completed by the end of October, and focus group moderators will be trained in October and November, with focus groups about the instruction and use of the library being held in November. Student bibliographies from Fall 2015 will be collected in December and analyzed through January. The Registrar will also collect aggregate data in January comparing retention and GPA for students who received library instruction for EN 111, those who received both instruction and a library tour, and those who received neither. EN 111 instructors will be interviewed as a group in December.

The process will be repeated in the Winter semester, although we should not have to train new focus group moderators. The team leader/sponsor will attend the face-to-face meeting of the AiA group at the American Library Association Midwinter meeting in January, as well as monthly webinars on the assessment process sponsored by this group. The results of the project will be presented in a poster session at the American Library Association Annual Conference in June (a requirement of the AiA project).

Recommendations based on the results of this project will be made and disseminated by September 30, 2016.

6. Describe the challenges that may be encountered in successfully completing the project or for institutionalizing the learning from the project's goals.

The Action Project committee will have to get bibliographies from student work from the EN 111 instructors, and library faculty have had difficulty getting assessment data from teaching faculty in the past. Since we are asking only for raw data, we hope that it will be easier to get this information. We hope to be able to make convincing, data-based recommendations on the importance of the library in student success and retention, and we hope that these recommendations can be implemented by teaching faculty across campus.

7. Provide any additional information that the institution wishes for reviewers to understand regarding this action project.