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Teaching Excellence @HCC

Chalk Talk by Mary Beth Chaney

In an effort to engage students in classroom discussions and reflections, I have adapted the following protocol from the National School Reform Faculty resources (www.msrfharmony.org). This strategy, Chalk Talk, is a silent way to reflect on debate topics or research, generate new ideas, informally assess student learning, develop project topics or problem solve. I have seen this strategy used with adults and children as young as second grade and have found it to be equally effective at all levels.

Chalk Talk is a completely

silent activity that allows thoughtful reflection or response, while also changing the pace of the normal classroom discussions/lecture. The time can vary based on your wants/needs as the facilitator of the activity. It can last for as little as five minutes up to an hour. The most effective way to complete the chalk talk activity is to post a question or prompt on chart paper and then have the students write their responses or reflections using markers.

As the leader, you would begin by explaining that a Chalk Talk is silent activity in which no one is permitted to talk. Sam-

ple questions in my classroom are often reflections/responses to classroom scenarios. You may decide that a professional article, response to current event, or other relevant topic may be best suited for your individual instruction. I often will post two or three questions throughout the room that relate to the same topic.

Set a basic time limit. For example, "You will have approximately ten minutes to read and respond to the posted question." This is not set in stone, but instead serves as a guide. If the ten minutes have passed and students are still in reflective/responding mode,



allow them to finish. The idea is to allow as much wait time and reflection as responders need. You may choose to not interact during this time or interact by adding stars to key points, circling main ideas, or responding to comments with questions. The facilitator's interactions encourage maximum participation from everyone.

At the completion of the activity you may verbally discuss the responses or choose to let the comments speak for themselves.

The Outcomes Assessment Database



Have you been nagged by your Outcomes Assessment Leadership Team representative for a completed COG? Are you tired of Andy's monotone and repetitious dribble about a database during Faculty Assembly? If so, you are not alone. Many members of the HCC faculty have sought counseling to deal with the effects of OFS – Outcomes Fatigue Syndrome.

Although outcomes assessment

work might seem tedious, it is ultimately beneficial. It assists faculty in improving teaching and learning at both the course and program level. For courses, this improvement can be demonstrated through completed Course Outcome Guides. These guides, or COGs, reflect the progress that has been made in assessment within each course offered here at the college. These forms are simple and easy to complete. At a minimum, a COG should contain the common course outcomes that have been developed for each course and the methods of assessment that are being

used to measure those outcomes. If there is a common assessment that is being used to collect data, that should be the primary instrument listed on the form. Courses that are further along in the assessment process may have data that has been collected and analyzed. A summary of this information should be included on the form. The final step in completing the form is to list improvements that have been or will be made in the course based upon the data analysis (closing the loop).

COGs are now being collected (by team representatives) in folders that can be

found on the I drive. They will ultimately be collected into a master database that can be used to demonstrate our progress in outcomes assessment. As progress is made in assessment within individual courses, the COGs will be updated within the database.



Assessment Handbooks—Coming Soon!

Do you often find yourself waking up in the middle of the night wondering just how you can close that loop? Are you constantly distracted by dreams of the perfect common assessment? Do you have nagging fears that a SLOA monster is living in your file cabinet? If you answered yes to any of these questions (and even if you didn't!) we will soon have a solution to your problem. Now, you too can own your very own Hagerstown Community College Outcomes Assessment Handbook!

The Outcomes Assessment Leadership Team will be developing a handbook to guide HCC's faculty through the outcomes assessment process. From the basics of outcomes assessment on our campus to the search for the perfect outcome, we will try to provide a handy reference designed to meet all of your outcome needs (well, at least most of them). We hope to have this handbook ready for faculty perusal by the end of fall, 2010 and anticipate that it will quickly jump to the top of the nation's bestseller list. Act now and pre order your copy before they are all gone!



Ok, so there won't be any pre orders, bestseller lists or mad runs on the printers to get handbooks that are fresh off the press. The handbooks will, of course, be available to all. If you have any suggestions about what you would like to see in the handbook, please send an e-mail to Cindy Dove or Andy Keyser.

Assessing General Education

ACTION!

Many students who enroll at Hagerstown Community College choose to pursue General Studies. This program allows students to explore a variety of disciplines by taking courses in Arts and Humanities, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Biological and Physical Science, English, Information Literacy and Mathematics. As a part of the Outcomes Assessment initiative at the college, general education outcomes were developed for each one of these areas and assessment of these outcomes was attempted by having graduating students take the MAAP exam. Unfortunately, typically only a handful of students volunteered to take this exam. Since there was no baseline data to compare the results to, it was impossible to determine if students made progress during their time at HCC. Furthermore, a recent review of the General Education outcomes revealed that

many were flawed, not assessable, or only measured lower level learning.

In the past few months, faculty members have reviewed the General Education outcomes and, in many cases, have revised them. All revised General Education outcomes should go before the Outcomes Assessment Leadership Team and be approved by the faculty of the division that is connected to the discipline area. All courses that are considered a part of the General Education curriculum must meet all of the outcomes in their specific area. For example, if there are three General Education outcomes in Social Science, a History 101 class must meet those outcomes as well as the outcomes specific to the course.

Although the MAAP exam will still be given to graduating students on a voluntary basis, it will no longer be used as a method of assessing General Education outcomes. Instead, faculty associated with each General Education outcome area will decide upon an instrument (common assessment) that can be used to measure learning of all of the outcomes. Some divisions are already using instruments while other com-

mon assessments will be developed by the end of the fall of 2010 to be implemented in the spring of 2011. It is suggested by the Outcomes Leadership Team that these assessments be given in a random selection of General Education classes each semester and that the results be identified only by General Outcome area, not by individual faculty members.

Outcomes Assessment Leadership Team

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