

Pilot Year Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan “A Plan to Enhance Student Computer Literacy”

Title and Brief Description of the QEP as Initially Presented: Meridian Community College (MCC) is committed to the success of its students, including those who enter the college lacking the appropriate technological skills to successfully complete their education at Meridian Community College, transfer to a four-year institution, or enter the workforce. Entitled ***MCC: Making the Computer Connection***, the QEP outlines the process used by MCC to serve the needs of students and meet the intended student learning outcomes of the QEP.

Initial Goals:

The QEP is consistent with the college’s mission and strategic plan and provides a framework for addressing goals and assessing outcomes through both direct and indirect measures.

- (1) MCC will create new curricula, practices, and procedures to ensure that a manageable, sustainable, and successful program for developing student technological literacy is in place by 2017.
- (2) MCC graduates will have the conceptual knowledge and skills to effectively use technology to accomplish their academic and professional goals.

Intended Outcomes:

- (1) Students will demonstrate knowledge of basic computer operations and terminology.
- (2) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the structure and uses of the Internet, including concepts and terms, security, browsing, settings, navigation, searching and search engines, electronic mail, and operations for Eaglenet and Blackboard.
- (3) Students will demonstrate proficiency in word processing including being able to open, close, save, and edit files in word processing; inserting, selecting, editing, duplicating, searching and replacing information; and formatting tests, paragraphs, and documents.

Significant Changes Made to the QEP:

As intended, the Pilot Year provided the College with an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of its QEP implementation plan. The QEP Implementation and Monitoring Committee met with the instructors who are piloting the QEP and the QEP Computer Lab Facilitator several times to discuss the process and to discuss changes to be made for the upcoming year. After much deliberation, the following changes have been decided upon:

1. MCC will cease using Accuplacer as the testing instrument. This decision is based on several factors.
 - a) Testing is time-consuming. It is necessary to take up an entire class period. Each student must be logged on to Accuplacer by someone with “Administrator” credentials.
 - b) Score reporting is unreliable. This issue caused a delay in the assessment of the Pilot. We were unable to produce a complete list of students’ scores. A staff member in Advising had to enter each student’s ID to retrieve the few individual scores available.
 - c) Accuplacer tests certain skills in more detail than is called for in the QEP.
 - d) The latest version of Microsoft Word that is tested in Accuplacer is Word 2007. We need to test for skills in a more up-to-date version.

- e) Accuplacer is more expensive than anticipated. One Computer Skills test in Accuplacer “costs” two units, doubling the cost of a test.
- f) Pre and Posttests consisted of entirely different questions as the items in the Accuplacer Computer Assessment are randomly generated, thus making the few assessment results we were able to retrieve unreliable.

2. The Implementation and Monitoring Committee produced an instrument which will more precisely test the skills in which we are interested. *This test was piloted in the spring of 2013* and will be ready for full implementation in the fall of 2013. The pretest results of the new assessment clearly proved that our cut off score was far too low. We have addressed this issue for the fall of 2013.

3. The need for a QEP Lab which can better meet the time constraints of our students became apparent. When the QEP is fully implemented, the need for increased hours will be even more imperative. Also, there is the consideration of evening classes. These students must be afforded the opportunity to employ the QEP Lab. Longer hours will be implemented in the fall of 2013 when the designated lab is fully operational.

4. It was also decided the “cut-off” score for the new assessment test needed to be changed. The original cut-off score of 60% used for the Accuplacer Computer Skills Assessment was raised to 75% for assessment to be used in the fall of 2013.

The Quality Enhancement Plan will be fully implemented during the 2013-2014 academic year. The fall 2013 semester will see the employment of a full-time QEP lab facilitator and the opening of a lab fully dedicated to the QEP. The QEP lab facilitator will provide support services related to the QEP goals. The instructors of the LLS 1423 classes and the QEP lab facilitator will be responsible for the achievement of intended QEP Learning Outcomes:

Outcome 1- 70% of students will demonstrate knowledge of basic computer operations and terminology at a **proficiency level of 75% (change from 60%)**.

Outcome 2- 70% of students will successfully perform the actions listed in the prescribed set of basic operations for Eagenet and Blackboard (Canvas) at a **75% proficiency level (change from 60%)**.

Outcome 3- 70% of students will demonstrate proficiency in word processing including being able to pen, close, save, and edit files in word processing; inserting, selecting, editing, duplicating, searching, and replacing information ; and formatting text, paragraphs, and documents at a **proficiency level of 75% (change from 60%)**.

Unanticipated Outcomes

Our college has seen a tremendous growth in the numbers of online and nontraditional learners. Many of these students lack computer skills because they either opted out of higher learning following high school or they have had little or no exposure to basic computer operations. In addition to the lack of computer skills, these students are finding that e-textbooks are yet another step toward the digitization of education. When we began working on our QEP, e-textbooks were not a consideration. However, our college is now making the transition to e-textbooks, and many of the students who visited the computer lab came for help in that area. We now realize that teaching students to access and use e-textbooks must be part of our goal to produce technologically literate students.

Summary

The IMC was initially dismayed that our carefully thought out plan for the Pilot year did not simply “fall into place.” However, upon consideration, we concluded that this year was a success after all. What we wanted to happen happened. We found out what worked and what did not. We were made aware of problems that can arise when relying on an outside testing service. We realized that the technological needs of our students are constantly changing and that the QEP goals must accommodate those changes. Our awareness that our QEP is a good plan and a will benefit our students in ways that we never anticipated when we started this project over five years ago was validated time and again. We are looking forward to Year One of full implementation and to what we know will be positive assessment results.

Cathy Webb
QEP Director